



DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 37

FALGUN 7, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHABAN 20, 1446 HIJRI

60 PAGES PLUS CAMPUS: TK 15.00



Student protesters on the way to padlock administrative buildings of Kuet yesterday. Their five-point demand includes the VC's resignation.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Khaleda Zia's legal woes end

She's cleared in all 37 cases as court acquits her of Niko graft charges

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is now cleared of all the 37 cases filed during the 2007 caretaker government and the Awami League regime as the court acquitted her in the Niko graft case yesterday.

"There is no case pending against Khaleda Zia," Zakir Hossain Bhuiyan, one of her defence lawyers, told The Daily Star.

Yesterday, Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka cleared Khaleda, also the former prime

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## 'ROLE IN RIGGED POLLS' Govt going after officials involved

33 more ex-DCs made OSD; many likely to be forced to retire

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has decided to take disciplinary action against 110 officials, including former deputy commissioners (DCs) and divisional commissioners still in service, who played significant roles in the engineered elections during the Awami League's rule.

So far, 45 former DCs, serving as joint secretaries, have been made Officers on Special Duty (OSD), a position deemed a punishment in the civil service.

A list of around 50 former DCs would be sent to the Anti-Corruption Commission so that their actions can be probed. On top of this, 23 additional secretaries and four to six secretaries may be forced to retire soon.

At least three senior government officials currently serving in key positions, including at the Chief Adviser's Office, revealed these to The Daily Star.

LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan in a social media post around 9:00pm yesterday said that all DCs involved in the "nighttime

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## Star INTERVIEW

## Election schedule likely by Oct

Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain tells Star

With the interim government having completed its first six months in office, all eyes are now on the series of dialogues with political parties to reach a consensus on reforms to be carried out. At this crucial juncture, The Daily Star's Wasim Bin Habib and Baharam Khan sat down with Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, adviser to the ministries of shipping and labour and employment, to discuss various issues. Below is the full interview.



Star: When will the election take place?

MSH: If I am not mistaken, the election schedule will be announced around October, and the election may be held in December. We might have a new government formed by January. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has already said if we want to go to polls after urgent reforms, it will be held at the end of this year, and if we wish to do extensive reforms, the election may be held in the first half of next year. Reports from the reform commissions have started coming in, and there will be discussions with

political parties soon regarding the reform proposals. We believe that political parties' opinions on reforms are the most important as no reform will last without their participation.

Star: Based on your experience as Election Commissioner, who actually conducts elections in Bangladesh: the Election Commission or the government?

MSH: Nowhere in the world can an Election Commission conduct an election alone — it requires the involvement of six to seven lakh people.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



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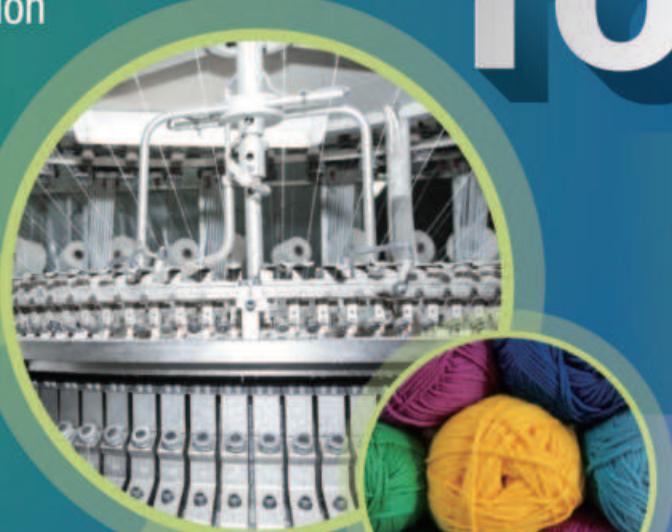
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## Zelensky a dictator: Trump

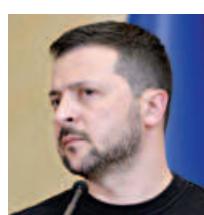
Tells him to move fast for peace or lose Ukraine

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday denounced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "a dictator without elections" and said he had better move fast to secure a peace or he would have no country left.

Trump spoke hours after Zelensky hit back at his suggestion that Ukraine was responsible for Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion, saying the US president was trapped in a Russian disinformation bubble.

"A Dictator without Elections, Zelensky better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left," Trump wrote on his Truth Social media platform.



In response, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiba said no one could force his country to give in. "We will defend our right to exist," Sybiba said on X.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Trump calling Zelensky a "dictator" is "false and dangerous", German newspaper Spiegel reported.

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DHAKA'S CULINARY STREET PERFORMERS

# Live cooking stations captivate the city

RBR

Food prepared on the streets is nothing new in Dhaka. Darul Kabab of yesterday saw various kebabs on skewers, or seekh as it is called in Bangla, being grilled over an open fire or coal embers.

At least for me, this 1975 classic eatery, situated on top of a dhaba or sink pond, introduced the experience of live cooking stations, and had awed me as a child.

And now, again in 2025 Dhaka, I was awestruck when I saw Tanim, a lanky lad in a black apron, rolling out pizza dough in front of Lalbagh Fort. His custom-made cart was unique in having a type of wood-fire deck oven, with personalised pizza sliders. But what got my attention was his confidence in his trade of making pizzas in a live station by the street.

Reserved in showing off his pizza-flipping skill, he had sausages, mozzarella balls, tomato puree, and his special pizza sauce along with a box full of mushrooms, black olives, and capsicums. Even shakers of oregano were all conveniently stored in his neat cart.



"My best seller is the 12-inch Cheese Blast pizza, which is Tk 599," Tanim says, without taking his eyes off the BBQ pizza order he was preparing.

He sells 30 pizzas from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. I could see regulars placing orders for their favourite take-out boxes. Youngsters jumped off their rickshaws, giving high-fives and going through his menu card, while others



PHOTO: STAR, COLLECTED

waited patiently on the stools near the cart for their orders to arrive.

"I have such carts in the Paribagh and Bangla Motor area as well. I have been in this business for the last seven years or so. And all my carts are running successfully," says Tanim.

"What I like is his focused attention in making the pizza in front of you and flipping it inside the oven," says Emdad, a bystander attracted by the fancy act of live cooking.

A few yards from Tanim's cart, was another pop-up stall offering pizza toasts, grilled on big iron fry-pans. This toast is a slice of a pizza but cut in squares like toast.

The street-food businesses are all the rage now, with venturers going for dishes and menus that are not exactly street food per se.

Julekha, an expert of Bangladeshi cuisine, sits in Lamatia from 6:00pm to almost 10:00pm with her mouth-watering vegetable labra, which is a slow-cooked seasonal vegetable dish. She adds her personal touch by throwing in some raw brown peanuts and a dollop of clarified butter. Her off the cuff menu offers Nolen gurer payesh, a rice pudding made with jaggery, and Alu r Dal, a potato stew that is a famous recipe from Rangpur. She serves these with freshly rolled out and deep-fried luchi, a sort of fried flatbread.

Puffed up and piping hot luchi and labra is a quintessential Bengali dish. What is remarkable is that this weekend Bengali breakfast is easily available on a roadside cart, called Bistro on the Go.

Cooking in front of a crowd in an al fresco arrangement has its share of gimmicks and perks, and Dhaka streets are full of such live stations right after the sun sets, adding a sort of animated joy to the street food genre.

## Election schedule likely by Oct

FROM PAGE 1

The EC has to work on most matters with the cooperation of the police, presiding officers and others from the government -- there is nothing wrong with it. The question is, what is the government's perspective on the election?

For instance, the previous government was determined to win the last three parliamentary polls at any cost. The first election (held in 2014) took place without the opposition parties, which was followed by an election that became widely known as "the midnight election" (due to ballot papers being stamped the night before the polls). The most recent election featured dummy candidates. Such election models are unheard of anywhere in the world. Such polls were not held even during Ershad's regime. The Deputy Commissioners appointed individuals from the Awami League and the Chhatra League as presiding officers.

**Star:** Has public trust been restored in the EC now?

**MSH:** People's trust has not yet been restored, and it cannot be regained overnight, especially considering the irregularities that occurred in the elections over the past decade. Therefore, I believe a lack of trust still persists, and restoring it remains the biggest challenge.

I would like to request the EC not to view their responsibilities as merely bureaucratic -- they are extremely difficult tasks. When we were in the EC, regardless of our performance, people at least had some trust in us.

**Star:** How can the EC regain public trust?

**MSH:** There is no specific formula for this. Those in charge must understand who they need to communicate with and whom to invite for discussions. They must act independently.

**Star:** The Electoral Reform Commission has recommended that the delimitation process be carried out by a separate authority. The current EC reacted to it by saying that the move would curb its authority. What is your opinion?

**MSH:** Delimitation is a highly complex issue. In many countries, it is typically carried out by a separate commission. If the EC were to handle it, political parties might accuse them of bias. However, even if a separate commission handles this issue, it must adhere to the guidelines set by the EC. If implemented properly, I believe it will be a positive initiative.

**Star:** Now, let's turn to labour issues. What is happening with Beximco's factories?

**MSH:** The Beximco issue reflects the real situation in Bangladesh. The government has not shut down any factories. These factories are closing because many of these companies operate on bank loans

and subcontracts. Now that the banks are no longer providing loans to them, the factories cannot sustain themselves. Where will the banks get the money to lend when the companies have taken loans and not repaid them? From what we have gathered, around 27,000 workers were employed at Beximco. However, among the Beximco companies that took loans, 16 are untraceable. In other words, loans were taken under these companies' names and worker numbers were reported but these companies do not actually exist. Just from the state-owned Janata Bank, various entities of Beximco have taken loans amounting to Tk 23,000 crore. Can you imagine? If we include loans from other banks, Beximco has borrowed a total of Tk 40,000 crore. The question is, what happened to all that money? There is no clear record.

**Star:** You previously announced that Beximco's workers would receive their salaries by February.

**MSH:** According to our calculations, more than Tk 500 crore will be needed to pay their salaries. We have informed the finance division that this money must be provided on humanitarian grounds. At the same time, we are finding ways to create employment opportunities for these workers. The government is not in favour of shutting down any industry and will not take any action that harms workers. The government has so far disbursed Tk 55 crore and Tk 58 crore in two phases to support the workers.

**Star:** What will happen to the unemployed workers?

**MSH:** An American company has expressed interest in Beximco's entities and is currently evaluating the possibility of taking over the factories. If they move forward, decisions will be made regarding the bank loans. Besides, a Japanese business group has also shown interest in Beximco and plans to conduct a three-month pilot programme to assess whether the factories can be brought back into operation. If things move in a positive direction, the government will take the necessary steps to keep these industries running. I hope this will prevent the workers from remaining unemployed for long.

**Star:** If another company takes over, won't there be legal complications?

**MSH:** The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority is working on these issues.

**Star:** Companies under the Gazi Group have also suffered losses. What will happen to them?

**MSH:** No one has come forward regarding Gazi Group. I am not aware of any developments in this regard.

**Star:** Is the government still providing funds to any factories?

**MSH:** We had to provide funds to some factories on humanitarian grounds. However, this will not continue indefinitely.

**Star:** How would you evaluate the first six months of the interim government?

**MSH:** The greatest achievement of this government is that the state has not failed -- it continues to function. For this, the main credit goes to the people of Bangladesh. However, I would have been happier if the situation had improved further. We have seen examples in Iraq and Libya of what happens after a leaderless movement. In Bangladesh, a government collapsed and left the country in the face of a sudden uprising. At that time, there was no opposition party in the parliament to take charge. It was at this critical moment that our government took over. Many even wanted the country to plunge into chaos and some still do. But the people have put their trust in our government.

**Star:** But people's expectations from this government were very high.

**MSH:** It took three months just to fully understand the real condition of the state. Banks were looted, reserves were in dire condition and the government faced enormous economic challenges. The law-and-order situation was practically non-existent. Yet, there has been remarkable progress in a short period. The credit for this primarily goes to the people. I am not claiming that the law-and-order situation has reached the desired level. If it had, the army would not have to be deployed outside the cantonments for such a long time. When the government of a country that relies heavily on imports collapses suddenly, there is a real risk of a famine-like situation. But we have started to recover from that. However, elements of the deposed government are still trying to destabilise the country in various ways.

**Star:** Regardless of the challenges, people still have high expectations from this government.

**MSH:** There is nothing wrong with that. But our biggest problem is a lack of patience. How can we achieve in six months what was not done in 16 years? We need to understand that.

**Star:** But people are questioning whether the government is on the right track.

**MSH:** According to people's expectations, the government's pace would ideally be 80 kilometres per hour. We might be moving at 40-50 kilometres per hour. To reach 80 kilometres per hour, we need to be given time.

**Star:** What is the progress on the amendment of the labour laws?

**MSH:** As a signatory to the International Labour Organisation conventions, we are committed to certain reforms. One of the discussions is whether a factory's workers can form a trade union if 15 of them agree. Tripartite discussions are going on among the government, employers and workers on this issue.

**Star:** Do you think the recent labour unrest in the garment sector will worsen in the future?

**MSH:** The government is not at all negligent in taking the necessary steps to address workers' problems. However, a vested group is instigating a section of workers to create trouble, which is a major concern.

**Star:** What is the current situation at the ports?

**MSH:** There were some initial issues after the uprising, but the situation is stable now. I have visited the ports three times and plan to visit more to ensure that port services improve rapidly. Some containers that have been at the ports for 20 years are still there. I have given instructions to address these issues.

**Star:** Is there any update on the deep sea port? Do we need it? Will we be able to operate it? Sri Lanka built two deep sea ports and then had to lease them to China.

**MSH:** We absolutely need a deep-sea port. The progress was stalled due to the strategic rivalry between China and India. But now Japan will carry out the project, so that issue has been resolved. We can operate it. Our existing ports are already performing well. Investors from Denmark, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Dubai are eager to invest in our ports. Saudi Arabia has shown interest in taking full responsibility for Matarbari Port while China is set to build two container terminals in Mongla Port.

**Star:** Bangladesh's relationship with India appears stable on the surface, but is that truly the case beneath the surface?

**MSH:** Have we engaged in any conflict with India? Please show me one example. We have consistently spoken about maintaining relations based on equality. Is that a bad thing? The former prime minister herself admitted that Bangladesh has given so much to India that the country will never be able to forget it. Despite that, India did not allow Nepal and Bhutan to use our ports. It is because India values its relationship with the government, not the people of Bangladesh. We all saw how that relationship unfolded over the last 16 years.

**Star:** The issue of barbed wire fences along the border did not arise in the past. Why is it an issue now?

**MSH:** The previous government did not raise the issue, so no problem arose. Even when Bangladeshi people were being shot at the border, the Bangladesh government remained silent. Instead, they instructed the BGB to hold flag meetings to recover the bodies. But now, we are speaking up and expressing our concerns. If someone slaps me, I may not punch them, but I will at least slap you back. From our side, I do not see any hostility toward India. They are a big country -- why should we seek conflict with them?

## Govt going after officials involved

FROM PAGE 1

voting" during the 2018 election would either be made OSD or forced to retire.

A total of 33 DCs were made OSD yesterday. The public administration ministry had earlier made 12 others OSD.

Last night, a senior official of the ministry told this paper that not all officials were equally guilty. A decision has been made to send those into forced retirement who were involved in seriously controversial activities and have served for more than 25 years.

"Those who have not served 25 years would be suspended, and departmental proceedings would be initiated against them. Officials involved in relatively minor controversial activities will be made OSD ... If someone voluntarily admits their wrongdoings and seeks an opportunity for correcting themselves, the government may consider," the official said.

Sources said the ministry may take disciplinary actions against several more officials today upon receiving approval from the president. A notification regarding the officials who would be forced to retire may also be issued.

"We have evidence that these figures are being discussed between America and Russia. That is, President Trump ... unfortunately lives in this disinformation space," Zelensky told Ukrainian TV.

In Moscow, Putin said yesterday that Ukraine would not be barred from peace negotiations but success would depend on raising the level of trust between Moscow and Washington.

Putin, speaking a day after Russia and the US held their first talks on how to end the three-year-old conflict, also said it would take time to set up a summit with Trump, which both men have said they want.

Trump's US policy reversal clashed with allies in the 27-member European Union, whose envoys yesterday agreed on a 16th package of sanctions against Russia, including on aluminium and vessels believed to be carrying sanctioned Russian oil.

The EU's diplomatic service has proposed boosting the bloc's military aid for Ukraine, aiming to show continued support for Kyiv, though no quick decision is expected.

The proposal says the main goals would be to supply at least 1.5 million rounds of large calibre artillery ammunition, as well as air defence systems, missiles for deep precision strikes, and drones.

Sources said the overall atmosphere in the meeting was "friendly" and that sensitive bilateral issues were discussed "in a candid manner", even though strong arguments were presented.

The BSF yesterday hosted a dinner for the 14-member BGB delegation.

The summit in New Delhi was shortened to three days from five, and the talks have been "business-like", said sources.

AL must be eradicated, not just banned

Says Adviser Asif Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain yesterday said the Awami League must be eradicated politically and ideologically from Bangladesh.

He said this must be done through ban following legal and social processes, such as a truth commission or precedents from other countries.

"The Awami League should not only be banned but also politically eradicated from Bangladesh. This is my personal stance. Now, discussion may take place on how it will be implemented. There are precedents of this in various countries," he wrote in a Facebook post yesterday.

"I have seen my brothers martyred by their [AL] men firing before my eyes. I have been a victim of disappearance; I have seen death up close. It is impossible to even think of the political rehabilitation of Awami League," Asif stated.

He also clarified the statement he made

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Rekha Gupta announced Delhi's new CM

THE HINDU ONLINE



India's Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday announced Rekha Gupta as the leader of the BJP's Delhi legislative party. She will be taking over as the next chief minister of Delhi during the oath-taking ceremony today.

Gupta will be the fourth woman CM of Delhi. Sushma Swaraj, Sheila Dikshit, and Atishi are the other women who have held the post.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Ministers from BJP-ruled States, NDA leaders, Union Ministers, and other prominent figures will attend the oath-taking ceremony today, a party top source told ANI.

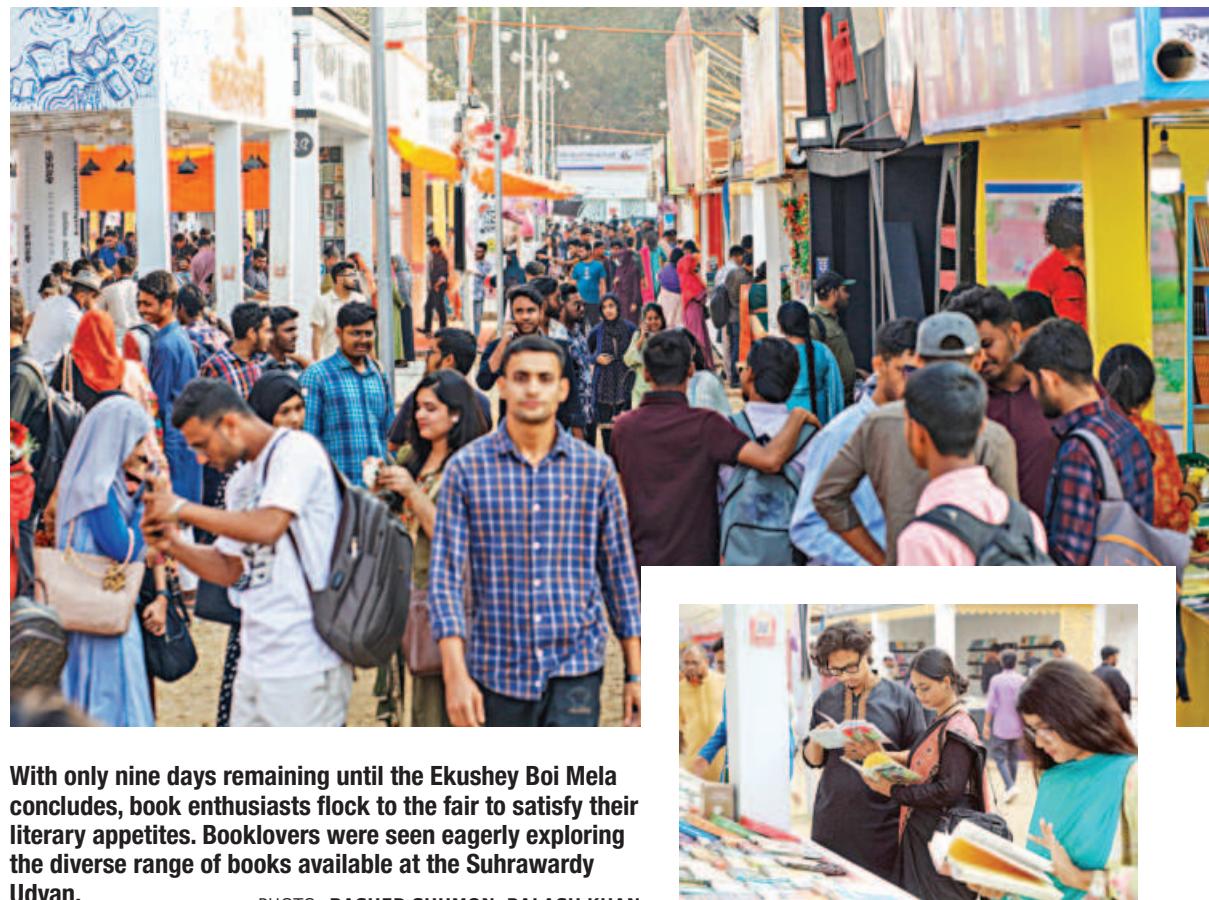
A cultural programme featuring music and songs will precede the ceremony.

Around 30,000 guests have been invited to the ceremony. BJP leaders and workers from other states who were deployed for the Delhi Assembly elections have also been invited to the ceremony.

When asked for comments, Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary at the public administration ministry, told The Daily Star, "Eventually, action will be taken against all officials involved in controversial activities during the Awami League rule."

The 33 joint secretaries who were made OSD yesterday are Abul Fazal Mir; Moinul Islam; Md Wahiduzzaman; AKM Mamunur Rashid; SM Abdul Kader; KM Kamruzzaman Selim; Mohammad Dawoodul Islam; Md Majedur Rahman Khan; AZDM Nurul Haque; SM Ajur Rahman; Mohammad Masud Alam Siddique; Gopal Chandra Das; Md Matiul Islam Chowdhury; Sabina Yasmin; Md Ataul Gani; Abu Ali Md Shazzad Hossain; M Kazi Emdadul Islam; SM Mostafa Kamal; Kazi Abu Taher; Md Mizanur Rahman; Mohammad Abdul Ahad; Anar Koli Mahbub; Syeda Farhana Kawnain; Mahmudul Kabir Murad; Anjan Chandra Pal; Sultana Parveen; Md Sarwar Murshed Chowdhury; Md Shahidul Islam; Mohammad Helal Hossain; Md Ali Akbar; Kabir Mahmud; Md Mahmudul Alam; and Hayat ud-Doula Khan.

**Zelensky a dictator: Trump</**



With only nine days remaining until the Ekushey Boi Mela concludes, book enthusiasts flock to the fair to satisfy their literary appetites. Booklovers were seen eagerly exploring the diverse range of books available at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN

'July Uprising belongs to all'  
Mahfuj advocates 'balance' to calm student factions  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to the interim government Mahfuj Alam has said the July-August mass uprising belongs to everyone, stressing that progress has to be achieved with everyone's participation.

In a post on his verified Facebook page yesterday, Mahfuj also said he had rejected the notion of "mastermind" in the very beginning, adding that it was a "hype created by media".

He said the decision-makers had to talk to many stakeholders for almost all decisions. To finalise a decision, opinions were taken from at least five to six groups before those were also analysed.

He said during "July 19-33", although people did not wait for anyone's decision, they took the students as "legitimate leaders".

Mahfuj stressed the need for a "balanced position" among the student factions and called for moving on with all but the saboteurs.

In his post, he apologised for some previous remarks and vowed to correct himself in future if required.

He also said they are encountering innumerable powerful enemies but are blessed with only a handful of friends.

**HSC exams to begin June 26**  
STAR REPORT

The Higher Secondary Certificate examinations will begin on June 26 and continue till August 10, said an education ministry statement yesterday.

The practical exams will be held from August 11 to 21, said a notification signed by SM Kamal Uddin, chief of the Inter-Education Board Examination Controllers' Committee.

**ABRAR MURDER**  
Uphold trial court verdict  
AG urges HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday prayed to the High Court to uphold the trial court verdict in Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case.

A Dhaka court on December 8, 2021, sentenced 20 Buet students to death for their direct involvement in the murder and also sentenced five other students to life imprisonment.

LGRD MINISTRY

## 'Its name, function do not match'

Says local govt reform commission chief, proposes renaming ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Local Government Reform Commission is going to propose a change in the name of the LGRD ministry, said the commission's chief Prof Tofayel Ahmed yesterday.

Why should the NGO Affairs Bureau be under the PMO? It should be overseen by those working at the grassroots level. This restructuring will integrate cooperatives and NGOs into the local government framework, allowing for better planning.

**Prof Tofayel Ahmed**

"There is no alignment between the ministry's name and its functions. Why is that? Because local government is not prioritised. The ministry includes entities like LGED and Wasa, with a budget of around Tk 30-40 thousand crore," he said.

"However, only Tk 1,200 crore is allocated specifically for local government, covering city corporations,

district administrations, and upazilas. There is no need to call it a local government ministry," he added.

The local government expert made the remarks at a programme titled "CSOs for Empowering the Marginalised Communities in Bangladesh," held at Dhaka University.

The event was organised by the Centre for Budget and Policy of DU.

Prof Tofayel said there is another wing under the Cooperative Ministry for Rural Development.

"However, there is neither rural development nor cooperatives

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Abdullah Abu Sayeed speaks at a discussion marking the launch of the third edition of "Ashimer Bhela: Bangla Shahitter Shera Kobitar Shongroho", a poetry anthology edited by him, at Batighar yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

### A DAY IN COURT

## Of Palak's prison insights and Faruk's viral controversy

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak remained relatively quiet as he was brought to Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court yesterday.

Palak was escorted from Kashimpur jail under heavy security, wearing a helmet, handcuffs, and a bulletproof vest. He was produced in court as part of an application to show him arrested in a murder case filed with Dharmondi Police Station.

However, his silence broke upon arriving at the courtroom at 11:00am, where the hearing was scheduled. He spoke with his lawyers until Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate MA Azharul Islam took his seat.

"Prison life comes with intense life lessons. Everyone should spend at least seven days in jail to understand this. Even if I ever get out, I will still say this," Palak remarked from the dock.

He also claimed he was enduring inhumane conditions in prison due to financial struggles. Addressing lawyers and journalists, he said, "I don't even have money to buy flattened rice or puffed rice. In prison, I share bread and bananas with Suman bhai [Barrister Syed Sayedul Haque Suman]."

Palak suggested that speaking in court often leads to an extension of remand. "If we speak, the remand is extended. If the lawyers speak, the remand is extended," he said, advising his lawyers to remain

cautious during the hearing.

When police asked him to stop talking, he responded, "I am not saying anything illegal."

Later, he attempted to catch the attention of Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi, greeting him with "Salam". Initially, the prosecutor did not respond, but eventually, he acknowledged the greeting.

Palak then remarked, "At last, the prosecutor's heart has softened."

Before being taken back to the lockup, he addressed journalists, saying, "Please be kind while writing about us."

Following the hearing, Magistrate Azharul ordered Palak to be shown as arrested in the case.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## A journey thru Bangla poetry

Discussion on Abdullah Abu Sayeed's anthology held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shortly after the evening fell, the event began, and the courtyard of Batighar became quite crowded. People of various ages had gathered there to listen to a discussion on a poetry book.

It was not an original collection of poems, yet the presence of its editor -- Abdullah Abu Sayeed -- was the reason behind the packed audience.

Yesterday, a reading session was held to mark the third edition of "Ashimer Bhela: Bangla Shahitter Shera Kobitar Shongroho", a poetry anthology edited by Abdullah Abu Sayeed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Today is the 8th  
Death Anniversary of  
The Founding Chairman of Alliance Properties Limited



**SYED ALI ASGHAR RIZVI**

(22 April 1944 - 20 February 2017)

For the eternal peace of his soul,  
the Alliance Family, his sons Zaki and Razi Rizvi  
and his grandchildren Afraz, Ariana, and Alazne ask  
all family members, friends, and well-wishers  
to keep him in their prayers.

Alliance  
PROPERTIES

## 9 lives lost

FROM PAGE 6  
student of Bangladesh Gas Fields School and College, and Mokaddes Mia, 70, a former army member from Nabinagar area, were killed in road accidents in Basudeb union under Sadar upazila, said Sadar Model Police Station OC Md Mozaffar Hossain.

In Habiganj Sadar upazila, fish trader Abdul Majid, 55, died as a truck hit him on Habiganj-Lakhai road, said OC Alamgir Kabir of Habiganj Sadar Model Police Station.

In Gopalganj's Kashiani upazila, a bus of Falguni Paribahan collided with a covered van of a courier service at Pona Bus Stand, leaving the van driver Jahangir dead and 16 others injured around 8:00am, said police.

Traffic movement on the highway remained suspended for three hours after the accident.

In Chattogram, Kamrul Ibne Hasan, a resident of Fatikchhari and an employee of Dutch-Bangla Bank's CEPZ branch, died and three others were injured as a bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Chattogram-Khagrachhari road in Hathazari upazila and fled the scene, said police.

In Narayanganj, two people were killed and four injured after a truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on the 300-feet road in Purbachal in the afternoon.

The deceased are Arobi Akter, 32 and Khairel Bashar, 35, both passengers of the auto-rickshaw.

Police seized the truck and detained its driver, Fakhrul Islam, and his assistant, Nahidul Islam.

In Pirojpur, Shahidul Islam Howlader, 75, a retired army member from Sadar upazila, died after being hit by a battery-run auto-rickshaw.

[Our correspondents from Rangpur, Brahmanbaria, Pirojpur, Gopalganj, Chattogram, Moulvibazar and Narayanganj contributed to this report.]



A worker sorts through a pile of tomatoes at a wholesale market to separate the good ones and throw away any rotten pieces. Various companies purchase tomatoes in bulk from farmers to make ketchup and other sauces. On average, a worker sorts through 18-20 crates of tomato a day and earns Tk 10 per crate. The photo was taken at a wholesale market in Khulna's Dumuria upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Its name, function do not match

FROM PAGE 3

functioning there. The concept of rural development is no longer viable in the current context.

That's why we believe these ministries should be renamed. We have proposed new names, but we will disclose them later."

He further stated that a mass organisation under the local government ministry will include NGOs.

"Why should the NGO Affairs Bureau be under the Prime Minister's Office? It should be overseen by those working at the grassroots level. This restructuring will integrate cooperatives and NGOs into the local government framework, allowing for better planning," he said.

Prof Tofayel also said maintaining separate engineering ministries is unnecessary. "These two ministries will be merged into one," he said.

Speaking as chief guest, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan

highlighted the lack of studies on marginalised communities.

"The progress we have made in improving their lives is largely due to reports and advocacy efforts by some NGOs. However, the problem with advocacy is that it has been intertwined with politics, affecting its neutrality," he said.

Prof Niaz urged NGOs and academicians to conduct systematic research to address the actual problems faced by these communities and called for a unified framework to support them.

Prof Taibabur Rahman, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at DU, said there are approximately 50-60 marginalised communities on the mainland.

He emphasised that the government, private sector, and civil society organisations (CSOs) each have distinct responsibilities in working for the welfare of these communities.

Highlighting the absence of accurate data, Prof Taibabur stressed the importance of determining the exact number of marginalised communities and ensuring their fundamental rights.

"Following the July uprising, there is now an opportunity for change. There should be an elected government that addresses the issues faced by marginalised communities," he added.

DU Pro-Vice Chancellor (Administration) Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha called for more research efforts to improve the conditions of marginalised groups.

Prof Kazi Maruf Islam from DU's Department of Development Studies presented research findings related to the programme's theme.

Other speakers at the event included Nuzhat Jabin, country director of Christian Aid Bangladesh, and Ilira Dewan, a member of the Local Government Reform Commission.

## BRAC Bank scholarships to support 300 female students

CITY DESK

BRAC Bank has recently expanded its "Aporajeyo TARA Scholarships" programme to support 300 female students at Rajshahi University, said a press release.

The partnership was formalised at a signing ceremony on February 16 at the RU campus, where Vice Chancellor Prof Saleh Hasan Naqib and BRAC Bank DMD and Chief Operating Officer Sabbir Hossain signed the agreement.

Aporajeyo TARA is BRAC Bank's flagship CSR initiative promoting women's education.

## A journey thru Bangla

FROM PAGE 3

Rokeya and Kamini Roy -- not because they are women, but because they are poets of literary significance.

"Another speaker pointed out that I did not include any Muslim poets in the medieval section. This was not a deliberate decision on my part. I didn't consider whether a poet was Hindu or Muslim while selecting poems."

Regarding the future of the anthology, he said, "As long as I am here, this collection will continue to be published."

Poet-journalist Sajjad Sharif said, "This anthology is one of the most significant collections of a thousand years of Bangla poetry. Through this collection, we can understand how new linguistic expressions have emerged in Bangla poetry over the centuries. At the same time, it showcases a millennium of creative brilliance through poetry. This anthology allows us to see the entirety of Bangla poetry."

Prof Kudrat-E-Huda, an essayist and researcher, said, "Sayeed Sir is one of the finest among those whose poetic taste can be trusted and relied upon. The book does not overwhelm with excessive erudition; rather, it can be read like any original work, allowing readers to discover Sayeed Sir's consciousness through it."

As residents continue to cope with limited water supplies, Chattogram Wasa has assured the public that repair work will commence soon, though a specific timeline for restoration has not yet been provided.

## Of Palak

FROM PAGE 3

**FARUK DENIES FB POST** Former civil aviation minister Muhammad Faruk Khan was also brought to the CMM Court yesterday for a remand hearing in a violence case filed with Motijheel Police Station.

On February 3, a Facebook post from the verified profile of the Awami League presidium member went viral, in which he denounced party chief Sheikh Hasina and called for a change in leadership. The post sparked nationwide discussions.

As Faruk was being taken to the detention cell, a journalist asked, "Did you post a status on Facebook from prison?" Faruk responded, "How can I post a status from prison? This is false information."

Another journalist repeated the question, to which he reiterated, "Is it possible to post a status from prison? How can I do that from here?"

When the journalist pointed out that the post had come from his verified account, Faruk remained silent.

## PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-20	12-45	4-30	6-03	7-30
JAMAAT 5-55	1-15	4-45	6-07	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh

**RFP No. LRPS-2025-9195670: Long Term Agreement (LTA) to provide 'Air Tickets & Travel Management Services'.**

UNICEF Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a proven track record and professional credibility of providing the above-required services under LTA.

- Download the electronic copy of Bid documents from UNGM <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/259668>
- Alternatively, vendors may request the bid documents via email at 'supplybangladesh@unicef.org' by **23 February 2025**.

Deadline for submission of the proposal: **17 March 2025 at 3:00 PM (GMT +6), Monday**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

[www.unicef.org/bangladesh](http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh)



## Legal Notice

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH

HIGH COURT DIVISION

(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 153 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF

Delivery Hero Kitchens APAC Holding Pte. Ltd.

...Petitioner

...VERSUS...

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, and another

...Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81(2) read with section 396 of the Companies Acts, 1994 has been filed by the Petitioner Company before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the company name & style as "Leader Garments Ltd.". The Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel vide an order dated 30.01.2025 was pleased to admit the said application.

Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on before the date so fixed.

Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.

Yours faithfully

**(Kazi Ershadul Alam)**  
Barrister-at-Law,  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Tanjib Alam & Associates,  
BSEC Bhavan (Level 11),  
102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar,  
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

## Space For Sale @ Gulshan Avenue

**Plot no-163/2B, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-2.**  
9th floor of brand new modern 14th stored building. Total 4,950 sqft open floor. All most work of the building is totally compleated. 2 parking, 2 lift, 2 stair, full back up genarator. **Mob: 01711-52 74 14**

## STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(ORIGINAL STATUTORY JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 131 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF :  
An application under Sections 81(2) and section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.  
AND In the Matter of :  
Mr. Moyeen Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, shareholder & Managing Director of Leader Garments Ltd., having its registered Office- at Plot No. 33(A), 27, Milk Vita Road, Section-07, Mirpur, Dhaka, representative by its Managing Director Mr. Moyeen Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury and another..... Respondents

Notice is hereby given that an application under Sections 81(2) and 396 read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condoning the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the company name & style as "Leader Garments Ltd.". The Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has admitted the said application on 27.01.2025 and Hon'ble court directed the petitioner to publish the notices within 3(three) weeks and also to submit affidavit-in- compliance on or before 2nd March, 2025 from the date of publication. Any person interested in the said application may appear before this Hon'ble Court. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.

**Mohammad Shariful Islam**  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Hall Room No. 1, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 0171173360

## CORRIGENDUM

1. TBL/HO/GSSD/PPD/TENDER/2025/03 correction as under:

For

Procurement of 100,000 Units VISA General Platinum Debit Card (DI).

Read

Procurement of 300,000 Units DI Cards (Visa, Mastercard, UnionPay) for Trust Bank PLC.

2. A complete set of the Bid documents containing the details of the terms and conditions and the details of Pre-Bid Meeting may be downloaded from the website <https://www.tblbd.com/tender>. Only schedule purchaser may attend the Pre-Bid Meeting.

Purchase & Procurement Department, GSSD

Reference No: 46.02.8700.001.99.001.23-347

Date: 19-02-2025

## e-Tender Notice No-34/2024-25 [OTM]

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

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Package No. & Name of works	Tender Closing date & time
1	1077636	e-Tender/PEDP4/SKR/2024-25/W-20.615 Repair Work of District Primary Education Office Building at Satkhira DPEO under Sadar Upazila, Dist.-Satkhira.	10-Mar-2025 12:30

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to **17.00pm, Date: 09-March-2025**.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

(Md. Kamruzzaman)  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Satkhira.

E-mail: [xen.satkhira@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.satkhira@lged.gov.bd)

GD-477

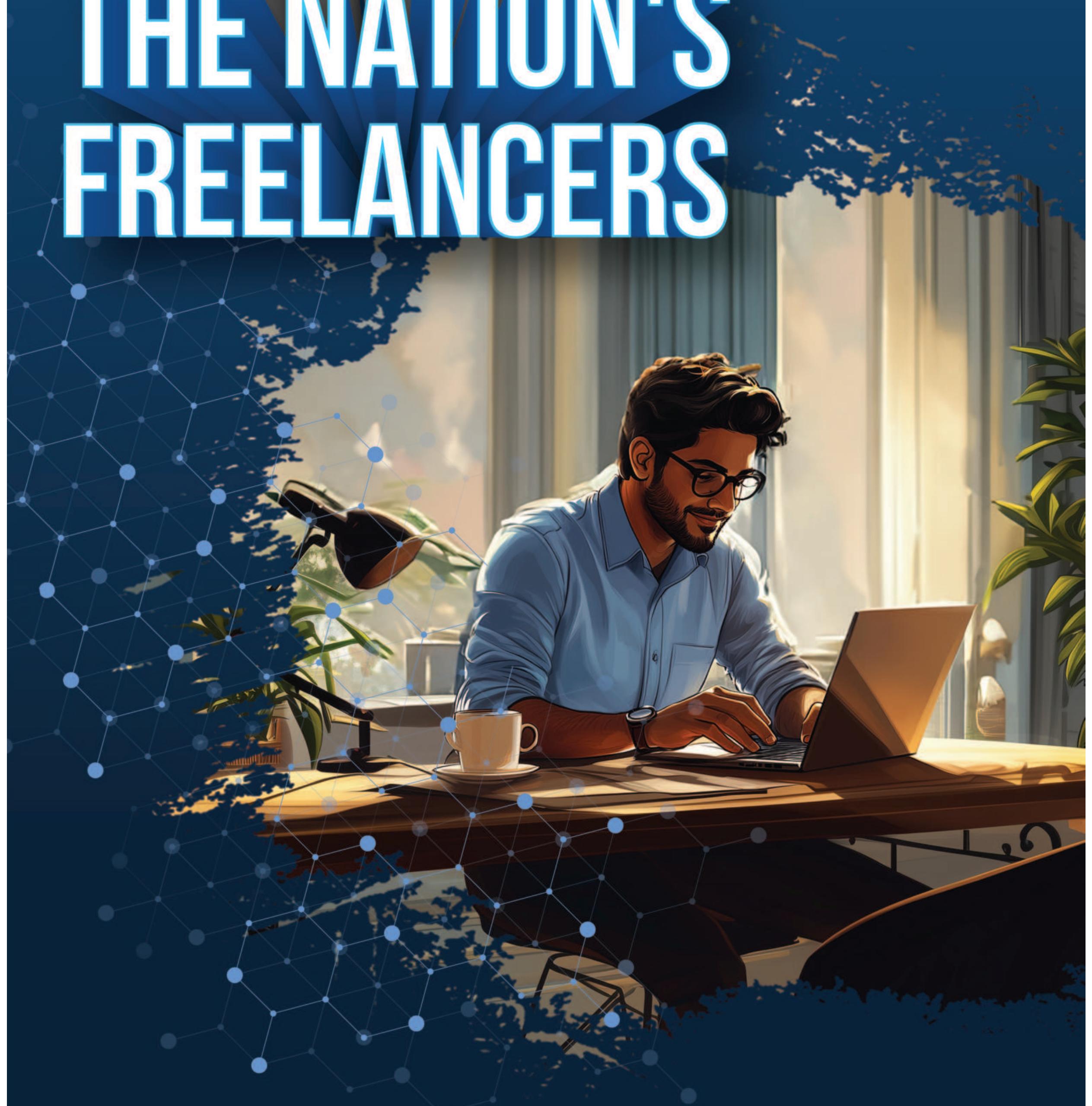


## ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-

 Bank Asia

# EMPOWERING THE NATION'S FREELANCERS



With over **USD 950 million** in freelancing export earnings facilitated through Bank Asia, Bangladeshi freelancers are poised to drive the nation's growth to newer heights.



Residents queue for drinking water in Lalkhan Bazar area as water supply in Chattogram remains disrupted for a second day yesterday, due to pipeline damage in Kuaij area, inset.

PHOTO: COLLECTED, RAJIB RAIHAN

## Key Khulna road needs urgent renovation

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Years of neglect and a lack of maintenance have left the Bir Shrestha Ruhul Amin Road in Khulna in urgent need of renovation.

The road was last repaired in 2015, and over the past decade, it has lost its paving and turned into a dusty, uneven surface, causing significant misery for thousands of commuters each day.

Stretching for seven kilometres from Rupsha Ferry Ghat to Zabusa Bazar via Char Rupsha, Bagmara, and the Rupsha Bridge, the road is a crucial thoroughfare for the local community, businesses, and institutions. At least 15 shrimp processing factories, 150 shrimp buyers, several ice mills, three primary schools, a Coast Guard office, a police camp, and numerous other

Obaidul Haque, a pick-up driver who regularly carries goods along the road, said it has become unfit for vehicular movement and called for immediate steps to repair and renovate it.

"It is a matter of shame that the road named after a national hero has become dilapidated like this," remarked Alamgir Hossain Sharabon, a member of Noiathi Union Parishad under Rupsha upazila.

"Large goods-laden trucks use the road every day, but it was never meant to handle such massive loads. If urgent measures are not taken, this road may completely collapse," he added.

Mahbubur Rahman Munna, general secretary of Nirapad Sarak Chai's Khulna city unit, demanded the implementation of a proper renovation plan instead of temporary repairs.



important establishments are located along this busy route.

The current condition of the road is adversely affecting local businesses, education, healthcare, and daily life.

During a recent visit to the area, it was observed that the road has caved in at various points, with exposed bricks and stones making it hazardous.

In the dry season, dust from the road surface fills the air, choking pedestrians and commuters. During the monsoon, deep mud forms, making it nearly impassable for both people and vehicles.

"Every day, I have to commute using the road amid risk," said Mita Dey, a schoolteacher and local resident.

### GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BRAHMANBARIA

Website: [eed.brahmanbaria.gov.bd](http://eed.brahmanbaria.gov.bd)

#### Invitation for e-Tender

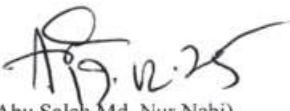
Tender Notice No: 18/e-GP/EED/BRAH/323 School/ (2024-2025)

Date: 19/02/2025

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 ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following Package from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to the Following Date & Time.

Tender ID	Lot/Package Location (Name of Institution)	Procurement Method	Publication Date & Time	Tender Document Last Selling/ Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1075847	Construction of 10 Storied Academic Building with 10 Storied Foundation In/c. Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Annada Govt. High School, Sadar, Brahmanbaria.	NCT (OTM)	20-Feb-2025 16:00	23-Mar-2025 16:00	24-Mar-2025 11:00

The Provisions laid down in the "PPA & PPR -2008 including latest all amendment" and STD will be Followed. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
(Abu Saleh Md. Nur Nabi)  
Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department  
Brahmanbaria.  
e-mail: [ee\\_brah@eedmoe.gov.bd](mailto:ee_brah@eedmoe.gov.bd)

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## FESTIVE FILMS

### Four at the forefront

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Although Eid-ul-Fitr is still a little while away, audiences are ardently anticipating the films scheduled for release during the festive season.

This year, fans can expect an intense showdown between four popular stars. Like every year, a Shakib Khan starrer will hit theatres this Eid, but this time he'll be competing against three other popular actors, setting the stage for an exciting cinematic clash.

Shakib Khan's fans are in for a treat as they will get to witness the superstar in a fierce role in Mehedi Hassan Hridoy's action-packed directorial *Borbaad*.

The filming of *Borbaad* took place in Mumbai, with Idris Paul playing the lead opposite him and veteran actor Mamanur Rashid taking on a significant role, among several others.

Earlier in 2023, Shakib Khan and Afran Nisho competed with their respective Eid films, sparking heated debates among their fans on social media. At that time, Nisho made his film debut with *Surongo*. This Eid, he is set to return as the lead in a new film, once again competing against Shakib Khan's release.

Afran Nisho's upcoming film *Daagi*, directed by Shihab Shaheen, is slated for release this year. Following *Surongo*, Nisho has reunited with

Tama Mirza for this project, alongside the addition of Sunerah Binte Kamal. With anticipation running high among his fans, excitement is building for Eid, when audiences will choose which film captures their interest the most.

Siam Ahmed, known for his captivating charm and swoon-worthy smile, is set to delight his fans with a blend of romance and high-energy action in his upcoming film *Jongli*. The film's posters have already created a buzz online, and excitement soared even higher with the release of its first song, *Jonon Jonom*.

In *Jongli*, Siam Ahmed stars alongside Shobnom Yesmin Bubly, with Prarthana Fardin Dighi also playing a significant role. The film promises an action-packed and thrilling experience.

Shajal Noor, who impressed everyone with his performance in *Jinn*, will once again be seen in the franchise's *Jinn 3* opposite Nusrat Faria. Directed by Kamruzzaman Roman, the shooting is underway, and the film is set to compete with other releases this Eid.

With so many prominent stars sharing the limelight, the big question is: How intense will the on-screen rivalry between the four leading actors be this Eid? Additionally, what other films will be gracing the theatres?



PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED



### Bangladeshi artistes to honour Language Movement at Unesco event in Paris

A group of Bangladeshi musicians is set to perform at Unesco headquarters in Paris for the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day, a key event highlighted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Ekushey February was officially acknowledged as International Mother Language Day by Unesco in 1999, and it has been observed in United Nations member states since February 21, 2000. This year marks the silver jubilee of this significant recognition.

The two-day event will occur on today and February 21, with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus addressing the inauguration virtually as the guest of honour.

On February 18, Islam Uddin Palakar, rapper Shezan, Shunno's Emil, F Minor, Parsha Mahjabeen, Tuntun Baul, Jalal, Mithun Chakra, and Jahid Nirob departed from Dhaka, for Paris, to attend the International Mother Language Day silver jubilee celebrations.

### 'Shastriya Sangeet O Nritya Utsab' commences at Shilpakala

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) is hosting a four day *Shastriya Sangeet O Nritya Utsab* to promote classical music and dance.

Organised by the Academy's Music, Dance, and Recitation Department, the event began yesterday and will continue today, then February 23, and 24 at the National Art Gallery auditorium, with programmes starting at 5pm each day.

The opening ceremony features a group dance titled *Shubhechchha O Bhalobasha*, directed by Snata Shahrin.

Performers include vocalists Kabyashree Ray Chowdhury and Ali FM Rezwan, along with various classical dance and music artistes like Jubair



Hossain Naim, Warda Rehab, Priyanka Sarkar, and Anil Kumar Saha, among others.

The free-of-charge event is open to all.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

#### 'Melody of Mavericks'

*Melody of Mavericks* is set to be an exceptional five concert, bringing together renowned artistes and bands, including Bappa Mazumder, Meghdol, Kaakaal, and others for a night of captivating performances. The event being held at the picturesque Hatirjheel Amphitheatre with stunning stage designs and a diverse mix of musical genres, will deliver an unforgettable experience filled with melody, rhythm, and vibrancy.

DATE: THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 20

TIME: 3PM-10PM

VENUE: HATIRJHEEL AMPHITHEATER



### J-Hope donates 200 million won to children's hospital

BTS member J-Hope recently celebrated his birthday with a philanthropic act, donating 200 million won to Asian Medical Center (AMC) in Seoul. Committed to supporting children in need, he expressed hope that his contribution would aid their treatment and bring them a brighter future.

Grateful for his fans' (Army's) unwavering support, J-Hope shared, "I want to thank you once again. It means a lot to continue making donations annually, starting with my birthday this year."

This is not his first act of generosity—he previously donated 100 million won to AMC in 2022.

Meanwhile, J-Hope is preparing for his *Hope on the Stage* tour, set to begin on February 28 at KSPO Dome in Seoul, before travelling to multiple cities worldwide.



## NEWS

### Bangladeshi climate

FROM PAGE 16

With livelihoods collapsing, migration has skyrocketed.

Around 84 percent of the families have moved to cities like Dhaka, Khulna, and Chattogram since 2011 in search of work -- often in exploitative industries.

Another 88 percent have sent relatives abroad, mostly to Gulf nations, where many face extreme working conditions.

The study further found that households facing higher climate risks are 161 percent more likely to migrate internally and 214 percent more likely to migrate internationally -- highlighting the critical role of climate induced shocks in driving distress migration.

Households with better education and larger landholdings are 356 percent more likely to migrate internationally, reflecting the dual nature of migration as both a coping and adaptive strategy, the report adds.

### Feb 21 gets its first poem in port city

FROM PAGE 16

shekhane ami kadte ashini..." (Those who gave their lives here, beneath the towering Krishnachura of Ramna, where, like sparks of fire, countless stains of blood glow here and there, I have not come here to weep.)

These powerful words, penned by Mahbub-ul-Alam in Chattogram, were triggered by the events of February 21, 1952—making it the first poem written about the historic and tragic day.

However, like other districts, Chattogram witnessed an extensive campaign leading up to March 11, 1948, which had been set as the main day of the movement.

On that day, a complete shutdown was observed across the district, with students striking and boycotting classes.

Three days later, the district administration imposed Section 144, banning all gatherings for a week in an attempt to suppress the movement.

During this period, leaders from the Communist Party and the Chattogram faction of the Chhatra Federation held a secret meeting, leading to the formation of the Muliiti Birodi Sangram Parishad (Anti Principle Struggle Committee), with Rafiquddin Siddique as convener and Mahbub-ul-Alam Chowdhury as joint convener.

The committee's stance was clear: if Bangla was not recognised as a state language, Constituent Assembly members AK Khan and Noor Ahmed would resign.

On March 21 and 24, student



Chattogram Central Shaheed Minar

protests erupted in Chattogram after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, during a speech in Dhaka, declared Urdu to be the sole state language of Pakistan.

In 1950, the Chittagong Bhasha Sangram Parishad was formed, with Rafiquddin Siddique as president and Mahbubul Haq and Mahbub ul-Alam as convener. Meanwhile, figures like Fazlul Kader Chowdhury promoted writing Bangla in Urdu script and Arabic letters.

On February 4, 1952, a complete shutdown was observed, and the Sarbodoloi Bhasha Sangram Parishad was formed, with poet Mahbub ul-Alam Chowdhury as convener, and MA Aziz and railway worker leader Chowdhury Harun or Rashid as joint convener. Other members included Zahur Hossain Chowdhury, Mozzafar Ahmed, Krishna Gopal Sengupta, Manindra Majahan, and Sudhansu Bhattacharya.

After the formation of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad around the same time, extensive campaigning took place across Chattogram, with February 21 as the focal point of the movement. The Simantonews paper and the pamphlet "Pakistan's State Language: Bangla or Urdu" by the Tamaddun Majlis also played pivotal roles in the movement in Chattogram.

### Launch likely on Feb 26

FROM PAGE 16

the member secretary post.

Sources within the Nagorik Committee say that Adviser Mahfuj Alam wants Nagorik Committee Convener Nasiruddin Patwary to be in the top leadership of the new party.

On the other hand, the former Shibir activists on the platform want Ali Ahsan Zonaed, former president of Shibir's DU unit and a member of nagorik committee's executive body, as the second-in-command of the new party.

Sources said that the key leaders are mulling a senior joint convener post and a senior member secretary post to accommodate former Shibir leaders and avoid a potential split.

### Govt may not be sincere in holding polls

FROM PAGE 16

while speaking at a discussion organised by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in the capital's Krishibid Institution auditorium yesterday afternoon.

He criticised LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan for his comments made on Tuesday that Awami League leaders could participate in the elections after apologising to the public.

"This proves that they [advisers] now want to give these fascists a place for their own interests. It is dangerous. Does this mean we should believe they are using various strategies to organise their party by remaining in the government?

"We will not allow it, and the people of this country will not allow it," Fakhru said.

The BNP would welcome the

formation of any political party, he said, adding, "This does not mean that you [advisers] will form your party while in government, taking advantage of government facilities. This will never be accepted."

The BNP leader also urged the interim government and its chief to act immediately, cautioning that "otherwise, public trust in you will be lost".

Recalling his earlier remarks about neutrality in the interim government, Fakhru said, "When I first pointed out that if the government loses neutrality, another neutral administration will be required, I was criticised. But now, it is being proven."

"At that time, one of the advisers said, 'I'm focusing on 1/11 situation'. We are the victims of it."

"I want to issue a warning again: if anyone thinks of such situations and attempts are made to establish a one-party rule, the people will never accept it."

Fakhru also highlighted the role of student politics in building a new Bangladesh.

"In our assessment, nearly 2,000 young individuals have sacrificed their lives in the movement [July uprising], with 800 of them belonging to Chhatra Dal. In my home district of Thakurgaon, nine lives were lost, and seven of them were Chhatra Dal activists."

"Therefore, those who claim that Chhatra Dal or the BNP had no role in this movement should carefully examine the facts and get a proper understanding of the situation before making such statements."

### Tigers look

FROM PAGE 16

excitement in India and Bangladesh. I think the players are focused on how to execute their plans, how calm they can stay on the field," Bangladesh skipper Nazmul Hossain Shanto said at the pre match press conference prior to a training session at the ICC Academy Oval 2 Ground.

While most cricketers were in jovial mood and honed their skills with both bat and ball during the two-and-a-half hours' session, veteran Mahmudullah not being involved in any batting drills and only having chitchats with selector Abdur Razzaq raised eyebrows.

Mahmudullah had also skipped batting during the warm-up game on Monday. When senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin was asked whether the 39-year-old had any injury issues or if it was just a ploy by the cricketer to remain calm before the big contest, the experienced coach didn't divulge much info on the issue, just saying: "He is okay. Nothing to worry about."

The India team trained at the main stadium in the afternoon. Out of nine wickets at the venue of which three remained under cover, Indian bowlers, especially their spinners, were seen practising at one of the uncovered wickets, while others were mostly engaged in running, football drills and warm-ups.

However, Indian team arrived late to training session due to heavy traffic, deferring scheduled press meet of captain Rohit Sharma by 35 minutes.

Indian journalists mostly questioned Rohit on the team's chances of winning the title, skipping any question regarding the Bangladesh game. The India media manager, too, did not allow any Bangladeshi journalist to ask anything about the match.

On February 19 and 20, activists secretly put up posters across the city, evading police surveillance. Various clubs and organisations also prepared to ensure the movement's success.

On February 21, a full-scale hartal was observed, and multiple processions were organised across the city. These were followed by a rally at Lalbagh Maidan, chaired by Mozammel Ahmed, with over 40,000 people in attendance.

Meanwhile, news of student deaths at the hands of the police in Dhaka sent Chattogram into a state of intense turmoil.

Students and locals organised a procession towards the old Wazirullah Institute, while another, led by Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury, also marched through the streets. Separate processions were organised by Chittagong College and Medical College.

The same slogans echoed throughout the city: "Rashtrabhasha Bangla chail" (We want Bangla as the state language) and "Chhatra hottoya bichar chail" (We demand justice for student killings).

Poet Mahbub ul-Alam, who was ill at home, then wrote the poem "Kadte ashini, phaashir dabi niye eshechhi" (I have not come to weep, I have come to die). At a rally in Lalbagh Maidan on February 23, Mahbub ul-Alam recited the poem himself, and it was later distributed among the public.

The Simantonews paper and the pamphlet "Pakistan's State Language: Bangla or Urdu" by the Tamaddun Majlis also played pivotal roles in the movement in Chattogram.

The government is expecting \$4 billion in budget support from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, according to finance ministry officials.

On the other hand, foreign-funded project utilisation has to be sped up such that development partners disburse the funds, Raihan said.

The development spending in the revised budget has been slashed by Tk 49,000 crore to Tk 216,000 crore.

The revised ADP will be finalised next week at a meeting chaired by the planning adviser. It will then be placed at the meeting of the National Economic Council for final approval, said planning ministry officials.

## Khaleda Zia's legal woes end

FROM PAGE 1  
minister, and seven others in the case lodged by the Anti Corruption Commission in 2007.

The 79-year-old BNP chief -- currently in London for treatment -- was represented by her lawyer Mohammad Ziauddin Zia at the court.

Khaleda and other accused had no malafide intention during the time of agreement between the government and Niko, a Canadian oil and gas exploration company, the judge observed in the verdict.

The case was dragged onto politically harass

Begum Khaleda Zia and the other accused. Khaleda Zia did not commit any corruption. She did not even misuse her power," the court also said.

"Two cases were filed

against former prime

ministers -- Sheikh Hasina

and Khaleda Zia -- on the

same day in December

2007. However, the case

against Sheikh Hasina was

quashed after she assumed

power in 2009, while the

case against Khaleda Zia

continued throughout

the entire Awami

League regime," said the

judgement.

"During the investigation, the former

Dhaka Club president Selim Bhuiyan, an accused in the case, gave a confessional statement before a magistrate. He was forced to make the statement..." it said.

"Selim was tortured during remand and admitted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital for treatment," the verdict mentioned.

The court observed, "His confessional statement was not voluntary; it was done to implicate Khaleda Zia and others in the case."

The seven other accused are Giasuddin Al Mamun, BNP acting chairman

Tarique Rahman's

close friend; Khondaker Shahidul Islam, former acting secretary for energy ministry; CM Yusuf Hussain, ex senior assistant secretary; Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, former principal secretary; Mir Moynul Haque, ex general manager of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (BAPEX);

Kashem Sharif, former president of Niko Resources (Bangladesh) Ltd, and Selim

Hossain and ex-BAPEX

secretary Shafiqur Rahman

were dropped from the

charges as they died.

After the acquittal order

in the Niko graft case,

Khaleda's lawyer Masud

against Khaleda and the seven.

The ACC filed the case in December 2007, accusing Khaleda and several others of abusing power to award a gas exploration and extraction deal to Niko when she was the prime minister between 2001 and 2006.

The names of former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf

Hossain and ex-BAPEX

secretary Shafiqur Rahman

were dropped from the

charges as they died.

After the acquittal order

in the Niko graft case,

Khaleda's lawyer Masud

Ahmed Talukder told reporters that they finally got justice from the court.

"The case was filed against the BNP chairperson just to harass her politically," he said.

A day after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5 last year amid a mass uprising, the president

pardoned Khaleda in cases

she had been punished

during the AL rule.

She was acquitted in five defamation cases

filed during the AL rule over derogatory remarks

about the Liberation War,

Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman, and

Hasina on September 3 last year, and relieved of the charges in the Gato graft case.

The BNP chief landed in

jail after she was sentenced

to five years in a corruption

case on February 8, 2018.

In April 2019, her health

deteriorated. She was

released from prison after

776 days on March 26,

2020, amid the Covid 19

pandemic.

The AL government

temporarily released her

with an executive order,

suspending her sentence

on the condition that she

remains at her Gulshan

home and does not leave

the country. The term of her

release had been extended

several times.

## Kuet suspends exams, classes amid protests

FROM PAGE 1

DAL activists on Tuesday.

Protesters marched across the campus and padlocked the main gates of several academic buildings as the authorities did not meet all their demands, which included action against those involved in politics and the clashes.

The atmosphere in Kuet remained tense. Law enforcers stood guard in front of the main gate. Army personnel patrolled the areas adjacent to the campus. Some students left at least 40 people injured.

Besides suspending classes and keeping the ban on student politics effective, Kuet's syndicate at a virtual meeting yesterday afternoon recommended the suspension of students involved in the clashes. It also decided that the university administration would file a case against outsiders over the violence.

other for the clashes.

Pro-BNP student organisation JCD's Kuet unit alleged that Islami Chhatra Shibir activists and anti-discrimination students using the banner of "general students" attacked its activists first before the clashes broke out on Tuesday. The violence left at least 40 people injured.

Besides suspending classes and keeping the ban on student politics effective, Kuet's syndicate at a virtual meeting yesterday afternoon recommended the suspension of students involved in the clashes. It also decided that the university administration would file a case against outsiders over the violence.

The syndicate also

decided that the university would bear all medical expenses for the injured students.

It recommended measures with guidance from Khulna divisional commissioner to ensure students' security on the campus and adjacent areas.

Hours after the clashes, the Kuet students protesting against JCD attacks made a five-point demand on Tuesday night, giving the authorities until 1:00pm yesterday to meet those.

Besides expulsion of those involved in politics on campus, they demanded legal and disciplinary action, including expulsion, against those involved in Tuesday's violence; deployment of military personnel around the campus until February 28 to ensure security; and payment of treatment costs of injured students.

They also demanded that the VC, the pro-VC, and the director of student welfare resign by acknowledging their failure to ensure students' security.

At 9:00am yesterday, they started a sit-in outside the university's medical centre, where the VC was receiving treatment. He was reportedly assaulted on Tuesday.

The protesters vowed to stay in the dormitories and boycott classes under the current administration. As their all demands were not met by the deadline, they padlocked the administrative buildings.

Asked about the demand for his resignation, VC Prof Masud evaded any specific answer, saying that four of the students' demands had been met. He also revealed the syndicate decisions and recommendations at that time.

Meanwhile, Obaidullah, former senior joint convener of Students Against Discrimination in Kuet, said that the students of the university were not taking part in the protest as members of the organisation.

[Our correspondents in Khulna, Jahangirnagar University, and Jagannath University also contributed to this report.]

### বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক পিএলসি

হেড অফিস, ঢাকা।

এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট

বিষয়: তালিকাভুক্তকরণ।

২০২৫ সালে ০১ (এক) বছর মেয়াদে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য এই ব্যাংকের হেড অফিস কর্তৃক নির্দিষ্ট ব্যবস্য নির্মাণের নির্দেশ প্রক্রিয়া প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহের নিকট হতে দরবার্থ আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

(১) অসমাবস্থ সরবরাহ, মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ; (২) যানবাহন মেরামত ও সার্ভিস; টায়ার, টিউব, বাটারী সরবরাহ; (৩) কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ, মেরামত, রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ ও পরিষেবাকরণ; (৪) ফটোকপি মেশিন, মোটর কার্ডিং মেশিন, নেট বাটিং মেশিন, পেগার হেডার মেশিন, জাল নেট সন্তোকণ মেশিন, এবং এন্টেনা স্টেশন মেশিন; (৫) শীতাতপ যন্ত্র ও রেফিজেরেটর সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; (৬) বিভিন্ন সামগ্রী মুৰগি ও সরবরাহ; (৭) টেলিমারী সামগ্রী সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; (৮) অর্থনৈতিক যন্ত্রপাতি সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; এবং (১০) বাক ক্ষেত্রের পুরুষনির্মাণ/মেরামত কাজ ইত্যাদি।

০২। এ সংক্রান্ত পিডিউল/ফরম ঘ, রাজাকুর এভিনিউ, বিভিন্ন ভবন, মুক্তিবাহী আন্দোলন ক্ষেত্রে স্টেলস-৯ এ এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নথন দিতে হবে। ইতোপূর্বে তালিকাভুক্ত হয়েছে এমন সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তালিকাভুক্তি নথনের জন্য অবেদন করতে হবে। আলোচনা তালিকাভুক্ত প্রাবল্যক প্রক্রিয়ামেন্ট বিভিন্নাংশ-২০০৮ এর আলোকে করা হবে।

০৩। এ সংক্রান্ত পিডিউল/ফরম ঘ, রাজাকুর এভিনিউ, বিভিন্ন ভবন, মুক্তিবাহী আন্দোলন ক্ষেত্রে স্টেলস-৯ এ এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নথন দিতে হবে। ইতোপূর্বে তালিকাভুক্ত হয়েছে এমন সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তালিকাভুক্তি নথনের জন্য অবেদন করতে হবে। আলোচনা তালিকাভুক্ত প্রাবল্যক প্রক্রিয়ামেন্ট বিভিন্নাংশ-২০০৮ এর আলোকে করা হবে।

০৪। এ সংক্রান্ত পিডিউল/ফরম ঘ, রাজাকুর এভিনিউ, বিভিন্ন ভবন, মুক্তিবাহী আন্দোলন ক্ষেত্রে স্টেলস-৯ এ এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নথন দিতে হবে। ইতোপূর্বে তালিকাভুক্ত হয়েছে এমন সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তালিকাভুক্তি নথনের জন্য অবেদন করতে হবে। আলোচনা তালিকাভুক্ত প্রাবল্যক প্রক্রিয়ামেন্ট বিভিন্নাংশ-২০০৮ এর আলোকে করা হবে।

০৫। এ সংক্রান্ত পিডিউল/ফরম ঘ, রাজাকুর এভিনিউ, বিভিন্ন ভবন, মুক্তিবাহী আন্দোলন ক্ষেত্রে স্টেলস-৯ এ এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নথন দিতে হবে। ইতোপূর্বে তালিকাভুক্ত হয়েছে এমন সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তালিকাভুক্তি নথনের জন্য অবেদন করতে হবে। আলোচনা তালিকাভুক্ত প্রাবল্যক প্রক্রিয়ামেন্ট বিভিন্নাংশ-২০০৮ এর আলোকে করা হবে।

০৬। এ সংক্রান্ত পিডিউল/ফরম ঘ, রাজাকুর এভিনিউ, বিভিন্ন ভবন, মুক্তিবাহী আন্দোলন ক্ষেত্রে স্টেলস-৯ এ এন্টারপ্রিসের এক ক্ষমতা সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নথন দিতে

# INTERNATIONAL

ISRAELI OPERATION IN WEST BANK

## Tens of thousands flee refugee camps

Palestinians say Israeli bulldozers demolish houses, dig up roads

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Tens of thousands of Palestinians living in refugee camps in the occupied West Bank have left their homes as a weeks-long Israeli offensive has demolished houses and torn up vital infrastructure in the heavily built up townships, Palestinian authorities said.

Israeli forces began their operation in the refugee camp in the northern West Bank city of Jenin on January 21, deploying hundreds of troops and bulldozers that demolished houses and dug up roads, driving almost all of the camp's residents out.

"We don't know what's going on in the camp but there is continuous demolition and roads being dug up," said Mohammed al-Sabbagh, head of the Jenin camp services committee. The operation, which Israel says is aimed at thwarting Iranian-backed armed groups in the West Bank, has since been extended to other camps, notably the Tulkarm refugee camp and the nearby Nur Shams camp, both of which have also been devastated.

The camps, built for descendants of Palestinian refugees who fled or were driven from their homes in the 1948 war around the creation of the state of Israel, have long been major centres for armed groups.

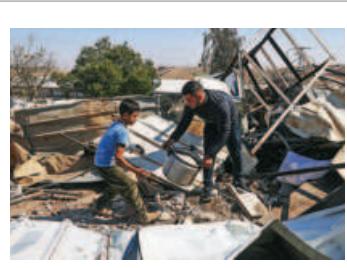
They have been raided repeatedly by the Israeli military but the current operation, which began as a ceasefire was agreed in Gaza, has been on an unusually large scale.

According to figures from the Palestinian Authority, around 17,000 people have now left Jenin refugee camp, leaving the site almost completely deserted, while in Nur Shams 6,000 people, or about two thirds of the total, have left, with another 10,000 leaving from Tulkarm camp.

"The ones who are left are trapped," said Nihad al-Shawish, head of the Nur Shams camp services committee. "The Civil Defence, the Red Crescent and the Palestinian security forces brought them some food on Monday but the army is still bulldozing and destroying the camp."

The Israeli raids have demolished dozens of houses and torn up large stretches of roadway as well as cutting off water and power, but the military has denied forcing residents to leave their homes.

"People obviously have the possibility to move or go where they want, if they will. But if they don't, they're allowed to stay," Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani told reporters.



Residents stand at the site of an apartment building and a clinic hit by a Russian drone strike in Odesa, Ukraine, yesterday. The drone attack injured four people, including a child, and caused widespread power cuts, interrupting heating supplies to about 500 apartment buildings, 13 schools, a kindergarten, and several hospitals, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'I can't sell Ukraine'

Says Zelensky on US minerals deal

REUTERS, KYIV

President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday rejected US demands for \$500 billion in mineral wealth from Ukraine to repay Washington for wartime aid, saying the United States had supplied nowhere near that sum so far and offered no specific security guarantees in the agreement.

The Ukrainian leader, who is under major pressure from Trump's White House, said Washington had supplied his country with \$67 billion in weapons and \$31.5 billion in direct budget support throughout the nearly three-year war with Russia.

"You can't call this 500 billion and ask us to return 500 billion in minerals or something else. This is not a serious conversation," Zelensky said.

Trump has said he wants \$500

billion in rare earth minerals from Kyiv to secure Washington's assistance and his team last week proposed a deal that Kyiv declined to sign in its current form.

Zelensky has said the proposed deal did not contain the security provisions Ukraine desperately needs to protect it from Russian aggression. He said the draft deal proposed the US taking ownership of 50 percent of Ukraine's critical minerals.

"I defend Ukraine, I can't sell our country. I said OK, give us some sort of positive. You write some sort of guarantees, and we will write a memorandum... some sort of percentages," he said.

"I was told: only 50 (percent). I said: OK, no. Let the lawyers work some more, they did not do all the necessary work. I am just the decision maker, I don't work on the details of this document. Let them work on it."

It had earlier said one person was wounded in the Wazzani region, elsewhere along the frontier, after Israeli forces opened fire "while residents were inspecting" restaurants and cafes in the area.

## Israeli strike kills one in south Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Lebanese official media said Israel struck a vehicle in the south yesterday, killing one person -- the first death since Israeli troops withdrew from most of the border area a day earlier.

"An enemy drone struck a vehicle... in the town of Aita al-Shaab," near the southern border, the official National News agency said, reporting one person was killed.

It had earlier said one person was wounded in the Wazzani region, elsewhere along the frontier, after Israeli forces opened fire "while residents were inspecting" restaurants and cafes in the area.

## Trump restricts AP access over Gulf of Mexico issue

REUTERS

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he will block the Associated Press from the Oval Office and Air Force One until the news agency stops referring to the Gulf of Mexico.

Trump signed an executive order in January directing the Interior Department to change the name of the body of water to the Gulf of America. The AP, citing editorial standards, said it would continue to use the gulf's established name.

The White House has kept the AP out of several press pool gatherings during the past week, calling the news agency's decision divisive and misinformation. "We're going to keep them out until such time as they agree that it's the Gulf of America," Trump told reporters at Mar-a-Lago in Florida on Tuesday evening in his first public comments on the issue.

## Focus on law and order

FROM PAGE 16

Speaking to The Daily Star anonymously, the DC from a southern district said, "The government has placed utmost importance on maintaining law and order. Most advisers, in addition to overseeing their respective ministries, have instructed us to take necessary measures to ensure improvement of law and order across the country."

A DC from Dhaka division said the government has concerns regarding conspirators linked to the ousted Awami League regime, saying they might tarnish its image in the run-up to the election. "The government emphasised ensuring stability in our respective districts."

Regarding prices of essentials, another DC said, "The government is determined to prevent illegal hoarding that could lead to price hikes. We have assured that the district administrations will give top priority to market monitoring throughout Ramadan."

One DC said the government expects district administrations to remain politically neutral, adding, "The government has a very straightforward expectation, but running a district administration is not that simple."

"In districts that are strongholds of certain political parties, we have to accommodate them while working. If a party is not in power, DCs naturally have a kind of political backup. This is a critical time for managing deputy commissioners. No matter how much the government wants neutrality, it is difficult to grasp the ground realities..."

The government also instructed strict enforcement of the "Land Crimes Prevention and Remedy Act-2024" to control land related offences.

Meanwhile, a DC from the North told The Daily Star that the government told them to boost the police morale by visiting them at the stations.

Additionally, it asked the DCs for a list of environmental polluters, while also urging them to encourage all kinds of sporting activities and promote fair polls in their respective areas.

The final day of the conference featured a session including the Cabinet Division and the public administration ministry, in which Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid, said, "Any deviation [from the instructions given] won't be tolerated. Work with courage and integrity -- there is nothing to fear. People are eagerly waiting for the election. Your conduct must not show any signs of bias."



An aerial view shows a mosque and residential buildings surrounded by flood waters after overnight heavy rain in Karak, Malaysia's Pahang state, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



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DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

## BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

## Personalistic authoritarianism and Bangladesh: Reading Ali Riaz's 'Ami E Rashtro'

Review of 'Ami E Rashtro: Bangladesh E Byaktitantrik Shirotontr' (Prothom Prokashon, 2025)

## SADMAN AHMED SIAM

Bangladesh has suffered the terrible luck of having to deal with authoritarianism several times since its inception, most recently under the Awami League from 2009 to 2024. Bangladesh is not alone, as the global trend at present seems to be sliding towards authoritarianism. These civilian-authoritarian regimes have fundamental differences with the brutal dictatorships of the past, which has forced citizens fighting for democracy to change their methods of

protest. Ali Riaz, a prominent political scientist, lays out these discussions for general readers in his short book, *Ami E Rashtro: Bangladesh E Byaktitantrik Shirotontr*.

The book has seven chapters in total, where the first four are an attempt to situate the authoritarian regimes in a global context, and the final three deal with Bangladesh specifically.

*Ami E Rashtro* begins with a brief introduction to personalistic authoritarianism, with examples such as Russia, China, and North Korea—where authoritarianism is not based

on total brute force, but rather a cult of personality. The data Riaz presents illustrates how there is now a global trend towards authoritarianism, which has reversed the democratic wave that started in the 70s and continued after the Cold War ended.

The author analyses what could have led to this reversal. Academics have identified three types of causes—economic, politico-institutional, and social. The economic reasons involve economic decline and inequality which exists between the citizens of the country. Politico-institutional

reasons refer to the weakening of institutions which are supposed to safeguard democracies, such as the judiciary, human rights, and anti-corruption organisations, etc. by political elites, and breakdown of the rule of law. Finally, the social reasons involve clashes between different ethnic or religious groups and class divisions in society.

Although these are integral to explaining the rise of authoritarianism, Riaz explains that what differentiates them from previous ones is the inclusion of another crucial element—ideology. Ideology, or a national story/myth is needed to legitimise all the shortcomings of the economy and the political system. The new authoritarians don't want to be seen as applying brute force in a military style; instead, they want to be perceived as democratic. This is why they utter phrases such as "democracy customised to local culture and heritage", which is nothing but a refusal to follow international standards.

Riaz also expands upon the process by which an authoritarian regime executes its will—democracy itself. By creating an ideological grounding, the would-be authoritarian claims to be the saviour of the nation and wins the parliament through majority votes. Then they weaken the legislature, change laws in their favour, and attack their political opponents through legal and ideological frameworks, portraying them as enemies to the nation's sovereignty. In other words, these regimes use democracy to undermine democracy.

The chief discussion of the book revolves around personalistic authoritarianism, a special variant of today's authoritarian regimes. In this form, the ideological framework posits the leader and their family as the supreme, above everything else in the nation, eventually creating a cult of personality. Another feature of personalistic authoritarianism is patrimonialism—the tendency to use state property as personal belongings. These behaviours include but aren't limited to nominating family members for the highest rank in different national organisations, acquitting them of criminal charges without proper investigation, and granting them property bypassing the law. The rule of order breaks down in this system, and the only way to ensure that a citizen can attain anything is their connection to the ruling authority. Processes become irrelevant, and institutions are made impotent.

Riaz reiterates the history of

Bangladesh and its three authoritarian regimes, including the two non-military dictatorships in 1972-1975 and 2009-2024 and the military dictatorship of 1975-1990. He explains how Bangladesh can be a case study to test academic theories on authoritarianism. Issues with the formation of the constitution in 1972 are discussed, including how it put several restrictions on fundamental human rights such as freedom of speech. These articles were later used to legislate laws to crush dissent and opposition. In addition, the constitution put too much power in the hands of the prime minister and made them virtually above the law, which certainly eased the way into building a personalistic dictatorship—where one person's command is enough to overturn everything.

These were justified with an ideology which placed Sheikh Hasina and her family as the sole leaders of the Liberation War in 1971. Critics were silenced and anyone opposed to the regime was called 'anti-Liberation War', 'traitor', and 'threats to sovereignty'. The Sheikh family practically reigned over the country, which resembles the patrimonialism described by Riaz earlier. The Sheikh family and their members took decisions in the government bypassing existing laws and processes; here, Riaz gives an example of Adani's deal with Hasina, which was made solely by Sheikh Hasina despite continuous criticism from experts.

The final chapter discusses how to get out of such a situation. Riaz outlines a few solutions, such as strengthening the institutions which are to protect the democratic structure, such as the judiciary, human rights and anti-corruption agencies, the election commission, etc. He also suggests reforming the constitution to add checks and balances so that no one person has unmatched power—be it the president or the prime minister—and a change in political culture itself by ensuring democracy inside political parties and organisations first.

The July Uprising in 2024 has given Bangladesh new hope, and this time, citizens are demanding substantial change so that Bangladesh does not find itself face to face with another dictatorship. This book is a vital resource for achieving that goal, by analysing previous mistakes and formulating new pathways.

**Sadman Ahmed Siam**, as the name suggests, is indeed a sad man. Send him happy quotes at: [siamahmed09944@gmail.com](mailto:siamahmed09944@gmail.com).

## BOI MELA 2025

## 5 books to look out for at THIS YEAR'S BOI MELA

**On the occasion of this year's Ekushey Boi Mela, book lovers have much to look forward to. From thought-provoking short stories and captivating novels to powerful poetry and engaging plays, the fair offers a diverse selection catering to all literary tastes.**

## STAR BOOKS REPORT

Whether you're searching for contemporary works by emerging writers or timeless classics from renowned authors, this list highlights must-read books that deserve your attention during your visit.

**"Bibaho"****Montazuddin Ahmed**

A poignant tale that revolves around the protagonist Sakhina's husband who is martyred in the 1952 Language Movement. Ahmed's work captures simultaneously the heartbreak and the pride of losing a loved one for the greater, collective political aspiration of a people. As Sakhina mourns the death of her beloved, her father urges her to take pride in his sacrifice—a dualism that characterises Bangladesh's struggle for independence.

***Ekushe February*****Hasan Hafizur Rahman (ed.)****Bangala Gobeshona, 2020**

Published on the first anniversary of 21st February, this short story

collection features stories, such as Shawkat Osman's "Mouno Noy", Nur Ul Alam's "Ekaler Rupkatha", Rabeya Khatun's "Prothom Bodhobhumi", Shahidullah Kaisar's "Emni Korei Gore Utbhe", among others. Set against the backdrop of the tumultuous days of February 1952, this collection offers snippets of quotidian Bangali lives as the struggle for independence and linguistic autonomy raged on.

***Mofossholio Intensity*****Syeda Nilima Dola****Oitijhya Prokashoni, 2025**

Brought to this year's Boi Mela by Oitijhya Prokashoni, in her debut poetry collection, Syeda Nilima Dola traces her evolution as a poet, capturing the raw emotions and transformative moments that have shaped her journey. Much like the title of her book, she finds the intensity of her love for life through poetry. In *Mofossholio Intensity*, she explores the experiences that shape our psyche and the intensity of emotions that moves us to find solitude in art. With an achingly beautiful tribute to all the people she loves, this book explores the theme that we are just a mosaic of everyone and everything we have ever loved.

***Hijra Shobdokosh*****Selina Hossain****Somoy Prokashon, 2019**

Selina Hossain is a widely celebrated Bangladeshi fiction writer who sheds light on society's taboos through activism in her writing. Her book, *Hijra Shobdokosh*, is another significant addition to her literary works, published in 2019 by Somoy



Prokashon. This book provides detailed information on the language, culture, and various aspects of the lives of the Hijra community. It highlights the scrutiny and misconceptions surrounding the Bangladeshi Hijra community and the generational mistreatment that they have lived through. It inspires conversation on how we can practise open-mindedness and recognise the struggle such marginalised communities face in cementing their identity in this society. Encouraging their social inclusion, it urges readers to see the Hijra community as an equal and

respected minority while emphasising the importance of accepting their existence.

***The White Book*****Han Kang, Tripti Santra (translator)****Kobi Prokashani, 2025**

Each year, innumerable Bangla translations of international bestsellers inundate the shelves at Boi Mela, making them accessible to a wider readership in Bangladesh. At this year's fair, we think Tripti Santra's translation of *The White Book* is one worth checking out. Originally written by Han Kang, a South Korean writer, *The White Book* is a

deeply personal semi-autobiographical account that immerses readers into the severity of losing a loved one and the confusion of perceiving the world in their absence. Kang first rose to international prominence for her novel *The Vegetarian*, which became the first Korean language novel to win the International Booker Prize for fiction in 2016. In 2024, she became the first Asian woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, which the Swedish Academy awarded Kang for her "intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life".



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক  
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)

প্রধান কার্যালয়

মতিবাল, ঢাকা-১০০০

বাংলাদেশ

ব্যাংকের সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

বিজ্ঞপ্তি মুদ্রণ: ১৬/২০২৫

তারিখ: ০৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৪৩১

১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৫

## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি'র সদস্যাত্মক ০২টি ব্যাংকে সমর্পিতভাবে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে 'অফিসার-কর্মসূচি ক্রেডিট (ও-আরসি)' এর ২৩০টি শূন্য পদ প্রয়োগে লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশ নাম্বারিকদের নিকট হতে Online এ দরবার্তা আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক	শিল্পোনাম	বিবরণ														
১।	পদের নাম ও শ্রেণি	'অফিসার-কর্মসূচি ক্রেডিট (ও-আরসি)', (১০ম শ্রেণি)														
২।	Job ID Number	10223 (আবেদনের ফি প্রদানের সময় নির্ধারিত হালে ব্যবহার করতে হবে)।														
৩।	পদ সংখ্যা	২৩০টি (জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি ১০০টি ও অর্থনৈতিক পিএলসি ১৩০টি)														
৪।	বেতন ক্ষেত্র	জারী বেতন ক্ষেত্র, ২০১৫ এর টাকা ১৬০০০-৩৬৪০ ক্ষেত্র এবং তৎসহ নিয়মানুসূচী প্রদেশ অন্যান্য সুবিধা।														
৫।	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	<p>ক) শীর্ষক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে যে কোনো বিষয়ে প্লাটকের ডিপি অর্থাৎ চার বছর মেজানী প্লাটক/প্লাটস (ম্যান) ডিপি থাকতে হবে।</p> <p>খ) মাধ্যমিক স্তর সার্টিফিকেট/সমাপ্তান এবং তদুপর পর্যায়ের পরীক্ষামূলকে মুন্তব্য ০১(এক) ডিপি প্রথম বিভাগ/প্রেসি থাকতে হবে। প্রেসি প্রতিক্রিয়া ফলাফলে কেবলে সরকারি নৈতিকমাল প্রযোজ্য হবে।</p> <p>গ) কোন পর্যায়েই গো বিভাগ/প্রেসি এবং ম্যান প্রযোজ্য হবে না।</p> <p>ঘ) প্রেসি প্রক্রিয়াতে প্রক্রিয়া ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০১০ ও ০২/০৩/২০১০ তারিখের প্রজ্ঞাপন নথ যাবতোর পিএলসি/১-জ্যোতি/১৫২ এবং পিএলসি/১-১/২০০৭/১৪ অনুমতি ব্যামান প্রাপ্তি জিপিএ বা ক্ষেত্রত, সিলিপিএ এবং বিপরীত পূর্বের ১ম ও ২য় বিভাগ/প্রেসি নিম্নরূপে নির্ধারিত হবে:</p> <p>(১) এস.এস.লি বা সমান এবং এইচ.এস.লি বা সমান পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে-</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>জিপিএ ৩,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক</td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>জিপিএ ২,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,০০ এর ক্ষেত্র</td> <td>প্রিভেজ বিভাগ/প্রেসি</td> </tr> </table> <p>(২) অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সিলিপিএ এর ক্ষেত্রে-</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>অর্জিত সিলিপিএ</th> <th>সমতুল্য বেলি/বিভাগ</th> </tr> <tr> <td>৪,০০ প্লেটে ক্ষেত্র</td> <td>৫,০০ প্লেটে ক্ষেত্র</td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক</td> <td>৩,৭৫ বা তান্তুর্ক</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২,২৫ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,০০ এর ক্ষেত্র</td> <td>২,৮৩ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,৭৫ এর ক্ষেত্র</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ/প্রেসি</td> </tr> </table>	জিপিএ ৩,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক	প্রথম বিভাগ	জিপিএ ২,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,০০ এর ক্ষেত্র	প্রিভেজ বিভাগ/প্রেসি	অর্জিত সিলিপিএ	সমতুল্য বেলি/বিভাগ	৪,০০ প্লেটে ক্ষেত্র	৫,০০ প্লেটে ক্ষেত্র	৩,০০ বা তান্তুর্ক	৩,৭৫ বা তান্তুর্ক	২,২৫ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,০০ এর ক্ষেত্র	২,৮৩ বা তান্তুর্ক ক্ষেত্র ৩,৭৫ এর ক্ষেত্র		প্রথম বিভাগ/প্রেসি
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৬।	বিশেষ শর্ত	নিয়োগপ্রাপ্তদের প্রত্যু কৃত ক্ষেত্র সম্পূর্ণ/জ্যোতি-২, ত এবং ৪ খারামসূচে পদায়ো করা হবে এবং সেখানে কৃত ক্ষেত্র সম্পূর্ণ যাবতীয়ের কাজ করতে হবে। তাদেরকে বাধাতাত্ত্বিকভাবে পর্যাপ্ত এলাকার অবস্থিত কৃত ক্ষেত্র সম্পূর্ণ/জ্যোতি-২, ত এবং ৪ খারামসূচে আবাদিন প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদানের প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করা হবে। এ বিষয়ে প্রবর্তীতে হাজোরীয়ের প্রদান করা হবে।														

৭। বর্ষস: ১৮/১/২০২৪ তারিখে সকল প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে সর্বনিম্ন ২১ বছর এবং সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর।

৮। আবেদনের প্রার্থীর শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ২০/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫০ টা।

৯। আবেদন, Payment Verify এবং Tracking Page সংযোগের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ২৫/০৩/২০২৫ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫০ টা।

১০। আবেদন ফি: অফেডেন্টেন্যু টা: ২০০/- (টাকা দ্বিশত মাত্র)। ফি প্রদান সংজ্ঞান ক্ষেত্রে বিতরণের জন্য ১১ (টি) প্রেসি।

(অনুমতি প্রাপ্তির প্রোত্তোভূত প্রাপ্তি অবস্থার প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করা হবে। এ বিষয়ে প্রবর্তীতে হাজোরীয়ের প্রদান করা হবে।)

১১। আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া:

ক. Online Registration : কেবল বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংজ্ঞান ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) এ নির্ধারিত হুকুমের মাধ্যমে Online এ নিবন্ধনকর্তৃত আবেদন করতে হবে। ইতোপৰ্যে নিবন্ধনকৃত প্রাপ্তি বিদ্যমান CV ব্যবহার করে আবেদন করতে প্রযোজ্য।খ. CV ID Number : বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংজ্ঞান ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) এ নির্বাচিত হুকুমের মাধ্যমে Online এ নিবন্ধন সম্পূর্ণ করলে একটি CV ID Number এবং Password প্রাপ্ত হবে। এবং প্রদান করা হবে। একজন প্রাপ্তি একেবার CV তৈরি করতে প্রযোজ্য।

গ. প্রাপ্তির বিবরণ : প্রাপ্তির নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম এবং জন্ম তারিখ অবশ্যই এসএসিসি অবস্থান মাধ্যমে Online আবেদনে নির্বাচিত হুকুমের মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

ঘ. প্রাপ্তির বর্তমান ঠিকানা : প্রাপ্তির বর্তমান বসবাসের স্থান এবং নিয়োগ সংজ্ঞান চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান ঠিকানা হিসেবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

১. প্রাপ্তির হাজী ঠিকানা : প্রাপ্তির ইতোপৰ্যে নিয়োগ সংজ্ঞান চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। বিবরিত মহিলা প্রাপ্তি তার স্বামীর হাজী ঠিকানা নির্বাচিত হুকুমের মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

২. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৩. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চি�পিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৪. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চি�পিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৫. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৬. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৭. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৮. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৯. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে।

১০. প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড : প্রাপ্তির প্রতিক্রিয়া চিপিটেড প্রেসি হতে ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান স্থান ইতোপৰ্যে ঠিকানাকে বর্তমান প্রাপ্তি প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হবে। এবং প্রেসি নথ মাধ্যমে প্রযোজ্য হালে প্রদান করতে হব

## KUET violence is deeply troubling

We must prevent the resurgence of toxic student politics

We are deeply alarmed by what happened on Tuesday on the campus of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET) and the subsequent tensions spreading across multiple universities. The violent clashes between activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the pro BNP student wing, and the Students Against Discrimination platform—leaving about 50 injured—signal a troubling return to the age-old toxic student politics that long vitiated our campuses. At a time when the nation eagerly awaits a shift in our political culture after 15 years of autocratic rule by Awami League and ongoing commitments by political parties to building a “new Bangladesh,” this development is both shocking and disheartening. It shows that, unless checked, the ghosts of the past may easily resurface and undo our hard-earned progress.

There are conflicting accounts about who initiated the violence and the identities of those involved, with JCD blaming Chhatra Shibir's influence under the banner of the student platform. But this only adds to the confusion surrounding the shifting political allegiances and narratives in the wake of the July uprising. According to our report, tensions had been brewing at KUET over JCD's campaign to lift the existing ban on student politics, leading to protest rallies by anti-discrimination activists. On Tuesday afternoon, both groups faced off, resulting in a series of clashes, chases, and counter-chases that lasted until the evening. By then, photos of men wielding large scythes and machetes, as well as injured students, went viral on Facebook. Later, Jubo Dal, BNP's youth wing, expelled Mahbubur Rahman, vice president of its Daulatpur unit in Khulna, after he was seen brandishing a sharp weapon.

By now, we know about the protests and show-downs that followed the KUET incident, including at Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, and Jagannath University. On Wednesday afternoon—after an ultimatum from KUET students demanding a complete ban on student politics, punishment for the attackers, and the resignation of top officials—the university authorities decided to prohibit all forms of political activities on campus. Students found engaging in politics will face permanent expulsion, while teachers, staff, and officials are also barred from any political involvement. A four-member committee has been formed to investigate Tuesday's violence, including the role of outsiders. All academic activities will also remain suspended until February 28.

While we welcome the prompt response by KUET authorities, it is not enough to defuse the tensions brewing within the wider community of politically minded students. The bellicose rhetoric from some student leaders is only making matters worse. If this is a preview of what lies ahead, it is deeply disturbing. This calls for a sober reflection by all parties involved, including the warring student factions. While we support the emergence of a new student-led party and acknowledge that differences of opinion are natural, all parties must ensure that their activities do not harm the interests of general students. The student politics of old has no place in post-uprising Bangladesh.

## Ensuring economic stability is paramount

Govt must rein in inflation, adopt more business-friendly policies

We are concerned about the sluggish business environment that has persisted in the country for the past several months now. According to a report, in the October-December period of 2024, most listed companies experienced a decline in profits compared to the same period in the previous year. This decline is primarily due to rising borrowing costs, high inflation, and other economic stresses. Out of 213 listed firms, 97 reported higher profits, while 116 saw a drop. While 18 of the profit-making companies recovered from previous losses, 32 of the loss-making firms reported fresh losses. During this period, GDP growth slowed, and consumer spending shrank. These factors, combined with persisting political uncertainties, have exacerbated the situation.

Reportedly, while large corporations such as Power Grid Bangladesh PLC, Square Pharmaceuticals, and DESCO are in a comparatively better position due to their diverse portfolios and vast market base, small and medium-sized businesses are still struggling to recover. Many have adopted a wait-and-see approach to business expansion due to political uncertainties and volatile law and order, while high interest rates and inflation have further increased the cost of doing business. According to Bangladesh Bank, the weighted average interest rate in the banking sector rose from 6.60 percent in October 2023 to 10.23 percent by December 2024—a 55 percent increase. And despite relatively stable foreign exchange reserves, driven by record remittance inflows and growing exports, private sector investment remains sluggish. Meanwhile, persistent high inflation has eroded people's purchasing power, and the recent increase in value-added tax (VAT) may worsen the situation. Since taking office, the interim government has introduced several initiatives to stabilise the economy. But clearly, more needs to be done to ensure macroeconomic stability. To this end, controlling inflation remains a major challenge. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the country's inflation fell to 9.94 percent in January from 10.89 percent in December, but further measures are needed ahead of Ramadan when inflation typically rises. Besides, the government must prioritise improving political stability and law and order to support business growth. Political parties also have a major role to play in this regard. They must refrain from actions and statements that could destabilise the country.

Finally, the government must engage in dialogue with the business community to address their concerns and grievances. Our economy has been going through a difficult phase for quite some time now. Only coordinated, well-thought-out measures can help it recover.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Volcano Paricutín erupts

On this day in 1943, the volcano Paricutín in Mexico's Michoacán state erupted, eventually burying two villages.

## WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

# Imperialism, war, and the fight for a just world



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Since 2009, the World Day of Social Justice has been observed on February 20 with the goal of raising awareness and promoting efforts to combat social exclusion, poverty, and unemployment. It primarily focuses on promoting global harmony among people, reducing inequality, alleviating poverty, and establishing a fair social system.

Beyond this designated day, social justice remains a significant global issue, with people in different countries expressing their aspirations for fairness in various ways. However, without questioning the power exercised by major global players, ruling classes, or imperialist forces—as well as the dominance of anti-people and anti-environmental justice groups in different countries—the concept of international social justice cannot be truly meaningful. Therefore, this question needs to be raised in our country as well as globally.

We know that the largest allocation, or the biggest single sector in terms of expenditure worldwide, is the industry dedicated to human destruction—the war industry, armaments, and surveillance. The amount of money spent on them now is nearly \$2 trillion, with 50 percent of this expenditure being made by the US alone. The spending of this money and its allocation drive activities that fuel war, violence, and repression across countries. They strengthen authoritarian regimes and are used by the most parasitic, anti-people, and anti-environment corporate powers to consolidate their dominance.

In recent history, we have seen this in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, various parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Surveillance, interventions, and the patronisation of war-mongering groups in different countries have further expanded this system. Alongside this expansion, we witness the rise of plundering elites and authoritarian, autocratic ruling classes in many countries.

This clearly indicates that our current world order is completely against international social justice. Therefore, whenever we talk about international social justice, we must question the present global (dis)order. To challenge the current global system, it is essential to establish agendas focused on public rights.

If we take Bangladesh as an example, the Liberation War was fundamentally fought to establish social justice and build a society free from inequality, exploitation, oppression, and dominance. However, in the post-war period, we have witnessed various

phases of betrayal. Over time, a class has emerged that holds highly concentrated wealth, leading to rising inequality and poverty. Instead of achieving sustainable development, we have ended up with sustainable poverty, increasing deprivation, widespread environmental destruction, and deepening ethnic, class, and religious disparities.

If we look at India, we see a similar pattern. Despite the extreme levels of poverty and inequality, a few Indians are consistently listed among the richest people globally.

However, India is also home to the highest number of the poorest people in the world, with extreme inequality and deprivation. At the same time, the militarisation of the state is evident. Similarly, in Pakistan, we see

genocide have reached unprecedented levels. Despite the killing of over 45,000 people in recent months, those responsible in Israel have not been prosecuted as war criminals. On the contrary, the US administration has welcomed, honoured, and supported them, even encouraging further aggression against Palestine.

Nevertheless, there is hope because we also see that various universities in the US have organised massive protests against Israel's actions. Many Jewish individuals, including religious leaders, have also spoken out against Israel's aggression. In many places, large-scale protests have taken place, and people across the world have demonstrated against Israel's genocide and occupation.

The solidarity emerging through these protests—against war, aggression, neo-colonialism, neo-liberal aggression, and environmental destruction—is genuine and meaningful. The public mobilisation, protests, and gatherings happening in different countries reflect a strong and significant global unity.

This solidarity presents a real possibility for human-led change in the global order. Given the current

for dominance will continue, with both forces working in tandem. The fourth possibility is a revolutionary transformation of the global order.

These four possibilities are on the horizon, and within this framework, the desire to establish social justice, equality, and an environmentally friendly economy is rising. This urge emerging within people is driven by the need to sustain human society's existence in the face of capitalist aggression and the madness of the global ruling class.

The entire planet is facing an existential crisis, primarily due to the destruction of the environment and climate change. Across the world, insecurity and health hazards are increasing, and the quality of life for people is being threatened. In this context, the environmental movement is becoming a powerful force for challenging and changing the current global order. The environmental movement, along with the anti-war movement, the anti-imperialist aggression movement, and the equality movement creates the potential for international people's power needed to establish social justice on a global scale.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Thousands of demonstrators protest in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, in London, Britain, on October 21, 2023.

continuous militarisation of the state along with poverty and inequality, with power being increasingly concentrated in the hands of the military, while a vast number of people remain deprived of their rights.

Following the election of Trump in the US, global tensions have escalated. Instead of fostering solidarity and unity among people worldwide, there is growing concern over increasing US domination and imperialist aggression in various regions. This has raised fears of a new phase of war or the emergence of a new chapter of global conflict.

Meanwhile, in Palestine, Israel's aggression, colonial occupation, and

state of the world, I see four potential possibilities emerging from this situation.

One possibility is that the world becomes increasingly fascist. In other words, the entire global system could turn into a fascist system, with the US as its leading power, and this could take on a more extreme form both globally and in various individual countries.

The second possibility is that multiple centres of power will emerge in the world, leading to competition between them, and no single dominance will prevail. The third possibility is that the struggle for change will intensify, and the fight

However, international agencies that are supposed to promote justice often end up compromising with those who create injustice, rendering both the international social justice agenda and the observance of the day itself meaningless.

To make this day meaningful and to turn social justice into a reality, it is crucial for people in all regions of the world to engage in meaningful struggles to establish social justice in their own countries. Additionally, solidarity between the struggles of people across all countries must be built to ensure social justice on a global scale, which is urgent for all of us.

## KUET CAMPUS VIOLENCE

# Are we returning to divisive student politics?



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The events that unfolded at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET) on February 18 serve as a stark reminder of the direction Bangladesh's educational institutions are heading. It should be looked at as more than just an isolated incident, but more as a preview of what the future holds if we continue down the same perilous path. The rapid resurgence of age-old toxic practices on campuses is alarming. What happened at KUET is nothing less than a betrayal of the sacrifices made during the upheaval of 2024—a time when people bled and endured lifelong suffering in pursuit of a better future. Those who wish to understand the true essence of 2024 need only revisit the videos and graffiti from that time. The message was clear: the stranglehold of partisan blindness, campus violence,

and opportunistic hypocrisy had to end.

For the last four to five decades, how many true leaders have emerged from student politics? If we examine the legacy of recent campus-based politics, the results are disheartening. Instead of nurturing responsible, visionary leaders, student politics has often devolved into factional brawls, extortion, deception, dormitory takeovers, and the exploitation of campus resources for personal gain.

The repercussions of this flawed system are evident in the country's governance today. Many of those who once indulged in student politics have moved on to become police officers, bureaucrats, teachers, and tax officials. The practices they learnt on campus—intimidation, manipulation, and corruption—are now deeply

embedded in the fabric of Bangladesh's institutions.

What kind of educational environment do we truly want for our students? What should a university campus represent? We envision a campus where students exhibit such discipline and responsibility that they, alongside a few administrative staff, can efficiently manage their residential halls. This model, followed by top universities worldwide, not only streamlines administrative functions but also nurtures future leaders.

Universities should be hubs for intellectual discourse, debate, and dialogue. Students must learn to engage with diverse perspectives, embracing inclusivity and critical thinking rather than blind allegiance to any political ideology. A politically aware student body should prioritise education-centric activism—demanding increased funding for academic research, well-stocked libraries, nutritious food in canteens, and better living conditions in dormitories. These are the real concerns that affect students' lives and futures. When injustice occurs anywhere in the country, students should rise above political affiliations and speak out. Corruption and oppression know no political colour,

and neither should the voices of the youth.

If student politics continues to promote division rather than unity, how can these same students later contribute to building an inclusive society? The primary duty of students is to pursue education and research. Beyond that, they should engage in social service, sports, and cultural activities. But under no circumstances should they allow themselves to be used as pawns in partisan power struggles—especially not during their formative years.

For a while now, politicians have been uttering nice words—words designed to erase the memory of 2024, like an eraser slowly wiping away hard-fought progress. Now, every political party seems eager to erase the lessons of that transformational year, rushing to restore the very system that so many fought to change.

If we do not act now, if we do not demand accountability and resist the return to divisive politics, our universities will continue to be breeding grounds for corruption and chaos rather than institutions of innovation and learning. The events at KUET are a warning—one we ignore at our own peril.

# Why the outrage over pads but not violence against women?



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NOORA SHAMSI BAHAR

Let us try to not get into the specifics of whether sanitary napkins were being sold or distributed at the country's largest annual book fair—the Ekushey Boi Mela. Let's not even point fingers at the event management company or the Bangla Academy for allowing, and later, stopping the stalls to do so. The unsettling fact that surpassed these issues is that a group of men had a problem with the public display of such "private" product—sanitary napkins.

In this context, I couldn't help but look back at a chapter titled "The Curse" from a superhero series named *Swamp Thing*, published by DC Comics. In this chapter, we are presented with a white female protagonist named Phoebe who is haunted by the spirits of menstruating women from the fictitious Native American "Pennamaquot" tribe. Those women were ostracised and quarantined in "the red lodge" that once stood in the plot of land, now occupied by Phoebe and her husband, Roy.

Phoebe's rage is fuelled by the condescending way her misogynistic husband—an epitome of toxic or hyper masculinity, treats her. Phoebe is also infuriated by the stifling patriarchy that is

too ingrained in the system and sometimes propagated by women themselves—women who have internalised patriarchy. For example, at the supermarket, Phoebe buys a large box of sanitary napkins that the checkout lady hides in a brown bag "as if to protect other groceries." This evidences the latter's role in the patriarchal tool of making menstruation and menstruation products taboo.

Needless to say, this is also the norm in pharmacies and shops or supermarkets that sell sanitary napkins in Bangladesh. The need to hide the period product from the male gaze is similar to hiding Pennamaquot menstruating women from the rest of the tribe, which in turn, is similar to the demands of the group of men, who want to keep the sanitary napkins out of sight at the book fair. Menstruation, at the end of the day, in both so-called "civilised" and "uncivilised" societies, in the past and at present, is seen as something to be ashamed of because it is associated with undesirability and grossness.

Why should one be so vehemently against period products being openly displayed, when these very products ensure the physical and mental wellness of women while their uterus

sheds its lining during every menstrual cycle—a completely natural bodily function? Many girls and women in Bangladesh do not have access to period products due to financial constraints and lack of awareness and resort to using rags and unhygienic products that may lead to discomfort, skin issues, various kinds of infections, diseases, cervical cancer, absenteeism at school or workplace, low self-esteem, and overall, poor quality of life.

fallacy, which compares two situations—past generations who did not use sanitary napkins and current generations who are encouraged to do so, as if they are the same, ignoring critical differences such as advancements in hygiene, healthcare, and changes in lifestyle. Just because women in the past managed without sanitary products does not mean it was ideal or healthy. It's like saying, my grandfather smoked his entire life and lived

which assumes that because something was done a certain way in the past, it should be continued in the same way. It suggests that traditional practices are inherently better without considering improvements or the problems that those practices used to cause. It's like saying, we have always used home remedies for illnesses in our family, so there's no need for modern medicine, which assumes a tradition or practice is better or correct simply because it has been done for a long time, while disregarding advancements in medical science that could offer effective treatments.

It is men who stood in unison to put an end to the public display of sanitary napkins, yet they remain conspicuously absent from efforts to combat violent crimes against women. Where do men gather to voice their protestations when children, disabled, and elderly women are violently abused, raped and murdered? When there's hardly any hue and cry as far as gender-based violence is concerned, there is a terrorising frat party or congregation of conservative men who are uncompromisingly opposed to the idea of ensuring that women at a book fair can get easy access to sanitary napkins if they happen to bleed there. Do they expect us, women, to dislodge our private parts and leave them under lock and key, in a sealed safe, buried six feet under, in some impenetrable forest, when we go out?

What if this same energy that was exhibited by sanitary-napkin-hating men was channelled into advocating for women's safety, dignity, and access to essential products? How different could our society be if those voices rallied for progress instead of suppression?



VISUAL: SIFAT AFRIN SHAMS

Some men have even gone on to claim that women in past generations never used sanitary napkins and they were healthy women, so what is the need for such a product now? This argument falls under two types of logical fallacies. First, the false equivalence

up to the ripe old age of 90, so smoking can't be that bad for your health—a comparison that uses an anecdote ignoring scientific evidence that links smoking to cancer, heart disease and early mortality.

Second, the appeal to tradition fallacy,

## Bangladesh's bureaucracy needs reinvention



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HABIB ZAFARULLAH

Despite nearing almost six decades of independence, Bangladesh's administrative system remains stuck in the past, a relic of British colonial rule. Originally designed to serve foreign rulers, this bureaucracy now appears more interested in protecting its own privileges than advancing the nation. Outdated methods of handling paperwork and communication create unnecessary obstacles, slowing decisions and holding back progress.

One glaring example of delay is the "noting system," where files must pass through multiple hands for comments and approvals before any action is taken. This confusing process loses time and money that could be used for better purposes, such as building schools, hospitals, and other infrastructures. Even now, high-ranking officials often behave like kings, expecting their staff and the public to show them the same respect people did in colonial times. This old way of thinking focuses more on strict rules than on getting things done and values appearance over helping others.

Despite numerous reform attempts, the core structure of the civil service has barely changed. The Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), which evolved into Bangladesh's administration cadre, retained its elite status and privileged position. This has created a bureaucratic class that sees itself as the guardian of the state rather than as public servants. As a result, they resist meaningful reforms that could challenge their authority and disrupt their control over government operations.

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This rigid system affects every aspect of the country's development. Simple tasks, like getting a business permit or accessing land records, become complicated, time-consuming, and prone to corruption. Resistance to

growth challenges is obvious. Although the country has improved in many ways, slow and complicated government processes are holding back economic growth, social progress, and public services.

What makes this situation even more frustrating is how stubbornly the system resists change. Experts point to an "iron triangle"—a powerful alliance between politicians, bureaucrats, and business elites—who benefit from the current system and work together to block meaningful reforms that could improve governance.

The colonial influence on Bangladesh's bureaucracy is still evident in many ways.

look like.

For Bangladesh to progress, it is important to make a strong effort to improve the public service. The government should focus on hiring and promoting people based on their skills and qualifications to make sure the best individuals lead. Technology should be fully applied in governance to make operations smoother, increase speed, and lower crime rates. We need better ways for citizens to give feedback so that government leaders are held accountable and serve the people accordingly.

The cost of maintaining the current system is becoming unsustainable. In a world where nations compete



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

change has also slowed the adoption of digital governance. Instead of using technology to improve services, many bureaucrats view it as a threat to their power. While other Asian countries have successfully implemented e-governance, Bangladesh struggles with endless delays and bureaucratic roadblocks. Digital systems would make processes more transparent, potentially reducing corruption—something many officials are unwilling to risk.

Another problem is that the promotion system is old-fashioned and tends to prefer generalists instead of specialists. As a result, leadership roles often go to people who lack the needed technical skills, leading to the creation of useless policies and bad execution. This stops the country from having the skilled leaders needed to deal with today's problems.

The connection between this ineffective system and Bangladesh's

District commissioners, for example, still live in grand colonial-era residences and follow traditions that appear outdated in a modern democracy. But this isn't just about appearances—it reflects a deeper issue. The system continues to treat citizens as subjects to be controlled rather than as active participants in governance. This concentration of power in the hands of a few makes it harder for ordinary people to influence decisions that affect their lives.

However, there are signs of hope. A new group of civil servants, trained in modern management and aware of the best practices from around the world, is advocating for change from within the system. Young leaders in local areas are changing how things are done by focusing on serving the community instead of trying to rule them. Their method questions long-standing rules and shows what a better system might

base on innovation and adaptability; Bangladesh's bureaucratic inefficiencies threaten to undermine its economic growth and development goals.

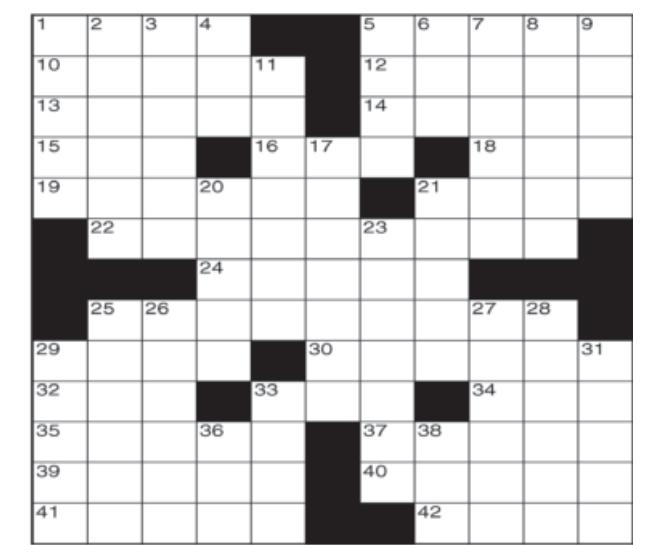
Bangladesh's bureaucracy doesn't just need reform—it needs reinvention. A system designed to serve colonial masters must be transformed into one that meets the aspirations of its citizens for a modern, efficient, and responsive government.

The real tragedy of Bangladesh's bureaucratic maze isn't just the wasted time and resources—it's the dreams delayed, and opportunities lost. But with growing public demand for change and reform-minded officials gaining influence, there is hope. The question is no longer whether change will come, but whether it will happen soon enough to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For millions of Bangladeshis that change can't come soon enough.

## CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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



Bangladesh take on India in their Champions Trophy opener in Dubai today. Scan the QR code to watch a podcast on how the match could unfold.

India have a significant advantage over Bangladesh in head-to-head contests in ODIs, with the Men in Blue boasting 32 wins in 41 meetings in contrast to the Tigers' eight. One meeting between the sides ended in a No Result.

Bangladesh, however, hold the upper hand in their last five meetings with India, winning three, including a victory in the 2023 Asia Cup, compared to India's two.

At the Dubai International Cricket Stadium – the venue for the contest – the two sides met twice, both in the 2018 Asia Cup. India won both encounters, including the final.

Virat Kohli has the most runs in India-Bangladesh contests, amassing 910 runs in 16 matches at an average of 57.58 and a strike-rate of 101.78. The maestro boasts five hundreds and three half-centuries against the Tigers. India skipper Rohit Sharma seconds that list with 786 runs in 17 matches. All his three centuries against the Tigers have come in ICC events (2015 World Cup, 2017 Champions Trophy, and the 2019 World Cup).

Amongst active Bangladesh players, Mushfiqur Rahim has the most runs against India, scoring 703 runs in 26 matches at an average of 31.95. He has also played the most India-Bangladesh matches amongst players from both sides.

With the ball, Mustafizur Rahman has the most wickets in India-Bangladesh contests amongst active players – 25 scalps in 12 matches.

## Kohli excited for CT campaign

AGENCIES

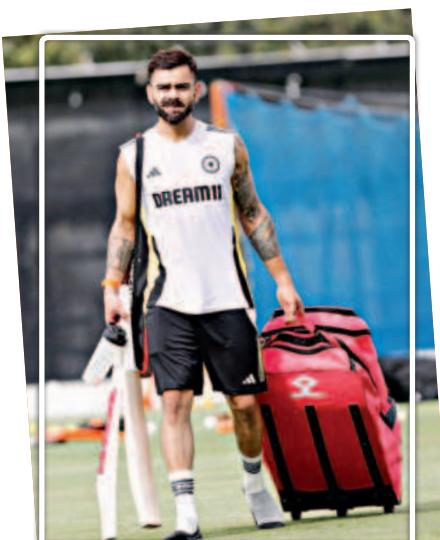
India superstar Virat Kohli said he has always liked the ICC Champions Trophy because of the urgency teams have to start the tournament on a high in order to qualify for the next round.

"The tournament is happening after a long time. I have always liked this tournament. It represents consistency as you have to be in the top 8 of the rankings (to qualify). The level of competition is always good," Kohli said yesterday.

"In ODI format, it creates the pressure of a T20 World Cup. There also you have three or four games in the league stage. If you don't start well, you are under pressure. The pressure is from the first game itself and that is why I like it, you have to be at your best from game one."

Kohli has played three editions of the tournament (2009, 2013, 2017) and is set to start his fourth when India take on Bangladesh at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium today. He won the 2013 edition and will be aiming to have a tournament to remember, especially because of the speculations over his retirement.

The 36-year-old has been mired in long lean patches in Tests and have already retired from T20 cricket



following last year's World Cup triumph.

In his last 22 Test knocks since the start of January 2024, Kohli has managed to hit just a solitary ton and a single fifty. In the five ODIs he has played since the 2023 World Cup, he has managed to score one half-century. Despite intense conjecture about his future, India head coach Gautam Gambhir said the stalwart will have a "massive role" to play at the Champions Trophy.

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's largest city was abuzz with anticipation and apprehension Wednesday as the hosts played the opening match of the nation's first major international cricket tournament in three decades.

The eight-team Champions Trophy launched in the southern city of Karachi with the home side facing New Zealand at a sell-out 29,300 National Bank Stadium.

Pakistan, a cricket-mad nation where the sport is played on almost every street corner, are the defending champions.

"Pakistan are unpredictable, they can surprise anytime," said 24-year-old Kashif Khan, queuing in the morning with his 5,000 rupee (\$18) ticket.

Long lines snaked outside the stadium four hours before the match, with a smattering of New Zealand fans outnumbered by hordes of chanting and flag-waving Pakistanis.

The Champions Trophy will take place in three cities in Pakistan, while India will play their fixtures in Dubai after refusing to visit its neighbouring archrival.

Among Karachi's population of more than 20 million, fans were adamant India would have been welcomed.

"If India were here I would arrange a trail of rose petals leading them to the stadium," Khan said. "We love



the Indian team in the same way that we love the Pakistani team – because it's all about cricket."

Pakistan last held a major international tournament as World Cup co-hosts with India and Sri Lanka in 1996.

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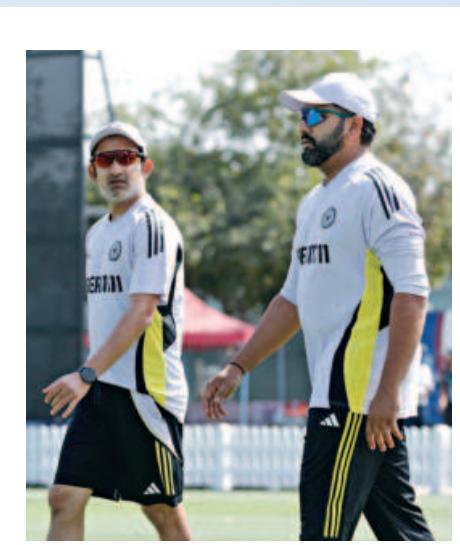
More than 6,000 police officers and paramilitary Rangers were deployed around the stadium -- in addition to 1,000 traffic police -- senior police official Muhammad Anwar Khetran told AFP.

The officer overseeing security at the front gate said fans went through three checks -- on roads leading to the stadium, at the stand entrance, and at each enclosure.

Although militancy is still a threat in Pakistan, the violence is nearly entirely limited to the remote border regions from north to south, far away from the stadiums in Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi.

Cricket is deeply entwined in Pakistan's sense of pride and the return of a big tournament promises to boost the national mood.

"We want to show the world that Pakistan is safe," said 53-year-old Asif Majeed, a third generation Pakistani migrant who travelled from his home in Britain to watch the match. "Win or lose, this event will do wonders for Pakistan's image globally."



The Champions Trophy is set to be Nahid Rana's first major ICC event but the 22-year-old quick, known to reach 150kph at times, is already being considered as one of the most crucial elements to Bangladesh's plans in the tournament. The Tigers will take on title contenders India, led by skipper Rohit Sharma and head coach Gautam Gambhir, in their first game of the competition in Dubai today, and hopes will be pinned on Rana to come through for the Tigers.

PHOTO: ICC

## New Zealand spoil historic day for Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

New Zealand rode on brilliant hundreds from Tom Latham and Will Young to beat Pakistan by 60 runs in the Champions Trophy opener on Wednesday, spoiling the country's historic return to hosting global events after three decades.

President Asif Zardari joined thousands of fans at the National Stadium in Karachi as Pakistan hosted its first International Cricket Council event since 1996.

But a poor performance from the home team left a packed 29,300 crowd disappointed as Pakistan were dismissed for 260 in 42 overs in reply to New Zealand's 320-5 in 50 overs.

Pakistan were never in the chase even after a late flourish from Khushdil Shah, who top scored with a fiery 49-ball 69 including 10 boundaries and a six. Babar Azam scored a more sedate 64 from 90 balls that had a six and six boundaries.

"We tried, but they played very smartly and that's why they got to that total. The pitch was not easy to bat early on, but Will Young and Latham's innings were crucial," said Pakistan skipper Mohammad Rizwan after the game.

Pacer Will O'Rourke finished with 3-47 while skipper Mitchell Santner took 3-66 for as New Zealand.

For all the hype and expectation before the game surrounding Pakistan, it was New Zealand who made the better start as Young and Latham clocked the first centuries of the tournament.

Sent in to bat, opener Young responded with



107 from 113 balls while Latham smashed an unbeaten 104-ball 118 on a flat National Stadium pitch.

Young and Latham revived the innings from 73-3 with a 118-run fourth wicket stand.

"The way Young and Latham rotated the strike and got the odd boundary really set us up. We were thinking 260-280, but it shows what you can do if you have a platform and wickets in hand," New Zealand skipper Santner also credited the Latham-Young duo, like Rizwan.

Young hit 12 boundaries and a six in his fourth ODI century before holing out to Naseem Shah in the 38th over.

Latham and Glenn Phillips, who made an aggressive 39-ball 61, gave the innings more impetus as New Zealand smashed 113 in the last 10 overs and 64 in the last five.

Latham hit 10 boundaries and three sixes in his eighth one-day hundred while Phillips' robust knock had four sixes and three boundaries.

Fast bowler Naseem Shah was the best Pakistan bowler with 2-63.

The defeat leaves Pakistan in a difficult position in Group A as they face archrivals India in Dubai on Sunday and Bangladesh in Rawalpindi on February 27.

## Chance for Rana to live up to the hype

SPORTS REPORTER from Dubai

Bangladesh are going into their Champions Trophy opener against India in Dubai today hoping that their fastest bowler Nahid Rana, who is set to make his first appearance in an ICC event, unleashes his full fury.

The Tigers are without ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and in the stalwart's absence, it is Rana who is garnering all the attention. Even during Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto's pre-match press conference yesterday, questions from the Indian media contingent also centered around Rana's raw pace.

Shanto was optimistic about the vibe Rana creates in the Tigers' dressing room. If the Tigers are to make headway into the tournament and upset the bigger sides, they would need Rana to be at the top of his game.

"I think in the last few matches, he bowled really well and bowled fast, as you mentioned. When we see bowling like this, it helps our whole bowling unit. And it's motivated us to think about how we can challenge our opponents."

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said about Nahid Rana.

dent in India's batting lineup when he gets the chance.

It might be hard to believe that only three matches into his ODI career, Rana is creating such a buzz in a major tournament. But with 20 Test wickets to his name in six matches, Rana has turned heads fast, clocking 152 kph in Rawalpindi during his last foray in Pakistan, the hosts of the Champions Trophy. His fifer in the West Indies recently helped the Tigers to a first historic Test win since 2009.

Playing this Champions Trophy against the biggest opponents in white-ball cricket

certainly would charge up the speedster.

"The opportunity to play against the best cricketers in the world is the highest form of inspiration," Rana said in an interview with ICC.

He also argued that his time playing first-class cricket has gotten him ready for the challenges ahead.

"I am enjoying every moment of international cricket. Things have happened very fast but I'm grateful for everything. It is never easy to adapt to international cricket but I was lucky in the sense that I got to play a good number of first-class matches before my debut."

"I feel that is the best thing that could have happened as you get exposed to all sorts of different situations and conditions. But international cricket is totally on a different level," Rana added.

Rana is adamant about maintaining discipline, which would be key in the batting-friendly surfaces in the tournament.

"The team expected me to bowl fast and used me as an attacking option. I tried to repay the faith by sticking to my strengths and staying humble."

"I would rather concentrate on getting into the right rhythm and my release. But then again, when you see or hear that the pace is around 150 kph, that's a nice feeling," he said.

Rana appears to know exactly what the Tigers expect from him and it is time for him to live up to the hype that has been built surrounding him.

## Pakistan hails Champions Trophy as homecoming of cricket

AFP, Karachi

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## Bosschaart hails Feyenoord character after dumping out Milan

REUTERS

Feyenoord interim boss Pascal Bosschaart was full of praise for his team's character, after recent upheaval at the club, when they came back from conceding an early goal to draw at AC Milan on Tuesday and reach the Champions League last 16.

The Dutch club's preparations for last week's first leg were far from ideal when Feyenoord sacked Brian Priske two days before the playoff game, but Bosschaart led them to a 1-0 win at home and they finished off the job at the San Siro.

"This says about the team that they have character. I think that's what I'm most proud of," Bosschaart told Ziggo Sport. "You have to remember that they come from a very difficult phase, have received a lot of criticism, a change of coach, and then an unknown person comes in front of the group who occasionally throws in some empty slogans."

"That is a very difficult phase for them but I do think we are very clear, very transparent and very honest and this group responds very well to it, so I am proud of it."

Bosschaart's side could not have had a worse start in Milan, when former player Santiago Gimenez put the hosts ahead in the opening minute, but they fought back in the



PHOTO: REUTERS



second half, after Milan had Theo Hernandez sent off.

"If you concede a goal within minutes, the plan you wanted to execute will be different again," Bosschaart said. "Everyone will now say that we took the upper hand after the red card but I also thought in the first half that we played quite well. Only after the red card it might be a little easier."

Feyenoord could return to the San Siro in the next round, where they will face either Inter Milan or Arsenal, but for now Bosschaart needs to let their achievement sink in.

"It's beautiful. We are one round further, so very special," Bosschaart said. "It's fantastic but I have to say, it hasn't really landed with me yet."

## Bayern cement last 16 spot after Davies' last-gasp equaliser

Bayern Munich secured their place in the last 16 of the Champions League with a 94th minute strike by Alphonso Davies on Tuesday to secure a 1-1 draw on the night and a 3-2 aggregate win. Celtic had led 1-0 since the 63rd minute, courtesy of former Bayern reserve player Nicolas Kuehn's strike, and the Scottish side had been on the verge of taking the German giants to extra time and pulling off their first-ever win in Germany but Davies stepped up as Bayern's saviour, tapping in after Celtic keeper Kasper Schmeichel had kept out Leon Goretzka's header. They will next face either fellow Bundesliga side Bayer Leverkusen or Atletico Madrid depending on Friday's draw.

Bayern Munich have reached the Champions League round of 16 in each of the last 17 seasons (since and including 2008-09) and in each of their last 21 appearances in the competition.

Alphonso Davies' equaliser (93:12) was Bayern Munich's latest equalising goal in a Champions League game (excluding extra time) on record (since 2003-04).

## Gymnast Menton chasing bold Olympic dream

**Menton Tony Mro** began his gymnastics journey in 2013 as a Grade-1 student at Bandarban's Quantum Cosmo School. Over the years, he has participated in numerous national age-group, youth, and senior-level gymnastics championships, earning nearly 50 medals, including gold medals in the pommel horse and all-around events at the 2019 Singapore Open. After clinching three golds and one silver at the 37th National Gymnastics Championships, which concluded on Tuesday at the NSC Gymnasium, he spoke to **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** about his journey, as well as his personal and collective aspirations for Bangladesh gymnastics. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** You returned home empty-handed in your debut appearance in the 2021 Bangladesh Games, but you stunned all by winning two golds and one silver in your second appearance at the senior level. How did you transform yourself?

**Menton Tony Mro (MTM):** During the Covid outbreak, we received uninterrupted training at the Quantum Cosmo School before joining the national training camp in 2022 under Korean coach Cho Sung Dong until June 2024. I never gave up because I dream of becoming a world-class gymnast in the pommel horse event... To be honest, I got more than I expected from the championships.

**DS:** How much are gymnasts benefiting from the National Gymnastics Championships, held after a four-year gap?

**MTM:** If the national championships are held every year, the number of gymnasts and teams will increase, and the gymnasts will also be able to evaluate themselves in competitions.

**DS:** Quantum Cosmo School dominates all gymnastic competitions. What is the secret behind its success?

**MTM:** The gymnasts of Quantum School rise early every morning to meditate before starting a 4 kilometre run. Then, they do two hours of training before going to school to study. In the afternoon, there is another three-and-a-half-hour training session before doing

homework for school at night.

**DS:** What facilities does the school provide for the gymnasts?

**MTM:** Initially, there were almost no facilities in 2013 because every apparatus was either broken or old. There was not even a proper floor facility, but compared to 2013, the facilities at Quantum School are now more or less good.



**DS:** Korean coach Cho Sung Dong left the country in June last year. Do you feel his absence in the national training camp?

**MTM:** Under his guidance, we trained for eight hours a day -- two sessions per day -- with proper food provided by the federation. But now, the federation can't provide proper food, so the training hours have been reduced to five. We are trying

to improve ourselves, but we can't reach the same level as we did under the Korean coach.

**DS:** How do you see the Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation's target to qualify directly for the 2028 Olympic Games, especially without a foreign coach?

**MTM:** We still believe in qualifying directly for the 2028 Olympic Games. We are not giving up our hopes despite the departure of the Korean coach. We don't want to dwell on what we have lost; rather, we want to progress with whatever we have in our hands.

**DS:** What is your personal target?

**MTM:** As a Quantum gymnast, I am still motivated by the dream of winning an Olympic gold medal. We are improving ourselves gradually. However, I want to be the first Bangladeshi gymnast to qualify directly for the Olympic Games on merit. I am confident that one day, I will enter the Olympics by proving my performance.

**DS:** The 2028 Olympics are still far away. Do you think the appointment of a foreign coach and proper facilities can help Bangladeshi gymnasts qualify?

**MTM:** Firstly, an athlete needs mental and physical stability, and secondly, motivation. Without proper facilities and a good coach, you can't achieve the target. Nevertheless, the appointment of a foreign coach and improved facilities will help gymnasts realise their dream.

## What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND NAGORIK TV  
Champions Trophy  
Bangladesh vs India  
Live from 3:00 pm  
SONY SPORTS 2  
Europa League

Roma vs Porto  
Live from 11:45 pm  
Anderlecht vs Fenerbahce  
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)  
SONY SPORTS 1  
Ajax vs Union Saint-Gilloise  
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

## WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE Sandiha bags six, Sheltech stun Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheltech Cricket Club stirred things up in the opening day's fixtures of the Dhaka Women's Premier League with a 53-run win over defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

However, Gulshan Youth Club's off-spinner Sandiha Islam Asha was the highlight of the day for her six-wicket haul against Khelaghbar Samaj Kallyan Samity at ULAB Cricket Ground.

Although skipper Nigar Sultana Joty fell for naught, Sheltech posted 249 for nine, courtesy of opener Ishma Tanjim's 68 and No. 3 Sumaiya Akter's 83. The duo put on a 79-run stand to create the platform for a big score before Ishma departed. Sumaiya hit seven fours and two sixes during a 101-ball 83 before falling to Fariba Trishna, who finished with three for 54.

Fahima Khatun's run-a-ball 28 saw Sheltech reach a commanding score and while Sharmin Supta hit 73 for Mohammedan, the defending champions were bundled out for 196 as Fahima bagged three for 33.

At ULAB, Sandiha only came to bowl as the sixth bowler and completed a six-for inside six overs, conceding just nine runs to help Gulshan bundle out Khelaghbar for 64 in 28.4 overs. In reply, Gulshan cruised to a seven-wicket win in 17 overs.

Abahani, meanwhile, won against Bangladesh Police at BKSP Ground 1 by four wickets, courtesy of a solid bowling effort. Apart from Rochona Tripty's 28 and Aporna Dey's 22, none of the others reached double figures as Bangladesh Police were bundled out for 98. Reya Akter Shikha bagged three for 13 while Rupa Roy and Fatema Jahan scalped two wickets each for Abahani.

Abahani were in a bit of trouble after early wickets but opener Farzana Haque Pinky guided them through the chase with an unbeaten 72-ball 55 to seize a four-wicket win.



**SUZUKI**  
INTRODUCING  
**250 SF**  
GIXXER SF

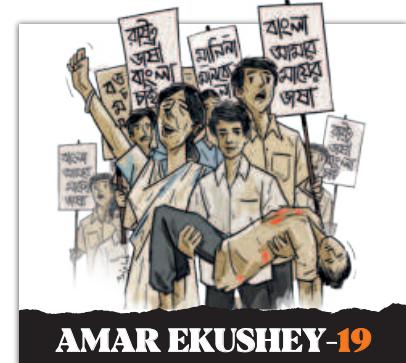
A person wearing a helmet and leather gear is riding the blue Suzuki GSX-R 250 SF motorcycle on a blurred track background.

**motoGP TECHNOLOGY**  
16638

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**AMAR EKUSHEY 19**

This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

**Feb 21 gets its first poem in port city**

AHMAD ISTIAK

"Ekhan jara praan diyechehe Ramna'r urdhomukhi krishnachurar toly, jekhane aguner phulkir moto ekhane shekhane jolchhe oshongkho rokter chhaap

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Last-minute preparations for Amar Ekushey underway at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, with Dhaka University fine arts students painting motifs on the altar. For the motifs this year, the DU Faculty of Fine Arts has chosen red symbolising revolution, white representing fairness and black, the colour of mourning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**NEW PARTY BY UPRISING ACTIVISTS****Launch likely on Feb 26**

Announcement may come from rally on Manik Mia Avenue

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Student leaders who spearheaded the July uprising are gearing up to announce their political party with February 26 in mind as the possible date.

They are considering the formal announcement at a rally on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital.

In the first meeting of the preparatory committee held last night, key leaders asked the committee members to prepare themselves with February 26 in mind, four meeting participants told The Daily Star.

The preparatory committee, comprising members of the civic and student platforms, Jatiya Nagorik Committee, and Students against Discrimination, sat at the Nagorik Committee's office at the capital's Banglamotor.

The meeting, which continued till 10:30pm from around 4:00pm, discussed holding a rally and gave responsibilities to individuals for mobilising the people.

It also formed three subcommittees on cultural, medical, and media affairs to oversee different aspects of the announcement ceremony.

Another subcommittee was also constituted to analyse and evaluate the opinions of people collected in the recently launched campaign regarding the new political party.

According to a meeting insider, the new party will be declared at the rally, but its charter may not be revealed.

The discussion on the formation of a new political party, helmed by those who spearheaded the July uprising, came to the fore in September last year.

Adviser Nahid Islam is almost certain to be the convener of the new party while discord has surfaced over

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

**BGB, BSF TALKS**  
Killings at border can't be justified  
Bangladesh tells India, discusses fencing

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
New Delhi

On the second day of the biannual BGB-BSF talks yesterday, Bangladesh reiterated the urgent need to ensure that no border killings take place.

The 55th meeting between the director generals of India's Border Security Force and the Border Guard Bangladesh in Delhi was the first since the fall of the Hasina-led regime.

According to meeting sources, Bangladesh argued that while Dhaka has no objection to trying border transgressors under existing laws, the killings cannot be justified.

"This is a sensitive issue for Bangladesh," the visiting delegation said at the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Indian delegation stated that implementing the coordinated border management plan is necessary to stop organised crime at the border,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

**Bangladeshi climate migrants end up in modern slavery**

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA

For thousands of Bangladeshis fleeing climate disasters, migration offers a desperate escape but at a grievous cost.

According to a survey by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), almost every person who has migrated abroad from Bangladesh's climate-vulnerable regions has suffered at least one form of modern slavery while working.

The IIED study, "Exposed and Exploited: Climate Change, Migration and Modern Slavery in Bangladesh," published yesterday, states that modern slavery takes many forms.

Those surveyed reported experiencing wage withholding, restricted movement, abusive conditions, threats, intimidation, and even physical violence.

The study surveyed 648 households across 33 villages in 19 unions -- 10 in Pirojpur's Mathbaria and nine in Sylhet's Gowainghat -- selected for their high climate vulnerability. Of these, 70.06 percent were migrant households (internal and international), while 29.94 percent were non-migrant.

➤ 99pc intl migrants report at least one form of modern slavery, 81pc face over five

➤ Climate disasters have doubled in six decades

➤ 88pc families sent relatives abroad, mostly to harsh working conditions in the Gulf

➤ Homes facing higher climate risks are 214pc more likely to send migrants abroad

The survey was conducted in 2023 and 2024 by IIED and Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), with funding from the UK Home Office's Modern Slavery Innovation Fund.

The report states, "Among internal migrants, 92 percent experience at least one form of modern slavery, with more than 52 percent enduring more than three forms. For international migrants, the prevalence of modern slavery is even more alarming, with 99 percent reporting at least one form and 81 percent experiencing more than five forms."

The crisis is rooted in climate change, it adds.

Over the past six decades, climate-related disasters in Bangladesh have nearly doubled, rising from four per year before 1990 to seven per year after. Cyclones, river erosion, and saltwater intrusion have destroyed crops, drowned livestock, and wiped out savings, leaving several families with no choice but to move, the report states.

"In some of the hardest-hit areas, like Pirojpur and Sylhet, 99 percent of residents report rising temperatures, while 90 percent say river erosion has worsened."

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

**More foreign financing to fuel this FY's budget****Revised budget to slash bank borrowing**

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has planned to increase foreign financing by around 15 percent and reduce bank borrowing by 28 percent in the revised budget for this fiscal year to tame inflation.

In the revised budget, the bank borrowing target has been brought down by 28 percent to Tk 99,000 crore, while the foreign financing target has been bumped up by 15 percent to Tk 109,000 crore, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

"If the government can materialise the plan, then it will be good -- the available statistics that we saw so far shows that borrowings from banks increased significantly," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

If the government wants to implement its plan, it must reduce its bank borrowings significantly in the coming months, he said.

In the first five months of the fiscal year, the government borrowed Tk 25,138 crore from the banking system, according to central bank statistics. A year earlier, it stood at Tk 3,188 crore.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

**New Zealand batter Tom Latham raises his bat after reaching his century against Pakistan in the opening match of the ICC Champions Trophy at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday. Latham's unbeaten 104-ball 118, complemented by opener Will Young's 107 and an unbeaten 61 from Glenn Phillips, helped the Black Caps post a challenging total of 320 for five. Defending champions Pakistan, however, were bundled out for 260 in 47.2 overs as they lost the contest by 60 runs.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

**Tigers look to remain 'calm' in India contest**

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN FROM DUBAI

Bangladesh will be looking to remain calm on the field and execute their plans well to get off to a winning start in the ICC Champions Trophy when they square off against India in the opening Group A fixture at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium today.

Despite not having had an ideal preparation for the tournament with a loss against Pakistan Shaheens in the only warm-up game and having last played a 50-over game two months ago in the Caribbean, the Tigers will be hoping to get into the groove of the format quickly in a bid to upset favourites India, who have featured in four out of the eight finals in the tournament's history.

However, Bangladesh's quest of beating India in a major ICC event for the first time since 2007 would be a tall ask, especially given the opposition's 3-0 home series win against England recently.

"Of course, there is a lot of

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