

EC TALKS BNP wants ROs from commission, not the admin

Jamaat questions reshuffles in police,
admin; NCP says candidates must not
use alliance partner's symbols

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

Major political parties yesterday urged the Election Commission to assert its constitutional authority, remain free of government influence, and clarify the electoral code of conduct.

The appeal came during the EC's ongoing dialogue with political parties at its Agargaon office ahead of the national election planned for early February.

The BNP pressed for greater institutional neutrality, proposing that returning and assistant returning officers be appointed from within the EC rather than the civil administration.

Jamaat-e-Islami questioned recent transfers in the local administration and police, while the newly registered National Citizen Party (NCP) reiterated its demand that candidates use only their own party symbols, even when contesting under alliance banners. Some other parties urged the EC to scrap this provision.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said many recommendations from the Electoral Reform Commission had already been incorporated into the code of conduct and the Representation of the People Order.

"Preparing the code of conduct is not the main challenge; compliance is what matters. We hope the parties will play their expected role in adhering to it," he said.

"Preparing the code of conduct is not the main challenge; compliance is what matters. We hope the parties will play their expected role in adhering to it."

CEC AMM Nasir Uddin



The CEC urged parties to cooperate in raising voter turnout. "We seek everyone's cooperation. With your advice, we hope to move forward smoothly."

Thirteen parties, including BNP, Jamaat and NCP, took part in yesterday's talks. Since November 13, 47 registered parties have joined the discussions.

BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan said his party and like minded groups had worked with a single purpose -- to restore democracy through free and fair elections.

He argued that adding too many rules complicates the process. "The more rules and regulations you add, the more complicated things become. Keep it simple."

Referring to the signing of an undertaking by each party that they would abide by the electoral code of conduct, he said the undertakings would be meaningless unless parties restrained their own behaviour. "If an undertaking is violated, what will happen? How will it be enforced?"

He said the BNP had stated clearly that "religion must not be used as a tool in politics".

"This would bring a qualitative change in Bangladesh's politics,"

Proposing the appointment of returning officers from the EC instead of the civil administration, he said such a step "would bring a qualitative change in Bangladesh's politics".

He alleged that deputy commissioners, police superintendents, UNOs and OCs had in the past been controlled from the Prime Minister's Office during elections. "We must move away from this system... Please, for once, exert your authority. You must demonstrate that you are not subservient to the government."

Past elections, Moyeen said, were not free and fair because the EC "bowed to the government".

Mahdi Amin, adviser to BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, urged

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A child works at a metal workshop in the port city's Kapasgola area, his hands operating heavy machinery amid aluminium dust that poses serious respiratory and skin health risks. As the world observes Children's Day today, such scenes underline how far we are from ensuring every child's right to safety and education. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



CA seeks the
armed forces'
support for
festive polls

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday sought the support of the armed forces and all law enforcement agencies to ensure that the upcoming national election is held peacefully and in a festive spirit.

"Now is the time for the election. We are looking forward to it, and we have announced the date for the polls in the first half of February," Yunus said, urging everyone's support to hold a free and fair election.

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WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

Child marriage still a bleak shadow on Bangladesh

It may take over 200yrs to end the scourge: UNFPA

2019-2025

Currently married adolescent girls (15-19)	Adolescent birth rate per 1,000	Contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR)
32.9% → 38.9%	83 → 92	62.7% → 58.2%

(DATA: MICS-2025)

NILIMA JAHAN and TANGILA TASnim

It could take Bangladesh more than 200 years to eliminate child marriage at the current pace of decline, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has warned.

The concern comes ahead of World Children's Day, whose theme this year, "My Day, My Rights", underscores how millions of girls are still denied their basic rights to safety, education, and autonomy.

Progress on ending child marriage remains alarmingly slow, particularly among adolescent girls aged 15-19, according to preliminary findings of the Multiple Indicator Cluster

Survey (MICS) 2025, released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with UNICEF's technical support on Sunday.

While the proportion of women aged 20-24 who were married before 18 has fallen from 51.4 percent in 2019 to 47.2 percent this year, the rate of currently married girls aged 15-19 has risen sharply from 32.9 percent to 38.9 percent.

The contrast shows that although fewer women today report being married as children, child marriage among today's adolescents is increasing — signalling deep-rooted social norms that continue to endanger girls' health, rights, and futures.

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9% children doing
hazardous work
MICS survey reveals steep climb
in child labour over 6 years

NILIMA JAHAN

Bangladesh is witnessing a troubling rise in child labour, with the latest government survey showing that about 9.2 percent of children aged 5-17 are engaged in work, up from 6.8 percent in 2019.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025, launched on Sunday, highlights stark disparities in child labour across gender, age, education, and region.

The survey shows hazardous work also remains widespread, with 9 percent of children exposed to dangerous conditions such as extreme heat, harmful dust, chemicals, heavy loads, or unsafe tools and machinery.

Boys remain more involved in economic work, while girls shoulder a heavier share of unpaid domestic labour.

Meanwhile, children not attending school are around 2.6 times more likely to be in labour, with an 18 percent prevalence compared to 7 percent among those attending school, said the survey.

Experts say this underscores that keeping children in school remains the most effective protection against exploitation.

Poverty and location also play a decisive role. Children from the poorest households (14 percent) are nearly five times more likely to be in labour than their wealthier peers (3 percent), while rural children (10 percent) face higher risks than urban ones (7 percent).

Regionally, the northern divisions of Rajshahi (12.4 percent) and Rangpur (11.8 percent) remain the hardest hit.

In contrast, Dhaka (7.3 percent), Chattogram (7.9 percent), and Sylhet (7.1 percent) have the lowest rates.

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Owners and workers of several brick kilns, which had been shut down in government raids over pollution, blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway in the Boliarpur Bhanga Bridge area of Savar yesterday, demanding permission to reopen. The two-hour blockade caused immense suffering to passengers, many of whom were forced to walk to their destinations. The photo was taken around noon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Khalil, Doval
meet in Delhi
ahead of CSC
Discuss 'key
bilateral issues'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Bangladesh National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman held delegation-level talks with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval in New Delhi yesterday, discussing "key bilateral issues" in the first high-level

meeting between the two countries in months amid strained ties following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government last year.

The meeting came less than 48 hours after the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh handed down the death penalty to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina for crimes against humanity during the July uprising.

Hasina has been staying at an undisclosed location

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Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus poses for a photo with the participants at the certificate distribution ceremony for the Defence Services Command and Staff College Course-2025 at the DSCSC Complex in Mirpur Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

BNP wants ROs from commission

FROM PAGE 1
the EC to establish a fact-checking cell to curb online misinformation. He proposed a central unit of the cell at the EC and decentralised units at the upazila level, along with clear timeframes for reviewing complaints related to misinformation and disinformation.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar and Assistant Secretary General AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad questioned the recent series of administrative reshuffles.

To build trust, Jamaat proposed lottery-based transfers of DCs and SPs.

Porwar said, "It hasn't even been a month, not even 20 days, and suddenly a deputy commissioner was transferred. Within a week, many others were reshuffled. It appears this is being done with a particular design or purpose."

He also asked the EC to clarify how expatriates would vote in the referendum. The Jamaat leader proposed allowing expats to register using either passports or NIDs.

Terming the three-loudspeaker limit impractical for large constituencies, he sought revisions to the rule.

On polling day security, he demanded at least five army personnel at every centre.

Porwar further said the code of conduct requires parties and candidates to sign undertakings, but does not specify where parties should submit theirs, while nominations are filed locally.

Jamaat leader Shishir Monir noted that although the code of conduct prescribes penalties of up to six months' imprisonment or Tk 1 lakh, or both, it does not clarify which authority will enforce these sanctions. He also called for a specific timeframe for resolving pre-election irregularities.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari urged the EC to immediately begin the referendum process, as it is planned to be held along with the election.

He insisted that alliance candidates must use their own party symbols.

"Borrowing another party's symbol will not be allowed. Even if candidates are part of an alliance, they must contest under their own symbol."

He said the NCP would fully cooperate with the EC if it maintained institutional independence and upheld its accountability to the constitution rather than to any party.

NCP Senior Joint Member Secretary Tasnim Jara demanded an extension of the December 23 deadline for expatriates to register for postal balloting.

She proposed visible 24/7 helplines or email support for the expats during the registration and voting process, with specified response times for queries or complaints.

She suggested allowing expats to register using either passports or NIDs.

She also called for a dedicated social media monitoring cell and a multi-channel reporting system, alongside collaboration with platforms such as Meta and TikTok, to ensure

rapid takedown of harmful content.

NCP Joint Member Secretary Jahirul Islam argued that the BNP should not be allowed to use the portrait of Tarique Rahman in campaign materials, since Khaleda Zia remains the party chairperson.

Several parties, including Ganosamhati Andolan led by Zonayed Saki, said alliance partners should be allowed to contest using the symbols of other parties within the alliance.

Saki and Gono Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rashed Khan also criticised the EC for amending the RPO and the code of conduct before consulting stakeholders.

Participants also asked how the EC planned to organise the referendum and raise awareness about its voting procedure.

The CEC said clarity would come once an ordinance on the referendum is issued, as it would outline the process in full.

9% children

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Compared to city-based or ad-hoc programmes, village-based, community-centric initiatives are likely to be more effective. If government and private organisations collaborate with families to implement local initiatives, they may yield better results."

Sultan also stressed that the lack of social security for adult workers is a key factor driving child labour. "When an accident or illness occurs, children in the family have to work. If parents' incomes are insufficient, children are forced into labour."

Sheaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, highlighted the disproportionate impact of child labour on girls.

"While boys are sent to earn an income, girls are kept busy with domestic work, missing out on schooling. In many cases, they are married off young, which not only ends their education but also exposes them to unsafe pregnancies. What girls learn is often forgotten, their development stalled."

She added that to reduce child labour and the burden of unpaid care work on girls, the government needs to adopt comprehensive strategies.

"A high-level committee is already working on this, but if the root causes -- poverty and lack of parental awareness -- are not addressed, the pressure on children cannot be reduced. Parents' livelihoods must be stabilised, and they must understand that responsibilities should not be forced onto children."

Khalil, Doval meet in Delhi

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in Delhi since she fled Dhaka on August 5.

The Bangladesh delegation to the seventh NSA-level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), led by National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman, met with India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his team today (yesterday) in Delhi," the Bangladesh High Commission said in a statement.

It added that "they discussed the work of CSC and key bilateral issues" but did not provide further details.

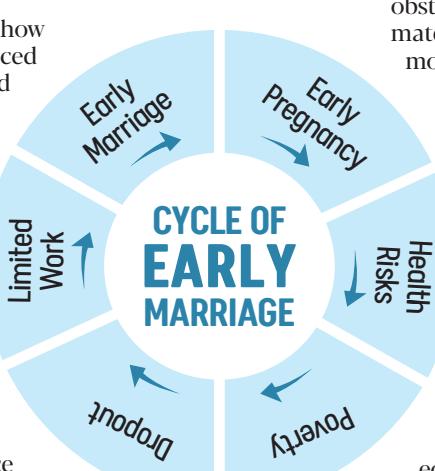
Khalilur also invited Doval to visit Bangladesh at his convenience.

Khalilur arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday evening, a day ahead of schedule. He had been due to travel yesterday for the CSC meeting called by Doval in the Indian capital today (November 20).

Hours after the ICT ruling against Hasina, the Bangladesh foreign ministry issued a statement making a renewed push for her extradition from India.

Following the verdict, India's External Affairs Ministry said New Delhi had noted the ruling of the International Crimes Tribunal concerning the former prime minister.

"It's a major undertaking. After an uprising, transitioning to a peaceful, celebratory election is difficult. We need an atmosphere of unity and optimism so people can freely express their desires and aspirations," he added.



early marriage needs stronger enforcement, wider awareness, and real investment in girls' education, as laws alone cannot protect them without community support.

Contacted by The Daily Star recently, UNICEF Representative to Bangladesh Rana Flowers said stronger enforcement is essential. "Child marriage is not merely a harmful practice -- it is violence against children and women. It strips girls of education and dignity and hinders national growth. We need a united national voice to change mindsets and enforce laws effectively rather than reducing age limits."

Dr Monzur A-Moula, junior consultant at the Maternal and Child Health

Hospital, said, "Early marriage is a serious public health concern. Medically, adolescent girls are not biologically ready for pregnancy. Early conception increases risks of anaemia, pre-eclampsia, premature delivery, and low-birth-weight babies. Underdeveloped pelvic bones often cause obstructed labour, raising maternal and infant mortality."

"Beyond the physical dangers, early marriage harms mental health. Young brides face anxiety, depression, and stress due to sudden responsibilities, marital pressure, and loss of independence. It cuts short their education, erodes self-confidence, and increases vulnerability to domestic violence and social isolation."

He added, "From a public health perspective, early marriage perpetuates poverty, increases maternal and child mortality, and slows national development. Education, awareness, and effective law enforcement are crucial to protect girls' rights."

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "Scientifically, girls are not physically fit for pregnancy before 18. Even after marriage, many girls cannot express their own opinions within their families."

"In rural areas, awareness about girls' education remains low, and nothing can legitimise child marriage. After early marriage, many

CA seeks the armed forces' support for festive polls

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Yunus, speaking at a certificate distribution ceremony at the Defence Services Command and Staff College in Mirpur Cantonment, highlighted the challenge of holding a participatory election in the aftermath of an uprising.

"It's a major undertaking. After an uprising, transitioning to a peaceful, celebratory election is difficult. We need an atmosphere of unity and optimism so people can freely express their desires and aspirations," he added.

"As a close neighbour, India remains committed to the best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including in peace,

EC unlikely to sit with JP, 6 other AL allies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Breaking with its own plan and past practice, the Election Commission abruptly ended its ongoing dialogue without meeting at least seven registered political parties, many of them long-time allies of the Awami League over the past 15 years.

This came despite the EC's electoral working plan, announced in August, which had pledged discussions with all registered parties ahead of the polls.

The parties left out of the talks are the Jatiya Party, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu), Bangladesher Shamayobadi Dal, Ganatantri Party, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, and Jatiya Party-JP.

Forty-seven parties participated in the dialogue that began on November 13. Officials confirmed last night that the talks had ended, noting that one invited party did not attend.

"The first phase of our talks with political parties concluded today [yesterday]," Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarker told this newspaper.

Asked whether the excluded parties would be invited later, he said, "We will take decisions regarding those parties at a later stage," offering no further clarity.

Another election commissioner said the talks with the remaining parties may not take place at all, as objections were being raised from several quarters.

On May 12, the government banned all activities of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations, alleging killings, genocide, crimes against humanity and other grave offences during the July uprising.

Hours later, the EC suspended the party's registration.

Jamaat, 7 parties ramp up pressure for pre-polls referendum

Announce rallies in divisional cities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight like-minded parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Andolan Bangladesh, yesterday vowed to continue their movement to realise the alliance's five-point demand, including holding a referendum before the national polls.

Maulana Yusuf Ashraf, senior nayeb-e-amir of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, announced rallies in all divisional cities except Dhaka between November 30 and December 6, with top leaders addressing each gathering.

Rallies will be held in Rangpur on November 30, Rajshahi on December 1, Khulna on December 2, Barishal on December 3, Mymensingh on December 4, Sylhet on December 5, and Chattogram on December 6.

"We will continue campaigning and building public opinion in favour of a 'yes' vote in the referendum," Yusuf Ashraf said at a press briefing after holding meeting with alliance representatives in the capital.

The alliance's five-point demand includes the death sentence for Sheikh Hasina in a crimes against humanity case, implementation of the July charter, trials of those responsible for the July killings, a ban on parties like Jatiya Party seen as accomplices of the former autocracy, and ensuring a level playing field for the election. While some demands -- the death sentence for Hasina and the directive to implement the July charter -- have been met, others remain unfulfilled.

Hamidur Rahman Azad, Jamaat assistant secretary general, also spoke.

Nations 'still far' from deal at UN climate talks

Says French minister as discord persists on finance, emissions cuts

AGENCIES

France's environment minister said yesterday that governments remain far from reaching a deal at UN climate talks in Brazil, but she was nonetheless "more optimistic" than the day before.

COP30 host Brazil released a draft deal Tuesday, hoping to get nations to agree on the most contentious points as soon as yesterday, two days before the conference is scheduled to end in Belem.



"No, there will not be a COP decision today (Wednesday). I don't see how that could happen," French ecological transition minister Monique Barbut told AFP.

"However, yes, there is a little bit of movement. But we are still far from the mark because for us, it must be a comprehensive package," Barbut said after a coordination meeting with European colleagues. She added, however, that she was "more optimistic" than she was the day before.

A new text was due to be published yesterday.

Brazil said on Tuesday it still expects to land a deal on some of the most contentious issues, but conceded there were still wide gaps between countries on issues like fossil fuels, reports Reuters.

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“



The essence of democracy is that I may not agree with you, but I will still defend your freedom to express your opinion, even at the cost of my life. That is democracy. Unfortunately, we do not want to tolerate others' views here -- we want to silence them. We must move away from this mindset.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR
BNP Secretary General



Students cover their nose and mouth as they walk past a heap of burning trash on their way home from school around noon yesterday. Locals said when city corporation cleaners fail to collect garbage on time, some people set the waste on fire. The photo was taken in Lalmatia yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The birth registration conundrum at DSCC

Around 79,000 certificates issued through its 'own server' now invalid; residents face extra hassle, costs

DIPAN NANDY

The long-running complications over birth registration have reached a breaking point in the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Although the Office of the Registrar General holds legal jurisdiction, former mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh introduced an "own server" of the city corporation during his tenure, claiming it would boost revenue.

Nearly 79,000 birth and 1,500 death registrations were recorded through this system. But after August 5 last year, DSCC's registration process was reinstated under the Registrar General's central server, rendering those certificates invalid.

As a result, residents are now being forced to reapply and pay the fees again. Every

day, affected individuals crowd DSCC's regional offices seeking valid certificates.

On Tuesday morning, Jahidul Islam waited outside the Zone-1 office at Nagar Bhaban, trying to collect a birth certificate for his four-year-old son, Ayman, ahead of school admission.

"When I went for admission, I found out the certificate issued during Taposh's tenure was invalid," he said. "I had to reapply. They charged Tk 50 before, and again this time. When I asked about the earlier payment, no one had an answer."

In the same office, Dhamondi resident Erlanul Rahman sought clarification about his daughter Abiba's "fake birth certificate".

He said, "When applying for a passport, they told me the certificate had no link to the national server. DSCC is supposed to provide services,



When I went for my son's school admission, I found out the birth certificate issued during Taposh's tenure was invalid. I had to reapply. They charged Tk 50 before, and again this time. When I asked about the earlier payment, no one had an answer.

JAHIDUL ISLAM
A resident of DSCC Zone-1

but they are harassing us. Now they're asking me to apply again."

Victims say they must pay the government-prescribed fee again, with no refund for the money previously deposited into DSCC's server. Death certificates issued through the server have also become invalid.

DSCC Zone-1's Zonal Executive Officer Kazi Saleh Mustanir said, "After August 5, we attempted to integrate South City's birth and death registration data into the central system. Due to technical errors, not all data could be integrated.

Therefore, people were asked to reapply." Similar complaints came from Zone-3 in Nawabganj.

Monowar Hossain, dealing with his daughter Raida's registration, said, "I already took the service from DSCC and paid the fee. Now I have to take it again."

Zone-3's Zonal Executive Officer Md Sujauddoula acknowledged the frustration.

"Their anger is natural, as they are facing both extra expenses and suffering. The application fee is embedded in the online system, making submission impossible without payment."

DSCC sources said Taposh demanded a share of the Registrar General's revenue from birth certificates after taking office.

This dispute halted registration activities in the DSCC from June to September 2023. As public suffering grew, DSCC began issuing certificates directly from its own server on October 4, 2023, and collected fees accordingly.

However, as the server was not connected to the Registrar General's database, problems surfaced immediately.

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Ex-OC ordered killings, set bodies on fire in Ashulia

Testifies former SI at ICT-2 on July uprising killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former OC of Ashulia Police Station AFM Sayed and assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Biswajit Saha poured petrol on the bodies of six protesters and set them on fire on August 5 last year, an approver testified before the International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday.

Former sub-inspector (SI) of Ashulia Police Station Sheikh Abzal Haque also said that police, earlier that day, opened fire on a victory procession -- minutes after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country -- on the direct orders of the OC, leaving several demonstrators collapsing to the ground.

"Some people died instantly," said the accused-turned approver in a crimes against humanity case filed over the killing of seven youths and the subsequent burning of six of their bodies in Ashulia.

He appeared as the 23rd prosecution witness in the case.

The former SI, however, added that he was not present at the scene during the burning. He learned about it only after returning to the police station on August 15, 2024, to deposit the firearm issued in his name.

Abzal is the second accused to turn approver, after former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who was convicted by ICT-1 on Monday and sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a separate crimes against humanity case linked to the July uprising.

Describing the events of the day, Abzal said a group of protesters approached Ashulia Police

Station in a victory procession shortly after Hasina's departure.

"When the protesters reached near the station, OC Sir ordered the force to

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Commuters from Kamalapur, Gopibagh, Tikatuli, and surrounding areas use a boat to cross Motijheel's only remaining jheel (pond). The waterbody, a popular transportation route, serves as a time-saving shortcut, with passengers paying Tk 5 for the journey.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SC order on caretaker govt today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is set to deliver its verdict today on the appeals and review petitions against its 2011 judgment that scrapped the non-party caretaker government system.

The appeals and petitions have been listed as item numbers 1 and 2 in today's cause list for announcement of judgment, according to the SC website uploaded yesterday afternoon.

On November 11, a seven-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed concluded the hearing and fixed today for delivering the verdict on the appeals and review petitions.

During the hearing, the lawyers for the appellants, petitioners and the state prayed to the top court to overturn its 2011 judgment and restore the non-party caretaker government system to the constitution for holding free and fair elections and to establish democracy in the country.

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, five citizens, freedom fighter Mofazzal Islam of Naogaon and two rights organisations lodged the review petitions last year challenging the 2011 verdict.

A seven-judge full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by the then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque, had declared by majority view on May 10, 2011 that the 13th amendment to the constitution (related to the caretaker government) was null and void.

Finn, Cory and Sam to retire

The K-9 trio will be up for auction on Nov 25



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finn, Cory, and Sam -- three dogs of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's K-9 Team -- sniffed out danger, guarded crime scenes, and stood loyally beside their handlers for years.

Now, after a long stretch of service, the three are preparing for a quieter life -- not in kennels or behind barbed wire, but hopefully in warm homes with new families.

The DMP has announced that the three will be released from duty and offered to the public through an open auction on November 25 at its canine facilities in Mirpur-14 Police Lines.

All three dogs were born and trained in the United Kingdom before being inducted into the force's operational lineup in Dhaka. They worked for the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit's specialised K-9 unit.

Among them, Finn is a male Labrador, Cory a female Labrador, and Sam a male German Shepherd. All of them are eight years of age and have grown too old for the demanding tasks of explosive detection, search operations, or patrol duties. However, officials say they remain in

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

DC Park or mangrove forest?

Forest Department, Ctg district admin at odds over control of 194-acre land in Sitakunda

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Forest Department and the Chattogram district administration are at odds over the control of a forest land in Sitakunda upazila, where a recreational park has been developed after felling hundreds of trees.

The Forest Department wrote to the chief conservator of forests on January 2, requesting that the land, along with existing structures, be handed over to the Coastal Forest Division of Chattogram.

Records show that the land – about 194 acres under North Salimpur mauza – was officially gazetted as a notified forest by the government under Section 4 of the Forest Act on January 9, 1986. Later, the Coastal Forest Division planted mangrove trees there in the 1990-91 fiscal year.

In its letter, the Forest Department argued that, even though the land has been typically recorded in the name of the deputy commissioner of Chattogram in Khatian 1, this cannot be used as a pretext to treat such notified land as grassland, and hence any such action by the district administration is unlawful and constitutes an overreach of jurisdiction.

District administration officials rejected the claim, saying the land is recorded in its name in the official khatian.

According to Section 5 of the Act, once land is notified under Section 4 and subsequently gazetted as forest land, it cannot be repurposed.

In a verdict on October 6, 2013, the Supreme Court also directed that forest land notified under Section 4 must be preserved.

And yet, the Chattogram district administration constructed what is now known as DC Park in 2023 on the land, allegedly ignoring objections from the Forest Department.

The land of DC Park had not been under our possession for a long time. During that period, a local influential named Kafil Uddin established a recreational centre there called Shuktara Park. However, the area still had many trees, including mangroves. We sent a letter to the deputy commissioner on November 22, 2020, requesting its eviction. The park was removed in January 2023, after which the district administration took control of the land and built DC Park there later on," said Belayet Hossain, divisional forest officer of Chattogram.

"Despite our objections during the construction of DC Park, the district administration went ahead, building numerous facilities for visitors, including seating areas, swings, and restaurants,"

he added.

The Forest Department stated in its letter that the park was built on over 37 acres of land, with at least 5,000 mangrove trees felled during construction.

This claim is supported by satellite imagery analysis from Google Earth. A 2018 image shows the western bank of a pond inside the park was densely forested, while 2025 images show numerous structures now occupy the site. The latest imagery also shows a road cutting through the northern part of the park, extending towards the sea.

"DC Park has been built on land belonging to the Chattogram district administration. We have not constructed the park on any land belonging to the Forest Department, so their claim is not reasonable," Farida Khanam, deputy commissioner of Chattogram, said when contacted in this regard.

Asked why the Forest Department only recently sought to reclaim control of the land, Belayet Hossain said, "We have observed that the district administration is gradually expanding the park, constructing facilities for tourists near another pond, and there are plans to build a road towards the sea. We are concerned about these activities, and so we are now trying to regain control of the gazetted

forest land."

The Forest Department had tried to intervene during construction of the DC Park earlier, but the district administration proceeded, allegedly threatening forest officials in the process, he claimed.

If the land is returned to the Forest Department, a coastal greenbelt could be developed there, serving as an ideal habitat for wildlife, water systems, air quality, and biodiversity, Belayet added.

In a letter, Chief Conservator of Forests Mollah Rezaul Karim wrote that mangrove forests beyond the embankments in Sitakunda and Mirsarai upazilas have played a crucial role in protecting lives and property by mitigating the impact of several major cyclones in the past.

Kamal Hossen, a former professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences at Chittagong University, said, "Mangroves are frontline defenders of coastal regions, reducing the force of storm surges, protecting against erosion, and helping maintain biodiversity. When these forests are cleared, they remove a critical natural shield, leaving communities highly vulnerable to cyclones, flooding, and long-term ecological damage."

Finn, Cory and Sam to retire

FROM PAGE 3
"good health" and are "perfectly capable of living comfortably as companion animals".

"Dogs used in law enforcement generally have a fixed service span. As per procedure, we sought approval from the Police Headquarters to put them

up for auction," said Nazmul Hasan, additional deputy commissioner of the CTIC's Dog Disposal Unit. "K-9 unit hopes these animals will spend the rest of their lives in a safe and caring environment with animal lovers." The auction is being conducted in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act, he added.

According to the tender notice, businessmen, auction bidders, contractors, and dog lovers have been invited to an open auction, which will begin at 12:00pm on November 25 and continue until all three dogs find new owners.

The rules are simple: interested buyers must deposit Tk 1,000 to participate. Successful bidders will pay the final price along with 10 percent income tax and 7.5 percent VAT.

Each dog will be auctioned separately. They can be inspected by contacting the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Action Group), DMP, and buyers must complete payment and collect their dogs within three days. For more details, interested persons may dial 01320-046356.

The witness further stated that he saw no punitive action taken by

fire directly," he testified. "ASI Bishwajit and several others opened fire on his command," he added.

He said police personnel then loaded the bodies of the fallen protesters onto a police van. While doing so, he noticed that the OC was speaking in hushed tones with Bishwajit and Abdul Malek, a constable.

"They stopped talking when I approached. I suspected they were planning something regarding the bodies," Abzalul said. He later came to know that the OC and ASI Bishwajit burned the bodies using petrol.

The witness further stated that he saw no punitive action taken by

senior police officials, then Dhaka Range DIG Syed Nurul Islam, then Dhaka SP Asaduzzaman Ripon, former SP Abdullaheb Kafi, and Savar Circle Additional SP Shahidul Islam, against those involved.

According to him, during the July uprising, then lawmaker Saiful Islam repeatedly phoned OC Sayed, instructing him to suppress protests and arrest opposition activists.

"The OC relayed those orders to us, and we carried them out," he said. Abzalul, arrested in

the case in May 2025, told the tribunal he chose to turn approver out of "moral responsibility" and to repay his debts to the martyrs. He also vowed to make a "full and truthful disclosure."

On August 21 this year, the tribunal framed charges against 16 accused in the case. Of them, eight are in custody. Seven pleaded not guilty and demanded justice.

Following his deposition, the defence began cross-examining him, which is set to continue today.

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Shafiu Alam
Khan's death
anniversary
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 16th death anniversary of Md Shafiu Alam Khan, a retired employee of Karnafuli Paper Mills Limited.

He died on this day in 2009 at a hospital in Dhaka.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and Qurankhwani will take place at his elder son senior advocate Md Khurshid Alam Khan's law firm, "Khurshid & Associates", at 204 Bijoy Nagar, Dhaka, after Maghrib prayers today.

Relatives, friends, and well-wishers are invited to attend the prayers.

Six more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least six dengue patients died while 788 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the deaths, three were reported from Rajshahi division (out of city corporation), two from Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), and one from Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of dengue-related deaths this year rose to 349, while the total number of cases rose to 87,712.

PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-05	12-45	3-45	5-21	7-00
JAMAAT 5-40	1-15	4-00	5-24	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The century old Kakarkandi Football Field in Sherpur's Nalitabari upazila has long been used as a weekly cattle market.

Although the market operates only once a week, animal wastes left behind and holes made for bamboo posts driven into the ground leave the field largely unfit for sports activities.

As such, football practice and tournaments in this field have remained suspended for years.

Local youths and former players recently submitted a written application to the Nalitabari upazila nirbahi officer demanding restoration of the field for sports activities.

According to locals, Sangreen Sangma, a priest, took the initiative to make football more popular among the Garo community in 1925.

Supporting his initiative, generous local sports enthusiasts Porod Chandra Deo donated 2.70 acres of land for public use, where the football field was established. Centring the field, the first local football organisation, "Kochop Club," was formed by Garo players that later drew attention of youths from other communities.



After independence, another club was also established beside the field in memory of the martyred freedom fighters.

However, since 2003, a weekly cattle market has sat on the field after the upazila

NALITABARI OF SHERPUR

Century-old football field now a cattle market



PHOTO: STAR

administration leased it out.

Visiting the field recently, it was seen that the field was in a shabby, dirty state, with cow dung and other garbage spread all over it. Numerous holes riddle the ground, making it unsuitable for sports.

"The local youths have long been detached from sports due to the field's present condition," said Mannan Sohel, a local journalist.

"For many years, vibrant football tournaments used to be held regularly involving teams from different districts, alongside other cultural events and national day celebrations," said Abdur Rahman, a resident.

"Local players used to practice on the field regularly, and many prominent football talents were produced over the years. It is painful to see the field lie in such neglect," he added.

Ashim Dutta, a former prominent football player from the Mymensingh region, said "a mindless act" has been done to the field by leasing it out for the cattle market. "The field

should be recovered and restored for better interest of the young generations," he added.

Piyush Chandra Deo's son, Porod Chandra Deo, said, "My father donated the land for public welfare through use as a playing field, not for a cattle market. It is not just a playground; it is part of our local history and heritage."

They all urged the local administration to take necessary steps in this regard.

Md Ibrahim Khalil, the present lease holder, said that if the administration wants, the cattle market can be moved elsewhere.

UNO Farjana Akter Bobi said they have received an application regarding the removal of the cattle market from the field to restore its sporting environment.

"A portion of government land has been allocated for a cattle market, but instead of relocating there, the traders have continued to use the playground. I have already asked Kakarkandi union parishad chairman Niamul Kawsar for steps to shift the market to its actual location," she added.

Halt fossil gas expansion Urge activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Speakers at a global action event on the Pashur river warned that the pace of fossil gas extraction is obstructing global climate ambitions, particularly as energy demand continues to rise across the Global South.

At 10:00am yesterday, environmental organisations Dharitree Rokkhay Amra (Dhora), Waterkeepers Bangladesh, and Pashur River Waterkeeper launched a boat rally on the Pashur river in Mongla.

Presiding over the rally's inauguration programme, environmental activist and Pashur River Waterkeeper Md Noor Alam Sk said, "Fossil gas expansion must be stopped immediately."

"As a just energy transition, fossil gas can never be an alternative to coal or oil. The world's



PHOTO: PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY

largest natural gas producers are the US, followed by China, Russia, Iran, Canada and Qatar. To these countries, I say, 'Stop gas and LNG, we need renewable energy'."

Speakers urged G20 leaders and COP30 negotiators to ensure policy shifts towards renewable energy.

Youth leader Mehedi Hasan said industrialising countries outside the Global North are projected to see "an 85 percent rise in energy demand", adding, "To meet this demand, the Global North is promoting fossil gas as an alternative. We want to give a clear message to the Global North: 'Don't gas the South'."

Environmental and development worker Fatema Jannat highlighted the scale of fossil gas expansion worldwide, noting that 768 gas fired power plants are in the pre-construction stage across Africa, Latin America, and Asia.



A fisherman shows off his fresh catch from the Kalababor river before heading to Bheduria Bazar in Barishal Sadar upazila, where it will be sold at wholesale rates. The photo was taken recently.



রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
RUPALI BANK PLC
উন্নত সেবার নিষ্ঠতা

ধানমন্ডি কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা

শাখা স্থানান্তর

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-এর ধানমন্ডি কর্পোরেট শাখা, ঢাকা
আগামী ২৩/১১/২০২৫ তারিখ রোজ রবিবার হতে নতুন ঠিকানায়
ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম শুরু করবে।

পুরাতন ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
ধানমন্ডি কর্পোরেট শাখা
বাড়ি নং-৮০/১, রোড়: ১৪/এ,
ধানমন্ডি আ/এ, ঢাকা।

নতুন ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
ধানমন্ডি কর্পোরেট শাখা
নিজাম শাহের প্লাজা, হোস্টংঃ৭২ (পুরাতন),
৭২ (নতুন), সড়কের নাম: পুরাতন-১৯,
১৪/এ (নতুন), সড়কের নাম: পুরাতন-১৯,
সাত মসজিদ রোড, ধানমন্ডি আ/এ, ঢাকা।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক এবং শুভানুভ্যায়ীদের ব্যাংকিং
সেবা প্রাপ্তিগ্রহণের জন্য নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগের অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

GD-2508

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Sadar, Manikganj
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.5646.000.07.000.25-2251
Dated: 19/11/2025

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-25

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

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Tender method	Tender publishing & closing date and time
1.	1172522 1172521 1172519 1172518 1172515 1172514 1172488 1172487 1172486 1172485	LTM	20-Nov-2025; 9:00:00 4-Dec-2025; 17:00:00
2.	1172523	OTM	20-Nov-2025; 9:00:00 04-Dec-2025; 17:00:00

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

Md. Rousul Arefin
Upazila Engineer
Sadar, Manikganj
Phone No. 0184-3790728
E-mail: ue.upz.manikganj-s@lged.gov.bd

GD-2507

Three magistrates

FROM PAGE 4

probationers have been removed from government service. The notification added that any outstanding financial dues during their service will be recovered.

The notice did not mention the reason for their dismissal. Two of the officers told The Daily Star they were not informed of any cause.

Officials at the ministry said the officers completed their basic training yesterday – meaning they were dismissed on the same day their training ended.

Rule 6(2)(a) states that if a probationer is deemed unfit during the probationary period, the government may terminate the appointment without consulting the Public Service Commission.

Sources said during recruitment for this batch, at least 67 candidates were dropped. Later, another 13 officers from different cadres were terminated after joining service.

One of the newly dismissed executive magistrates said, "During student life in the dormitory, I had to join political rallies and meetings. If these are counted as disqualifications, what can I say?"

He added, "My wife is pregnant, my father recently had a heart implant – you can understand my situation."

Public administration expert and writer Firoz Mia told The Daily Star that although the dismissals were made under the recruitment rules, similar orders have not been held up in court in the past. He said there is no barrier to dismissal if there is a specific reason, but doing so without stating any cause goes against principles of justice.

"Those who have been dismissed can seek remedy in court under the Constitution. I hope they will get justice," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer

Sonagazi, District: Feni.

www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No-46.02.3094.878.14.001.25-1134

Date: 18/11/2025

e-Tender Notice No-01/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works. Details are given below:

Sl No	Package No	Tender ID No.	Description of Works	Tender Security Last Submission (Date/Time)	Tender Closing & Opening (Date/Time)
01	e-Tender/PEDP4/FNU-SON/2025-26/W15A-03021	1175690 OTM	a) Construction of Head Teacher's Room with attached toilet of Sonsagazi Primary School under PEDP-4. b) Construction of Head Teacher's Room with attached toilet of Paik Para Primary School under PEDP-4.	02/12/2025 01.00 PM	02/12/2025 03.00 PM

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 **date up to 02/12/2025 at 11.30 AM**. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Monir Hossen
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GD-2487

BOAT CAPSIZE 11 migrants face charges in Malaysian court

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Eleven survivors of a deadly boat capsize two weeks ago appeared in a Malaysian court yesterday, charged with illegally being in the Southeast Asian country, officials said.

The accused -- nine Myanmar nationals and two Bangladeshi citizens -- were among 14 people rescued after the November 6 shipwreck off a Thai island near the Malaysian maritime border. They are said to be from a group of around 70 undocumented migrants, mostly from Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya community, who were trying to reach Malaysia when their vessel overturned.

A charge sheet seen by AFP said the group, aged between 17 and 43, was accused of entering the country around the Langkawi "without valid passes".



This handout photograph released yesterday by Ukraine's National Police shows a heavily damaged residential building following a Russian air strike in the Ukrainian city of Ternopil.

PHOTO: AFP

SUDAN CONFLICT Aid workers choose who to save in Darfur

AFP, Cairo

Humanitarian workers in Sudan's Darfur are being forced to "choose who to save" due to insufficient resources, aid group Handicap International's logistics chief Jerome Bertrand told AFP.

After more than two years of war between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, needs have reached overwhelming levels, Bertrand said.

"We are forced to choose who we save and who we don't," Bertrand said after returning from a three-week mission to assess aid logistics.

"It is an inhumane dilemma that humanitarian actors have to face and it goes completely against our values."

Bertrand said teams were prioritising children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers "in the hope that others can hold on".

The conflict in Sudan, which began in April 2023, has killed tens of thousands and displaced nearly



the region, on October 26.

The UN-backed Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) confirmed this month El Fasher is facing famine, which has raged in its surrounding displacement camps for over a year.

Aid groups like Bertrand's are

scrambling to meet immense needs, with no functional infrastructure.

None of Darfur's airports can receive aid, roads are often impassable and the only access point into the region -- through neighbouring Chad -- is riddled with "administrative obstacles", in addition to exorbitant costs and insufficient funding.

"It's the entire supply of an area the size of France, with 11 million inhabitants, moving partly on the backs of donkeys," he said, describing a "state of anarchy", the total collapse of government structures, rampant banditry and security threats on the roads, including "extortion, theft, assaults and arrests".

In Tawila -- a refugee town now sheltering more than 650,000 people fleeing El Fasher and the nearby Zamzam camp, both now under RSF control -- Bertrand said he encountered people who "have absolutely nothing left", while aid organisations are unable to meet demand.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী সওজ এর কার্যালয়
সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল
ফোনঃ ০৯২১-৬৪০৪৩

E-mail: eetan@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৪৭৮.০৭.০০১.২৫-১১.২৫-৯৩৭

তারিখঃ ১৪-১১-২০২৫ইং

হাটুভাঙ্গা সেতুর টোল আদায়ের ইজারা কোটেশন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১।	ইজারা কোটেশন নং	১। ০১/কোঠ/ইই/টিআরডি/২০২৫-২০২৬
০২।	ইজারার বিবরণ	১। ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বৎসরে টাঙ্গাইল সড়ক বিভাগাধীন মির্জাপুর (গোড়াই)-সখিপুর সড়কের ৪৮ কিলোমিটারে হাটুভাঙ্গা সেতুর উপর দিয়ে যানবাহন পারাপারের জন্য টোল আদায়ের নির্ধারিত ইজারা প্রদান।
০৩।	ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	১। (তিনি) অর্থ বৎসর (১০৯৬ দিন)।
০৪।	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য	১। টাঙ্গ ৫০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য)
০৫।	বায়নার টাকের পরিমাণ	১। ইজারা উক্তি দরের ১০% (শতকরা দশ টাঙ্গ) নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল এর অন্তর্কাল যে কোন তফসিলভূক্ত বাংকে হতে বাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে ইজারা কোটেশনের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
০৬।	ইজারা কোটেশন বিতরণের শৈষ তারিখ ও সময়	১। ২১/১/২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)
০৭।	মুখ্যবক্ত অবস্থার ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শৈষ তারিখ ও সময়	১। ২২/১/২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ দশপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত, খোলার সময় প্রায় ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা
০৮।	ইজারা ডাকে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	১। ভ্যাট ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ন্যাগরিক, সরকারী/বেসরকারী/স্বায়ত্ত্বাপনিক সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের টিকাদার।
০৯।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন আদায়ের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে	১। বিভাগীয় কর্মশালার, ঢাকা/জেলা প্রশাসক, টাঙ্গাইল/নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল/পি-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল/মির্জাপুর/মির্জাপুর।
১০।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখ্যবক্ত অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	১। (ক) নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল। (খ) জেলা প্রশাসক, টাঙ্গাইল।
১১।	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	১। স্থানঃ নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিবেশন, সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল। তারিখঃ ২২/১/২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ। সময়ঃ দশপুর ৩:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	ইজারা আহ্বানকারী যে কোন সময় যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

১। সিনথিয়া আজমিরী খান
পরিচয় নং-৬০২১৪
নির্বাচী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, টাঙ্গাইল

জিডি-২৫০২

INTERNATIONAL

Russian threat looms in outer space

Germany beefs up defence

AFP, Berlin

Germany unveiled the country's first national space security strategy yesterday, with Defence Minister Boris Pistorius vowing to expand military and civilian capabilities in orbit.

The strategy comes weeks after Pistorius announced plans for the Armed Forces to spend 35 billion euros (\$41 billion) by 2030 on space defences, citing growing threats posed by Russia and potentially China.

"We must develop and possess the capacity for deterrence and defence," Pistorius told a press conference in Berlin. Both Russia and China are "heavily involved" in space and "positioning themselves to influence other satellites" from Europe and the United States, Pistorius said.

The minister acknowledged that "Germany alone will not keep pace with Russia and China," but said European Nato countries can work together "to ensure that we remain capable of action and defence".

The German initiative follows other European efforts to achieve greater independence in space.

The multinational European Space Agency plans to launch an internet satellite constellation, dubbed Iris2, by 2030.

In October, three major European aerospace firms announced plans to merge their satellite options to create a credible European rival to US billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket company and Starlink internet system. Satellite systems play a central role in modern communications, internet service, GPS systems and weather forecasting -- all with major implications for military operations as well as civilian life.

A cyberattack against satellites at the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine caused the failure of several hundred wind turbines on German soil, Pistorius noted.

"Everyone can imagine what an effective strike in space could do to satellite systems -- it would paralyse entire countries... to protect themselves against this," Pistorius said.



Gunmen kill two in Nigeria church attack

AFP, Lagos

Gunmen on Tuesday killed two people in an attack on a church in western Nigeria, according to a video of the incident and a police statement.

The attack comes after US President Donald Trump at the start of November threatened military action over what he claims are the killing of Nigeria's Christians, a narrative which the Nigerian government has rejected.

Africa's most populous country is divided between a predominantly Christian south and a Muslim-majority north.

ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ওজোপাডিকো)
West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী এর দক্ষতা, পরিচালন ও সর্বোচ্চ সার্কেল, ওজোপাডিকো, বিদ্যুৎ ভবন, ফরিদপুর
ফোনঃ ০২৪৯৮৪৮৭৬৫৫০০০১-০২৫২৭
ইমেইল: wzse.faridpur@gmail.com
তারিখঃ ১৪/১/২০২৫ইং

খোলা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১।	মুষ্টিপাত্র/বিভাগ	বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ, মুষ্টি, কালোনী ও ধৰ্মজ সম্পদ মুষ্টিপাত্র।
২।	একাডেমি/প্রতিষ্ঠান	ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন মোস্কোপীট (ওজোপাডিকোলি), মুলনা।
৩।	সম্পর্কের নাম	তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, পরিচালন ও সর্বোচ্চ সার্কেল, ওজোপাডিকোলি, ফরিদপুর।
৪।	কাজের নাম	পি-পিটেক (কম্পিউটারাইজড) সিস্টেল ও ভবল রেজিস্ট্রেশন বিদ্যুৎ বিল ফর্ম (বালোর) সর্ববাহ কাজ।
৫।	সংজ্ঞান পদ্ধতি	খোলা দরপত্র (OTM)
৬।	দরপত্র বিকাশের দ্রেপ তারিখ ও সময়	১। ১২/১/২০২৫ইং (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)
৭।	দরপত্র গ্রহণ মুদ্রণ কার্যক্রম ও সময়	২। ১। ১২/১/২০২৫ইং (সময় ১২:০০ মিনিট পর্যন্ত, খোলার সময় প্রায় ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা)
৮।	বিদ্যুৎ নির্মিতিকা	৩। কার্যক্রম কোন কারণে দর্শনার্থী ব্যাপকভাবে বাস্তিল অথবা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। ৪। অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে ওজোপাডিকোলির ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।

জিডি-২৪৯৬

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Government Press
Department of Printing & Publications
Ministry of Public Administration
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
www.bpress.gov.bd

Date : 19-11-2025

Tender Notice (Amendment-01)

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

Name of goods	Tender Proposal ID	Publishing
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TAIWAN SPAT

China to halt Japan seafood imports

AFP, Tokyo

China will suspend Japanese seafood imports, media in Tokyo reported yesterday as a row sparked by comments about Taiwan deepens, although neither government confirmed the move.

The uneasy neighbours' most serious spat since 2012 was triggered by new Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggesting on November 7 that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on Taiwan.

China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has been furious, summoning Tokyo's ambassador and advising its citizens against travel to Japan. The release of at least two Japanese movies will also be postponed in China.

Reporting suspension of seafood imports, Japanese media, including public broadcaster NHK, cited unnamed government sources.



Migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean react while sitting on a dinghy after being rescued by the Greek Coast Guard off the southern coast of Crete on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Romania reports fresh drone incursion

Eastern Nato members scramble jets; UK warns Putin as Russian military ship enters its waters

AFP, Bucharest

Nato members Romania and Poland yesterday scrambled fighter jets after Russian attacks in neighbouring Ukraine, with Bucharest saying a drone breached the country's airspace.

Moldova, which lies between Romania and Ukraine, also reported a drone breach, summoning the Russian ambassador.

Meanwhile, the UK government warned the Kremlin yesterday after saying a Russian military ship had entered British waters and directed lasers at UK pilots.

Defence Secretary John Healey told reporters in London that the ship had "entered" UK waters for the second time this year, following an earlier incursion back in January.

Romania and Moldova have repeatedly seen violations of their airspaces, including drone fragments falling onto their soil, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Yesterday Romania's defence ministry said that following Russian air



strikes on Ukraine, "for a few minutes, the signal of a drone was detected, which had entered approximately eight kilometres (five miles) into national airspace" before it disappeared from the radar.

The drone then "reappeared intermittently on radar for approximately 12 minutes," the ministry said, with phone alerts sent to residents in the affected regions.

Two "F-16s of the Romanian Air Force were scrambled," the ministry added, saying that "no cases of aircraft impact with the ground have been reported".



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office of the Directorate of Engineering
Bangladesh Coast Guard Headquarters
Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Director Engineering e-GP Invitation no: 44.08.2680.050.53.001.25.1203

Date: 19 November 2025

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

Ser	Tender ID	Package Name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last Selling	Closing and Opening
1.	1179747 (Re-Tender)	Procurement of furniture for various office at BCG HQ	OTM	20/11/2025 11:00 AM	30/11/2025 17:00 PM	01/12/2025 11:00 AM
2.	1180667	Repair & maintenance of various bases, stations & outposts under BCG Dhaka Zone	OTM	24/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
3.	1180671	Repair & maintenance of support columns including ancillary works of boundary wall in the residential area at BCG Mongla Annex	OTM	24/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
4.	1180670	Repair & maintenance of RCC road at BCG Mongla Annex	OTM	24/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
5.	1180669	Repair & maintenance of admin building at BCG Base Bhola	OTM	24/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
6.	1180674	Repair & Maintenance of officers' mess building at BCG Base Chattogram	OTM	27/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
7.	1180673	Repair & maintenance of sailors' quarter building-2 at BCG Base Chattogram	OTM	27/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
8.	1174446	Repair & maintenance of officers' mess building at BCG Base Mongla	OTM	27/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM
9.	1180668	Procurement of fitting and fixture items for various office (2nd phase) at BCG HQ Building	OTM	27/11/2025 11:00 AM	07/12/2025 17:00 PM	08/12/2025 11:00 AM

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

Documents can be downloaded till deadline of Tender/Application/Proposal submission.

RIYADH IBNE JAMAL
Captain BN
Director Engineering
Bangladesh Coast Guard

GD-2493

US Congress approves release of Epstein files

The bill to be sent to Trump for his signature

REUTERS, Washington

The Republican-controlled US Congress voted almost unanimously on Tuesday to force the release of Justice Department files on the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, an outcome President Donald Trump had fought for months before ending his opposition.

Two days after Trump's abrupt about-face, the House of Representatives passed the measure with a vote of 427-1, sending a resolution requiring the release of all unclassified records on Epstein to the Republican-majority Senate, which swiftly approved it. The bill could now go to Trump for his signature.

Trump plans to sign the bill when it reaches his desk, a senior White House official said.

The Epstein scandal has been a political thorn in Trump's side for months, partly because he amplified conspiracy theories about Epstein to his own supporters.

Many Trump voters believe his administration has covered up Epstein's ties to powerful figures and obscured details surrounding his death, which was ruled a suicide, in a Manhattan jail in 2019.

Epstein was a New York financier who fraternized with some of the most powerful men in the country.

Before the House vote, about two dozen survivors of Epstein's alleged abuse joined a trio of Democratic and Republican lawmakers outside the US Capitol to urge the release of the records.

RAIL 'SABOTAGE' Poland to close Russian consulate

AFP, Warsaw

Poland said yesterday it would close the Russian consulate in the northern port city of Gdansk, after accusing Moscow of orchestrating the sabotage of a train line earlier this week.

Poland had already shut other consulates outside Warsaw, and the move would leave the Russian embassy in the capital as Moscow's only diplomatic mission in the country. "I have decided to withdraw consent for the operation of the Russian consulate in Gdansk," Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said.

Polish officials accused Russia of sending 2 Ukrainians to sabotage part of Lublin-Warsaw train line.

No let-up in arson, crude bomb attacks

FROM PAGE 16

Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

ASI Nur Islam, who was in front of the police station gate, was injured. He has been to a hospital, police said.

About one and half hours later, a parked bus was set on fire in front of the BTV Bhaban in the Rampura area around 9:55pm.

Mohammad Raju, officer in-charge of Hatirjheel Police Station, said they are investigating whether the fire was an act of sabotage.

DC Talebur said police have intensified efforts to maintain law and order in the city. The DMP has urged the city dwellers to provide information about the attackers to the

nearest police station or via emergency number 999.

Meanwhile in Dhamrai, miscreants hurled a petrol bomb at Grameen Bank's Suapur branch early yesterday. No damage was reported in the attack.

Another parked bus was set ablaze in Narayanganj's Fatullah early yesterday.

Anwar Hossain, OC of Fatullah Model Police Station, said locals managed to extinguish the fire, but most of the seats and interior of the vehicle were burnt.

In another incident, a group of miscreants set fire to a compartment of a train at Mymensingh Railway Station early yesterday. However, railway security force members brought the blaze under control before it could spread.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Moulvibazar
www.rhd.portal.gov.bd

Date: 18-11-2025

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have published through e-GP portal.

Tender ID, Package No. & Date of Publishing	Name of Work	Procurement Method	Last selling date	Closing and Opening date & time
1177932 PMP-Minor-Works-09/EE/MRD/OTM/2025-2026 18-11-2025	Emergency Bullah Palisiding Protective Work With Geo-bag at chainage: 02+020 km, 02+600 km, 02+960 km, 03+260 km 03+870 km of Kulara (Gazipur)-Juri(Shagaran) Upazila connecting Road (Z-2825) road under Road Division, Moulvibazar during the year 2025-2026.	OTM	30-11-2025, Up to 17:00	01-12-2025, At 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please tenders on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Moulvibazar.

Further information's and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk: www.eprocure.gov.bd)


Md. Kaysar Hamid
ID No.602195
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Moulvibazar
Date: 24-11-2025
E-mail: cemou@rhd.gov.bd

GD-2488


POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212
স্থানক নং- ২৯,১১,০০০,০০০,৭৯৪,১০,০১৮,৪২৪৯

www.powergrid.gov.bd
তারিখ: ১৮/১১/২০২৫

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার শ্রিন্ড রাখলাদেশ পিএলসি
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212
স্থানক নং- ২৯,১১,০০০,০০০,৭৯৪,১০,০১৮,৪২৪৯

www.powergrid.gov.bd
তারিখ: ১৮/১১/২০২৫

পাওয়ার শ্রিন্ডের জিএমডি, সিরাজগঞ্জ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিয়ন্ত্রিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টেলে প্রকাশিত হচ্ছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works
1176467	GMD Sirajganj-Sirajganj 132 KV-1	Protective Coating and Refurbishment of Tower Legs for the Sirajganj-Ullapara 132 KV High Voltage Transmission Line, GMD Sirajganj, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC
1180250	GMD Sirajganj-Shajadpur 132 KV-1	Protective Coating and Refurbishment of Tower Legs for the Shajadpur-Ullapara and Bera-Patgari 132 KV High-Voltage Transmission Line, GMD Sirajganj, Power Grid Bangladesh

আগ্রহী টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ মামুস সুব্র

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, সিরাজগঞ্জ

লেক কর্মসূল

FBCCI needs its voice back

Apex trade body failing to serve private sector sans elected leadership

Trade bodies exist for a reason. They are the loudest voices of the private sector, pushing for lower tariffs, clearer rules, and sympathetic policies. Yet, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has gone strangely quiet of late. It is not because the country's business community is content, but because their apex body has been decapitated.

Since the political changeover last year, the FBCCI's boardroom has been empty of actual business leaders. Instead, the interim government has installed bureaucrats to keep the seat warm. First came a retired bureaucrat; now sits a serving additional secretary. This is a routine adherence to outdated rules. Asking a bureaucrat to represent the sheer dynamism of the private sector is a disservice to the economy. And its consequences are potentially severe.

Bangladesh boasts a \$500 billion economy with the private sector commanding 85 percent of it. The FBCCI typically advises the government on export-import policies and assists in setting prices for essential commodities. Without elected leadership, that system is broken. The government, deprived of genuine consultation, seems to be flying blind. To be fair, the rot set in long before the arrival of the current administration. Under the previous regime, the FBCCI became a patronage mill. Leadership elections were often theatrical shams. The institution was hollowed out by politicisation.

So, restoring credibility will require a new system, not just an election. The reforms currently on the table are promising. The most consequential shift is at the top: the president and three vice-presidents will now be directly elected rather than chosen by nominated and elected directors. That will end an opaque tradition in which directors selected the leadership from among themselves. The board itself is being downsized. The previously bloated assembly of 80 directors—comprising 34 nominated and 46 elected representatives—will be reduced to 44. Under the new rules, 30 directors will be chosen through direct ballot, split evenly between chamber and association groups. The remaining 14 seats will be nominated, again divided equally, with a new decision to ensure female representation in both categories. This is the right direction, as the new rules may dismantle the old syndicates.

However, the deadline has been missed. Legal squabbles over membership fees and powers of the election commission have been allowed to fester. A promised September poll date came and went. This drift must end. The interim government's new appointee, Abdur Rahim Khan, has 120 days to hold the vote. He should treat this timeline as sacrosanct. Bangladesh is navigating a fragile economic transition, and so needs a vocal, perhaps even prickly, partner in the private sector. The FBCCI must function as a robust counterweight as well as an adviser to the government. The economy needs a voice, and that voice must belong to the private sector.

Stop the rise in secondary dropout

Govt must take proper policy measures to keep students in school

While Bangladesh has over the years achieved notable success in attaining high completion rates at the primary level, the situation appears to be the opposite at the secondary level. Our report on the recently conducted Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2025 shows a steady decline in completion rates as students move from primary to lower secondary and then to upper secondary across all divisions. Although around 84 percent of children complete primary school nationwide, less than half manage to finish secondary education. The survey further reveals that children from low-income households—particularly girls—are more likely to drop out before completing secondary school. Experts attribute this situation to socio-economic conditions and structural weaknesses within the education system.

The survey divides secondary education into two levels—lower (classes six to eight) and upper (classes nine and ten)—and reveals a sharp fall in completion rates at each level. While 83.7 percent of children complete primary school, only 69.3 percent complete lower secondary, and a mere 43.9 percent complete upper secondary. The rich-poor divide in secondary education is particularly alarming: only 21 percent of children from poor families finish upper secondary, compared to around 66 percent from wealthier households. An urban-rural divide also persists, with 49 percent of urban students completing upper secondary against 42 percent of rural students. Additionally, certain divisions are performing worse than others. Sylhet, for instance, reports the lowest completion rates at both lower and upper secondary levels.

Early marriage remains a major reason for girls dropping out, particularly outside Dhaka. Meanwhile, many low-income families are forced to prioritise immediate household income over education, pushing boys into work instead of keeping them in school. This partly explains why only 63 percent of boys complete lower secondary, compared to 76 percent of girls. Educationists also note that the teaching-learning process in mainstream schools often fails to engage students, further contributing to dropout rates.

Therefore, we urge the government to address the underlying causes of high dropout rates at the secondary level. While existing laws aimed at preventing child marriage and labour must be strictly enforced across all divisions, targeted interventions are needed for the more vulnerable groups and regions. Measures such as inflation-adjusted stipends and free or subsidised educational materials should be considered for secondary students. The government must also expand vocational training opportunities for students who are unable to continue in mainstream education. Equally important is the need to make classroom teaching more engaging and to improve the overall standard of education. Finally, increased investment in both primary and secondary education is essential to ensure quality learning and prevent dropouts.

EDITORIAL

A second chance for Pangaon, but can it unlock its potential?



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury
is adjunct faculty at Bangladesh Maritime University and former head of the Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) and the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal under Chittagong Port Authority.

AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh's container-logistics landscape has just crossed a defining threshold. What has long been discussed as a likely outcome is finally a signed reality: the operating contract for the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal (PICT) has been formally awarded to the Swiss-based Medlog SA, the logistics arm of the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC). The 22-year concession agreement between the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and Medlog Bangladesh Private Ltd will shape how Dhaka connects with global maritime supply chains. For Pangaon, long criticised for its underutilised potential, this is more than a change of operator; it is a second chance to become the inland gateway we once envisaged.

That ambition dates back to 2013, when PICT was built at a cost of about Tk 157 crore and designed to handle 116,000 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) annually. In practice, the terminal has consistently struggled, sometimes operating below 20 percent of its capacity. The reasons for the failure remain familiar: operational bottlenecks, inconsistent scheduling, weak multimodal integration, and policy gaps that failed to match the rhetoric of shifting cargo from road to river. In the concession process, Medlog emerged as the sole technically qualified bidder, receiving a perfect technical score, while the competing bid from HR Lines was deemed non-responsive. When the government extended the proposed tenure from 12 years to 22 years in July 2025, it cleared the way for this transition.

A report by The Daily Star has added further details about the deal. Medlog reportedly plans to increase Pangaon's annual handling capacity by 160,000 TEUs—a substantial boost that, if executed properly, could redefine Pangaon's role in Bangladesh's logistics chain. To strengthen multimodal connectivity, Medlog will also charter inland barges from PICT to link Pangaon with other river terminals and seaports. The project, as per the company, aims to stimulate trade, enhance supply-chain resilience, and elevate Bangladesh's logistics sector to globally competitive standards. These commitments go beyond earlier public disclosures and

signal a more ambitious operational roadmap.

The timing of this concession aligns with Bangladesh's gradual efforts to modernise its logistics ecosystem. Medlog has previously expressed interest in major inland and coastal terminal investments, with estimated upgrades of around \$400 million. This mirrors a global trend where ocean carriers invest in inland logistics to



Since its inauguration in 2013, the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal (PICT) has consistently struggled, sometimes operating below 20 percent of its capacity.

PHOTO: ASHRAF KARIM CHOWDHURY

secure network reliability. PICT offers such an opportunity, provided that the surrounding infrastructure supports, rather than constrains, it.

This perspective connects with arguments from my previous article where I emphasised the potential synergy between Pangaon and the Matarbari Deep-Sea Port. Pangaon serves as Dhaka's inland gateway, while Matarbari offers the deep water needed for large vessels that Chattogram and Mongla cannot accommodate. Together, the two could form a corridor supporting triangular service models—such as Pangaon-Matarbari-US/Europe—reducing reliance on transhipment hubs and deepening Bangladesh's integration into global shipping networks. The concession agreement keeps that

exporters, especially in the time-sensitive RMG sector. Systemic barriers such as limited jetties for inland vessels at both Pangaon and private terminals have seen only incremental progress.

Riverine constraints further compound the challenge. The Buriganga-Shitalakshya corridor, for instance, suffers from insufficient draft of around four metres, sharp bends near Fatullah, and vessel-length restrictions of roughly 83 metres. These limitations prevent typical 350-TEU feeder vessels from accessing Pangaon. Overcoming such barriers requires proper river dredging and training as well as modern navigational aids.

Connectivity by road remains another bottleneck. Although Pangaon lies only 13 kilometres or so

from central Dhaka, poor road links blunt its geographic advantage. The incomplete Middle Circular Road—particularly the crucial Kalakandi-Hemayetpur stretch—continues to restrict integration with industrial zones across Savar, Tongi, and Gazipur. Completing this link could significantly reduce transit times and support a meaningful modal shift to inland waterways.

The economic case for such reforms is compelling. Moving a container between Dhaka and Chattogram costs \$800-1,000 per TEU, which is among the highest inland logistics costs in Asia. In comparison, India's inland waterways operate at \$250-300 per TEU. Efficient utilisation of Pangaon could reduce Bangladesh's logistics cost per TEU by up to 30 percent, strengthening export competitiveness at a time when margins for key sectors like RMG are tightening.

A long-term concession offers a realistic path forward, but success hinges on close cooperation between Medlog and government agencies. The authorities must introduce fixed berthing windows at Chattogram, ensure scheduled dredging, complete the Middle Circular Road, and accelerate digitisation of customs and port processes. Medlog can bring global best practices, but only a supportive ecosystem will translate those capabilities into measurable gains.

Concerns about foreign involvement in strategic national assets are understandable and merit attention. These can be addressed through transparency, proper tariff oversight, regular performance audits, and robust regulatory safeguards. But the goal should not be to automatically dismiss foreign operators but to align any concession with national interests.

So if the recently inked agreement delivers even part of its potential, the impact could be transformative. A revitalised Pangaon could ease pressure on highways, offer exporters predictable alternatives, and lay the foundation for an integrated Pangaon-Matarbari corridor. This could ultimately support direct Bangladesh-US/EU services through a triangular model.

The signing of the concession therefore brings cautious optimism. The true measure of its success will lie in how quickly Pangaon begins to handle meaningful volumes, how reliably it links with Matarbari, and how transparently its benefits reach shippers. With Medlog's capability and coordinated national support, Pangaon can still evolve into an important pillar of Bangladesh's next-generation logistics system.

WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

The children who work while we look away



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NAZIFA RAIDAH

On the traffic-stricken streets of Dhaka, we all come across a scene that is too depressingly familiar: children moving like shadows between rickshaws and stalls. They never tell us their names, but we all know them. It's that little boy, maybe nine or 10, who knocks on the car window with the gentle insistence and the practised smile of someone who has done this thousands of times. When the light turns green, he jogs alongside the car for a few steps before giving up. In seconds, he is at another window, rehearsing the gesture again. Or it could be the little girl who sits beside her mother on the pavement, making flower garlands, or the small boy who washes cups in tea stalls with his fingers chapped from hot water and detergent. All of them, from the second they perceived this world, were taught survival before they could even utter a full sentence.

These are not rare sights in Bangladesh. They take place within the daily texture of the city. It is baffling how normalised we all are to child labour, and sometimes, I wonder if we even notice them anymore. Over the years, through our reluctance to acknowledge them and their tenacity to live, these children tragically have become permanent features of our lives that we have learned to manoeuvre around, to ignore.

Recent surveys by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and Unicef revealed that 9.2 percent of children aged between 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour, an increase of 1.2 million since 2019. Many of these children are engaged in hazardous sectors like mechanical garages, workshops, and leather factories. They are exposed to industrial fumes, long hours and death, as seen in the fatal factory fire in Mirpur last month. The study also found that lead poisoning, a silent predator, affects 38 percent of young children nationwide. In Dhaka, 65 percent of children are affected. The consequences of lead poisoning are irreversible: stunted cognitive development, reduced academic potential, and lifelong health problems.

One could go ahead and argue that part of the reason behind the normalisation of child labour is linked to our collective acceptance of poverty. According to estimates by Power and Participation Research Centre, poverty in Bangladesh has soared to 28 percent. More often than not, when poverty increases, so does the exploitation of children.

This opens up a debate on child labour in Bangladesh that is rather multifaceted and uncomfortable and the crux of it is rooted in affordability.

Although social safety net allowances exist, they do not keep pace with the rising costs. As a result, poor families are often forced to choose labour over education for their children. In this circumstance, if the state cannot radically lift families out of poverty, demanding that children not work becomes just a strictly moralistic stance.

Sadly, the majority of child labourers are employed in the informal sector—small factories, workshops, street vending, home-based businesses and domestic work—which makes eliminating child labour by 2025 a fever dream.

It's not like the Bangladesh government has not taken any steps—it has ratified international conventions, drafted national plans, and proposed a Tk 25 billion programme to eliminate child labour and rehabilitate those children—but all of these stumble at the implementation stage. In 2023, the Bangladesh Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments identified 3,459 child labour violations, but the lack of routine monitoring and enforcement of safety standards still claims the lives of children like 13-year-old Asma Akter or 14-year-old Mahira Akter and Abdul Alim. These teenagers were working in the garment factory, which was engulfed by an adjacent chemical warehouse fire last month in Mirpur.

The situation is worse for children working inside Export Processing

Zones, as the government continues to obstruct unannounced inspections there. Moreover, enforcement remains nearly impossible in informal sectors, since the Labour Act of 2006 is primarily restricted to formal sectors. Sadly, the majority of child labourers are employed in the informal sector—small factories, workshops, street vending, home-based businesses and domestic work—which makes eliminating child labour by 2025 a fever dream.

Change in this area requires more than legislation. It requires a shift in belief and a culture that values children as children, not as miniature labourers. Strong social safety net programmes must be created so that families are not forced to rely on child labour income. Evidence from Latin America shows that well-targeted conditional cash transfers reduced child labour significantly in Brazil under its Child Labor Eradication Program (PETI). Similar programmes reduced child labour by nearly 20 percent in Honduras, while simultaneously improving school attendance and health outcomes. However, for such a programme to work in Bangladesh, inspections and interventions must reach the workshops, markets, and other places where exploitation hides in plain sight, as exemplified by India's Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Brazil's PETI after-school programmes, and Ecuador's Working Boys' Center.

On this World Children's Day, perhaps the most honest thing we can do is not celebrate but pause. We need to call a spade a spade and recognise that the children we see working in our streets, in our factories, workshops and homes, were never given a choice. Let's try to ensure they have that—a chance to live their childhood as children, not labourers.

The case for an Islamic digital bank in Bangladesh

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MEZBAH UDDIN AHMED and
ATM ANISUR RABBANI

According to a recent report by The Daily Star, Bangladesh Bank has received 13 new applications for digital bank licences, including one from a local conglomerate seeking to establish an Islamic digital bank. These applications followed the central bank's renewed call under its revised Guidelines to Establish Digital Bank, issued in August 2025. By contrast, the original guidelines released in June 2023 attracted 52 applications, of which only two—Nagad and Kori Digital Bank—were granted provisional approval, and the progress of both has stalled.

A digital bank is a fully branchless, end-to-end virtual entity designed to provide inclusive financial services through entirely online platforms. This model of banking differs fundamentally from the digitalisation of traditional banks, which involves upgrading parts of existing operations with digital tools while continuing to rely on physical branches, in-person services, and legacy systems.

Although a digital bank maintains a registered head office to house management and support staff and serves as a central hub for addressing customer complaints both physically and digitally, it does not operate physical branches, sub-branches, or over-the-counter facilities. To offer efficient, competitive, and innovative financial products, its ecosystem typically integrates artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, blockchain, and other advanced technologies. It may issue its own virtual cards, QR-based instruments, and other advanced digital tools to facilitate customer transactions, and can utilise the existing infrastructure of traditional banks, mobile financial service providers, and other licensed payment channels.

Bangladesh Bank has set the minimum paid-up capital for digital banks at Tk 300 crore under the revised guidelines, up from Tk 125 crore in the original guidelines. In comparison, traditional banks are required to maintain a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 500 crore. Additionally, the prudential regulations of Bangladesh Bank, including the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), Advance-to-Deposit Ratio (ADR), Capital-to-Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR), Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR), will apply to digital banks, alongside other laws

and regulatory provisions relevant to the banking business.

Although Bangladesh Bank's digital banking guidelines provide a broad operational framework, they do not include provisions specifically tailored to Islamic digital banks. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect that an Islamic digital bank, in addition to meeting all requirements applicable to digital banks, would need to establish a robust

For instance, when a client applies for a sales-based financing facility through a mobile app, the system can automatically verify the supplier's credentials, confirm the existence of the underlying asset, generate an electronic sales contract, and record both ownership transfer and delivery. This digital workflow would prevent fictitious trading and ensure full traceability of every transaction. The resulting immutable audit trail would enhance

models, thereby reducing their dependence on collateral and manual verification.

The possibilities extend to social finance as well. Digital zakat, sadaqah, and waqf tools can allow donors to track contributions instantly. Islamic robo-advisors can guide customers on ethical wealth management. Linkage to crowdfunding platforms based on Musharakah or Mudarabah structures can connect investors with halal ventures,

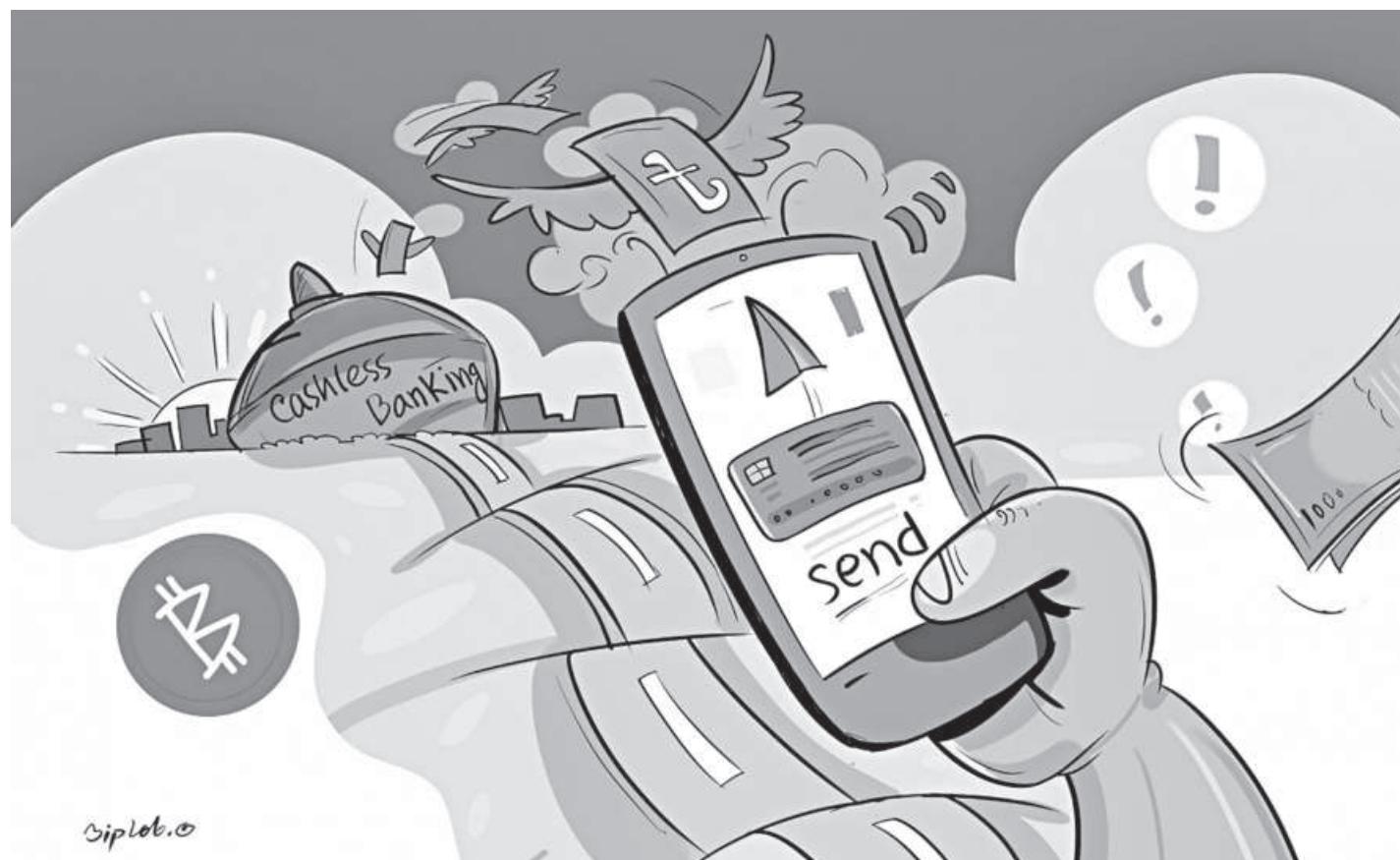
to no involvement in auditing information systems. In a digital banking environment, this approach must fundamentally change. Shariah committees will need to engage directly with the underlying digital architecture. They must be able to assess digital contract structures, evaluate data integrity and governance, address issues of cyber ethics, and scrutinise the fairness of algorithms. A similar shift is needed in internal Shariah audits, which traditionally overlook information systems or examine them only superficially.

This evolution demands a new generation of professionals who combine Islamic jurisprudence with technological competence. It may be difficult to find individuals with all these competencies, but at the very least, Shariah committees and internal Shariah audit teams must collectively represent this multidisciplinary balance.

Cybersecurity is another critical area that must be recognised as a fundamental Shariah concern, as it directly upholds the Islamic core principles of trust and the protection of wealth. Strong encryption, secure cloud infrastructure, and real-time fraud monitoring should be seen not only as technical requirements but also as essential for upholding Shariah objectives.

Regulators will need to guide this transformation. Bangladesh Bank should consider developing a dedicated regulatory framework for Islamic digital banking. This framework should cover digital architecture certification, algorithmic transparency, data governance, cybersecurity standards, and the enforceability of electronic contracts. The requirements should be set from both technical and Shariah perspectives for Islamic digital banks, while ensuring that regulation facilitates innovation without compromising integrity. Capacity building for regulators, Shariah experts, fintech professionals, and system auditors is equally essential, ensuring that technological sophistication and Shariah compliance are integrated seamlessly and advance simultaneously.

It is particularly timely for Bangladesh to introduce Islamic digital banks, given recent experiences among traditional ones. However, an Islamic digital bank should represent more than a digital version of existing entities. It must articulate a clear value proposition that truly distinguishes it from others while demonstrating the ability to restore public trust in the Islamic banking sector. In a country where smartphone penetration stands at 72.8 percent yet financial inclusion lags, a well-designed Islamic digital bank could help bridge this divide. However, realising this potential will depend heavily on enhancing digital financial literacy across the population.



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

Shariah governance framework ensuring that every aspect of its activities adheres to Islamic principles. Its distinction from traditional Islamic banks may not primarily lie in the structuring of the underlying agreements but in their execution.

Traditional Islamic banks in Bangladesh have long faced criticism for weak asset linkage, reliance on paperwork-based processes rather than real trade, limited transparency in fund utilisation and profit distribution, and governance shortcomings. These weaknesses have contributed to the recent crises in several banks. A thoughtfully designed Islamic digital bank can help reverse this trend by embedding Shariah compliance within its technological architecture.

transaction authenticity, a critical need in Bangladesh's Islamic banking landscape.

An Islamic digital bank also has the potential to fundamentally reshape savings, deposits, and investments. Customers can open accounts digitally, track the utilisation of their funds in real time, and monitor profit distributions down to the transaction level. Smart-saving and micro-investment tools can be added to allow users to automate small savings and invest digitally in capital market instruments, such as sukuk and other Shariah-compliant assets. AI-driven micro or nano Mudarabah and Qard Hasan products can extend small-scale financing to microentrepreneurs based on AI scoring

supported by automated Shariah screening and transparent fund flows.

Clearly, the potential is significant. However, implementing a fully automated workflow and introducing various service options may pose challenges as Bangladesh's supporting digital ecosystem is still developing. Additionally, technologies such as smart contracts, blockchain, and advanced verification systems are expensive and resource-intensive.

One of the major challenges for an Islamic digital bank will be ensuring robust Shariah governance. Traditionally, Shariah committees in Bangladesh have largely confined their role to reviewing documents submitted to them, with little

No refuge for Palestinians caught between Israeli military and Jewish mobs



Jamal Kani
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JAMAL KANI

In the occupied West Bank, Palestinian villages have become open fields for illegal Jewish settlers operating under the protection of the Israeli army. In recent weeks, organised Jewish mobs, some armed with rifles and sticks, others carrying torches, have unleashed violence across occupied Palestinian towns and villages. It is not only that Israeli soldiers stand providing cover for the illegal Jewish mobs, but the army also blocks Palestinian farmers from accessing their farms for the annual olive harvest.

The Jewish mob's thuggery follows a clear pattern where settlers attack homes, burn olive groves, beat villagers and drive out farmers from their land. Multiple international eyewitness accounts and videos showed Jewish settlers descending from Jewish-only colonies, escorted by soldiers firing tear gas or live ammunition at Palestinians defending their farms. Meanwhile, Western media copies Israeli military euphemising these attacks as "flash points" or "friction."

Since October, the olive harvest season in Palestine, Palestinian farmers have been attacked at least 259 times by illegal Jewish settlers. When Palestinian civilians attempt to defend their villages, they face violence—nearly 1000 died at the hands of Jewish settler mobs in the West Bank since 2023, including four American-Palestinian citizens.

Often, no charges were filed against the Jewish murderers. The violence has become so normalised that government ministers openly praise the mobs as defenders of "the Land of Israel." Jewish settlers now act as shock-troops in a slow-motion official annexation strategy, blurring the line between state and vigilante.

Under the watchful eyes of Israeli soldiers, Jewish mobs attack journalists filming the olive harvest. Refusing to intervene, the Israeli army fired steel-plated rubber bullets and tear gas at the Palestinian farmers and international activists, dispersing the olive pickers and empowering the Jewish mobs to cut and burn olive trees. In another arsonist attack, Jewish settlers on November 13 torched a mosque, sprayed the walls with racist graffiti, and set cars ablaze.

It is an open partnership between the Israeli army and Jewish settlers under an apartheid occupation. A dual legal system where illegal Israeli Jewish settlers are governed by civilian courts, while Palestinians have little rights in military courts. The distinction is not administrative; it is what Jewish apartheid in Palestine looks like.

According to Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups, Jewish impunity is systemic: 97 percent of complaints filed against Jewish vigilantes resulted in acquittals or closed without investigation. In

contrast, in Israeli military courts, 96 percent of the cases against Palestinians lead to convictions.

Beyond direct mob violence, a parallel system of control is tightening the noose on Palestinian daily life. According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, there are 877 checkpoints and roadblocks restricting the movement of 3.3

of systematic separation.

The economic and social cost for non-Jews is enormous. Trucks carrying perishable goods rot at checkpoints; workers lose entire shifts; ambulances sit in line. As one Palestinian described the ordeal simply: "time is being stolen from us."

The military checkpoints serve as a visible thread in a larger web of

the occupier and silences dissent in the streets of Ramallah or Jenin, settlers torch olive groves a few miles away.

Internationally, Israel continues to face little consequence. The United States provides billions in aid while shielding it from accountability at the United Nations. The EU issues perfunctory statements

racist mob culture.

These illegal colonies are bankrolled by an extensive network of Israel-first Zionist Americans, among them the Kushner family, and non-profit platforms, including several synagogues that openly host fundraising drives to finance the construction of Jewish-only homes on stolen Palestinian land.

This fusion of settler ideology and state power represents the logical endpoint of Israel's occupation. The army's policies ensure that every act of settler terror becomes yet another instrument in its overarching strategy. The apartheid wall, checkpoints, and military zones suffocate Palestinian life, while Jewish mobs terrorise their towns and villages.

To that end, the Jewish mob violence is not an aberration, but rather an inevitable outcome of a system built on Jewish supremacy and dispossession. As long as Western governments and media continue to ignore this silent Israeli war in the West Bank, as they did prior to October 7, 2023, in Gaza, Israel will persist in quietly sanctioning, arming and shielding the Jewish mobs.

Unlike in Gaza, there is no organised armed resistance to defend Palestinians in the West Bank, no declared war zone, no pretext to hide behind. What Israel is doing exposes its cruelty in its rawest form. It is carried out in broad daylight against a defenceless people whose only crime is existing on their own land, refusing despair, where their mere survival has become an act of resistance. It is a 77-year-long, unprovoked, racist campaign of state-sanctioned Jewish-mob terror.

This is an abridged version of an article first published on Middle East Monitor on November 17, 2025.



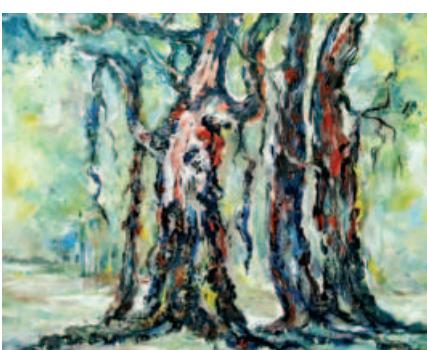
A masked Jewish extremist swings a slingshot while hurling stones at Palestinians who had gathered for the annual olive harvest season, during an attack by Israeli settlers on the Palestinian village of Beita, south of Nablus in the West Bank, on October 10, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: AFP

million Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Checkpoints are for the non-Jewish only natives while the illegal Jewish settlers enjoy free movement on Israeli-only roads. These barriers are not for "security," they operate as economic choke points in a regime

structural Jewish apartheid.

Caught between armed Jewish mobs and military rule, Palestinians find no refuge in their own leadership. The Palestinian Authority (PA), remains largely paralysed or unable to defend them. While the PA maintains security cooperation with



PHOTOS: AISHWARYA RAIHAN

'SCAPE BETWEEN SPACES': Divinity on canvas

AISHWARYA RAIHAN

As a child in art school, I was known to my painting teacher as the student obsessed with landscapes. I might not have bloomed into a remarkable landscape artist, but fast forward to 2025 – after work, I dragged my exhausted self to Dwip Gallery in Lalmoni just to witness the landscape art exhibition they are currently hosting.

Scape between Spaces was inaugurated on November 14, 2025, featuring 45 artists from various academic, religious and cultural backgrounds, and age groups, whose works were selected from an open call a few months back.

The participating artists have showcased their skills through different

methods and mediums. The reflections of their clever and thoughtful imagination are presently beautifying the interior of Dwip Gallery. Every canvas, every piece of paper holds a window to a different world through the eyes of an artist.

Upon entering the gallery, I was met with a heavily textured painting of a tree – a demonstration of what lies ahead. The first set of paintings that drew my attention belonged to Mostaque Ahmed, and they reminded me of the fluidity of alcohol ink. Muhtasim Galib Inan displays his unlimited patience and precision with a pen through *The Red*



Tree. Sajan Rana's surrealistic painting is thought-provoking, whereas Shafin Arshar's minimalist photography of bird silhouettes is much more adorable.

Our precious rivers, canals, swamps, ponds, lakes, wetlands and the bay are a large part of our livelihood, and thus the endless number and structures of boats adorning the landscapes. It is no wonder that multiple artists portrayed marvellous landscapes in their own unique art styles – some as prints, some as paintings; some with muted colours, some with vibrant hues; some proving the saying

"God is in the details", and others, "Less is more". Samia Sabiha Rini, Apurba Ranjan Biswas, Md Hamim Biswas, Shibananda Adhikary Biplob, Md Sajjadur Rahman Shihan and Uttam Kumar Talukder are some of the remarkable creators of these boats.

A landscape art exhibition is incomplete without flora. Debrupa Ghosh's *Darkness and Light* in monochrome looks otherworldly, whereas Rituparna Saha and Monidipa Dasgupta created pieces straight out of fairy tales.

In short, *Scape between Spaces* showcases the mesmerising charm of our diverse landscapes and the versatility of artistic practices in Bangladesh. Dwip Gallery will run this exhibition till November 27, 2025.

Cultural affairs ministry unveils tribute documentary on Humayun Ahmed

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has released a 25-minute state-produced documentary honouring renowned writer and filmmaker Humayun Ahmed. Directed by *Debi* filmmaker Anam Biswas, the film revisits Humayun's life, influence and contributions to literature, television and cinema.

Published on the Chief adviser's office's official Facebook page on November 18, the documentary is part of the ministry's *Celebrating Bangladeshi Legends* series. The accompanying note highlighted Humayun as Bangladesh's most beloved author and the creator of iconic characters such as Himu,

Misir Ali, Rupa and Shuvro. Cultural Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, who had earlier pledged state recognition for Humayun, shared the film, calling him "the man, the myth." The documentary also features reflections from Afzal Hossain, Faruk Wasif, Luna Rushdi and others.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Siddhartha'

Arshinagar brings Hermann Hesse's timeless novel to the stage, tracing a young Brahman's restless journey from asceticism to enlightenment. Directed by Reza Arif, the play explores spiritual hunger, disillusionment, and the search for truth – moving from sacred renunciation to worldly experience in a lyrical, visually meditative production.

Date: Thursday-Friday November 20-21, 2025

Time: 7:30pm onwards

Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA



BotTala unveils 25th production 'Jojongondha Maya'

BotTala Theatre Company is set to premiere its 25th production, *Jojongondha Maya*, at the Experimental Theatre Hall of the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy on November 27 at 7:30pm, with two additional shows on November 28.

Written by Badruzzaman Alamgir and directed by Imran Khan Munna, the play follows a mother searching for her

missing child, framing personal grief within the broader realities of war and its aftermath. Alamgir describes it as a reflection on how the powerless carry the heaviest costs of conflict, while Munna notes the emotional pull of a mother's vigil. The cast includes Samina Luthfa Nitra and Mohammad Ali Haider, supported by a creative team overseeing music, costumes, and lighting.

NEWS

Strict conditions raise syndication fear

FROM PAGE 16

Asif Nazrul on October 30, opposing Malaysia's criteria outright.

"I don't think any of the Bangladeshi recruiting agencies can fulfill the three criteria. These are also not important at all," said Mohammad Fakhruddin Alam, former joint secretary of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, and one of the signatories to the agencies' letter.

He said the demand for a 10,000 sq ft office and fully controlled training centres would only inflate recruitment costs, which had already soared to Tk 450,000-600,000 between 2022 and 2024.

It was "totally unnecessary" to require such office space and training centres when Malaysia itself does not mandate specific training, he said.

The letter from the 10 agencies argues that most local recruiters would fail to meet the requirement of sending at least 3,000 workers in the past five years due to disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine war, the global economic downturn, long running syndication in the Malaysian labour market, and the closure of labour channels by the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Libya.

Migration researchers and industry insiders say Bangladesh's past experiences with Malaysia are fraught.

During 2022-24, a syndicate of 101 agencies, handpicked by Malaysia, operated under the influence of two powerful business figures, one based in each country. The same leaders were

behind the syndicates that controlled recruitment during 2016-18. Malaysia halted recruitment twice, in 2018 and again in 2024, citing widespread labour exploitation.

A Malaysia-based researcher said exploitation persists. "Even now, everyday, four to five workers call me, saying that they are jobless. A lot of them don't even get a redress after complaining to the labour department," he told this correspondent on November 16, requesting anonymity.

Around 8 lakh Bangladeshis live in Malaysia, but thousands remain undocumented and out of work, the researcher said, adding, "A major problem in Malaysia is you bring excessive workers and leave them jobless."

Although the 2022 memorandum of understanding capped migration costs at Tk 79,000, expenses soared to Tk 600,000 under the syndicate-run system.

Observers fear that limiting recruitment to a few agencies again would revive the very practices Bangladesh has struggled to escape.

"I am sensing putting old wine in a new bottle," a Bangladesh-based migration researcher said.

Asked whether the new Malaysian conditions would lower costs or ensure fair recruitment, a senior expatriates' welfare ministry official replied, "We are in the process of negotiation. Let's see."

3 Bangladeshis 'shot dead by Libyan mafia'

FROM PAGE 16

Fatema said the family sold land and irregular channels, and that over the past year alone he sent more than 50 youths from Adityapur via Libya.

His brother Selim reportedly assisted him. After news of Imran's death, families of both brothers fled their homes, locals added.

Fatema Akter, Imran's elder sister, told The Daily Star, "One day my brother told me, if we paid Tk 20 lakh to broker Shipon, he would take him to Italy. Several of my brother's friends were planning to go, and he wanted to tag along with them."

She said he had warned Shipon to ensure her brother was taken directly to Italy. "Today, my brother is lost in the Mediterranean due to some local mafia."

Fatema said the family sold land and

paid Shipon Tk 42 lakh in instalments after he claimed Imran was being detained and tortured by the mafia. "He later demanded more, but we could not afford it. Because we could not pay, the mafia killed my brother."

Munna's aunt, Khadija Akter, told journalists, "I gave Shipon a loan of Tk 40 lakh. We cannot accept the death of my nephew. We demand exemplary punishment of this broker and request the government to return the body."

Bayezid's father, Kuddus Sheikh, said, "How can I accept my son's death? The broker initially denied involvement, and only later did we learn my son was in Libya. He is now no more."

Mobile retailers demand

FROM PAGE 16

officer of Times PR, from their homes.

The media invitation to cover the MBCB press conference came with Sohel's mobile number.

Sohel, a board member of online air ticketing agency 24tkt.com that allegedly swindled about Tk 50 crore from small agencies and customers a few years back, was released yesterday morning.

Piyash, also the CEO of gadget retailer Sumash Tech, was released yesterday evening.

DB Chief Mohammad Shafiqul Islam confirmed the duo's detention.

"They were organising a press conference against NEIR, so we detained Piyash to ask why they were opposing it. He said that he is not against NEIR, so we released him," Islam said.

After his release, Sohel, also the head of online at Bhor Kagoj, described his experience in a Facebook post.

"Around midnight, using the excuse that the DB chief wanted to talk to me, 5-6 DB members forcibly picked me up... My name was written in the accused register... I realised that on the instruction of a government adviser, I was detained just to allow nine mobile phone businessmen to run a monopoly business," he wrote.

After news of Sohel's detention spread, social media discussions mentioned Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the Chief Adviser responsible for the Posts, Telecommunications and ICT Ministry.

Taiyeb rejected the allegations.

In a press release from the ministry, he said: "With ill intentions, some media outlets have blamed me based on a Facebook post... Law enforcement agencies do their work. There is no scope for me to be involved."

Reacting to this, MBCB Vice-President Shamim Mollah said: "I request you -- if

you are involved in these activities, please step back with your self-respect. Do not make such manoeuvres to increase the profits of a syndicate."

In another Facebook post, Taiyeb wrote that the press conference invitation – titled "Addressing Concerns Regarding NEIR Implementation" – was issued under the name of Mohammad Aslam, who claimed to be the president of the MBCB, but the organisation is not registered with the commerce ministry.

Indicating Sohel's involvement with illegal importers, he said the phone number listed on the invitation as Aslam's was actually the journalist's own, and that Sohel had personally sent the invitation to other journalists.

He wrote: "How can a journalist organise a press conference on behalf of a smuggling accused group... using a fake title, fake identity and his own phone number? How can a journalist act as the spokesperson, PR agent, consultant or beneficiary of smugglers? Is this within journalistic ethics?"

"Therefore, no one is above the law... If anyone goes beyond ethical boundaries and becomes involved with an illegal group, then they must face questioning by law enforcement."

Such questioning should happen in daylight, ensuring transparency.

"I personally want NBR to rationally reconsider mobile import duty and the tax structure for local manufacturing so that handset prices come down," Taiyeb added.

Asked about the allegation, Sohel told The Daily Star: "Alongside journalism, I have been running a PR agency called Times PR for 13-14 years... Since I was coordinating media for this programme, the letter was issued in the name of the organisation's president. The phone number was mine so that journalists could contact me."

Shipon's aunt Setara Begum said, "Shipon has taken many people, but we never knew anyone had died from gunfire, nor that he had killed anyone. Shipon lives in Libya, and his family is currently not at home. Their house is locked. We cannot say more."

Madaripur Additional Superintendent of Police Jahangir Alam said police were informed through a broker that three young men from the district were killed by mafia gunfire in the Mediterranean while trying to reach Italy.

"The victims' families have been asked to submit written complaints. Legal action will be taken upon receiving these complaints, and the brokers will not be spared," he said.

Govt moves to lease terminal out to UAE operator

FROM PAGE 16

member (finance) of CPA.

On Monday, the CPA signed two major agreements in Dhaka: one with APM Terminals, a concern of Denmark's Maersk Group, for building and operating the Laldia Terminal under a 33-year concession; and another with Switzerland-based Medlog SA to operate the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal for 22 years.

A High Court yesterday started hearing on the rule concerning the legality of the CPA's ongoing process to appoint a foreign operator for NCT.

The rule followed a writ petition filed earlier this year by Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibadi Forum.

Constructed in 2007 at a cost of Tk 2,712 crore, NCT is one of the largest terminals at Chattogram port and now handles a major share of the country's import and export containers.

It is currently operated by Chittagong Dry Dock Limited, an entity of the Bangladesh Navy, which will continue managing the terminal until a foreign operator takes over.

A torch procession was brought out in Chattogram on Tuesday evening, demanding an immediate halt to the leasing out of existing port terminals, including NCT and the Chattogram Container Terminal (CCT), to foreign operators.

Workers and employees from the port joined the procession organised by Bandar Raksha Parishad, which marched along the Port Connecting Road. Protesters later blockaded Boroipool Mor, temporarily disrupting traffic.

Rivalry with '4 Star Group'

FROM PAGE 16

also known as Sohel alias Pata Sohel, from Savar's Birulia. He is believed to have orchestrated the killing.

Later, another suspect, Sujon, 35, also known as Bokpura Sujon, was held from Tongi. On Monday evening, Kibria, member secretary of Jubo Dal's Pallabi thana unit, was shot dead inside a shop.

The following day, his wife filed a murder case with Pallabi Police Station against Sohel, four other named and seven to eight unnamed individuals.

Besides Sohel, the accused named in the case are Joni Bhuiyan, 25; Shohag alias Kallu, 27; Masum alias Bhaigun Masud, 28; and Rokon, 30.

Locals caught Joni while fleeing after firing on Kibria and handed him over to police.

At the briefing, Rab official Mahbub said two factors appear to have driven the killing. "One is the attempt to maintain territorial dominance in Mirpur for extortion, drug trade, and other criminal activities," he said.

The second one is political. Kibria was the member secretary of Jubo Dal's Pallabi thana unit. He recently started working against those he once had ties with. As far as we know, he did not support extortion or drug trade in the area. That may have led to the attack."

He said the suspects may have links to the underworld. "Based on intel, we have seen that recent criminal activities in Mirpur involve the Four Star Group. Four key operatives of the group are Mamun, Ibrahim, Shahadat, and Muktar. Many incidents of unrest or criminal activity across Mirpur occurred on their instructions."

The Rab official said the two arrestees are active members of the gang, which has divided Mirpur into four zones for carrying out their operation.

The arrestees work for Ibrahim and Mamun who control several areas, and they have long been involved in criminal activities there," Lt Col Mahbub said.

While the two arrestees are not the gunmen seen firing on Kibria in CCTV

shots, Rab official said the two arrestees are active members of the gang, which has divided Mirpur into four zones for carrying out their operation.

THE GEN Z guide to financial sanity in your 20s

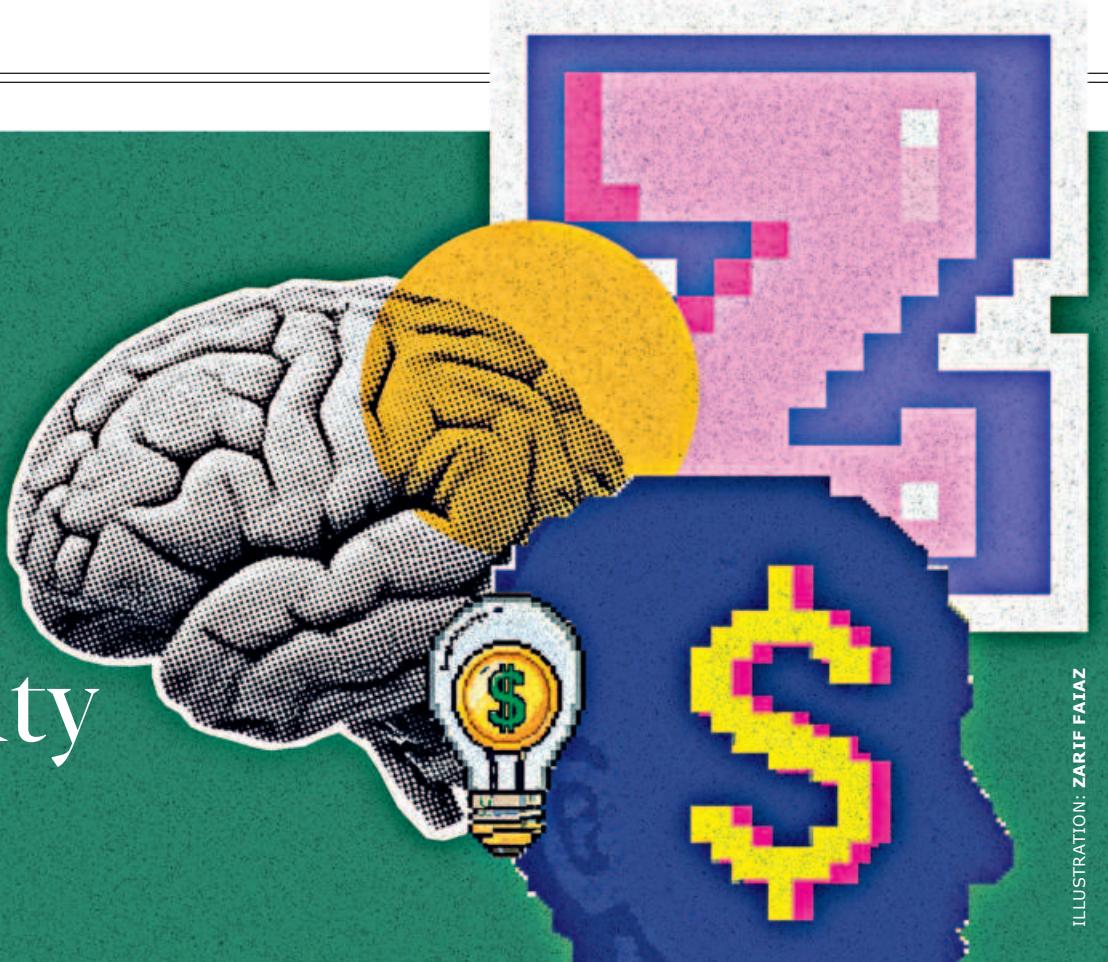


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAJAZ

Budgeting is often portrayed as a joyless exercise meant to strip every pleasant thing out of your life, but that philosophy is exactly why most budgets fail. A functional budget is a mirror, not a wishlist. It should reflect how you actually behave with money rather than how you hope a superior version of you might behave someday.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Financial sanity in our twenties is not about becoming a finance bro overnight or rejecting every impulse purchase that brings us joy. It is about building a system that can survive our bad weeks, unexpected expenses, and the constant oscillation between "I am going to be rich" and "why is everything so expensive?" Our twenties are supposed to be unstable by nature, but our finances do not have to be. So, here is a practical guide to managing money while twirling through our twenties.

Understanding the 50-30-20 framework with Gen Z reality

The 50-30-20 rule is a classic, as it gives structure without suffocating your lifestyle. The idea is to allocate half your income to needs, a little less than a third to wants, and the rest to savings. But the reality is that rent, transportation, groceries, and basic digital necessities often stretch far beyond the 50% mark, especially if you live in an urban area or do not have shared living arrangements. Start by calculating your recurring non-negotiables: rent, groceries, commute, phone bill, and utilities. If these exceed the 50% threshold, adjust the other categories instead of spiralling. It is entirely normal for needs to inflate and savings to fluctuate, but the goal is to maintain proportionality. Over time, as your income grows or your expenses reduce, you can gradually align more closely with the traditional percentage breakdown.

Creating a budget that does not feel like a punishment

Budgeting is often portrayed as a joyless exercise meant to strip every pleasant thing out of your life, but that philosophy is exactly why most budgets fail. A functional budget is a mirror, not a wishlist. It should reflect how you actually behave with money rather than how you hope a superior version of you might behave someday. Once you have your baseline, build a budget that accommodates your habits while gently nudging you toward healthier boundaries. The key is weekly check-ins lasting no more than five minutes. These prevent denial from accumulating and keep you conscious of how much you have used in each category. Over time, you will notice that your spending naturally aligns with your intentions simply because you are monitoring it without judgment.

Practising intentional spending without becoming miserly

In your twenties, it is tempting to view every pleasure purchase as a moral failure, but guilt is neither productive nor sustainable. Instead, the objective is to understand why you are spending and whether the expenditure genuinely improves your wellbeing. One helpful technique is the 48-hour pause rule: if an item is not essential, wait two days before deciding. This delay disrupts impulse buying without denying you the option. Most desires fade when deprived of immediacy, revealing which purchases are driven by emotion rather than value. For higher priced decisions, it helps to evaluate whether the item or experience will matter to you in six months. This shifts your thinking from instant gratification to future satisfaction.

However, intentional spending also means giving yourself permission to enjoy things that bring you consistent joy or comfort. If your favourite café drink genuinely brightens your week or a hobby energises you, those are valid investments in your lifestyle. The key distinction lies not in the price but in the purpose. Mindless spending drains your finances and your peace, while intentional spending builds a life that feels aligned with your priorities.

Managing impulses with a guilt-free fun fund

YOLO (You Only Live Once) culture may not be the healthiest financial motto, but it is important to understand that suppressing impulses entirely is unrealistic. The most effective compromise is establishing a fun fund, a designated amount you are allowed to spend freely each month, without accountability.

When a spontaneous craving hits, whether it is treating yourself to dessert, buying a new dress, or upgrading something unnecessarily, you can indulge without guilt as long as you stay within this fund. Thus, instead of viewing every impulse purchase as a mistake, you anchor it within a controlled environment. If the fund runs out early in the month, the rule is simple: you patiently wait until the next cycle. Over time, this boundary will reshape your impulses.

Building an emergency fund without terrifying yourself

The idea of saving three to six months' worth of expenses sounds noble until you try calculating the number and realise it rivals your annual tuition. Most people in their twenties panic at the thought of building such a fund, and that fear alone becomes a barrier. A gentler

approach begins with a one-month target. This is achievable, concrete, and immediately useful. Once you reach that milestone, aim for two months, then three. Keep this fund in a separate savings account where it is accessible but not easily mingled with your daily finances. You want to be able to reach it during genuine emergencies and not during minor inconveniences or existential shopping episodes. Over time, this fund becomes the backbone of your financial confidence. It will help cushion sudden job transitions, medical issues, or unexpected expenses.

Creating a simple investment habit without becoming a Wall Street prodigy

The biggest lie our twenties tell us is that investing is only for the financially enlightened, the math obsessed, or the people who can casually say things like "market volatility" at brunch. In reality, building an investment habit is far less glamorous and far more about consistency than genius. Start with the most frictionless approach you can: automate a tiny amount every month into a basic instrument you actually understand. This could be a mutual fund, government-backed schemes, or even simple fixed-income instruments. The key is starting small and staying regular. Even tiny contributions accumulate over time, and starting in your twenties gives compounding decades to work its quiet magic.

Automatic monthly transfers help bypass hesitation and emotional decision-making. If you lack confidence, educate yourself gradually using accessible resources or consult certified financial advisors rather than friends who judge risk by memes. Investing is less about chasing rapid returns and more about developing discipline. Avoid high-risk temptations like random crypto tips or trendy stock predictions circulating on social media. Over time, watching your investments grow, even modestly, creates a sense of financial stability no savings account can replicate.

In your twenties, money feels deeply personal. It shapes your lifestyle, your opportunities, your anxieties, and your sense of independence. But tying your self-worth to how much you earn or save creates unnecessary pressure. Money is not a measure of character; it is simply a resource to be managed wisely. You will make mistakes, overspend, underestimate costs, and indulge impulsively, and none of that means you are failing. So, the sooner you detach your identity from your financial mistakes, the sooner you begin making better decisions.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Grameenphone Ltd

Performance Management & Roadmap Planning Expert

Deadline: November 20

Eligibility:

Graduation from any reputed university. Business/STEM graduates will have preference; MBA preferred.

Minimum experience: 4-6 years



ZXY International

Product Developer (Knit & Woven)

Deadline: November 22

Eligibility:

Graduate in Fashion Design, Technical Design, or a related field from a well-reputed institution.

Minimum experience: 6 years



UNICEF

National Consultant, Cash Transfer

Deadline: November 23

Eligibility:

Advanced university degree in the fields of Social Sciences/ Public Policy/Public Administration/Disaster management/ development studies, or other related fields.

Minimum experience: 5 years

Heifer International

Country People Manager

Deadline: November 23

Eligibility:

Degree in Human Resources, Business, or a related field; continued HR education/ certification is a major plus.

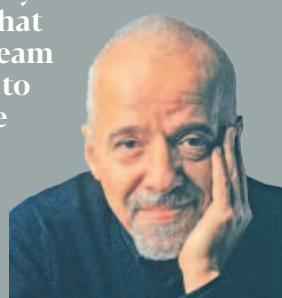


Minimum experience: 5-10 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



"There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure."



PAULO COELHO

Meta to measure employee performance by 'AI impact' from 2026

NEXT STEP DESK

Meta will formally incorporate "AI-driven impact" into its employee performance reviews starting in 2026, according to an internal company memo seen by Business Insider.

The new policy will make using AI to deliver results and build productive tools a "core expectation" for staff. Janelle Gale, Meta's head of people, stated in the memo that the company aims to reward employees who use AI to

create exceptional outcomes, either in their own work or by enhancing their team's performance.

While this metric will not affect 2025's annual reviews, employees are already being encouraged to document their AI-related achievements in self-assessments. The move is part of a broader push to cultivate an "AI-native" culture within the social media giant, states the report. This initiative includes internal games to incentivise AI adoption and a recently overhauled hiring process that permits job

applicants to use AI in coding interviews.

In a related development, Meta is also introducing an AI tool to assist workers in writing their performance reviews during the current cycle. The memo noted that employees are permitted to use the company's internal AI assistant, Metamate, as well as Google's Gemini, for this purpose. This strategy aligns Meta with other major technology firms like Microsoft and Google, which are similarly mandating greater AI adoption among their workforces.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Verizon plans its largest-ever layoffs, cutting 15,000 jobs

NEXT STEP DESK

US-based telecommunications company Verizon is preparing to cut approximately 15,000 jobs in the largest layoff in its history, according to a recent Reuters report citing a source familiar with the matter.

The cuts, which could begin as early as next week, represent about 15% of the US telecom giant's workforce, states the report. The plan will reportedly reduce non-union management ranks by more than 20% and involves converting around 180 corporate-owned retail stores into franchised operations.

The move is one of the first



PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Verizon faces intense market pressure from rivals offering cheaper plans, states the Reuters report, adding that the company added just 44,000 monthly wireless subscribers in the third quarter, significantly lagging behind competitors T-Mobile and AT&T. The market is also being disrupted by cable operators like Comcast, which bundle mobile internet service.

A Verizon spokesperson declined to comment to Reuters on the report. The company had about 100,000 employees at the end of 2024, following years of prior workforce reductions.

APPLE CEO TIM COOK could step down next year: report

NEXT STEP DESK

Apple is intensifying its succession planning as it prepares for Tim Cook to step down from his role as chief executive as soon as next year, according to a Financial Times report.

Citing people familiar with the discussions, the report states that the company's board and senior executives have recently increased their preparations



for a leadership transition. Cook has served as CEO for more than 14 years, having taken over from the company's co-founder, Steve Jobs, in 2011.

John Ternus, Apple's senior vice president of hardware engineering, is widely viewed as the most likely candidate to succeed Cook, the report said. However, an official announcement is considered unlikely to occur before Apple's next earnings report in late January.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC WORKS
URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
Barishal Regional Office,
834 Police line Road, Barishal
Website: www.udd.barisal.gov.bd

Memo No. 25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801 Date: 18th November 2025

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Services of
Integrated Surveying, Mouza Mapping & Preparing Plan for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW).			
2 Agency	Urban Development Directorate (UDD)			
3 Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project			
4 Procuring Entity Code	1320402			
5 Procuring Entity District	Barishal			
6 Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm Assignment based			
7 EOI Ref No	25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801			
8 Date	18 th November 2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
9 Procurement Method	Selection under a Fixed Budget (SFB)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10 Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget GoB			
11 Development Partners	N/A			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12 Project/Program Code	222020600			
13 Project/Program Name	"Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area"			
14 EOI Closing Date and Time	4 th December 2025; Time: 1:00 PM			
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT				
16 Brief Description of Assignment	Integrated surveying, Mouza Mapping & Preparing Plan for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project: 1) Physical feature & Topographic Survey with ground truthing & Land use/landcover; 2) Drone Survey for Core Urban Area & Potential Urban Area for detail Action Plan 3) Socio Economic Surveying 4) Traffic & Transportation Survey 5) Mouza Map Procurement & Digitization 6) Preparing Spatial Development Strategies/Structure Plan reflecting Major landuse zoning/guidelines & other Policy Issue 7) Preparing Urban Area Plan reflecting detail landuse guidelines; urban infrastructure plan like transport, drainage network, urban public space, conservation of Agri land & ecological sensitive area & other urban services like urban housing, health services, education, entertainment etc. 8) Preparing Action Area Plan with detail layout & architectural design of each action plan			
17 Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required	a. For individual firm minimum experience 5 years. or for joint venture (JV) minimum 5-year experience for lead firm & minimum 3-year specific experience for others. b. Required hardware (RTK GPS), Drone and licensed software [Survey data processing (GPS data Processing Software, etc.), GIS (Arc GIS) and Photogrammetric (Photogrammetric stereo Image processing Software) and other related original software]. c. Related Experience (Photogrammetric mapping by using 3D workstation etc.) d. Resources (office space, financial and managerial strength, computer, and other logistics) e. Related professionals (Team Coordinator, GIS Expert, Ecologist, Socio-economic Analyst, Spatial development strategy Analyst, Landscape Designer, Transport Planning Expert, Survey Expert, Junior Urban Planner, Junior GIS/RS Specialist, Surveyor) and 3D GIS and spatial planning support staffs.			
18 Other Details	Interested consulting Firms/Joint venture are hereby invited to submit EOI containing printed brochures (showing organizational identity and background), legal documents showing managerial and financial standing (according to PPA 2006 and PPR 2025), Staffing and inventory of resources and logistics confirming the firm's capabilities to provide the required services.			
19 Association with foreign firms is	Not Encouraged			
20 Ref No	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801	Not phased	Barishal Metropolitan Area	February, 2026	July, 2027
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
21 Name of Official Inviting EOI	Asaduzzaman			
22 Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Senior Planner Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office			
23 Address of Official Inviting EOI	Office of the Senior Planner, Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office, 834 Police Line Road, Barishal			
24 Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	Phone no: 01732122258			
25 The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all EOI's				



(Asaduzzaman)

Project Director

"Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project
Urban Development Directorate,
Barishal Regional Office, Barishal

GD-2491

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC WORKS
URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
Barishal Regional Office,
834 Police line Road, Barishal
Website: www.udd.barisal.gov.bd

Memo No. 25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801 Date: 18th November 2025

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Services of
Image Acquisition, Processing and Interpretation for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area Project"

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW).			
2 Agency	Urban Development Directorate (UDD)			
3 Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project			
4 Procuring Entity Code	1320402			
5 Procuring Entity District	Barishal			
6 Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm Assignment based			
7 EOI Ref No	25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801			
8 Date	18 th November 2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
9 Procurement Method	Selection under a Fixed Budget (SFB)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10 Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget GoB			
11 Development Partners	N/A			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12 Project/Program Code	222020600			
13 Project/Program Name	Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area			
14 EOI Closing Date and Time	4 th December 2025; Time: 10:30 AM			
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT				
16 Brief Description of Assignment	Image Acquisition, Processing and Interpretation for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area Project": 1) Procurement of 3D Satellite Image: Acquisition of high-resolution (0.3 m) satellite imagery for the project area ensuring new acquisition to capture current ground conditions. 2) Image Processing and Geo-referencing: Radiometric and geometric correction of raw imagery & Geo-referencing to national coordinate systems for integration with GIS. 3) TBM (Triangulation/Target Base Measurement) Installation: Establish ground control points to ensure accurate spatial referencing. 4) Stereo (3D) Digitization: Rural Settlements: Extraction of 3D features of rural settlements for planning purposes. 5) Stereo (3D) Digitization: Agriculture, Wetland, and Forest Areas: Mapping and classification of land cover/land use in 3D for strategic planning. 6) DEM (Digital Elevation Model) Preparation: Generation of high-resolution DEM from stereo imagery for topography, flood modeling, drainage, and urban planning.			
17 Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required	a. Firms with specific experience of 5 years. b. Required hardware (RTK GPS) and licensed software [Survey data processing (GPS data Processing Software, etc.), GIS (Arc GIS) and Photogrammetric (Photogrammetric stereo Image processing Software) and other related original software]. c. Related experience (Photogrammetric mapping by using 3D work station etc.) d. Resources (office space, financial and managerial strength, computer and other logistics) e. Related professionals (GIS/RS Expert, Photogrammetric Expert) and 3D GIS support staffs.			
18 Other Details	Interested consulting Firms are hereby invited to submit EOI containing printed brochures (showing organizational identity and background), legal documents showing managerial and financial standing (according to PPA 2006 and PPR 2025), Staffing and inventory of resources and logistics confirming the firm's capabilities to provide the required services.			
19 Association with foreign firms is	Not Encouraged			
20 Ref No	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801	Not phased	Barishal Metropolitan Area	January, 2026	July, 2026
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
21 Name of Official Inviting EOI	Asaduzzaman			
22 Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Senior Planner Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office			
23 Address of Official Inviting EOI	Office of the Senior Planner, Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office, 834 Police Line Road, Barishal			
24 Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	Phone no: 01732122258			
25 The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all EOI's				



(Asaduzzaman)

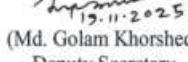
Project Director

"Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project
Urban Development Directorate,
Barishal Regional Office, Barishal

GD-2489

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www tcb gov bd

Commercial Section
Invitation For Tender (International) for Purchase of
10,000 M. Ton whole husked (without husk) red lentil

1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Commerce.			
2 Agency	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)			
3 Procuring Entity Name	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.			
4 Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable.			
5 Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.			
6 Invitation for	Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.			
7 Invitation Ref. No.	26.05.0000.016.09.629.25.3049			
8 Date	19-11-2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
9 Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (International)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10 Budget and Source of Funds	TCB's Own Fund.			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
11 Package No.	TCB/Imp-20/Red Lentil/2025-26.			
12 Package Name	Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.			
13 Tender Invitation/Publication Date	20-11-2025			
Date	Time			
14 Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time	03-12-2025 17:00 P.M			
15 Tender Closing Date and Time	04-12-2025 12:00 P.M			
16 Tender Opening Date and Time	04-12-2025 12:15 P.M			
17 Name & Address of the office(s)	Address			
- Selling Tender Document of each item can be purchased from the banks & offices as mentioned in right column.	(1) Sonali Bank Ltd, Kawran Bazar Branch, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka, (2) Trust Bank Ltd, Kawran Bazar Branch, and (3) Accounts & Finance Division, TCB's Principal Office at Dhaka.			
- Receiving Tender Document	In front of TCB's reception (2 nd floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.			
- Opening Tender Document	Board Room, TCB.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
18 Eligibility of Tenderer	Bonafide Suppliers. Details conditions will be mentioned in the Tender documents.			
19 Brief Description of goods	Import of 10,000 (Ten Thousand) M.Tons Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil packed in export standard/export worthy new and sound poly lined jute or polypropylene bag or HDPE bag of 25/50 (Twenty Five/Fifty) kg bag [Tender of partial Quantity is acceptable but not less than 2,000 M. Ton].			
20 Price of Tender Document	Price of Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand).			
Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (USD/BDT)	Shipment Schedule
21 1.	Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.	Offers are to be made on CFR (C) Chattogram/ Mongla Port by Sea or CPT Benapole/ Bangla Hili/ Darshana/ Sonamasjid/ Bhoma/ Teknaf by rail/ truck.	Tender is to be submitted along with Tender Security amounting to: USD 190,000 (US Dollar One Hundred Ninety Thousand) or BDT 2,32,52,200 (BDT Two Crore Thirty Two Lac Fifty Two Thousand Two Hundred) Only.	(a) Entire quantity of Goods is to be shipped within 10-02-2026 to 25-02-2026.
			In the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft must be issued from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh or Bank Guarantee from a foreign Bank must be endorsed by any local scheduled Bank. The Successful Tenderer is to submit 5% (Five Percent) Performance Security in the form of Bank Guarantee.	(b) Partial quantity of goods (2,000 M.tons) must be shipped within 10-02-2026.
			[N. B: In case of partial quantity, tender security will be fixed proportionate to the offered quantity.]	
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
22 Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Golam Khorshed			
23 Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.			
24 Address of Official Inviting Tender	Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.			
25 Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No. 02-8180060	Fax No. 880-2-8180057	E-mail: tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd	
26 Special Instructions:	<p>a. All terms and conditions related to the tender and product details are mentioned in the tender document. b. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole/ in part without assigning any reason.</p> <p> (Md. Golam Khorshed) Deputy Secretary Additional Director (Commercial) Trading Corporation of Bangladesh</p>			

GD-2504

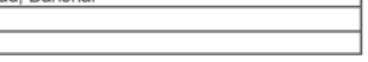
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND PUBLIC WORKS
URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
Barishal Regional Office,
834 Police line Road, Barishal
Website: www.udd.barisal.gov.bd

Memo No. 25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801 Date: 18th November 2025

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Services of
Geological and Hydro-geological Survey & Study for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW).			
2 Agency	Urban Development Directorate (UDD)			
3 Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project			
4 Procuring Entity Code	1320402			
5 Procuring Entity District	Barishal			
6 Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm Assignment Based			
7 EOI Ref No	25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801			
8 Date	18 th November 2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
9 Procurement Method	Selection under a Fixed Budget (SFB)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10 Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget GoB			
11 Development Partners	N/A			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12 Project/Programme Code	222020600			
13 Project/Programme Name	Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area			
14 EOI Closing Date and Time	4 th December 2025; Time: 11:00 AM			
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT				
16 Brief Description of Assignment	Geological and Hydro-geological survey & study for "Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project: 1) Geological Assessment including lithology, stratigraphy, structural features, and geomorphological conditions 2) Hydrogeological Assessment reflecting detail aquifer characteristics, groundwater potential, recharge zones, and water balance estimates. 3) Groundwater Monitoring Data, including water table measurements, borehole logs, and pumping test results. 4) Soil and Rock Suitability Analysis for infrastructure planning and land development. 5) Geohazard Identification and Risk Mapping covering areas prone to erosion, landslides, seismic activity, liquefaction, or subsidence 6) GIS-Based Thematic Maps & Modeling including slope analysis, hazard zones, and groundwater potential maps 3D finite difference Ground water model, Rainfall-runoff model, flash flood risk (inundation model) etc.			
17 Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required	a. Firms with specific experience of 5 years. b. Required hardware, licensed software and other related original software. c. Related Experience (Grain Size Analysis, Atterberg Limits Determination, Specific Gravity Determination, Direct Shear Test, Unconfined Compression strength Determination etc. 3D finite difference Ground water model characterizing existing groundwater system and making predictions for future groundwater development and risk characterization, Rainfall-runoff model to determine groundwater recharge potential, inundation model, surface water potential for water supply etc.) d. Resources (office space, financial and managerial strength, computer and other logistics and equipments) e. Related professionals (Geologist, Hydro geologist, Associate Geologist, Associate Hydro-Geologist and Geological Survey Technician etc.) and staffs.			
18 Other Details	Interested consulting Firms are hereby invited to submit EOI containing printed brochures (showing organizational identity and background), legal documents showing managerial and financial standing (according to PPA 2006 and PPR 2025), Staffing and inventory of resources and logistics confirming the firm's capabilities to provide the required services.			
19 Association with foreign firms is	Not Encouraged			
20 Ref No	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
25.45.1000.000.104.14.0001.25.801	Not phased	Barishal Metropolitan Area	January, 2026	January, 2027
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
21 Name of Official Inviting EOI	Asaduzzaman			
22 Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Senior Planner Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office			
23 Address of Official Inviting EOI	Office of the Senior Planner, Urban Development Directorate, Barishal Regional Office, 834 Police Line Road, Barishal			
24 Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	Phone no: 01732122258			
25 The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all EOI's				

GD-2490



(Asaduzzaman)

Project Director

"Preparation of Strategic Plan for Barishal Metropolitan Area" Project
Urban Development Directorate,
Barishal Regional Office, Barishal

ESSAY

Taylor Swift talks back to SHAKESPEARE

JONAH KENT RICHARDS

I first heard Taylor Swift's song "The Fate of Ophelia" on the radio during a road trip to New Hampshire the day after it was released on October 3. It was the opening song of Swift's latest album, *The Life of a Showgirl*. The song's title is a reference to the character of Ophelia from William Shakespeare's play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark* (1599-1601). It is difficult to overstate the impact that the song and the album as a whole is having in the United States. The song is ranked number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and broke the Spotify record for the most streamed song in a single week. Everyone—Swifties and Shakespearians alike—started talking about the song. Fashion magazines like *Elle* published articles explaining the literary references in the song. One can't help but wonder what is engendering such a powerful cultural response?

"The Fate of Ophelia" isn't the first time that Swift has written about Shakespeare. She famously referenced *Romeo & Juliet* in her 2008 song "Love Story." It peaked at number 4 on the Billboard Hot 100, generating a far less cultural response than "The Fate of Ophelia" has produced. What is the difference? I argue that "The Fate of Ophelia" is Swift's personal talk-back to Shakespeare. It is Swift's attempt to rewrite the ending for one



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

Swift's "The Fate of Ophelia" represents a unique dialogue between Swift and Shakespeare. Shakespeare scholars are already talking about the song. Regardless of Shakespearean opinion, Swift's song is likely to become a popular lens through which many future students approach the character. It is imperative that scholars study the song and similar adaptations to better understand this influence.

of Shakespeare's most tragic heroines with whom she feels a personal connection to.

"The Fate of Ophelia" is an example of what Shakespeare scholar Martha Tuck Rozett describes as "Talking Back to Shakespeare" (1996)—a process

where an artist adapts or appropriates one of Shakespeare's original works into a new collective text that often challenges the bard's original intent while still drawing upon his cultural authority.

In the 2025 *Taylor Swift: The Official Release Party of a Showgirl* promotional film, Swift explained her motives behind writing the song, "I love those tragedies so much. I fall in love with these characters so much that it hurts me when they die [...]. I'm just putting a romantic spin on the fact that Ophelia was driven mad—they drove her mad—but not me." As someone who is no stranger to heartbreak, Taylor is deeply empathetic to the character. She is not content to let Ophelia suffer what she considers an unjust fate.

In her song, Swift writes a version of herself as a foil figure to Ophelia. Unlike

in Shakespeare's play where Hamlet leaves Ophelia to drown, Swift's love interest rescues her. Swift writes in the second stanza of the song, "And if you'd never come for me / I might've drowned in the melancholy." The lines are a direct reference to Act 4 Scene 7 of *Hamlet* where Queen Gertrude describes Ophelia's offstage drowning in a local brook, "Your sister's drowned, Laertes." Swift continues this revision in the subsequent third stanza of the song when she writes, "Late one night / You dug me out of my grave and / And saved my heart from the fate of / Ophelia." Swift's lyrics echo Act 5 Scene 1 of *Hamlet* during Ophelia's funeral where we witness Laertes order Ophelia's corpse laid in her freshly dug grave, "Lay her in th' earth, / and from her fair unpolluted flesh, / May violets spring!"

Swift's talk-back is best visualised in the opening sequence of Swift's music video with a tableau vivant (living picture) of Swift lying on her back in a white dress on the surface of a flower-backdropped brook. The image is a recreation of the 1851 to 1852 painting *Ophelia* by Sir John Everett Millais of Queen Gertrude's description of Ophelia's drowning. Swift's tableau can be seen as a foil to Millais' painting. Millais' Ophelia is floating on her back looking upward singing to herself in her dirty flower strewn dress as she is already showing signs of submerging in the water. Swift's version of the character's dress remains pure white as if she remains unsullied by the dishonor and madness that stains Ophelia. Most importantly, Swift's character floats on the surface of the water completely undrowned. Unlike

Ophelia, she can get up and walk away from her fate.

Swift's "The Fate of Ophelia" represents a unique dialogue between Swift and Shakespeare. Shakespeare scholars are already talking about the song. Regardless of Shakespearean opinion, Swift's song is likely to become a popular lens through which many future students approach the character. It is imperative that scholars study the song and similar adaptations to better understand this influence. The fact that artists like Swift are continuing to talk back to Shakespeare's plays offers strong proof that the bard's characters are alive and well in our cultural imagination.

Jonah Kent Richards is a Shakespeare screen adaptation scholar, an English teacher, and contributor for *Star Books and Literature*.

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Contested words, painful genealogies

Review of 'On Antisemitism: A Word in History' (Penguin Press, 2025) by Mark Mazower

ISRAR HASAN

Buried beneath masses of mangled bodies of countless innocents slowly pulled from the shrapnel and debris, their remaining flesh torn in the extraction, lies a reflection of the world's inhumanity. The recent devastation in Gaza—what many observers have termed a genocide—has buried everything we thought integral to our conceptualisation of modernity: international law and human rights. While the Palestinian struggle continues amid unprecedented international outrage, particularly in the Global North, accusations of antisemitism have been increasingly weaponised to shut down criticism of Israel and champion the rights of one group over another. Has antisemitism always had one meaning? Like ideas and theories, meanings shift depending on their context.

A historian's job is seldom easy, and dissecting the past and present poses challenges of deep introspection and reflection. Mark Mazower, an acclaimed historian at Columbia University known for his distinguished books on the Balkans, delves into uncharted territory, attempting to understand a word—"antisemitism"—that is largely a product of the western modernity and a stain on Europe's bleak record of historical tolerance toward the Jewish people—which has added numerous words to our everyday vocabulary: pogroms, Holocaust, and ghetto.

On Antisemitism: A Word in History sifts through the troubled legacy of a word that was once used to hunt down Jews who spoke about equality and today is routinely used to silence critics of Israel, including Jewish critics themselves. Languages are often turned into instruments of power, and antisemitism—a term famously popularised in 1879 by a German politician, Wilhelm Marr, to oppose legal equality of Jews—has been transformed into an abstract noun with far-reaching consequences in world politics. The meaning of antisemitism

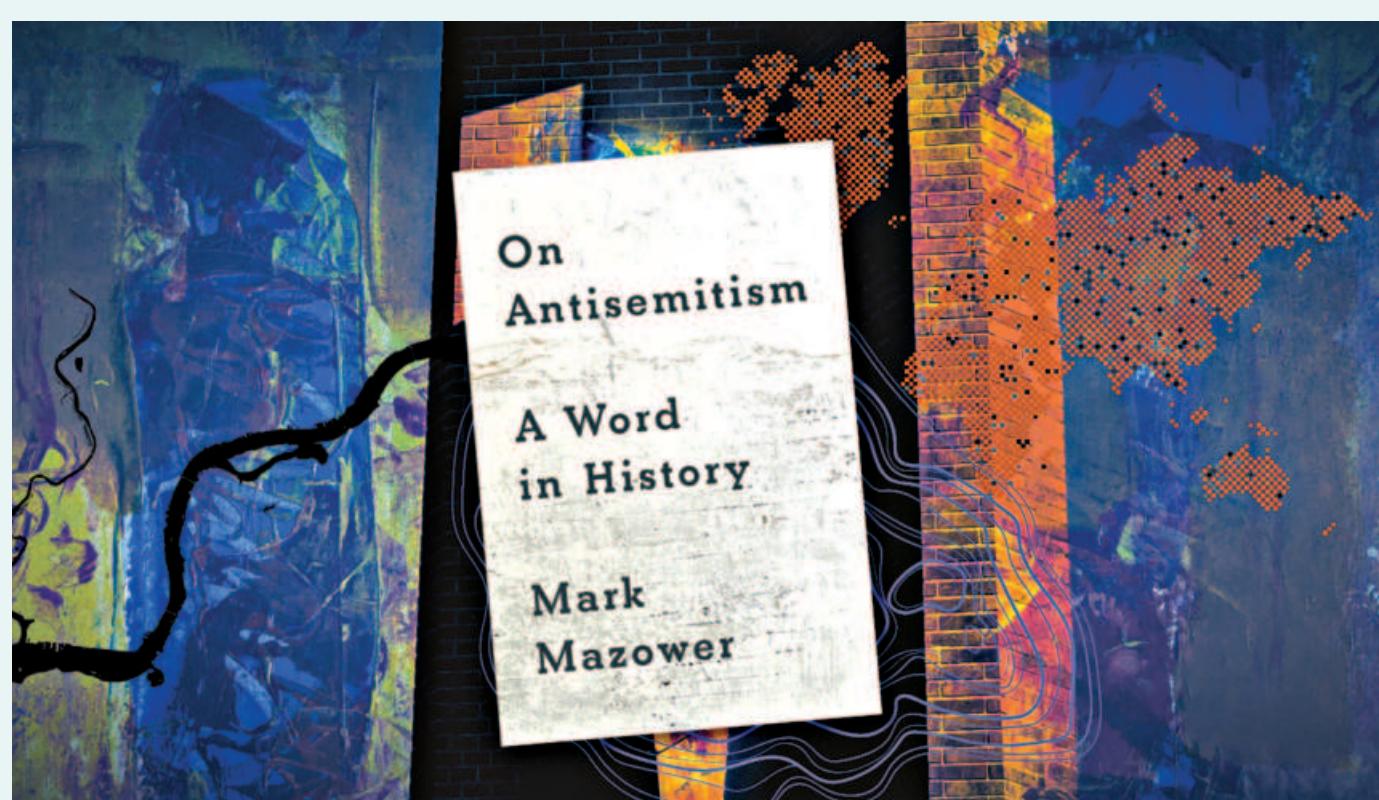


ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

has shifted since World War II, first being associated with the genocide of Jews at the heart of Europe, to now being inextricably linked with Israel's image in the world. Mazower argues that "no form of racial or religious prejudice enjoys such international attention," with countless countries and organisations pledging against it. Antisemitism, in of itself, "has become a world power."

While antisemitism exists in many parts of the world—including regions without Jewish populations, where it manifests through blanket demonisation of Jews simply for existing as a people (a phenomenon known as "antisemitism

without Jews")—the ideological conflation of Israel with the Holocaust is a relatively recent development. In the early 20th century, the Jewish experience in Europe oscillated between the remarkable successes of electoral democracy and the rise of communism and fascism, the latter becoming the death knell for people and their storied civilisation. Mazower's great strength as a historian, particularly as a Jewish historian rooted in the Anglosphere, is his ability to create a narrative history of a world that evokes powerful memories for many people, contested as they might be.

To understand how this transformation occurred, Mazower examines the

demographic and political evolution of Jewish communities in the 20th century. Israel, from its initial formation through the early years of the new millennium, did not house the world's largest Jewish population. In fact, it had the third largest Jewish population after the world powers of the day—the United States and the Soviet Union—with constant calls to Jewry in both countries to settle in the Jewish state. As Jews in the American polity reached new heights, establishing themselves in terms of influence and representation, constant linkages to Israel evoked anxiety over dual loyalties. Meanwhile, prominent Jewish organisations hailed

"the virtual end of overt antisemitism," even as it remained embedded in larger forms of racial discrimination in society, particularly toward the African-American community—a parallel struggle that many Jews had actively supported. Mazower traces the presence of Israel in American politics from colonial times to the present day, when Christian Zionists continue to view Jewish rule over the Holy Land as necessary to hasten the coming of the Messiah. The politics of Christian Zionism remains enmeshed with support for Israel's actions to this day.

In the post-1945 period, most American Jews saw their own fates tied to America and its numerous problems—the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights struggle—rather than conflating what it meant to be Jewish with Israel. This changed with the 1967 war, when Israel emerged victorious over its Arab neighbors. "American Jewry had become Zionized," in the words of a fellow Israeli historian. Since 1967, support for Israel has been the top priority of American Jewish civil rights organisations, superseding topics such as the struggle for civil liberties and the fight for anti-discrimination measures. Interestingly, politicians and early advocates of Israel did not view Arab opposition to the Zionist project as antisemitic, but rather as a political movement for nationalist self-determination in a land from which they had been forcefully displaced.

In the aftermath of what many people call the world's first live-streamed genocide, clarion calls for justice and a one-state solution grow louder. Mazower, a professor at Columbia University, where numerous protests against Israel's actions have taken place, has penned a book that explains how words are a double-edged sword, capable of both describing oppression and perpetuating it.

Israr Hasan is currently working as researcher in a public health institute.

CHEAT CODE HAMZA restores the roar

KHALID HOSSAIN

What Hamza Choudhury has done since pulling on the Bangladeshi jersey belongs to sporting folklore. Football rarely grants a nation this sort of figure whose very arrival resets expectations in ways statistics cannot capture.

Since March 2025, Hamza has managed the improbable and unthinkable, doing so with a style and spirit that has turned an entire era mythic. Bangladesh have welcomed expatriate talents before, but none restored the sport's dormant roar with such natural ease as the 28-year-old Leicester City midfielder.

On the pitch, he resembles a wartime general: leading by example, reading danger before others sense it, smiling even when the tide turns against his side. A superior talent to those around him, he plays alive to pressure rather than burdened by it. At times, he looks like he is playing a video game with cheat codes switched on.

In national colours, he expresses parts of his game that his clubs seldom require: the direct free-kick, overhead kick, Panenka penalty, and so on. His outrageous volley against India at the National Stadium on Tuesday -- struck with his weaker left foot from distance -- felt like the culmination of what Bangladesh had been promised but never believed they would see.

For once, fans feel they have a saviour who gives everything. Earning the trust of a result-hungry fanbase is never easy, but Hamza has made it feel inevitable, as if the country was waiting for him all along.

"Seeing the fans in the stadium, their energy, their passion... it lifts you in a way you can't describe," Hamza said after scoring against Bhutan in a 2-0 victory -- his first



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

with Bangladesh. "I want them to enjoy every moment we play together."

Most legends of Bangladesh football thrived when the game was king or fading into second place. Hamza arrived in a different landscape, shaped by European broadcasts and a generation raised on global stars. The atmosphere at the renovated National Stadium now speaks to something deeper: watching a messiah-like figure inspire teammates and elevate the standard. It's a feeling Argentina know with Lionel Messi, Egypt with Mohamed Salah. Bangladesh finally have their own version.

In a dramatic fashion, the memorable 1-0 win over India became a checkpoint in Hamza's tale -- the completion of a narrative arc that

began with his debut in Assam, where he first felt the weight and warmth of the national shirt. His first major triumph, fittingly, also came against India.

"This is right up there with the FA Cup win [with Leicester]," Hamza said. The catharsis was complete; the stage set for what comes next.

His goals in the Bhutan and Nepal friendlies showed what freedom can unlock, and the potential ahead if teammates continue to evolve to bridge the gap between the system and the superstar.

Whatever happens next, Bangladesh will always have Hamza, and as long as he keeps spreading the stardust, they will always witness a football fairytale in real time, front row, no filter.

'Goal against India ranks above the others'

Sheikh Morsalin once again made the headlines with the goal that helped Bangladesh edge past India 1-0 after 22 years. The 19-year-old forward, who has now scored seven goals in 21 international appearances, previously rescued the men in red and green by netting equalisers against Afghanistan and Lebanon, and struck the decisive goal in the 1-0 win over Bhutan. Yesterday, Morsalin spoke to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about the mood in the camp, his feelings, and his future ambitions. Following are excerpts from the conversation.

The Daily Star (DS): What is your feeling after scoring the decisive goal against India?

Sheikh Morsalin (SM): I am really very happy, Alhamdulillah. I think everyone prayed for us, and we are happy to deliver a win to the nation.

DS: In the counterattack, you and Rakib Hossain exchanged passes before you finished clinically. What understanding did you and Rakib have before the match?

SM: I have a good understanding with Rakib because we have played many matches together for both the national team and our club. The plan was simple: launch a quick counter and play the ball to whoever was in front of goal.

DS: You have scored quite a few important goals in your short career so far. Where do you rank the goal on Tuesday?

SM: I would definitely rank the goal against India above all the others because beating India after 22 years, in front of a full house, when the entire country was watching, is a huge achievement. Everyone would have been hurt if we hadn't won. That's why I rate it above all my goals.

DS: What did the players discuss among

themselves before the match?

SM: The only discussion was that we had to win the match at any cost. We also shared our feelings. I told the players to stand by one another, even if someone made a mistake during the match. The message was to help each other on the pitch.

DS: Bangladesh came close to victory in several matches of the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, but couldn't finally come in the fifth match. How was it achieved?

SM: To be honest, we were ahead in previous matches too, but in the final moments we conceded goals due to a loss of concentration, which was our failure. This time, we all tried to stay focused from the first minute to the last.

DS: Everyone gave their best, but how would you assess Hamza Choudhury's performance against India?

SM: He is a true leader who guides us in both attack and defence. Hamza bhai's impact on the team is immense.

DS: Can Bangladesh build a winning habit after this historic victory?

SM: Hopefully we can. We are improving day by day and hope to improve even more in the days to come.

Shamit has eyes on SAFF success

MINTU DESHWARA

Fresh off Bangladesh's historic 1-0 victory over India, midfielder Shamit Shome chose a quieter, more personal celebration. On Wednesday morning, he travelled to Sreemangal -- his ancestral home -- to spend time with his relatives and soak in the serene surroundings after an intense international window. It is his third visit to Bangladesh, yet his first opportunity to explore the tea capital, something he described as "a wonderful feeling." But even amid

family time and much-needed rest, Shamit's mind remained fixed on the national team's future. Reflecting on Bangladesh's recent progress, the Cavalry FC midfielder said the side had been improving "little by little" with every match. "The SAFF Championship is coming up, and we hope to do well there," he said. "We want to grow into a competitive team capable of qualifying for the Asian Cup and World Cup in the future."

Read the full story on The Daily Star website



100TH TEST, 99 RUNS: A day to remember for Mushfiqur

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Accolades were bestowed and heartfelt tributes flowed as Mushfiqur Rahim became the first Bangladeshi to enter the 100-Test club against Ireland in Dhaka on Wednesday. But for the celebrations to feel truly complete, it needed the history-maker himself to produce something special.

And that's exactly what the veteran batter did, remaining unbeaten on 99 at the end of the day as Bangladesh reached 292-4 at stumps.

From day's beginning till the end, everything revolved around Mushfiqur.

His first Test captain Habibul Bashar, who had presented him his Test cap which he still proudly puts on, presented him with another cap with '100' sewn on it. Bangladesh's first Test cricketer Akram Khan too presented a commemorative cap.

A crest was handed over to him by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam and cricket operations chairman Nazmul Abedeen Fahim. His teammates from his debut Test and his 100th Test presented him two signed jerseys as memento.

"Disciplined life, disciplined in everything," Mushfiqur's long-time friend and teammate Mahmudullah Riyad, who was present during the event, told broadcasters when asked what was the secret behind his two-decade-long career.

"Everyone talks about your hard work and intensity on the field. But you always play for the team, think of the team -- you never play for yourself," Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said.

The unyielding and unwavering Mushfiqur, who always puts his game above everything, did not get overwhelmed by the auspicious

occasion, and played a stoic innings that reflected the determination that has helped him keep going for so long.

Having hit only five fours in his 187-ball knock, the 38-year-old adjusted to the slower outfield to grind out his runs. He went to the crease after Shanto's dismissal, with the hosts 3 down for 95. His first boundary came after 67 deliveries, an elegant inside-out drive. Another of those saw him get to his fifty.

Even in the nineties, when the whole arena bore expectations, the wicketkeeper-batter picked up solid singles. He checked a scoop in the last second, adjusted for a safer paddle sweep to the relief of those present. It was nervy stuff for a first day's play and only Mushfiqur could evoke such emotions.

His seriousness is often so pronounced that Mominul Haque, who shared a 107-run stand with the veteran, was asked at the press conference whether jokes will be shelved for later with him on 99.

"No, no, it's not like that at all. Everything is normal as usual. Maybe now, we can joke around even more, as there's more time left," Mominul jokingly said as there are four days left in the match.

"It felt like a retirement ceremony that happens in other countries, not ours. Personally, I really liked it. If we can continue this culture in Bangladesh, the young generation will also be inspired to play Test cricket and play 100 Tests," he summed up the occasion.

Mushfiqur will be only the 11th cricketer to mark his 100th Test with a ton if he gets the single to complete his 13th Test century. But even if by the twist of fate he fails to get to the landmark, he has already done enough to make a historic occasion feel even more special.

Playoff drama awaits as six tickets left for 2026 World Cup

STAR SPORTS DESK

With 42 teams punching their tickets after the final wave of direct qualifiers, the race to the 2026 FIFA World Cup has boiled down to six last spots -- four in Europe and two across the rest of the world. The continent playoffs now stand between 22 hopeful nations and football's grandest stage, setting up a tense March window in Europe and an intriguing intercontinental showdown involving teams from Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania.

EUROPEAN PLAY-OFFS: 16 TEAMS, 4 SPOTS

The final four UEFA berths will be decided through the play-offs in March, involving 16 teams -- 12 group runners-up from the standard qualifying phase alongside the best four UEFA Nations League group winners.

The teams will be divided into four playoff paths and four pots of four teams each, with the 12 group runners-up in three pots and the four other teams in the



fourth pot. Each of the four paths will comprise two single-leg semifinals and one single-leg final. The teams for the paths will be drawn later on Thursday. The semifinals will be played on March 26 and the finals on March 31.

European play-off teams: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Denmark, Italy, Kosovo, Poland, Republic of Ireland, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, Wales, Romania, Sweden, Northern Ireland, North Macedonia.

what to WATCH

T Sports

Bangladesh vs Ireland

2nd Test, Day 2

Live from 9:30 am

Women's Kabaddi

World Cup

Live from 7:30 pm

Ten Cricket and A Sports

Pakistan T20 Tri-Series

Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe

Live from 7:00 pm

two semifinals to earn the right to meet the seeded sides for a spot at the World Cup.

The fixture schedule for the intercontinental playoffs has not yet been confirmed.

Intercontinental playoff teams: Bolivia, DR Congo, Iraq, Jamaica, New Caledonia and Suriname

TEAMS ALREADY QUALIFIED FOR THE 2026 WORLD CUP:

Co-hosts: Canada, Mexico and the USA.

Africa (9): Algeria, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia

Asia (8): Australia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Uzbekistan

Europe (12): Austria, Belgium, Croatia, England, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland

Oceania (1): New Zealand

Americas (9): Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, Curacao, Panama, Haiti



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YEARS



CTG NEW MOORING Govt moves to lease terminal out to UAE operator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After signing agreements with two foreign operators for the Laldia and Pangaon terminals, the government is now moving ahead with its plan to lease out the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), the largest operational facility of Chattogram port, to another foreign operator.

Preparations are underway to finalise an agreement with UAE-based DP World by December, despite widespread protests over the plan.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has proposed forming a seven-member committee to evaluate the tender for operating NCT under a Public Private Partnership arrangement.

On November 16, CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk sent a letter to the shipping ministry seeking approval for the committee, to be headed by Additional Secretary Md Mahbub Alam Talukder, also the board

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Mushfiqur Rahim wears a wry smile as he returns to the dressing room, unbeaten on 99 at the end of the first day's play of the second Test against Ireland in Mirpur yesterday. The 38-year-old needs one more run when play resumes today to become only the 11th batter to reach the three-figure mark in 100th Test.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

3 Bangladeshis 'shot dead by Libyan mafia'

They were trying to reach Italy; bodies reportedly dumped in the Mediterranean



Munna, 24

Imran, 22

Bayezid, 20

JAHID HASAN, Shariatpur

Three young men from Madaripur, who set out dreaming of Italy's shores, were allegedly shot dead by a Libyan mafia while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Their bodies were reportedly thrown into the sea.

Families and locals identified the victims as Imran Khan, 22, of Adityapur village in Madaripur Sadar; Munna Talukdar, 24, of Durgabaddi village in Rajair upazila; and Bayezid Sheikh, 20, of Ghoshalakandi village in the same upazila.

The three left home on October 8, hoping Italy would offer a better future. They were first taken to Libya. Their families said they learned yesterday through a broker that all three had been killed on November 1 while attempting the sea crossing.

Shipon Khan of Adityapur village, who has lived in Libya for a decade, allegedly arranged their journey. Local sources said he is known for sending young men from Madaripur and neighbouring areas to Italy through

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Curacao become smallest World Cup nation



AGENCIES

The tiny Caribbean nation of Curacao became the smallest country ever to qualify for the World Cup on Tuesday after a 0-0 draw against Jamaica in Kingston, with their coach Dick Advocaat, at 78, set to become the oldest coach at the showpiece event.

Advocaat's appearance in 2026 will break a long-standing record: the oldest person to coach at a World Cup was previously Germany's Otto Rehhagel, who was 71 years and 317 days old when he managed Greece in their final group game against Argentina at the 2010 tournament in South Africa.

A nerve-shredding finale to the CONCACAF qualifying campaign saw Curacao -- with a population of just 156,000 -- squeeze into next year's finals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The government, recruiting

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**No let-up in
arson, crude
bomb attacks**

Cop hurt in Pallabi

STAR REPORT

Incidents of arson and crude bomb attacks continued yesterday in parts of the country, including an attack in front of Pallabi Police Station in the capital that injured a policeman.

The attacks came two days after the International Crimes Tribunal sentenced deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her former home minister to death.

Centring the verdict, the Awami League, whose political activities are banned, announced lockdown and shutdown programmes.

At least 50 arson attacks -- mostly targeting buses -- and dozens of crude bomb explosions have been recorded nationwide over the past week.

In Dhaka yesterday, two crude bombs went off in front of Sagufta gate near Pallabi Police Station around 8:30pm, injuring a police officer.

Miscreants threw the bombs from the Kalshi flyover, causing fear among the public, said

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Mobile retailers demand tax cuts, NEIR launch delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile phone retailers yesterday demanded a reduction in taxes on imported handsets and a delay in launching the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR).

NEIR, which identifies and blocks stolen or unauthorised devices using their unique 15-digit IMEI numbers, is scheduled for rollout on December 16 after years of delay as the government looks to prop up the country's local handset manufacturing sector.

Many mobile retailers fear their businesses will collapse if NEIR is enforced.

Subsequently, at a press conference, the Mobile Business Community, Bangladesh (MBCB), which claims to represent mobile phone retail shops, demanded pushing the rollout back by a year to clear their inventory.

Bangladesh's grey market accounts for about 40 percent of all handsets, with devices entering the country illegally, according to the local handset manufacturers.

Under the existing tax structure, NEIR's implementation will hurt ordinary consumers by driving up handset prices, MBCB said. They also said that the local handset manufacturers had formed a "syndicate" pushing for the rushed rollout.

MBCB also protested the Detective Branch's detention of its Secretary Abu Sayeed Piyash.

On Tuesday night, after MBCB announced the press conference for Wednesday, DB officers picked up Piyash and Mizanur Rahman Sohel, founder and chief executive

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Saudi prince 'knew nothing'

**Says Trump about Khashoggi
killing contradicting US intel,
elevates KSA to non-Nato ally**



REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Mohammed bin Salman knew nothing about the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents, offering a fierce defense of the visiting Saudi crown prince that contradicted a US intelligence assessment.

The controversy over the killing of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist and US-based critic of the Saudi leadership, flared again in the Oval Office in front of cameras as the kingdom's de facto ruler made his first White House visit in more than seven years, seeking to further rehabilitate his global image tarnished by the incident.

Trump later announced that he was designating Saudi Arabia as a major non-Nato ally, and the two sides announced agreements on arms sales, civil nuclear cooperation, artificial intelligence and critical minerals.

The White House announced Trump had approved future deliveries of F-35 fighter jets and the Saudis had agreed to purchase 300 American tanks.

LABOUR MARKET IN MALAYSIA Strict conditions raise fear of syndication

Dhaka renegotiating terms

PORIMOL PALMA

The criteria Malaysia has set for selecting Bangladeshi recruiting agencies for a fresh round of labour intake have stirred concern among experts, industry insiders, and government officials, who fear the conditions could concentrate power in the hands of a few large agencies.

They said that seven of the 10 conditions Malaysia sent to Bangladesh on October 27 can be met by many among the more than 2,000 licensed agencies.

These include having a valid licence for five years, experience of sending workers to at least three countries in that period, a certificate of good conduct, no record of forced labour, trafficking, extortion, money laundering or labour-law breaches, and five written testimonials from employers.

It is the remaining three conditions that are seen as prohibitive -- a record of recruiting at least 3,000 foreign workers in the past five years; training and assessment centres fully controlled by itself; and a permanent office of at least 10,000 square feet for the last three years.

The government, recruiting



CONDITIONS FOR AGENCIES

- ① Recruiting at least 3,000 foreign workers in past 5 years
- ② Training and assessment centres fully controlled by itself
- ③ Permanent office of at least 10,000 square feet for last 3 years

agencies, and migration researchers say these requirements are impractical.

Speaking yesterday after inaugurating the "Overseas Employment Platform" at a Dhaka

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Rivalry with '4 Star Group' led to killing of Kibria Says Rab; two more suspects held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rivalry with a criminal gang known as the "Four Star Group" over establishing dominance in the Mirpur area led to the killing of Jubo Dal leader Golam Kibria, the Rab said yesterday after arresting two suspects.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also said political feud with rivals also played a part in the murder.

"This was a planned murder," Lt Col Mahbub Alam, commanding officer of Rab-4, told a press briefing at its media centre in Karwan Bazar.

"The suspects are professional killers, each with multiple criminal cases against them."

Rab-4 arrested Monir Hossain, 30,



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After harvesting, cabbages being packed into sacks in a field to be sent to Dhaka and other parts of the country. Traders buy each piece of this winter vegetable from farmers at Tk 10-15, depending on size, but it is sold in markets at Tk 30-35. The photo was taken in Rajshahi's Paba upazila.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN