



Govt reshuffles SPs in all districts ahead of polls

Manual lottery draws mixed reactions

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and TOUSIF KAUM

The government yesterday appointed or transferred superintendents of police to all 64 districts through a manual lottery, a first in the force's history, in a major reshuffle aimed at ensuring stability during the upcoming national election.

In the same move, 33 additional deputy inspector generals were promoted to DIG, and Rajshahi Metropolitan Police received a new commissioner. The home ministry issued separate circulars announcing the postings and promotions.

The SP, as district police chief, oversees security planning before, during, and after polling. The reshuffle is part of a wider reorganisation of the field administration. Earlier in mid-November, the government changed deputy commissioners in at least 50 districts.

Separately yesterday, the government appointed new Upazila Nirbahi Officers to 166 upazilas across eight divisions, with the public administration ministry issuing eight notifications. During national polls, UNOs act as assistant returning officers.

Of the 64 SPs, 46 were already serving in the districts. Besides their transfers, 18 officers came from other units. The selections were finalised on Monday at the chief adviser's residence, Jamuna, through a manual lottery. Police officers said never before had all district SPs been appointed at once, nor chosen through a lottery.

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Intelligence agencies vetted officers for over a month

Those in key posts during 2014, 2018, 2024 polls excluded

Internal lobbying, tensions marked lead-up to reshuffle

Some officers frustrated over re-selection of SPs

166 upazilas get new UNOs



In the aftermath of the Korail slum fire, residents return to the rubble of their burnt homes. Amid the twisted tin and scorched earth, Minara Begum points into the distance as she desperately searches for her missing mother, Hosne Ara. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

KORAIL SLUM 4th fire in 2yrs exposes deadly structural flaws

DIPAN NANDY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The slum, one of the largest in the city and home to nearly 1.5 lakh people, is connected to the main road by a narrow approach that remains clogged most of the time by long lines of stalled rickshaws.

A little further in, past the gate of Baitul Aman Central Jame Mosque, the lanes shrink even more. They are so tight that two rickshaws cannot pass at the same time. During rush hours, even pedestrians struggle to get through.

This narrow, congested stretch is the only entry into the Korail slum in Mohakhali, and it was the same path firefighters struggled to navigate when the blaze broke out around 5:20pm on Tuesday.

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Govt promotes, transfers 826 judges in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday made a major reshuffle in the judiciary by promoting, posting and transferring 826 lower court judges in a single day ahead of the national election, according to five gazette notifications of the law ministry.

Of the total, 250 judges have been promoted from additional district judge to district judge and 294 from joint district judge to additional district judge.

Another 282 judicial officers have been promoted from senior assistant judge to joint district judge.

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Bad loans continue to break records

Defaulted loans hit Tk 6.44 lakh crore

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Defaulted loans in the banking sector rose further to Tk 6.44 lakh crore, or nearly 36 percent of total disbursed loans, at the end of September, indicating the continued fragile state of the country's financial sector.

At the end of the third quarter, total disbursed loans stood at Tk 18.03 lakh crore, of which Tk 6.44 lakh crore became defaulted, amounting to 35.73 percent of all disbursed loans, BB data showed. This is the highest bad loan ratio since 2000.

A year earlier, the ratio of bad loans was 16.93 percent of total outstanding loans.

Big borrowers such as S Alam, Beximco, AnonTex, Orion, Abdul Monem and Sikder Group defaulted on a large scale after the fall of the Awami League government in August last year, causing an

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PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM Verdicts in 3 cases against Hasina, Joy, Putul today

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

A Dhaka court is set to deliver verdicts today in three graft cases filed over the Purbachal plot scam against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajeb Wazed Joy, and daughter Saima Wazed Putul.

On November 23, Judge Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, of the Special Judge's Court-5 of Dhaka, fixed the date after concluding the trials in 13 hearings.

Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam told The Daily Star that the trials were completed quickly as 22 out of 23 accused

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Dhaka world's 2nd most populous city with 3.66 crore people: UN

UNB, Dhaka

A new United Nations report shows that Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, has become the world's most populous city with 41.9 million people, while Bangladesh's Dhaka ranks second with a population of 36.6 million (3.66 crore).

According to the UN's World Urbanization Prospects 2025

report, Japan's Tokyo population has held fairly steady at 33.4 million, pushing it down to third place, while Dhaka, one of the world's most crowded capitals, climbed from ninth to second and is projected to become the world's largest city by 2050.

The report highlights Asia's



dominance in global urban growth, with nine of the world's top 10 megacities located on the continent.

Cities joining Jakarta, Dhaka, and Tokyo in the top 10 include New Delhi (30.2m), Shanghai (29.6m), Guangzhou

(27.6m), Manila (24.7m), Kolkata (22.5m), and Seoul (22.5m).

Egypt's Cairo, with 32 million people, is the lone non-Asian city on the list.

Dhaka's rise has been driven largely by an influx of people fleeing rural areas due to flooding, erosion, and other climate-change

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NCP, allies may unveil a new alliance today

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE and SHAMIMA RITA

A new political alliance is likely to be launched today, involving the National Citizen Party, Amar Bangladesh (AB Party), United Peoples (UP) Bangladesh, and Rashtrio Songskar Andolon.

The announcement may be made at 3:00pm at the Shaheed Abu Sayeed Convention Centre in the capital's Shabbagh area, said NCP insiders after a meeting last night.

Regarding the development, Sarjis Alam, chief organiser of NCP (north), told The Daily Star yesterday that the alliance is named "Gonotantrik Songskar Jote," which will be both an electoral and political alliance.

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POLLS STRATEGY

Referendum not on BNP's mind

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The upcoming referendum, slated for the same day as the national election, appears to be low on the BNP's priority list, with the party planning neither to campaign for a "yes" nor a "no" vote.

Frustrated by the absence of notes of dissent in the July charter's referendum question, the party plans to leave the referendum on the back burner.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, several BNP standing committee members said that if the party supports a "yes" vote, people and rivals will question its political position, as its own demands are not reflected in the referendum question. If it campaigns for a "no" vote, it may lead to confrontation with other parties campaigning for a "yes" vote.

Against this backdrop, the party has initially decided not to issue any directive to its supporters on how to vote in the referendum.

Senior BNP leaders argued that taking a confrontational stance now would only spark complications and cause distractions from election work, a standing committee member said on condition of anonymity.

Is it right to impose such a [referendum] question on the people? With all these complicated issues at stake, reducing everything to a single one-word answer of 'yes' or 'no' is ultimately a kind of coercion.

Salahuddin Ahmed
BNP Standing Committee member

"So we would rather be busy with the election preparations," he added.

The July charter implementation order did not mention any notes of dissent, and the gazette notification of the Referendum Ordinance also omitted

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Tulee sued over 'hurting religious sentiments'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sanjida Islam Tulee, BNP's primary nominee for the Dhaka-14 constituency, has been sued on charges of "hurting religious sentiments".

Anwar Hossain, 30, a fabric trader and a former leader of Gono Odhikar Parishad, filed the case yesterday against Tulee with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahbubur Rahman, the complainant's lawyer Mahmudul Hasan told The Daily Star.

The court directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to probe the case and submit a report before it.

According to the case statement, the accused has recently made "insulting comments regarding the Islamic provision of marriage".

Tulee is the coordinator of Maayer Daak, a platform for families of enforced disappearance victims, and the sister of a disappeared BNP leader.



As winter sets in, roadside markets across the capital are brimming with warm clothes, drawing crowds of eager buyers. The photo was taken yesterday at Mohammadpur Krishi Market.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Any attempt to resist polls will face action

Says CEC Nasir Uddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin today said the law and order situation had improved compared to the period after August 5 and would continue to get better.

The Election Commission would take all necessary measures if any attempt is made to resist the upcoming polls, he told reporters after inspecting election training drills of Border Guard Bangladesh at Pikhana.

"The situation has visibly changed. People can now sleep safely and move without difficulty," he said, adding that law enforcement agencies were preparing in a coordinated manner to ensure a peaceful election environment.

"We will need cooperation from journalists, voters and the entire nation. Together, we will prevent unwanted situations and deliver a good election," he added.

On demands for wider army deployment, the CEC said the army moves in contingents and cannot be deployed like police or Ansar personnel. The final deployment plan would be decided on November 30 following discussions with all law enforcement agencies, he said.

He said risk assessment had already been completed, with polling centres categorised into red, yellow and green zones for deployment based on risk levels.

The CEC declined to comment on the reshuffle of superintendents of police and officers-in-charge through a lottery before the polls schedule is announced.

Akhtar Ahmed, senior secretary of the Election Commission, said such matters fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Dhaka world's 2nd most populous city

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impacts, as well as those seeking better opportunities, said the report.

Jakarta faces similar pressures, with rising sea levels putting up to one-fourth of the city at risk of submersion by 2050, reports Al Jazeera.

The UN says the number of megacities — those with populations exceeding 10 million — has surged to 33, up from just eight in 1975.

Although Indonesia is constructing a new capital, Nusantara, the UN estimates that Jakarta's population will continue to grow, adding another 10 million people by mid-century.

The swelling population has fuelled concern over inequality and affordability, issues that have already sparked public protests.

The report also notes that Iran's capital, Tehran, now with a population of 9 million, is struggling with severe water shortages, prompting rationing measures.

In preparing its latest assessment, the UN adopted a new global definition of cities to reduce inconsistencies across countries.

It now classifies a city as a contiguous area of grid cells with at least 1,500 people per square kilometre and a minimum total population of 50,000.

NCP, allies may unveil a new alliance today

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Earlier in the day, Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan, chairman of AB Party, said the formation of the alliance is expected to be finalised soon.

Talking to this newspaper, UP Bangladesh Convener Ali Ahsan Zunaïd said NCP, AB Party, Rashtr Songskar Andolon, and UP Bangladesh have reached an understanding. He described the talks as positive, adding, "We are also in touch with a few other parties."

Hasnat Quaiyum, president of Rashtr Songskar Andolon, said the final announcement may come today. He added that Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rab) and Gono Odhikar Parishad could join the alliance.

For months, the NCP has been exploring ways to forge an alliance. On November 9, it held a meeting at its Banglamotor office to discuss polls strategy, including the possibility of forming an alliance with like-minded parties and platforms.

NCP leaders also met representatives from AB Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and the six-party alliance named Ganatantra Manch in October to explore alliance options.

According to party sources, the new alliance is considered a "third force" outside the dominance of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in the next elections.

Earlier, a senior NCP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "We don't intend to remain a 'small BNP' or a 'small Jamaat.' Rather than following larger parties, we believe it is time to position ourselves as a major political force. That is why we are working to forge an alliance with like-minded parties."

A senior AB Party leader told the newspaper that this alliance would function as a political and electoral alliance. "It will remain active politically on the ground. The implementation of the July charter cannot be achieved through elections alone."

The new alliance, once unveiled, is expected to launch a coordinated campaign for the upcoming polls slated for February next year.

Govt reshuffles SPs in all districts

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Following the reshuffle, the process to transfer officers-in-charge of police stations has begun and is also set to follow a lottery system. Decisions on transfers of range DIGs, metropolitan police commissioners, and deputy commissioners are being prepared, though officials say it is still undecided whether lottery will apply to those posts.

SPs are typically posted for three years. Based on yesterday's changes, most newly appointed officers are expected to serve during the February national election, though once the election schedule is announced, the Election Commission will assume full authority and may transfer officials as needed.

At the Secretariat yesterday, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said districts had been categorised as A, B, and C based on law-and-order considerations. "We first identified the districts, then matched SPs accordingly," he said. "From the 64 districts, we removed 18 SPs and appointed new officers in their places. Once the categories were set, the lottery decided who would go where."

He added that the lottery was held only among shortlisted, highly qualified officers.

Officials involved said the aim was to place dedicated and skilled officers in critical positions ahead of the election. Intelligence units spent over a month vetting officers, including those who had benefited under the previous government. Officers who held high command roles during the 2014, 2018, and

2024 elections were excluded.

The reshuffle followed several rounds of meetings at the ministry and police headquarters amid tensions over competing demands and internal lobbying.

Former IGP Muhammad Nurul Huda criticised the move, arguing that quality and experience are crucial in SP postings and "a lottery system cannot ensure that level of judgment".

He said a committee could have selected competent officers and replaced them if needed after observing their performance.

Crime analysts also warned that the approach may backfire.

Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at Dhaka University, said districts differ widely in crime profiles, and "new officers will struggle without experience. A lottery can also be manipulated."

He said professional appointments "cannot rely on chance", adding that qualified officers risk being sidelined when experienced leadership is essential.

Several police officers voiced frustration, saying some who had already served as district SPs were re-selected, while others promoted years ago still have no district postings. Some alleged that certain officers obtained desirable districts despite facing allegations. "This lottery cannot guarantee impartiality," said one SP-level officer. Another officer from the 28th batch said many of his batchmates, promoted three years ago, still have no district assignments. "We hoped the interim

government would ensure fairness. Instead, the way this was done has left us frustrated."

A police headquarters officer also questioned the logic of the process. "A category SPs are moving to other A category districts, and the same for B and C. What does the lottery really achieve? It appears to have been done mainly to accommodate 18 new SPs."

At a ministry meeting last Saturday, districts were classified into 27 A-category, 28 B-category, and nine C-category areas. A category districts include Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Munshiganj, Jashore, Jhenidah, Satkhira, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, and Cumilla — considered crucial because of crime patterns, economic activity, and social sensitivity.

Pabna, Sirajganj, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdi, Kushtia, Faridpur, Khulna, Barguna, and Pirojpur fall under B category, while Gopalganj, Narail, Rajbari, Lalmonirhat, and Gaibandha are among C-category districts.

The reshuffle has also caused anxiety among OCs, whose postings will be determined through a lottery next week. Many have been in their posts only three to four months and fear removal, while allegations persist that some obtained postings through money or influence.

Asked about the need for such a sweeping overhaul, AHM Shahadat Hossain, assistant inspector general (media) at Police Headquarters, said the move was a government decision.

4th fire in 2yrs exposes deadly structural flaws

FROM PAGE 1

Flames tore through the tightly packed shanties, feeding on wooden frames, garbage, and tangled electrical lines. Nineteen fire service units fought the blaze through the night and finally brought it fully under control around 9:30am yesterday, nearly 16 hours later.

But the damage was immense. According to fire service, the fire destroyed 1,338 houses, leaving around 6,000 people homeless. At least 50 shops and part of a mosque was also gutted.

The cause of the fire remains unclear, and there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Both locals and firefighters said fires in Korail are difficult to contain quickly because of the settlement's geography, congestion, and poor infrastructure.

"It took almost 35 minutes to reach the slum after the call came in because of the narrow lanes and severe traffic congestion," said Lt Col Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

"Large engines could not enter. We had to drag hoses from a distance. By the time our teams got close, the flames had already spread to a large area," he told The Daily Star.

Dense electrical wiring and exploding gas cylinders fuelled the fire further, he added.

Residents also said firefighters cannot arrive on time because of the layout of the slum.

"Walk through these lanes, and you will understand. Even a rickshaw struggles here. How will a fire engine enter?" said Azmat Ali, a resident.

The slum in sits wedged between the affluent neighbourhoods of Gulshan and Banani, and is flanked

by clusters of upscale apartment towers.

On Tuesday evening, as the sun set, orange flames rose into the night sky, and heavy smoke blanketed the area as people fled with whatever belongings they could carry.

Fifteen-year-old Russel remembered the chaos vividly. "Everyone ran at once. There wasn't enough space to get out. Fire service members had to fight their way inside," he said.

Around 10:00am yesterday, a large section of the settlement was found buried under piles of charred wood, twisted tin, and ash. Even after 17 hours, smoke still rose from pockets beneath the debris, filling the area with a strong stench.

Crowds of affected residents searched through the ruins, looking for anything they could salvage.

Police maintained heavy deployment at the entry points, while several organisations distributed food.

Many residents spent the night without shelter at the Khamarbari Eidgah field, the Ershad School field, and the Mohakhali T&T ground. At Pallibandhu Ershad Shishu Kalyan Primary School, hundreds took refuge in Red Cross tents and classrooms.

Rima Akter stood silently at the site of her burnt home, holding her eight-month-old son, Rafsan. "The fire started from an electrical short in front of our home," she said. "Then a gas cylinder exploded. Another cylinder burst on the second floor. After that, I ran out with my son and daughter."

However, officials are yet to determine the origin of the fire.

Meanwhile, the Fire Service and Civil Defence formed a five-member

Bad loans continue

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unprecedented jump in bad loans.

Bad loans stood at Tk 2.82 lakh crore at the end of September last year, meaning defaulted loans increased by Tk 3.61 lakh crore in just one year.

After August 5 last year, many businessmen fled the country and many of their businesses shut down, which pushed up bad loans, said the chief executive of a private bank.

"Ahead of the upcoming election, an atmosphere of uncertainty is prevailing in the country, which is hindering trade and commerce. Because of these factors, many good companies have turned into defaulters," he added.

Due to the high volume of defaulted loans, the banking sector is facing a significant provisioning shortfall: Tk 3.44 lakh crore until September.

"This is not a good sign," said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank.

Banks' profitability will decline and the funds available for lending will shrink due to the high bad loans, said Rahman, also the former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, a platform of bank MDS.

However, defaulted loans may decrease in December because the central bank has introduced policy support. Many defaulted loans are being

rescheduled.

Recovery needs to be strengthened, he said.

"Legal procedures must be made faster. More courts and more judges are needed. But the challenge is that the election is ahead, so business conditions are weak," he added.

About 35 percent of the loans are now classified as non-performing, a level that has far-reaching effects, said Toufic Ahmad Choudhury, former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management.

When defaulted loans rise, banks earn less as they have to set aside larger provisions. This leads to the erosion of their capital base.

"As a result, foreign investors think twice, and international banks raise transaction charges. The country must come out of this situation. Exemplary punishment should be ensured for loan defaulters."

The higher figure partly reflects the central bank's decision to classify loans in line with international standards, he said.

In 1999, bad loans in the banking sector stood at a record 41.1 percent, the highest on record.

Since then, the ratio began to decline and fell to 6.1 percent in 2011.

Govt promotes

FROM PAGE 1

Some of the judges are likely to be included in the electoral inquiry committees.

The committees are tasked with investigating complaints, irregularities, and allegations during elections. They collect evidence, examine reports from polling centres, and submit findings to the EC to ensure accountability and transparency.

Law ministry sources said the large-scale promotions, postings and transfers were carried out for several reasons, including the imminent announcement of the national election schedule.

Once the election schedule is announced, such transfers or promotions may create complications in election duties. And the Election Commission may not be able to work

smoothly if officers responsible for election duties are transferred then, said the sources.

They said files regarding the promotions and postings of judges had been pending for several years. The lower courts will also go into a month-long annual civil vacation from December 2, prompting authorities to complete the process before the break.

The sources said the decisions were taken as routine work in consultation with the Supreme Court.

The law ministry cannot make such reshuffles in the judiciary once the Supreme Court secretariat is established. The interim government on November 20 granted final approval to the draft Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025.

Referendum

FROM PAGE 1

them, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star.

"Therefore, all of these responsibilities ultimately rest with the government."

Salahuddin warned that people might become confused and assume that everyone agreed with the proposal exactly as laid out in the order and Referendum Ordinance.

"Is it right to impose such a question on the people? With all these complicated issues at stake, reducing everything to a single one-word answer of 'yes' or 'no' is ultimately a kind of coercion."

The party is committed to implementing the version of the July National Charter it signed on October 17.

"Outside of this, no law, no order and no proposal can be used to limit or reduce the sovereignty of parliament over the parties that signed the charter."

The BNP has already raised questions about the government's steps outside the signed July charter, he added.

Although the party objects to the referendum question, it is keeping a cautious stance for now, as its demand to hold the referendum alongside the national polls has been met.

Some standing committee members said that as the government proceeds with the referendum without settling the issues raised by the BNP, it might lead to complications.

Some warned that supporting the referendum could create political complications for the BNP.

REFERENDUM ORDINANCE

The government yesterday issued

the Referendum Ordinance 2025 to conduct the referendum on the July National Charter.

The ordinance includes a provision allowing the Election Commission to use the same ballot boxes as in the general election for the referendum.

In addition, a separate coloured ballot paper will be used specifically for the referendum.

For the first time, expatriates will be able to cast their votes in the referendum through postal ballots.

Election officials from the national polls will also serve as officials for the referendum.

The process will follow the same voter list, polling centres, polling hours, balloting method and procedures for announcing results as the general election.

The referendum will be held on a single question, though it will cover four aspects of constitutional reforms.

The government on November 13 decided that the national election and the July charter referendum would be held on the same day.

Upon receiving the government's directive to hold a referendum, the EC began exploring measures to ensure both votes proceed smoothly.

Bangladesh has held three referendums to date. The 1977 and 1985 referendums took place under the governments of Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, respectively, while the 1991 referendum marked the country's return to parliamentary democracy.

The first two referendums were held under the Referendum Orders of 1977 and 1985, and the third under the Referendum Act of 1991.

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Confront social norms that normalise violence against women

Speakers tell MJF national dialogue marking 16 Days of Activism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must confront and overturn the harmful social norms and entrenched power structures that normalise violence against women and girls, said speakers at a national dialogue yesterday.

They stressed that without transforming these mindsets, no law or intervention can ensure a fear-free future.

They said violence against women and girls must be treated as a national emergency, calling for major shifts in social attitudes, stronger state accountability, and a more responsive justice system.

The national dialogue, titled "Challenging Social Norms and Power Dynamics: Towards a Fear-Free Future", was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) with support from UN Women, the European Union, Plan International, and the embassies of Sweden, Canada, and Switzerland at a hotel in Dhaka.

The event was part of the global 16

Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2025 campaign, under this year's UN theme, "UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls."

Presenting the keynote, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said violence is worsening despite progress in women's empowerment.

"Between January and October 2025, 503 women were reportedly killed due to domestic violence, 905 children were subjected to sexual violence, and more than 78 percent of women experienced digital abuse," she said, citing data from Ain o Salish Kendra and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

She said statistics cannot reflect the full extent of trauma and pain endured by a woman, girl, or child. "We must remember them and resolve to do our utmost to prevent such occurrences," she added.

She urged long-term investments in changing social attitudes, stronger law enforcement, better accountability in

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Distinguished guests at the national dialogue, titled 'Challenging Social Norms and Power Dynamics: Towards a Fear-Free Future', organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) with support from UN Women, the European Union, Plan International, and the embassies of Sweden, Canada and Switzerland. The event was part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2025 campaign.

Hold platforms, parties accountable to tackle polls-time misinformation

Speakers tell roundtable by Star, Tech Global Institute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the upcoming national election, experts, political leaders, and civil society representatives yesterday voiced concern over online misinformation, misuse of social media, and the need for stronger accountability from both platforms and political parties.

They were speaking at a roundtable titled "Digital Transformation and Democracy: Bangladesh's Electoral Challenge and the Way Forward", jointly organised by The Daily Star and The Tech Global Institute at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST, said, "We cannot only rely on what political parties say. We must look at the behaviour of their people on the ground. Many of them are competing to win, and they often create fear for others."

"We are seeing defamation cases again. We are also seeing cases where religious sentiments are being exploited. We should look at who is filing these cases. If they belong to your political party, then your party should take action against them," she said.

"We cannot expect the courts alone to

solve these problems. There is also fear within the courts about who might react if they make certain decisions," she added.

She stressed the importance of challenging the misuse of laws, including

The Daily Star, said, "Important issues remain unaddressed, especially the risks linked to access to the National ID database. 183 institutions currently have access, and election candidates will also

access is not abused?"

He said the growing threat of AI-generated content and misinformation cannot be controlled without cooperation from global tech companies.

"We expected the government to negotiate with Meta, YouTube and other platforms. Their own codes of conduct already exist. Why are they not enforcing them? If they enforced these rules, much of the hate speech and incitement would not be published," he said.

He questioned the government's practice of granting indemnity to platforms for harmful content.

"Which country gives them indemnity? The US does not. The UK and the European Union do not. Why should Bangladesh do it?" he asked.

Citing the country's nearly 80 million Facebook users, he said this gives the government leverage to demand responsible behaviour from platforms.

He also pointed out that Meta operates multiple services beyond Facebook and Instagram, often allowing politically motivated groups to spread propaganda under seemingly innocent identities.

"Who takes responsibility for these abuses? It is Meta. The government should

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Speakers at a roundtable titled 'Digital Transformation and Democracy: Bangladesh's Electoral Challenge and the Way Forward', jointly organised by The Daily Star and The Tech Global Institute at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

the Anti-Terrorism Act, and ensuring a level playing field for candidates and voters.

Kamal Ahmed, consulting editor of

need voter lists for their constituencies. If there are 1,200 candidates, each of them has the right to access the voter list of their constituency. How do we ensure this

Of recurring fires and lost homes

Residents of Korail slum see their lives uprooted yet again by another blaze



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Yesterday, around midnight, a 50-year-old day labourer stood near the fire-ravaged Korail slum, a single suitcase balanced on his head.

Inside were the last of his belongings — some clothes and a few utensils he managed to save. Everything else had turned to ash.

The labourer, Mohammad Ismail, does not know what comes next. He only knows this is not the first time fire has taken everything from him.

"This is my third time," he said, his voice tired. "I don't know why fate always plays with me."

Ismail has lived in the slum for 26 years, renting a single-room house that now costs him Tk 5,000 a month. He lives there with his wife and two children.

His first experience with fire was about 15 years

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Wagon units and freight equipment worth crores of taka have been lying neglected in the open for years in Halishahar, Chattogram. Exposure to sun, rain, and mud has left most of them rusted and covered in vines. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Titumir's life, legacy deserve more attention

Say speakers at Star Itihas Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite Titumir's importance in the region's history, serious research on him remains limited on both sides of Bengal, speakers said at a discussion.

They were speaking at the fifth episode of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Titumirer Bidroho O Boishommohin Samajer Shopno", held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

Researcher Prof Md Mizanur Rahman said Titumir was born only 25 years after the Battle of Plassey, at a time when the subcontinent was trembling on the hot pan of rebellion.

He said religious politics had long created divisions among Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian communities, and that rulers took advantage of these divides. Born into such a context, Titumir had to endure many hardships, he added.

Prof Mizanur said although Titumir played a key role in mobilising peasants against oppression, very little work has been done on him across Bengal, even though his name remains strong in public memory.

Sahidul Hasan, associate professor of

Dhaka University's history department, said how Titumir is remembered has depended on who wrote about him. Early accounts praised him as a devout and disciplined Muslim while also portraying him negatively, reflecting the writer's position within the power structure of that time.

portrayals. The accounts of Titumir's final battle mention Fakirs and Bauls taking part, showing the movement drew support from various groups.

Al Amin Sorol, author of the novel "Titumir: Jan Othoba Jomin", said he was inspired to write fiction about Titumir because of a gap in Bangla



PHOTO: STAR

He said satirical village songs after the uprising mocked Titumir, his followers' beards, and the bamboo fort, while colonial reports labelled him a dacoit or fanatic. Later writers interpreted him through the lens of their own time, creating very different

literature. "Although research-based books exist, Titumir is almost absent in novels, plays, or stories," he said.

"What is available either presents him only as a religious reformer or solely as an anti-British rebel. The

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Keep the CU admission form fee under Tk 500

Students demand at sit-in on campus

CU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Chittagong University have urged the university authorities to reduce the fee for admission forms from Tk 1,000 for each unit.

The application process of CU admission tests for 2025-26 session is set to begin on December 1.

During a sit-in in front of the CU administrative building yesterday, students said considering the fact that many students from poor financial backgrounds apply for admission to CU, the university authorities should reduce the admission form fees to Tk 500 or less for each unit. They termed the Tk 1,000 fee for admission form of each unit unjustified.

They also warned that they would lock the administrative building unless their demand is met by next Sunday.

Abdur Rahman, a student of CU's Islamic Studies department (2021-22 session), said, "Many poor students cannot afford to apply due to such a high fee. We want every student to have an equal chance to vie for admission. The fee must be reduced immediately."

Tahsan Habib, a student of the History department (2018-19 session), added, "If the fee is not reduced by Sunday, the administrative building will be locked."

Contacted, CU Registrar Prof Dr Saiful Islam said, "The fee was set at Tk 1,000 each unit, considering current operational expenses. If we receive a formal application for lowering the fee, we will review it."

PRAYER TIMING

NOVEMBER 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-10 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00
JAMAAT 5-45 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PLOT SALE

A plot is available for sale in the Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. Interested and genuine buyers are warmly invited to contact for further details.
Contact: 01973456904

হারিয়েছে

আগে শুকুর এর নামের মূল দলিলের এসআরও টোকেন হারিয়েছে, যাহার মৌজা- পশ্চিমগাঁও, উপজেলা-রূপগঞ্জ, জেলা- নারায়নগঞ্জ, দলিল নং- ১৩৬৩৭, তারিখ- ২৩.১১.২০২১ইং। জিডি নং- ২২১৪, জলশান থানা, তাং- ২৩.১১.২৫ইং। পক্ষে, মোহাম্মদ নাজমুল চৌধুরী



Md Monir Taj goes door to door in rural areas, making quilts, mattresses, and pillows to earn his living. Between the Bangla months of Kartik and Magh, the 45-year-old earns around Tk 50,000 to Tk 60,000. The photo was taken in the Purbo Charadi area of Bakerganj, Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

SAINT MARTIN'S ISLAND

Bookings for overnight stay remain thin

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Despite the government's decision to allow overnight stays on Saint Martin's Island from December, cruise ship operators and resort owners say bookings have been far below expectations for the first half of the month.

They hope turnout will pick up from December 15 through January once school examinations end.

"The island reopened after a long pause, but many are still hesitant because of the country's overall situation," said Shibli Azim Kashemi, president of the Saint Martin's Hotel and Resort Owners' Association.

Cruise operators voiced similar concerns.

Hossainul Islam Bahadur, general secretary of the Sea Cruise Operator Owners' Association of Bangladesh, said very few bookings were made for trips before December 15.

The two vessels under his

supervision, Karnaphuli and Baro Aulia, will be operating with around 950 passengers per trip against a capacity of 1,600 each. Both ships will run daily from Cox's Bazar's Nuniachhara Ghat to Saint Martin's and return by afternoon.

"Tickets for Fridays and public holidays in December have already sold out, but remain mostly available for other days," he said.

Under government regulations, up to 2,000 tourists will be allowed to stay overnight on the island daily from December through February.

The island officially reopened to visitors on November 1, but not a single tourist arrived throughout the month as there was no permission in place for overnight stay and no ship service was operational. Ship services will remain suspended till November 30.

"Many local resort owners won't earn enough to sustain the rest of the year due to only a two-month tourist season with the 2,000 daily tourist cap," said Tayeb Ullah, owner of Saint Martin's Mermaid Resort.

This year, seven vessels received approval to operate, including Keari Group's Keari Sindabad and Keari Cruise & Dine, which have recently begun ticket sales. Others like MV Bay Cruise, MV Kajol, and Atlantic Cruise are still completing regulatory requirements.

Hossainul said while the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority has granted navigational permission to the vessels, final approval from the Department of Environment is still pending.

Mohammad Zamir Uddin, director of the DoE's Cox's Bazar office, said all preparations to resume vessel movement are complete. "Strict monitoring will be enforced, and no vessel will be allowed to carry passengers without following government guidelines," he said.

Separate checkpoints have been set up at the BIWTA jetty in Nuniachhara and on Saint Martin's Island to ensure the daily limit of 2,000 tourists is not exceeded, he added.



A quiet stretch of Saint Martin's Island. Operators say bookings for December's overnight stays have been far below expectations.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Elderly man killed over land dispute, nephew held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An 80-year-old man died after he was allegedly killed by his nephew over a land dispute in Saker Mohammad Char area of Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Kalu, 80. The accused, Ali Ahmed, 60, was detained by police shortly after the incident.

Local residents said the two had long been embroiled in a dispute over ancestral land. On Wednesday morning, an argument broke out between them, during which Ali Ahmed allegedly kicked Kalu in the chest. He was rushed to a local hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

As police took Ali Ahmed into custody and attempted to transport him to the police station, relatives of the deceased and other locals intercepted the police van, forcibly pulled him out, and beat him. His house was also vandalised, said locals.

Sarwar Alam, son of the deceased, said, "Locals beat Ali Ahmed. Our family had no involvement in that attack."

Touhidul Anwar, officer-in-charge of Chakaria Police Station, said injured Ali Ahmed was taken to the upazila health complex.

KAWKHALI IN PIROJPUR

Erosion batters Amrajhuri ferry terminal

KMHABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Erosion on both sides of the Amrajhuri ferry terminal in Pirojpur's Kawkhali upazila has taken a devastating turn, with continuous collapse of the River Swandha's banks forcing many people to leave the area.

The terminal is a key link connecting Nesarabad upazila with the district headquarters and other parts of the country, but frequent shifting of the pontoon and gangway due to erosion is disrupting regular vehicle movement.

Recently, the Water Development Board began dumping geotextile bags inside a fenced area made of wooden sticks and bamboo to protect the Kawkhali side. The fence collapsed before the work was finished.

Ruhul Amin Fakir, a local resident, said earlier steps also yielded no results. He said the erosion point lies at the river's arching bend and the mouth of the Gabkhan Channel, where strong waves strike, and the riverbed is over 150 feet deep. More than 1,000 feet of land on the Kawkhali side have already been swallowed.

Local Mehedi Hasan said mosques, madrasas and houses have already been lost to erosion, and residents now want a permanent embankment.

Contacted, Nusaer Hossain, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Pirojpur, said they are currently working with Tk 45 lakh but have proposed a 1.5km permanent dam costing over Tk 59 crore.

"A feasibility study has been approved, and a Development Project Proposal will be prepared, though the project may take two years to begin," he said.

Rickety bridge puts locals at risk

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A decades-old wooden bridge over a branch of the Lauhajang river at Gharia in Kalihati has become a daily ordeal for residents of four villages who depend on it as their only link to other areas.

The rickety structure connecting Gharia, Sherpur, Mirpur and Poshana is severely damaged, with broken planks, weakened supports, and wide gaps along its surface. The bridge sways under pressure, making each crossing perilous.

"The bridge shakes every time a rickshaw passes. If a plank snaps, we could fall straight into the water," said Mamun, a rickshaw puller from Gharia.



Local resident Ali Chan said the union parishad previously carried out small repairs but abandoned the effort this year. "We eventually collected money from villagers and tried to fix parts of it ourselves. Still, it remains highly risky..." he said.

"From medical emergencies to daily travel, we suffer constantly. It feels like the people of these four villages have been forgotten," said Morshedul Islam of Gharia.

Contacted, Kalihati UNO Md Khairul Islam said, "If the locals submit a written application, we will speak to the relevant department and try to take necessary measures."

DOCKYARD & ENGINEERING WORKS LTD
BANGLADESH NAVY
SONAKANDA, BANDAR, NARAYANGANJ
PABX-880-2-7661480, Mobile no: 01769719880, Fax: 880-2-223303501
E-mail - commercial@dewbn.gov.bd, www.dewbn.gov.bd

Ref: 06.02.6758.165.07.193.25.1306-1311 Date: 26 November 2025

INVITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TENDER

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 01 | Procuring entity name | Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, BN, Narayanganj |
| 02 | Invitation for | a. Electronics Equipment (Items Serial No: 01-13), Lot-01 b. Life Raft (Items Serial No: 01-05), Lot-02 c. Sacrificial Anode, Lot-03 d. Shore Supply Cable, Lot-04 e. Hydraulic Pipe, Flexible Hose Pipe & Hydraulic Pipe Connector (Items Serial No: 01-05), Lot-05 f. Sight Glass with 2" Ball Valve connected with both end (Items Serial No: 01-06), Lot-06 |
| 03 | Procuring method | Open tender |
| 04 | Budget & source of funds | Own finance |
| 05 | Tender last selling date | 10 December 2025 time 04:00 PM |
| 06 | Tender closing Date and time | 11 December 2025 time: 12:15 PM |
| 07 | Tender opening Date and time | 12 December 2025 time: 12:30 PM |
| 08 | Name & Address of the office: a. Selling tender document. | Cash Section, Account Department, Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj Or Account Name: Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bank name: Trust Bank Ltd, Account no: 00350320000056, Branch: Narayanganj, deposit slip submitted by tender document. |
| | b. Receiving tender document | Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. |
| | c. Opening tender document | Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Tenderers and their authorized representative are allowed to attend. |
| 09 | Price of tender document | TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Electronics Equipment (Items Serial No: 01-13), Lot-01, Ref No: 1306 b. TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Life Raft (Items Serial No: 01-05), Lot-02, Ref No: 1307 c. TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Sacrificial Anode, Lot-03, Ref No: 1308 d. TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Shore Supply Cable, Lot-04, Ref No: 1309 e. TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Hydraulic Pipe, Flexible Hose Pipe & Hydraulic Pipe Connector (Items Serial No: 01-05), Lot-05, Ref No: 1310 f. TK 1,000.00 (Taka One thousand only) (Non-refundable) for Sight Glass with 2" Ball Valve connected with both end (Items Serial No: 01-06), Lot-06, Ref No: 1311 |
| 10 | Contact details official | Mobile: 01615519870, 01769719888 Web: www.dewbn.gov.bd E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd |
| 11 | | a. Tenderer must be OEM/ distributor/ local agent. b. Document required: 1. Up to Date/Trade License 2. TIN Certificate, 3. VAT Registration Certificate 4. Bank Statement 5. Experience Certificate |
| 12 | Earnest Money | All bidders must submit earnest money 01% (one percent) of the actual quoted Total value of the stores either by Bangladesh currency or equivalent to any International Trading currencies favoring the Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd, in bank draft/ Pay order/ Bank guarantee/ which will be issued by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh. |
| 13 | Special instructions | The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any part of the tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason. |

GD-2561

Ruddraw Mohammad Nabi
Lt Commander, BN
Manager (Commercial & Purchase)
Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd,
Bangladesh Navy, Narayanganj
For Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Planning

Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division

Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

No- 21.00.0000.000.005.30.0326.25-279 Date: 26/11/2025

Invitation for e-Tender (Goods)

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

| Package No | Description | Tender ID No | Closing Date & Time |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| GR-18/25-26/IMED | Purchase of Stationery and Others | 1171218 | 08-Nov-2025 Time-12:00 |

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system. (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

26/11/2025
(Md Masudul Haque)
Joint Secretary

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Ref: Hosp Directorate/100584/procurement/3 Date: 26 November 2025

HOPE: DG, BIRDEM General Hospital

Procuring Entity: Brig Gen Dr. Md. Nasir Uddin Ahamed (Retd), BIRDEM General Hospital, Shabag, 122, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000.

Subj: Consultant for VRF HVAC System (150 TR) BIRDEM General Hospital Outdoor Block (Ground Floor), Shabag, 122, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000.

Procuring Entity (PE) of BIRDEM General Hospital invites EOIs from eligible consulting firms/individual consultants for design, BOQ preparation, procurement support, supervision, testing & commissioning of a 150 TR VRF system for its Outdoor Department (Ground Floor).

- Eligible applicants must have experience in designing VRF (100 TR+) systems, preferably for hospitals/commercial buildings.
- Documents to submit: Trade license, TIN/VAT, company profile/CV, similar experience, and technical capacity.
- EOI submission deadline: December 10/2025, 10am.

Submission to: Room No. 508, BIRDEM General Hospital, 4th Floor, 122, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shabag, Dhaka-1000.

Procuring Entity

Brig Gen Dr. Md. Nasir Uddin Ahamed (Retd)
Director (Hospital Administration)
BIRDEM General Hospital
Cell Phone: 01754030989
Email brignasir584@gmail.com



Residents are rescued on a boat in flood waters in Hat Yai in Thailand's southern Songkhla province yesterday, as severe flooding affected thousands of people in the country's south following days of heavy rain. Tens of thousands of people in Thailand and neighbouring Malaysia were displaced by widespread flooding, with streets submerged and at least 34 dead, officials said. PHOTO: AFP

Israel launches new ops in northern West Bank

Five Palestinians killed in Gaza tunnel clash

AGENCIES
The Israeli military yesterday announced a new "counterterrorism" operation in the north of the occupied West Bank.

The military and internal security service said in a joint statement that they "began operating as part of a broad counterterrorism operation in the area of northern Samaria", using the Israeli biblical term for part of the West Bank.

In response to a question from AFP, the Israeli army said the operation was new and not part of its counterterrorism operation launched in January 2025, which primarily targets Palestinian refugee camps.

Violence in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, has soared since the Hamas attack on Israel triggered the Gaza war in October 2023. It has not ceased despite the fragile truce in effect in Gaza since October 10.

1,000 Palestinians killed in West Bank since start of Gaza war

Israel returns **15** Palestinian bodies to Gaza

Israeli troops or settlers have killed more than 1,000 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the war, according to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry figures.

Meanwhile, Israel's army said it killed five Palestinians on Tuesday who had probably emerged from a tunnel network in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

"During the troops' searches in the area, five armed terrorists were identified and eliminated," it said in a statement. "They were likely the terrorists who emerged from the

underground terror infrastructure in eastern Rafah."

During talks on Sunday with the head of Egyptian intelligence on the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, Hamas said it had raised the fate of fighters in Rafah with whom it had lost contact.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday Israel returned the bodies of 15 Palestinian prisoners under the US-brokered ceasefire exchange deal.

On Tuesday, Israel said it had received the coffin of a hostage held in Gaza, with the remains undergoing forensic examination to determine their identity.

In a separate development, the British government's decision to ban pro-Palestinian campaign group Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation was set to be challenged in court yesterday, with lawyers representing a co-founder arguing it is a misuse of anti-terrorism laws.

Sudan army chief calls on Trump to end country's war

AFP, Port Sudan

Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, at war with a rival paramilitary group since April 2023, called on US President Donald Trump yesterday to bring peace.

"The Sudanese people now look to Washington to take the next step: to build on the US president's honesty and work with us — and those in the region



St Paul police fire pepper balls at protesters and journalists after a federal immigration raid on a home in St Paul, Minnesota, US on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM Turkish firms ink \$6.5bn Steel Dome deals

REUTERS, Ankara

Turkish defence companies signed \$6.5 billion worth of contracts to reinforce and develop Turkey's integrated, multi-layered 'Steel Dome' air defence system, the Turkish Defence Industries Presidency (SSB) said yesterday.

Nato member Turkey, which in recent years has significantly ramped up its defence industry production and reduced dependence on external suppliers, first announced plans to build its Steel Dome — similar to Israel's Iron Dome system — in July 2024.

The project is comprised of 47 components, including radars, missiles, electro-optical sensors, command and control centers, and air defence elements with different ranges.

Strikes by Israel — the Middle East's

most advanced military with hundreds of US-supplied F-15, F-16 and F-35 fighters — on Turkey's neighbours Iran and Syria, as well as on Lebanon and Qatar, unnerved Ankara in the last year and pushed it to ramp up air power and air defence to counter any possible threats.

Turkey has also become a leading manufacturer and exporter of armed drones, with these being used in conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh, and across Africa.

In a statement, SSB Chairman Haluk Gorgun said the contracts included combat systems and their advanced versions, which would be developed by Roketsan, adding that the 'Steel Dome' would be made of fully domestic systems.

Gorgun said the contracts would help increase Turkey's deterrence.



UKRAINE PEACE PUSH

Russia backs parts of US plan

AGENCIES

Russia has seen the latest copy of a US plan to end the Ukraine war and views some of it positively, but other points require discussion, the Kremlin said yesterday.

In comments to a Russian state TV reporter, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said the new draft required "truly serious analysis" and that Russia had not yet discussed it with anyone.

"Some aspects can be viewed positively, but many require special discussions among experts," Ushakov told a state TV reporter.

Washington's latest plan has not yet been published.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday that it was premature to speak about striking a peace deal in the near future on Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported.

When asked by reporters if a peace deal was close, Peskov answered: "Wait, it's premature to say that yet."

US President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that it was a "fine-tuned" version of an earlier 28-point plan that would have seen Ukraine withdraw from its Donetsk

region and cut the size of its army, points that Kyiv had criticised.

Ukraine said later it had reached an "understanding" with the US and that the two sides had pared back some of the points it disagreed with following talks in Geneva.

US officials will now meet with both sides in the hope of finalising the agreement, Trump said Tuesday.

The Kremlin confirmed earlier yesterday that US special envoy Steve Witkoff would visit Moscow next week to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, reports AFP.

অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক নিয়োজিতকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাপান, কোরিয়া, মধ্যপ্রাচ্য ও ইউরোপের বিভিন্ন দেশে গমনেছদের জন্য জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো (বিএমইটি) এর নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন ইনস্টিটিউট অব মেরিন টেকনোলজি (আইএমটি)/কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (টিটিসি)/শিকানবিশি প্রশিক্ষণ দপ্তরসমূহে জাপানিজ, কোরিয়ান, আরবি, জার্মান, ইটালিয়ান ও ইংরেজি ভাষা শিক্ষা কোর্স পরিচালনার জন্য অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক নিয়োজিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে প্যানেল তৈরির নিমিত্ত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে কাজ করতে আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো (বিএমইটি) এর ওয়েবসাইট www.bmet.gov.bd হতে নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম ডাউনলোড করে সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক শুধুমাত্র আবেদনপত্রের স্ক্যান কপি bmettrs@gmail.com ই-মেইলে বিজ্ঞাপন প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে আগামী ০৮-১১-২০২৫ খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে প্রেরণ করতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, ভাষাগত দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা সংক্রান্ত সকল সনদপত্রের অনুলিপি এবং এক কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি মূল আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করে লিখিত পরীক্ষার দিন পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রের নির্ধারিত কাউন্টারে জমা দিতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য, ই-মেইলে প্রেরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের সাথে কোন সনদপত্র সংযুক্ত করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

| ক্রমিক নম্বর | পদ ও ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক কোর্সের নাম | পদের সংখ্যা | ঘণ্টা প্রতি সম্মানীয় হার | আবেদনের যোগ্যতা |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|---|---|
| ০১ | ০২ | ০৩ | ০৪ | ০৫ |
| ১ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (জাপানিজ ভাষা) | ৫১ টি | প্রতি ঘণ্টা ৮০০/- (আটশত) টাকা [দায়িত্ব পালন সাপেক্ষে প্রতি কার্য দিবসে সর্বোচ্চ ৪ ঘণ্টার সম্মানী ভাতা প্রাপ্য হবে।] | ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি/সমমান পাশসহ জাপানিজ ভাষাগত দক্ষতায় JLPT N3/সমমান লেভেল পাশ হতে হবে। জাপানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় অবস্থানকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় জাপানিজ ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে দায়িত্ব পালনকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে অধিক অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ২ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (কোরিয়ান ভাষা) | ১ টি | | ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি/সমমান পাশসহ কোরিয়ান ভাষাগত দক্ষতা পরীক্ষায় TOPIK Level-3/ সমমান পাশ হতে হবে। কোরিয়ায় ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় অবস্থানকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় কোরিয়ান ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে দায়িত্ব পালনকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে অধিক অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ৩ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (ইংরেজি ভাষা) | ৩১ টি | | সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর/সমমান ডিগ্রী থাকতে হবে। ইংরেজি ভাষাভাষি দেশে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় অবস্থানকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় ইংরেজি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে দায়িত্ব পালনকারী/IELTS-এ ৬.৫ পয়েন্ট অর্জনকারী প্রার্থীগণ অগ্রাধিকার পাবেন। অধিক অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ৪ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (আরবি ভাষা) | ২৬ টি | | সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর/সমমান ডিগ্রী থাকতে হবে। আরবি ভাষাভাষি দেশে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় অবস্থানকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় আরবি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে দায়িত্ব পালনকারী/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে অধিক অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ৫ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (জার্মান ভাষা) | ০৭ টি | | ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি/সমমান পাশসহ জার্মান ভাষাগত দক্ষতা পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম Level-B1 পাশ থাকতে হবে। জার্মানিতে ৩ বছর বা অধিক সময় কাজের/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় জার্মান ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীগণ অগ্রাধিকার পাবেন। অধিক যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ৬ | অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক (ইটালিয়ান ভাষা) | ০৮ টি | | ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি/সমমান পাশসহ ইটালিয়ান ভাষাগত দক্ষতা পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম Level-A2 পাশ থাকতে হবে। ইতালিতে ৩ বছর বা অধিক সময় কাজের/পনামধন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৩ বছরের অধিক সময় ইটালিয়ান ভাষা প্রশিক্ষক হিসেবে কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীগণ অগ্রাধিকার পাবেন। অধিক যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা শিথিলযোগ্য। |

আবেদনের শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলী:

- আবেদনকারীকে মহাপরিচালক (প্রোড-১), জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো (বিএমইটি) ব্যবহার নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রে (১) পদের নাম (২) প্রার্থীর নাম (৩) প্রার্থীর পিতা/স্বামীর নাম (৪) আতার নাম (৫) জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র নম্বর/জন্ম নিবন্ধন নম্বর (৬) জন্ম তারিখ (৭) বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়স (৮) প্রার্থীর নিজ জেলা (৯) স্থায়ী ঠিকানা (১০) যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা (১১) যোগাযোগের মোবাইল/টেলিফোন নম্বর ও ই-মেইল আইডি (১২) জাতীয়তা (১৩) জেডার (১৪) ধর্ম (১৫) পেশা (১৬) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (১৭) সংশ্লিষ্ট ভাষার উপর দক্ষতা লেভেল ও অতিরিক্ত যোগ্যতা (১৮) অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ (১৯) বৈবাহিক অবস্থা (২০) বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পত্রিকার নাম ও তারিখ উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর প্রাপ্ত কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। অসম্পূর্ণ ও ত্রুটিপূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য করা হবে।
- বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়স ২২ হতে সর্বোচ্চ ৪৫ বছর এর মধ্যে হতে হবে।
- নির্বাচিত অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষকগণ শুধুমাত্র কার্যদিবসসমূহের দায়িত্ব পালনের জন্য ঘণ্টা প্রতি উল্লিখিত সম্মানী প্রাপ্য হবেন। এছাড়া অন্যান্য ভাতা প্রাপ্য হবেন না।
- কার্যদিবস ব্যতিত অন্য কোন দিনের অর্থাৎ ছুটির দিনের জন্য কোন সম্মানী প্রাপ্য হবে না।
- প্রাপ্য সম্মানী হতে ১০% হারে আয়কর কর্তন করা হবে।
- আমন্ত্রণ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে নির্বাচিত অতিথি ভাষা প্রশিক্ষকগণ দায়িত্ব পালন করবেন। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিত কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন সময় তাঁর আমন্ত্রণ বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখে।
- প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে বাছাই প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন হবে, সে ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবে।
- লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের দিন পূরণকৃত মূল আবেদন পত্র ও প্রবেশ পত্রের সাথে (ক) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার মূল/সাময়িক সনদপত্রের ফটোকপি। (খ) সাম্প্রতিক তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ২ কপি রঙিন ছবি। (গ) অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্রের ফটোকপি। (ঘ) সংশ্লিষ্ট ভাষার দক্ষতা পরীক্ষার সনদপত্রের ফটোকপি। (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম সনদের ফটোকপি। (চ) প্রবেশ পেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সংযুক্ত করে পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রের নির্ধারিত কাউন্টারে সরাসরি জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।
- লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীগণকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষা সময়ে প্রবেশপত্রসহ জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম সনদ ও সকল সনদপত্রের মূল কপি সঙ্গে নিয়ে আসতে হবে।
- লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের তারিখ ও স্থান প্রার্থীর আবেদন পত্রে উল্লিখিত ই-মেইল ও মোবাইল এসএমএস প্রেরণের মাধ্যমে যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে।
- নিয়োজিতকরণ পরীক্ষার ফলাফল পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রের নোটিশ বোর্ড/মোবাইল/বিএমইটির ওয়েবসাইট www.bmet.gov.bd এর মাধ্যমে প্রকাশ করা হবে।
- পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না।
- প্রার্থীকে দেশের অভ্যন্তরে যে কোন উপজেলা/জেলায় কাজ করার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে।

২৩/১১/২০২৫
পরিচালক (প্রশিক্ষণ পরিচালনা)
জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো (বিএমইটি)
৮/২ কাকরাইল, ঢাকা-১০০০

who genuinely seek peace — to end this war," Sudan's de facto leader wrote in an op-ed published in The Wall Street Journal.

Attempts to broker peace between Burhan and his one-time deputy, Rapid Support Forces commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, have repeatedly failed over the course of the war that has killed tens of thousands, displaced 12 million and created the world's largest hunger and displacement crises.

Trump took an interest in the war for the first time last week, vowing he would end it after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman urged him to get involved.



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Poison on the plate?

Implement court directive to phase out harmful pesticides

Consider a winter meal on a typical dining table. It includes beans, tomatoes and cauliflowers—a diet that, on the surface, appears wholesome. Yet, according to a chilling new study, to eat one's greens in Bangladesh is to play Russian roulette with one's health, metaphorically speaking. Recent tests on winter vegetables have revealed that nearly three-quarters exceeded maximum residue limits for pesticides; half of all cauliflowers and over 90 percent of beans were contaminated. Evidently, in its rush to secure food self-sufficiency, Bangladesh has allowed its fields to become a chemical wild west.

The study, funded by the Global Environment Facility, has identified at least 17 "active pesticide ingredients" currently in use that are classified as highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization. These are not benign additives. As this newspaper has reported, they include chemicals like paraquat, a herbicide banned in the European Union and dozens of other nations for its tendency to damage human lungs and kidneys, and glyphosate, a probable carcinogen. In Bangladesh, however, they are being sprayed with abandon.

The result is a slow-motion poisoning of both the consumer and the farmer. In the countryside, where protective gear is often nothing more than a rag wrapped around a face, farmers are inhaling toxins that cause immediate respiratory distress and long-term neurological risks. A recent review suggests that over a third of farmers suffer acute symptoms after spraying. It is a grim irony that the very people labouring to feed the nation are doing so at grave personal risk.

Regulatory inertia is largely to blame for this. The number of pesticide companies in the country has surged sevenfold since 2010, flooding the market with over 8,000 products. The bureaucracy has failed to keep pace with this. Despite a 2020 High Court directive to phase out glyphosate and other toxins, the government has dragged its feet. The Department of Agricultural Extension's Plant Protection Wing appears toothless, unable to enforce rules or educate a workforce that sprays chemicals with terrifying zeal—sometimes up to 150 times in a single crop cycle.

Some might argue that Bangladesh, a land-scarce delta teeming with people, cannot afford a collapse in crop yields, and that banning efficient pest killers may lead to a food shortage. But this is a false dichotomy. The choice here is not between starvation and poisoning, but between lazy governance and innovation. There are safer, albeit sometimes more expensive, alternatives to HHPs. Integrated pest management and bio-pesticides exist, but they require an administration capable of policing supply chains and training farmers.

At present, the steady rise in pesticide use—topping 40,000 tonnes last year—suggests that the chemicals lobby is winning. The government must, therefore, decide whose side it is on. A phased ban on the worst offenders is long overdue. Then again, a ban on paper is useless without boots in the muddy fields to enforce it. While the country has made admirable strides in feeding its population, we must remember that a full stomach offers no protection against a poisoned future.

DU dormitories need urgent repair

Neglect and weak maintenance are putting thousands at risk

We are deeply concerned by the vulnerable condition of many Dhaka University residential halls, which were once again exposed by the recent earthquake. For years, experts have warned that these ageing dormitories are structurally weak, yet university authorities have repeatedly ignored the warnings. The 5.7-magnitude quake left fresh cracks in at least 12 halls and plaster peeled off in numerous areas, injuring several students. Thousands now live in constant fear that the next tremor could bring catastrophic collapse. Meanwhile, frustrated by years of inaction by the authorities, students of Mohsin Hall temporarily moved into unused staff flats to protest their unsafe living conditions. This is truly unfortunate.

Reportedly, since 2008, experts, including teams from Buet, have inspected multiple halls and recommended major structural repairs, retrofitting, and even evacuation in some cases. But only emergency fixes were carried out. Mohsin Hall, Surja Sen Hall, Shahidullah Hall, Zahurul Huq Hall, and others remain in the same compromised state identified more than a decade ago. Sir Salimullah Muslim Hall, flagged as the most vulnerable, was recommended for evacuation by Buet in 2021, yet no impactful action has been taken. Instead of being renovated or rebuilt, these halls continue to house thousands of students everyday.

According to DU engineers, at the core of this crisis lies chronic underfunding and longstanding neglect in building maintenance. While money is allocated for development, almost nothing is provided for routine maintenance. Only emergency repairs are undertaken, and expert recommendations for major renovations are left unimplemented. Around Tk 22 crore has been spent on the maintenance of seven to eight halls in the last five fiscal years, when fully renovating a single hall would cost nearly Tk 20 crore. This mismatch in funding makes meaningful repairs impossible.

After the quake, DU announced a two-week vacation to repair the dormitories, and some other universities, including Jagannath University, temporarily suspended classes and exams. But campus closures will not solve the problem; all public universities must ensure that student halls are structurally safe. They must establish proper evacuation systems with clear exit signs, regular drills, trained staff, and designated gathering points. Most importantly, campuses must be integrated into the national disaster preparedness framework. For DU, both immediate and coordinated long-term action are essential. High-risk halls need full structural audits, and unsafe buildings must be evacuated and retrofitted or rebuilt. The government should allocate dedicated maintenance funds, and a joint task force of DU, Buet, and relevant agencies should oversee the implementation. DU must act before a preventable tragedy unfolds.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Nobel Prizes established

On this day in 1895, Alfred Bernhard Nobel—Swedish chemist, engineer, and inventor of dynamite—signed his will establishing the Nobel Prizes.

Time to recognise the emotional toll of river erosion



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ALTAf RUSSELL

In the quiet villages along the banks of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, a slow disaster unfolds year after year. Homes vanish overnight, land disappears beneath spinning currents, and families are forced to flee with little more than the clothes on their backs. Yet, amid the visible destruction caused by riverbank erosion, an invisible crisis brews—one that affects the minds and hearts of those left behind.

Riverbank erosion is not new to Bangladesh. It is a recurring disaster that displaces hundreds of thousands annually. But what has remained largely unaddressed is the psychological toll it takes on the affected population. Our paper titled "Effect of riverbank erosion on mental health of the affected people in Bangladesh," published in *PLoS ONE* in 2021, co-authored by Md Jahangir Alam, Md Rezaul Haque and me, explored the mental health consequences of riverbank erosion in two of the most erosion-prone districts of the country: Rajbari and Tangail. The findings were stark and deeply troubling.

We surveyed 611 households, of which 83 percent had been directly exposed to erosion. Using the Depression Anxiety Scales (DASS-21) and statistical tools, we found that 38 percent of respondents showed symptoms of depression, 76 percent suffered from anxiety, and 32 percent experienced stress. In fact, exposed individuals were 8.3 times more likely to suffer from depression, 2.3 times more likely to experience anxiety, and 5.1 times more likely to be stressed compared to their non-exposed counterparts.

The mental health burden was not evenly distributed. Women, particularly housewives, were disproportionately affected. Older individuals, the uneducated, and those with larger families also showed higher rates of psychological distress. The economic dimension was equally critical—respondents with lower monthly incomes were more vulnerable, and those who had lost cultivable land or

livestock faced compounded stress due to financial insecurity.

One of the most revealing aspects of the study was the impact of displacement. People who had been forced to relocate within the past three years were significantly more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress. These individuals often found themselves outside the reach



FILE PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

of government support systems, struggling to rebuild their lives in unfamiliar environments. The trauma of sudden displacement, coupled with the lack of institutional assistance, created a perfect storm for mental health deterioration.

This crisis is particularly ironic when viewed through the lens of global economic geography. As Jeffrey D Sachs notes in *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions*, proximity to rivers and coasts has historically been a major advantage for economic development. Waterways have long offered the cheapest and most efficient means of transporting goods, fostering trade, agriculture, and urban growth. Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*,

emphasised that industry naturally flourishes along navigable rivers and coasts, where markets are more accessible and infrastructure more concentrated.

Indeed, riverine and coastal cities have historically been hubs of innovation, commerce, and cultural exchange. According to a 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, coasts are home to 28 percent of the world population. Another 2011 study stated that 50 percent of global population lives within three kilometres of a surface freshwater body. Europe, for instance, benefits immensely from its geography—around 80 percent of its population lives near a waterway, enabling robust economic activity and connectivity.

Bangladesh, too, is blessed with an

intricate network of rivers and a long coastline. But for many of its citizens, this geographic gift has turned into a curse. Instead of prosperity, proximity to rivers now brings displacement, trauma, and mental illness. The very waterways that once sustained livelihoods are now eroding them—physically and psychologically.

Importantly, riverbank erosion is not solely a natural phenomenon. Anthropogenic activities—particularly indiscriminate sand extraction from riverbeds—have accelerated erosion in many regions. These practices, often driven by short-term economic interests, destabilise riverbanks and increase the vulnerability of nearby communities. Recognising these human-induced factors is essential for crafting effective and just policy

Populist politics is undermining safety for the vulnerable



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JANNATUL MAWA

As the 13th national election approaches, political leaders are once again busy flexing their muscles and making promises. Yet amidst this familiar chaos, a compelling question arises: are they genuinely concerned with listening to people and upholding democratic values? Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center's (BYLC) Youth Matters Survey 2025 further deepens my concern and cynicism. The survey reveals that 76 percent of the 2,545 respondents think women do not feel safe in Bangladesh today, and 23.5 percent perceive a lack of communal harmony in the country.

The survey uncovered several other deeply concerning issues related to peace and justice. Before diving in, we must also consider the demographics of the survey to understand the nuances of the data. The survey was conducted among 2,545 individuals aged 18-35, comprising an almost equal ratio of men and women. More than 56 percent of respondents were from rural areas, and almost 30 percent were female homemakers.

While the data presents a paradox between communal harmony and personal safety, the underlying reasons identified are even more troubling. Of the 23.5 percent who deny the presence of harmony, 42.2 percent believe Bangladeshi society is becoming increasingly polarised. This exposes the vulnerability of the nation's once-resilient social fabric. Polarisation, especially in a volatile social and

political landscape like Bangladesh's current environment, not only erodes trust in democratic institutions but also threatens democratic values. A 2021 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) study suggests that the negative consequences of polarisation—from institutional inefficiency to political stalemate—further reinforce the perception that democracy is incapable of addressing the country's most pressing challenges and may push people towards authoritarianism and populism. It also turns politics into a zero-sum game where political opponents are regarded as "others" and dehumanised based on their affiliations.

We have already witnessed the interim government conform to populist ideas repeatedly over the last 15 months. The scrapping of music and physical education teachers' posts in primary schools and the arrest of Baul singer Abul Sarkar over allegations of hurting religious sentiments are the latest additions to a long list of decisions influenced by religious groups. Protesters who condemned the arrest and demanded bail for the singer were attacked by what some observers referred to as the "Touhidi Janata," which is a clear sign not only of rising authoritarianism but also of an erosion of democratic values at the social level.

According to Human Rights Watch, nearly 250 people, including policemen, Awami League supporters,

and individuals from minority groups, were killed in retributive violence after Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Just a few months ago, bloody violence erupted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts among Indigenous communities and Bangalee settlers. These incidents send a clear signal to progressive groups—who have experienced harassment and are often labelled as "supporters" of the Awami League—as well as religious and ethnic minorities, that their freedoms and rights may come under threat. Therefore, the illusion of harmony suggested by the 65.3 percent is highly susceptible to the shocks of political and social unrest, especially with the national election approaching.

Now, let us take a deeper look at the survey's findings on perceptions of women's safety and what they reveal about our society and politics. According to the survey, more than 40 percent of respondents identified a lack of law enforcement and protection as the primary reason for insecurity. This is an alarming indictment of the current state of security and people's mistrust of the rule of law, access to justice, and state institutions.

Herein lies a major disconnect: people's perception of communal peace and harmony sharply contradicts their perception of gendered insecurity. A society where women live in pervasive fear cannot credibly be described as harmonious, and this is where political pledges diverge from the lived realities of women.

Recently, Jamaat-e-Islami's Amir Shafiqur Rahman pledged that if elected, his party would reduce women's working hours from eight to five per day while ensuring full eight-hour pay, and that homemakers would be honoured as *ratnagarbha* mothers. While framed as a gesture of respect for mothers—ignoring the other identities a woman may hold—the proposal is neither progressive nor respectful.

responses. The emotional wounds of erosion go beyond the loss of property. Families often lose ancestral graveyards—sacred spaces that connect generations and hold deep cultural significance. The disappearance of these sites is not just a physical loss but a spiritual and emotional rupture. For many, it feels like losing a part of their identity.

Another devastating consequence is the sudden collapse of dignity in society. Riverbank erosion can turn well-off families destitute overnight. The psychological shock of losing status, security, and social standing is profound. Unlike some other natural disasters, erosion often strikes without warning, and its victims carry the burden silently.

Despite the gravity of the situation, mental health remains a neglected area in Bangladesh's disaster response framework. The country's mental health infrastructure is underdeveloped, and awareness about psychological disorders is limited. Climate change is expected to exacerbate the frequency and intensity of riverbank erosion. As extreme weather events become more common, the number of displaced individuals will rise, and so will the mental health burden. Without proactive measures, Bangladesh risks facing a silent epidemic of psychological disorders among its most vulnerable populations.

Bangladesh cannot afford to overlook the people who live by its rivers, as they are the backbone of the river economy. The government must act decisively: integrate mental health into disaster response, expand targeted social safety nets, regulate sand extraction, and ensure fair access to reclaimed land for agricultural use. As seen in Tangail, access to land can significantly reduce psychological distress by restoring livelihoods and a sense of stability. Education is key. Families that educate their children adapt far better to crises. Targeted educational support for displaced households should be a priority. European nations have already shown the way, securing vulnerable communities through robust social protection and climate adaptation strategies. Bangladesh must follow suit. Behind every collapsed home is a story of loss, fear, and resilience. As Bangladesh continues to battle the forces of nature, it must also recognise and respond to the emotional wounds left in its wake from lost land to lost legacy.

Rather, it is a deeply patronising and politically calculated move that threatens to undermine women's economic independence and exposes a fundamental refusal to address real issues of safety and equality. It is a deliberate diversion from women's physical insecurity to a non-issue that would further limit their economic opportunities. Although it took a long time for domestic work to be recognised economically, honouring homemakers through such policies adds another layer of disrespect for women striving for financial independence or pursuing their dream careers.

Furthermore, beyond the flawed sentiment, the proposal is harmful even from a policy-making level. According to a report, the unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 remains the highest in the South Asia region, standing at 42 percent for young women. Moreover, Bangladesh has the largest gender gap in youth unemployment globally. The proposal would simply make hiring women more expensive instead of implementing policies that ensure their safety and security, eradicate sexual harassment and gender-based violence, create more jobs, and ensure equal pay.

With the national election approaching, the road ahead requires actionable plans that address the issues faced daily by youth, women, and other minority and vulnerable groups, both individually and collectively. Beyond political gimmicks, we require state institutions that uphold democracy, justice, good governance, and the rule of law. Today's youth want politics that deliver results. Now, the question is whether our politicians will hear their plea amidst all the noise of reform and electioneering, or, more importantly, whether they are willing to.

After Narsingdi's jolt, a national push for seismic resilience is overdue



Dr. Munaz Ahmed Noor is professor at the Department of Civil Engineering in BUET and vice president of Bangladesh Earthquake Society.

MUNAZ AHMED NOOR

The 5.7 earthquake in Narsingdi on November 21 renewed national awareness of the country's deep seismic vulnerability. Lasting for 26 seconds, it was one of the strongest shakes in the region in decades. The tremor sent thousands scrambling into the streets as buildings swayed violently. Within hours, deaths and injuries were confirmed, many caused by failing structural elements. Though moderate, the quake reminded us an uncomfortable truth: Bangladesh lies atop active tectonic time bombs capable of producing far larger events. For many young Bangladeshis, this was their first direct brush with a seismic hazard, prompting the government to acknowledge it as a serious wake-up call. History, science, and lived experience now converge on the same urgent message: the window for preparedness is rapidly closing.

Countries facing high seismic risk offer clear lessons for Bangladesh. Japan, the US, and Turkey have demonstrated that strictly enforced modern building codes save lives. After Turkey strengthened its codes in 1998, newer buildings performed dramatically better during the 2023 earthquakes. In California, mandatory retrofitting of unreinforced masonry and soft-story buildings has significantly reduced casualties. The principle is straightforward: buildings must be designed to flex without collapsing, and regulations must be enforced—not simply drafted. Japan leads globally in proactive strengthening. Following the 1995 Kobe earthquake, sweeping legislation was introduced requiring and incentivising retrofiting. Today, more than 80 percent of homes meet seismic standards, and nationwide upgrades to schools, hospitals, and bridges helped limit casualties during the 2024 northern Japan quake. Retrofitting methods such as steel bracing, ground-floor

reinforcement, and fibre wraps for columns are now both effective and affordable.

Advanced engineering solutions provide additional layers of safety. Base isolation and tuned mass dampers, installed in thousands of Japanese buildings, have allowed critical facilities to operate during major quakes and help absorb earthquake energy and stabilise structures. Even simple innovations—like automatic gas shut-off valves—reduce fire risks and are now mandatory in Tokyo. Preparedness also plays a vital role: Japan conducts nationwide drills annually and US cities train neighbourhood responders and run public awareness programmes. Early warning systems via phones and TVs, now standard in Japan, Mexico, and California, provide crucial seconds to take cover or stop trains and machinery. Bangladesh currently lacks such capabilities but can adopt these models. Global experience underscores a powerful truth: resilience costs far less than disaster recovery.

One of the major barriers to reducing Bangladesh's earthquake risk is the high cost of strengthening hundreds of thousands of vulnerable buildings. For a lower-middle-income country, large-scale retrofitting is a serious financial challenge—yet the alternative is far worse. A major earthquake in Dhaka alone could cause \$69 billion in damage, vastly exceeding the cost of prevention. Despite this, preparedness funding remains limited as government budgets are stretched and many homeowners cannot or choose not to invest in safety upgrades.

A multi-pronged financing approach is therefore essential. Public spending should first focus on critical infrastructure—hospitals, schools, fire stations, and utility networks—to ensure they function during emergencies.

International partners like the World Bank, ADB, and JICA can expand their support for initiatives such as the urban resilience programme. Global evidence shows that each dollar invested in resilience saves four in future losses. The private sector must also be incentivised through tools such as property-tax rebates, utility discounts, and a national earthquake resilience fund offering zero-interest loans would encourage retrofiting.

engagement, Bangladesh can fund a safer future.

However, immediate priorities must combine structural safety measures with rapid technology deployment. Engineering teams from Rajuk, Buett and the military should inspect cracked buildings—particularly in Old Dhaka—and evacuate high-risk structures. Citizens should be encouraged to report damage through mobile apps that feed into

fibre-reinforced polymers, engineered bamboo, and ground-floor strengthening—drawing on successful models from Turkey and India. Emergency services require modern equipment, regular drills, and digital tools for search-and-rescue coordination. School curricula, community volunteers, and a trained network of community masons can promote simple, low-cost safety upgrades in informal settlements. Policy reforms, structural fitness certificates, and retrofit financing tools must also be fully operational.

Long-term (over five years) reforms must reshape urban environments for resilience. All new buildings should follow seismic design standards, while older hazardous structures are retrofitted or phased out. Digital permitting systems, supported by AI-based compliance checks, must approve only code-compliant plans. Urban planning should incorporate seismic risk maps, create wider roads and open spaces, and prioritise resilient infrastructure. Long-term success also depends on expanding seismic monitoring networks, supporting local engineering research, and pursuing regional cooperation. Integrating early warning systems and citywide digital risk maps will further enhance preparedness.

The Narsingdi earthquake—though moderate in magnitude—has decisively dispelled any remaining illusion that Bangladesh is safe from seismic threats. The question is no longer "if", but "when." To confront this reality, national institutions must urgently strengthen enforcement, preparedness, and response capacities by drawing on proven international strategies. At the same time, Bangladesh cannot overlook the critical roles of technology, community training, and smarter urban planning. Just as the nation transformed its cyclone preparedness over the past decades, it must now blend traditional safeguards with innovative, context-specific solutions for seismic resilience. With coordinated action today and sustained investment in engineering, technology, and governance, Bangladesh can break its cycle of vulnerability and move toward a safer and more resilient urban future.



To reduce earthquake casualties, buildings must be designed to flex without collapsing, and regulations must be enforced—not simply drafted. PHOTO: PALSH KHAN

Banks could provide soft loans, while expanded earthquake insurance—modelled on Turkey's DASK system—can be established.

For new development, access to finance must be directly tied to seismic safety. Banks should require certified structural designs before approving construction loans, and developers who exceed standards could receive faster approvals or additional floor area. Strict penalties, including demolition orders, should apply to code violations. Nationally, Bangladesh could explore catastrophe bonds or join a regional insurance pool to secure rapid post-disaster funding. A modest "resilience surcharge" on major urban projects could help finance retrofits in high-risk neighbourhoods. With coordinated public investment, donor support, private participation, and community

real-time assessment dashboards. Authorities must issue aftershock alerts and check gas and power lines to prevent secondary fires, while drones, remote sensing and AI can help map surface damage and unstable zones. A nationwide media campaign on earthquake safety, emergency kits, and safe behaviour during tremors will further strengthen public readiness.

Over the medium term (one to five years), institutional capacity must expand significantly. The Bangladesh National Building Code needs strict enforcement across all municipalities, supported by Building Safety Cells and a growing cadre of trained inspectors and structural engineers. At the same time, Bangladesh can pilot innovative retrofitting techniques—rubber bearings,

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Rethinking Bangladesh's cyber security laws for women



Naziba Basher is a journalist at The Daily Star.

NAZIBA BASHER

From November 25 to December 10 each year, the United Nations urges governments to go beyond slogans and tackle violence against women. This year, the UN's UNiTE campaign has shifted focus to a newer frontline: the internet.

Under the theme "UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls", UN Women warns that technology has become a major vehicle for stalking, threats and humiliation aimed at women and girls, and that many still live without specific legal protection from such abuse. Bangladesh is not outside this picture.

Over the last decade, the country has assembled a patchwork of laws addressing gender-based and digital violence. The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010, was rightly hailed as a landmark, defining domestic violence to include physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse. The Pornography Control Act, 2012, Bangladesh's first dedicated law on pornography, offers remedies when intimate images are recorded or shared to shame or extort women.

Yet studies by Bangladeshi researchers and women's rights groups show that implementation remains weak: abuse is still treated as a family matter, frontline officials lack training, and public awareness is low.

The most contested layer has been cybercrime legislation. Section 57 of the old ICT Act became notorious for a vague description of offences and sweeping powers. It was followed in 2018 by the Digital Security Act (DSA), which rights groups described as even more repressive. They documented how its broad clauses were used to arrest journalists,

activists and social media users for online speech.

Under pressure, the then government later announced the DSA would be scrapped and replaced by the Cyber Security Act (CSA). But reviews found the CSA retained almost all the DSAs' provisions, effectively repackaging the same restrictions.

The interim government has since revoked the CSA and introduced a Cyber Security Ordinance, while signalling plans to recognise internet access as a civil right and to review the most controversial clauses.

The change in tone is welcome. The wider lesson is that cyber laws, for years, have been justified in the name of safety while being enforced in ways that undermine freedom of expression.

For women and girls facing digital violence, this history of cyber laws in Bangladesh is of importance. A woman who has watched critics being wrongfully jailed for civic debate under cyber laws may not feel confident about getting justice under the same law being misused widely. When protection becomes a language for surveillance and censorship, trust in state institutions erodes.

The UNiTE campaign presents Bangladesh with an opportunity to chart a different course. It aims to address the growing issue of digital violence, including online abuse, harassment, and control, and the need to create safer and more inclusive online spaces.

The goal, according to the UN, is to urge governments, tech companies, and communities to take action to end digital violence and promote gender equality in digital spaces.

A rights-respecting digital future for women and girls will not emerge from just renaming laws. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) needs to be clearly defined in law.

UN Women and other experts use the term TFGBV to cover cyberstalking, image-based abuse, non-consensual sharing of intimate

For women and girls facing digital violence, this history of cyber laws in Bangladesh is of importance. A woman who has watched critics being wrongfully jailed for civic debate under cyber laws may not feel confident about getting justice under the same law being misused widely. When protection becomes a language for surveillance and censorship, trust in state institutions erodes.

content, AI-generated deepfakes and other forms of online harassment with real offline consequences.

The UK has criminalised the non-consensual sharing of intimate images since 2015, and courts have jailed offenders for revenge porn, sextortion and threats to share intimate photos. In 2023, the Online Safety Act expanded this to cover deepfakes, too. Australian courts have also sentenced offenders for filming women without consent, sharing intimate content and threatening to distribute nudes, handing down both prison terms and heavy fines. South Korea treats digital sex crimes as serious offences, with specialised cyber

units and courts that regularly issue strict prison sentences.

These countries can act decisively because their definitions of offences are crystal clear.

Bangladesh's statutes should acknowledge and define violence and its provisions explicitly. Non-consensual sharing of intimate images has often been prosecuted under sections of the Cyber Security Act or the Pornography Control Act, even though neither explicitly names image-based abuse as a distinct crime. Deepfakes and AI-generated sexual content are not explicitly mentioned in any statute. Cases get forced through general clauses on defamation, obscene material or unauthorised data modification, none of which capture the actual

harm. These are just two examples.

Also, protection must mean more than prison sentences. Survivors need safe ways to seek help: clear reporting channels, easy-to-use complaint mechanisms, police and prosecutors trained in handling digital evidence and avoiding victim-blaming, and time-bound processes for taking down abusive content. Without investment in awareness, training and monitoring, progressive laws remain on paper.

Any future cyber law must be grounded in international human rights standards. That means narrowing offences, strong safeguards against arbitrary arrest and surveillance, and the decriminalisation of defamation and other non-violent speech.

Criminal penalties should be reserved for serious offences such as credible threats, extortion, child sexual abuse and persistent stalking.

As the 16 Days of Activism is underway, the question for Bangladesh is not whether digital violence exists. Women and girls, public figures and private citizens, have been living with its consequences for years.

The real question is what kind of virtual space this country chooses to build. A digital future envisioned by the UNiTE campaign would be one in which a teenager can report a faked image without fear, a woman can challenge harassment without risking arrest, and critics can say what is needed to without a law hanging over their head.



Sundarban Gas Company Limited
 (A Company of Petrobangla)
 Operation Division,
 218, M.A Bari Sarak, Sonadanga, Khulna.

জাতীয় সম্পদ গ্যাসের অপচয় রোধ করে জাতীয় বাস্তব পাননে কড়ন

Tender Invitation Reference No.: 28.21.0000.181.49.002.25.01

Date: 25-11-2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited through e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Operation Division, Sundarban Gas Company Limited for the procurement of the following work which will be available at e-GP website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) from date 26-11-2025 & time 10.00 :

| Sl. No. | Tender ID & Reference No. | Package No. | Description of Works | Last Selling Date & Time | Closing Date & Time | Opening Date & Time |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 01 | 1156320, 28.21.0000.181.49.002.25.01 | 28.21.0000.181.49.002.25 | Coating Defect & Gas leak detection works of 35 km gas distribution pipelines of SGCL in Bhola. | 07 December 2025 17:00 | 08 December 2025 12:00 | 08 December 2025 12:00 |

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders 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 National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.

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


(Engr. Md. Tauhidur Rahman)
 General Manager,
 Operation Division,
 SGCL, Khulna

GD-2563

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'TARA UNPLUGGED'

Shuvendu Das Shuvo and Sanzida Mahmood Nandita of Mosey & Co join Animes Roy for an intimate acoustic night, weaving old favourites, reimagined covers, and fresh originals into a warm winter tapestry. Their stripped-down set promises a soulful, slow-burning evening of voice, craft, and quiet magic.

Date: Friday | November 28, 2025
Time: 7pm onwards
Venue: 138 East Gulshan 1



Band members should not release solo songs: PARTHA BARUA

Souls frontman Partha Barua has voiced a firm stance on band culture, saying musicians should avoid releasing solo tracks while actively performing with their groups, as it risks harming unity and diluting a band's collective identity. Speaking on the TV programme *90's Music Story*, which looks back at the era's band scene, Partha reflected on his own journey in Souls – from joining as a keyboardist to becoming its lead vocalist – and on the camaraderie, studio practices and recording environment that shaped the group's legacy.

Partha noted that while every band member contributes equally, audiences tend to recognise the vocalist more easily. When the lead

singer pursues solo fame through mixed albums or individual projects, he argued, the balance within the group inevitably suffers. Although he himself had sung on mixed albums early in his career for financial reasons, the artiste said he intentionally avoided releasing a solo album despite lucrative offers. According to him, any additional visibility gained individually would have come at the expense of his fellow musicians. "I gained recognition because I sang for Souls," he said, adding that seeking more would have felt unfair.

Commenting on the current music landscape, Partha observed that YouTube has blurred traditional roles. Producers increasingly record their own vocals, while artistes who

produce their own tracks are less inclined to collaborate. With fewer production houses remaining, many impose restrictive demands, pushing for replicas of existing hits rather than encouraging new sounds. Partha believes this environment limits creative freedom for emerging artistes. As a result, many musicians are bypassing labels altogether and choosing to release songs independently, which he sees as both a symptom and a consequence of a system resistant to originality.

He emphasised that greater awareness and responsibility across the industry – from producers to performers – is essential to restoring vibrancy and fostering authentic musical expression in Bangladesh.

Animated series on Diego Maradona in the works

Diego Maradona's life and legacy are set to be revisited in a new animated series now in development. India's Reliance Animation has secured rights to produce the scripted show, which will follow the football icon's journey from his childhood in Villa Fiorito to his rise as one of the sport's most influential figures.

Developed in collaboration with SATTVICA SA, managed by Maradona's family, and mediated by Bridge Marketing Group, the series will delve into his greatest on-field triumphs, personal challenges, and enduring cultural impact.

Maradona's sisters hope the animated format will introduce "their brother" to children worldwide. For Reliance Animation, the project marks a significant milestone, while for fans it offers a new way to revisit the story of one of football's most unforgettable icons.



Eva Green joins 'Wednesday' Season 3 as Aunt Ophelia

Eva Green has joined the cast of Season 3 of *Wednesday* as Aunt Ophelia, Netflix confirmed on November 25.

The French actor, known for *Casino Royale*, will play Morticia Addams' reclusive sister, whose face remained hidden during the Season 2 finale.

The reveal followed the scene in which Grandmama Hester found Ophelia isolated in a dark room, writing "Wednesday must die" on the



wall.

Showrunners Alfred Gough and Miles Millar said Green's "elegant, haunting" presence makes her an ideal fit. Green called the series "deliciously dark" and said she is eager to add her "touch of cuckoo-ness" to the role.

Season 3 brings back Jenna Ortega and the series' main cast, though Netflix has not yet announced a release date.

NEWS

Phantom bank account linked

FROM PAGE 12 and Gold Star Trading House – linked to S Alam Group.

Its investigation found that funds were deposited into Top Ten's account on multiple occasions directly from S Alam linked firms, including S Alam subsidiaries such as S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd, Sonali Traders, S Alam Edible Oil Ltd, and S Alam Sugar Refinery Ltd.

Mahmudul Hasan, an assistant commissioner at ACC's Dhaka office, filed a case over the suspicious account at the commission's Chattogram integrated office on August 18.

Suspects in the case include the nominal owners of three shell companies, along with S Alam Group Chairman Saiful Alam, its former deputy managing director Akiz Uddin, and former executive vice-president Miftah Uddin.

The ACC filed the case after Islami Bank alerted the anti-graft body about the suspicious account.

In a letter to the National Board of Revenue, the bank admitted that it did not follow proper procedures at the time of opening the account.

"A substantial sum was transferred into the account from investments made in the names of various S Alam Group concerns. While the transactions appeared on paper as payments to suppliers of the bank's investment clients, the ultimate beneficiaries were S Alam Group and some former bank officials who facilitated them," reads the letter dated October 18.

"Former Islami Bank deputy managing director Akiz Uddin, along with senior executives of S Alam Group, had opened fake accounts

under the names of Top Ten Trading House and other shell firms to siphon off large sums of money and hide illicit financial dealings," the letter added. **FAKE VOUCHERS, PAY ORDERS** Bank and ACC documents show that on January 17, 2024, Tk 20 crore was transferred from Top Ten's account to Rabeya Enterprise at Southeast Bank. The company is owned by Nasir Uddin, who is married to Akiz Uddin's sister Sharmin Akter.

Bank officials say Akiz exerted significant control over Islami Bank and other banks under S Alam Group's ownership until August 5 last year. He reportedly left for Dubai after the political changeover.

The Daily Star called and texted him on WhatsApp, and the app's notification status indicates he has seen the message, but did not respond.

ACC investigators estimate that at least Tk 600 crore was deposited into Top Ten's account over 18 months since the opening of the account in April 2023 using a network of different bank accounts, fake vouchers, and pay orders.

Direct transfers from S Alam subsidiaries were avoided to mask the origin of the funds. Instead, the money was routed through shell companies before depositing in Top Ten's account.

On July 2, 2024, for example, Tk 523.10 crore was withdrawn in cash from Alam Trading's account at Islami Bank's Agrabad branch. The same amount was then deposited through three pay orders into the account of Gold Star Trading Company at the bank's same branch. Just a month later, on August 6, Tk 544 crore from Gold Star was deposited into Top Ten's account using a voucher, according to

the case documents.

These transactions violated banking rules, as the pay orders should have been deposited into the issuing company's own account. Instead, they were diverted to Top Ten in a pattern the commission identified as embezzlement and money laundering.

Both Alam Trading and Gold Star Trading were found to be shell companies. Bank documents show Alam Trading is owned by Nurul Alam of Chattogram's Patiya upazila and Gold Star is owned by Bedarul Islam of Fatikchhari.

Their mobile numbers provided in bank records were found switched off.

These two accounts, having transactions worth over Tk 2,000 crore, have since been frozen on Bangladesh Bank's instructions, said Syed Mohammad Azim, senior assistant vice-president of Islami Bank's Agrabad branch.

A senior bank official said most of the money had already been withdrawn before the freeze in late August 2024, leaving only around Tk 2 crore.

Multiple Islami Bank officials said that during the 15-year rule of the Awami League, they could not question any transactions linked to S Alam. But after the August 5 changeover, more than 200 suspicious accounts linked to S Alam Group have been seized.

"S Alam-linked concerns embezzled around Tk 52,000 crore from Islami Bank through shell firms disguised as loans. Deposits in Top Ten Trading's account also came from such loans. Steps are underway to adjust the funds against outstanding liabilities," said Muhammad Jamal Uddin, senior vice president of Islami Bank's Khatunganj branch.

The priority is to extinguish the fire and rescue the residents who are trapped. Then, we'll launch a thorough investigation," Lee told reporters.

Frames of scaffolding were seen tumbling to the ground as firefighters battled the blaze, while scores of fire engines and ambulances lined the road below the development.

"The priority is to extinguish the fire and rescue the residents who are trapped. Then, we'll launch a thorough investigation," Lee told reporters.

Frames of scaffolding were seen tumbling to the ground as firefighters battled the blaze, while scores of fire engines and ambulances lined the road below the development.

Verdicts in 3 cases

FROM PAGE 1 did not appear before the court.

The verdicts are expected to be delivered at 11:00am, said the PP.

The PP said 28 people testified in a case filed against 12 people, including Hasina; 22 people in another case lodged against 18 people, including Hasina and Putul; and 27 people in the other case filed against 17 people, including Hasina and Joy.

Most of the witnesses are common in the cases, added the PP.

Besides the three cases, the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka is set to deliver judgement on December 1 in another corruption case filed over the plot scam against 17 people, including Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq.

The trials of two other graft cases lodged against 21 people, including Hasina, her nieces Azmina Siddiq, Tulip, and nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, are now ongoing at the same court, said the prosecution.

Tulip, who stands accused in the three cases, used her power to get plots for Rehana, Bobby, and Azmina, say officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

According to the records of the

cases, 53 people testified in six cases as prosecution witnesses.

Of them, six are ACC officials, four Rajuk employees, and seven officials and staffers of the housing and public works ministry.

The anti-graft body, between January 12 and 14, lodged the six cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

The ACC alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots – each measuring 10 kathas, in the diplomatic zone of Sector 27 of the Purbachal New Town project for herself, Joy, Putul, Rehana, her son Bobby and daughter Azmina despite their ineligibility under existing regulations.

On March 25, the graft watchdog filed six charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka where Hasina was named as a common accused in all six cases.

Charges were framed against 29 people on July 31, including Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, Bobby, Tulip, and Azmina.

In the six cases, the ACC brought charges of criminal misconduct

under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, along with several other charges, including criminal breach of trust and cheating, in the Penal Code.

Apart from Hasina and her six family members, the accused include former housing and public works minister Sharif Uddin, Shamsuddin Ahmad Chowdhury, Nurul Islam, and Nayeb Ali Sharif; incumbent director Kamrul Islam; former deputy directors Hafizur Rahman, Habibur Rahman Sobuj, Sheikh Shahinul Islam, and Nayeb Ali Sharif; and former assistant directors Mazharul Islam and Faria Sultana.

The other accused are former Rajuk chairman Anisur Rahman Miah, former members Khurshid Alam, Kabir Al Asad, Tanmoy Das, Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Shamsuddin Ahmad Chowdhury, Nurul Islam, and Nayeb Ali Sharif; incumbent director Kamrul Islam; former deputy directors Hafizur Rahman, Habibur Rahman Sobuj, Sheikh Shahinul Islam, and Nayeb Ali Sharif; and former assistant directors Mazharul Islam and Faria Sultana.

According to the documents, Sharif, Saiful, Purobi, Washi, Anisur, Khurshid, Nasir, and Shamsuddin are accused in all six cases along with Hasina.

Only Khurshid is now in jail among the 29 accused, according to the documents.

Attack on bauls

FROM PAGE 12 unconditional release of arrested baul singer Abul Sarkar.

Witnesses said a group of around 40-50 people, shouting slogans in the name of "Tawhidi Janata", carried out the attack around 1:30pm.

The injured are Shamsul Chisti of Joypurhat's Panchbi and Mokhes Pagla of Thakurgaon's Sadar upazila, said Rezwatul Haque Riju, general secretary of the Thakurgaon district unit of Udichi Shilpigoshthi.

Speaking about the incident, Riju said a group of baul artistes gathered on the court premises to form a human chain demanding the release of Abul Sarkar.

"At that time, a group of people brought out a procession on the court premises and attacked them," he said.

Contacted, Thakurgaon Sadar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Sarwar Alam Khan confirmed that two people were injured in an attack in the area.

However, the police officer claimed that he did not know the identities of the victims and the attackers.

Police would take legal steps after receiving a complaint, the OC added. No police complaint was filed till filing the report last night at 8:30pm.

Earlier on November 20, renowned baul singer Abul Sarkar was sent to jail in Manikganj after being arrested in a case filed on charges of hurting religious sentiments.

On November 23, three artistes were injured in an attack in Manikganj when they were preparing to form a human chain demanding the unconditional release of arrested baul singer Abul Sarkar. **PROTEST RALLY STOPPED IN FARIDPUR**

Meanwhile, in Faridpur, a group calling themselves "Tawhidi Janata" interrupted a rally protesting the recent attacks on baul artists and shrines nationwide. The event, organised by Banglar Prantik Baul Shilpigoshthi, was being held in front of the Faridpur Press Club yesterday afternoon, reports our local correspondent.

The group arrived during the programme and demanded it be stopped, said Arun Shil, general secretary of the organiser. "At one stage, they tried to seize the microphone and even attempted to speak using it. Under such circumstances, we were forced to stop the event midway."

Faridpur Kotwali Police Station OC SM Nuruzzaman said he wasn't aware of the incident.

832 bhoori gold

FROM PAGE 12

presence of a judicial magistrate, the investigating officer, a Bangladesh Bank-nominated gold expert, two officials from the National Board of Revenue's intelligence unit and the Central Intelligence Cell, and bank representatives.

Akhtar said, "After reviewing bank vault documents, we recovered 832 tola of gold registered under Sheikh Hasina, her daughter and her sister. From one locker at Agrani Bank's principal branch, 5,923.60 grams of gold

ornaments were recovered. Another locker at the same branch, under the names of Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana, contained 4,783.56 grams of gold ornaments. A locker at Pubali Bank in Motijheel, registered under Hasina's name, contained only a small empty jute bag."

He said according to descriptions on notes found inside the lockers, the gold appears to belong to Hasina, her son Sajeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, Rehana, and Rehana's son Radwan Mujib.

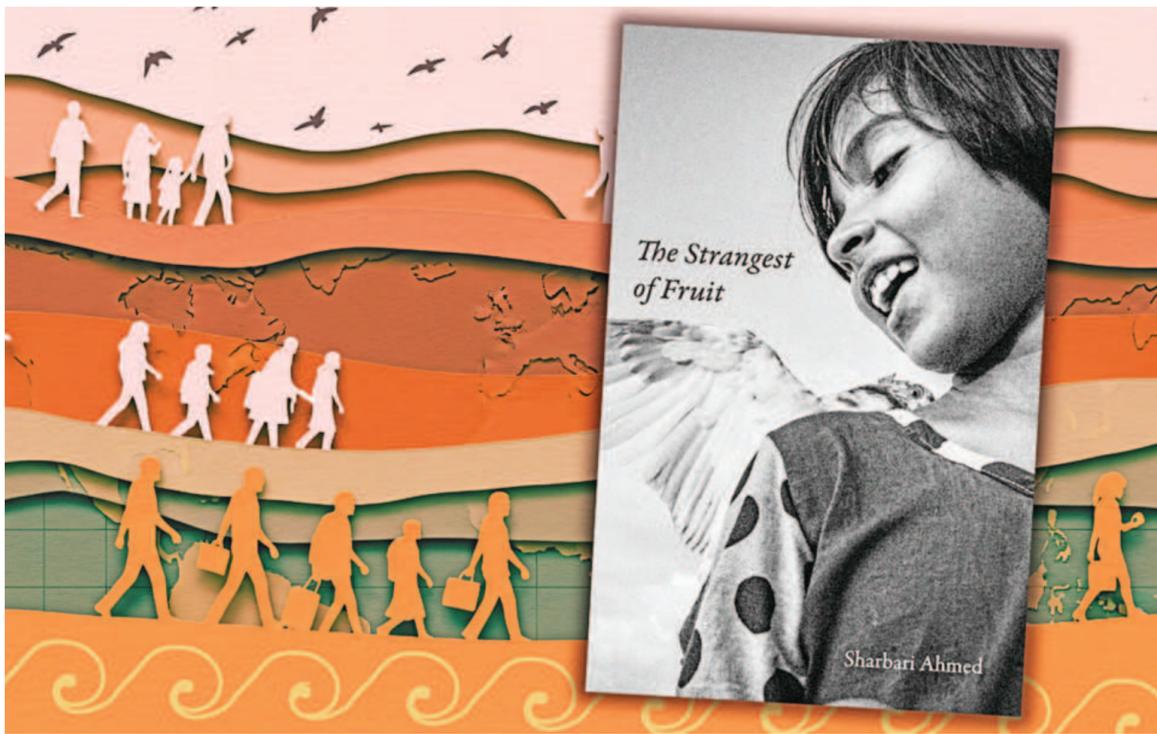
36 killed

FROM PAGE 12 wife was trapped inside.

A firefighter was among the 36 killed, and 29 people were in hospital, Hong Kong leader John Lee told reporters. Some 900 people were in eight shelters.

"The priority is to extinguish the fire and rescue the residents who are trapped. Then, we'll launch a thorough investigation," Lee told reporters.

Frames of scaffolding were seen tumbling to the ground as firefighters battled the blaze, while scores of fire engines and ambulances lined the road below the development.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Between home and elsewhere

Review of 'The Strangest of Fruit: Collected Stories' (Cheek Press, 2025) by Sharbari Ahmed

One of the most aching stories in the collection, "Black Ice in Jackson Heights", follows Rahima, an 18-year-old new mother who has recently migrated from Dhaka to Queens. The story opens with her sitting on a fifth-floor fire escape in the rain, barefoot, holding her eight-week-old baby. She is exhausted, underfed, disoriented by the new life she is living and cultural shock, and sliding into postpartum depression that no one around her has the language or patience for.

MAHMUDA EMDAD

Some books explain immigrant life through nostalgia. Others through big dramatic events. Sharbari Ahmed does neither in *The Strangest of Fruit*. Her stories focus on the quieter things like small humiliations, awkward encounters, the private wounds people carry, and the memories they don't talk about because talking would make them too real.

But even in that quietness, there is so much force. Reading the book feels like sitting with someone who has lived a full, complicated life and is finally ready to say the things they've been swallowing for years. Her stories circle around immigrants and their descendants, but what she really writes about is grief, loss, survival, and the quiet ways people keep going when no one is listening. *The Strangest of Fruit* gathers 10 short stories—some new, some previously published—into one sharp, emotionally layered collection.

The collection opens with "Noor, Embers and Ash", where the boundaries between myth and memory blur in a way that only the South Asian imagination can hold. A girl visiting her grandmother's village encounters a djinn-girl named Noor, who feels part warning, part companion, and part ghost of a history everyone tiptoes around. The story sits between myth and memory, showing how children use imagination to name what adults avoid. It becomes a fitting first note, eerie and tender, and it sets the tone for the rest of the collection.

One of the most aching stories in the collection, "Black Ice in Jackson Heights", follows Rahima, an 18-year-old new mother who has recently migrated from Dhaka to Queens. The story opens with her sitting on a fifth-floor fire escape in the rain, barefoot, holding her eight-week-old baby. She is exhausted, underfed, disoriented by the new life she is living and cultural shock, and sliding into postpartum depression that no one around her has the language or patience for. Ahmed lets the scene unfold slowly: the baby's phantom sucking, the numbness in Rahima's body, the way she drifts in and out of sleep dangerously close to the edge.

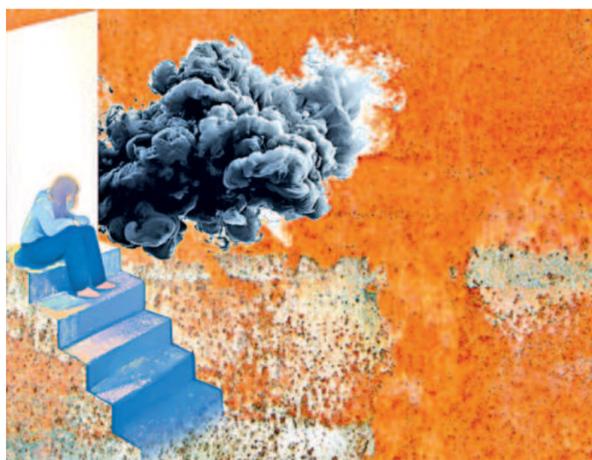
Where "Black Ice in Jackson Heights" deals with the invisible hazards of mental health in diaspora, "Perfect Flowers" approaches memory from another angle. Anadil, a 47-year-old Bangladeshi-American MFA student, tries to fulfill an assignment about memory by writing about mouse droppings on a teak coffee table stored in her basement. The table was bought on a honeymoon trip in Bali, now covered in rodent scat. The connection between past romance and present decay is obvious, yet Ahmed refuses to make it neat. The story is less about a failed marriage than about the difficulty of narrating a life at all—especially for a middle-aged South Asian woman in a workshop full of younger classmates who are eager to dissect

her but not really see her.

Shorter pieces like "Alexander", "Eyesore", and "Dervish" extend these same concerns in different registers. They return to the questions of how bodies are looked at, who is allowed to belong in a space, and what happens when desire, faith, and shame collide. Names, neighbourhoods, and even buildings become charged—either as sites of aspiration or as constant reminders that someone is "out of place." Together with the more overtly political stories, these pieces show how the inner life of a character can be just as shaped by gaze, class, and history as by any headline event.

One of the most interesting things about Ahmed's writing is how she uses humour to expose discomfort. "The Eyesore" is a perfect example. The story follows an interfaith South Asian couple who buy a small, unattractive house in a wealthy white neighbourhood

its flaws. At times, the political commentary can feel a little too on-the-nose, with characters articulating points that readers have already grasped from the scene. Some stories—especially the longer ones—are crowded with subplots and name-dropping, and the men can occasionally feel sketched in comparison to the women, who are almost always vivid, contradictory and real. A reader looking for quiet, minimalist slices of life will not find them here; Ahmed is maximalist by instinct. While the collection is emotionally rich, there are moments where the stories lean a little too closely toward familiar immigrant tropes. Some characters feel shaped by recognisable stereotypes—the judgemental in-laws, strict immigrant parents, the anxious "model minority", the overbearing aunty figure—and at times, the writing risks reinforcing the very



in Connecticut. Their neighbour Archita arrives immediately, loud and overbearing, offering frozen mithai she saved for months and plenty of unsolicited advice. The story is funny, but the humour has a sharp bite. Under Archita's arrogance sits insecurity, class anxiety, caste pride, and a desperate need for validation from the white people around her. Under Farzana's politeness there is quiet fear. She fears standing out, being judged and being seen as the wrong kind of immigrant.

Ahmed captures this dynamic with painful accuracy. Anyone who has grown up in a South Asian community abroad will recognise someone like Archita, someone who polices others because they see belonging as a competition. The story critiques this behaviour gently, without turning cruel.

Themes of aging, desire, and invisibility surface again in stories like "The Length in Six Strokes" and "Dervish", where characters navigate communities, preserved suburbs, class anxieties, and the layered prejudices that shape everyday life. The collection is not without

patterns it aims to critique. Ahmed usually complicates these figures with tenderness and context, but some readers may wish for more unexpected turns or deeper subversions of those archetypes.

The book shows that immigrant survival is not triumphant but continuous. Grief does not end. It only changes shape. Memory is imperfect, uncomfortable and incomplete, yet it remains the closest thing many people have to home.

At its heart, the collection is about how people carry the worlds that shaped them, even when they move continents away. Ahmed shows again and again that survival is not always loud. Sometimes it is quiet. Sometimes it is embarrassing. Sometimes it is funny. Often it is lonely. And almost always, it is ongoing.

Mahmuda Emdad is a women and gender studies major with an endless interest in feminist writings, historical fiction, and pretty much everything else, all while questioning the world in the process. Reach out at mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

An inter-cultural romance

A review of Clinton B Seely's 'Barisal and Beyond: Essays on Bangla Literature' (UPL, 2025; first published by Chronicle Books, Delhi, in 2008)

KAISER HAQ

The author of this book is the protagonist of a charming inter-cultural romance. He is one of fewer than a handful of living Westerners who fortuitously fell in love with Bengali literature and made a distinguished career of teaching it—at the University of Chicago in his case. A major in Botany from Stanford, he volunteered for the Peace Corps and spent a year and nine months (1963-65) training high school science teachers in Barisal. In the process he picked up Bangla and, through the desultory chitchat that Bengalis call 'adda', gathered some idea about the greatest writer in the language, Rabindranath Tagore. At the end of his stint he enrolled for graduate studies at the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilisations, University of Chicago, and discovered Bengal's greatest modern poet, whose hometown was his familiar Barisal.

His PhD thesis, published as *A Poet Apart: A Literary Biography of the Bengali Poet Jibanananda Das, 1899-1954* (UNKO, 1990), won him West Bengal's most prestigious literary award, the Ananda Puraskar. His other publications include three translated volumes, of which the one of Michael Madhusudan Datta's epic, *The Slaying of Meghnada: A*

sensibility.

"Say it with Structure: Tagore and *Mangal Kavya*" analyses the parallels between the play "Tasher Desh" or "Land of Cards" (1933) and the conventions of the medieval mangal kavya genre. The argument has something to it, though that something may seem rather tenuous. Besides the superficial difference between a play and the traditional pala in payar-tripadi, which is the vehicle of the mangal kavya proper, one also misses the robust and often menacing presence of a subaltern deity. By contrast, much of the play's charm lies in its delightful comic and satiric elements, and instead of forceful deities we have two opposed abstractions, Niyam, the foundation of a rules-based existence, and Ichchha, which allows us to be fancy-free. Of the four essays dealing with Michael Madhusudan Datta, one comprehensively reveals the "Indian Sources of Inspiration" behind his magnum opus, the epic *Meghnad Badh Kavya*; the critical view for long had been that Michael was a "European" poet who wrote in Bengali. Two essays on Jibanananda Das go for intriguing hair-splitting, though the one titled "Shifting Seas and 'Banalata Sen'", on the true geographic location of maalay, which features in Das' best-known poem, "Banalata Sen", as well as in another poem, "Nirankus", leaves me unconvinced.

The generally accepted rendering of maalay is that it refers to Malaya. This is how Seely himself rendered it the first time he translated the two poems. The poet himself in his English translation of "Banalata Sen" renders the phrase "maalay sagare" as "to/ the seas of Malaya". But Seely has second thoughts, prompted by a reader's comments, which he has followed up with an examination of dictionaries and atlases. Confusingly, maalay can be the adjectival form of malay, which can refer to the Malabar region. Seely decides to revise his translations accordingly, for two main reasons. First, if "maalay sagare" is retranslated as "to seas up the Malabar coast" (a clumsy phrase), all the geographical references in the poem are contained in India as it was at the time of composition, thereby making it "a strongly nationalistic poem." Second, in the poem "Nirankus" there is an anonymous Malayali, a word widely used in India to refer to a speaker of Malayalam, the language of the Malabar Coast. Seely therefore retranslates the poem, changing "the Malayan coast" to "On the coast along the Western Ghats" (another clumsy expression).

I find Seely's reasoning quite spurious. Das was never strongly nationalistic—his sense of geo-cultural rootedness applied to undivided Bengal rather than India as a whole—and it is difficult to see why he should wish to limit the peregrinations of the speaker in "Banalata Sen" to India, especially when the opening line describes him as "roaming the paths of this earth" (Seely's translation). More importantly, it is absurd to think that by "Malaya" in his own translation, Jibanananda Das—a college lecturer in English—could have meant "Malabar".

This is an excerpt. Read the full review on *The Daily Star* and Star Books and Literature's websites. An earlier, shorter version of this review article appeared in *Asiatic*, Vol. 3, No. 1, in June 2009.

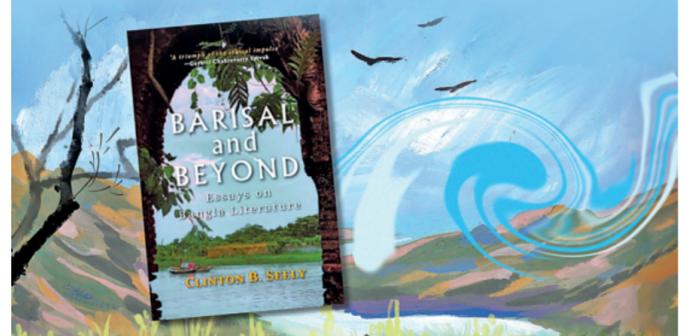
Kaiser Haq is a Bangladeshi poet, translator, essayist, critic and academic.

ILLUSTRATION: MAHMUDA EMDAD

The present volume is a mixed bag of essays and lectures covering a number of significant aspects of Bangla literature. Though the focus is predominantly on modern or post-Plassey literature, Seely's grasp of the earlier tradition of Bangla writing is palpable in several essays.

Ramayana from Colonial Bengal (Oxford University Press, 2004), got him the A. K. Ramanujan Book Prize for translation. Anyone interested in a detailed critique of it may look up my review, "Bengal's Modern Epic", in *The Daily Star Book of Bangladeshi Writing* (Daily Star Books, 2006), edited by Khademul Islam. The main point I make there is that although the translation reads smoothly, it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of Bengali prosody. The Bengali of the original is written in unrhymed lines of 14 metrical units or matras, which may or may not be equivalent to syllables, depending on whether they are "open" or "closed". Seely mistakenly equates a matra with a syllable, ignores the importance accorded to the caesura, and ends up with rhythmically limp lines far from Datta's robust amitrakshar chhanda, his Bangla equivalent of blank verse.

The present volume is a mixed bag of essays and lectures covering a number of significant aspects of Bangla literature. Though the focus is predominantly on modern or post-Plassey literature, Seely's grasp of the earlier tradition of Bangla writing is palpable in several essays. His treatment of the earlier writings serves a salutary purpose, bringing out the organic connections between them and modern Bangla literature and thus effectively countervailing the thesis of loyal colonial subjects like the late Nirad Chaudhuri that the latter is thoroughly Western in



Selection row casts shadow over Tigers' T20I opener

SPORTS REPORTER

As Bangladesh take on Ireland in the first of three T20Is in Chattogram today – their final international assignment before next year's ICC T20 World Cup – a dispute between skipper Litton Das and chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu over the omission of Shamim Hossain has overshadowed the game and taken centre-stage.

The series against the Irish is the Tiger's last opportunity to address issues with the T20I side before the global event, set to place in India and Sri Lanka in February-March. After this, the players will only feature in the 12th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), beginning on December 19.

When Bangladesh take the field on Thursday, it will mark their 28th T20I of 2025 – their busiest year ever in the format. In contrast, Ireland have played only six T20Is this year. Bangladesh's results have been evenly split, with 13 wins, 13 losses, and one no-result, while

Ireland have endured a tougher run with four losses and two no-results.

For Bangladesh, this series carries added importance. With the 2026 T20 World Cup approaching, they will be eager to finish the year on a strong note in their final T20I series before the global event.



PHOTO: AFP

Proteas end 25-year wait in style

A collective effort, boosted by several individual moments of brilliance, saw South Africa hand India a record defeat in the second Test to complete a series sweep on Day 5 in Guwahati yesterday.

The 408-run defeat is India's heaviest loss in Test cricket and South Africa's second-biggest victory by runs.

The win secured South Africa's first Test series triumph in India in 25 years -- and only their second ever, after a 2-0 victory in 2000.

As captain, Temba Bavuma has now won 11 of his 12 Tests in charge -- the most by any skipper after 12 matches, with the other game ending in a rain-affected draw.

Simon Harmer, who claimed six wickets in the final innings, finished the series with 17 wickets -- the most by any South African bowler in a Test series in India, surpassing Dale Steyn's 15 in 2008.

It's massive. These are the type of things that we're working towards and dreaming of. It's not every day where you get to think that you can come to India and walk away with a two-nil series win. I think what makes it sweeter for some of us within the group is the fact that we've been on the other side of the result.

South Africa captain TEMBA BAVUMA



But on the eve of the series, the discussions mostly centred around some of the comments made by Litton in the pre-series press conference. The skipper expressed dissatisfaction over Shamim's exclusion from the squad for the first two T20Is and said he was disappointed by the lack of communication from the selectors.

"It would've been good if he was in the team. This is not my call -- it's totally the selectors' call. I don't know why the selectors removed Shamim from the team without giving me any notice. I always thought that at least the captain should always know which players are coming in and going out," Litton told reporters.

Hours after Litton's comments, chief selector Lipu responded with a video statement.

Lipu said he knew of the skipper's desire to keep Shamim in the squad, who had managed just two runs across two matches in the recent West Indies series, but after a discussion with fellow selector Hasibul Hossain Shanto, it was decided to drop the all-rounder.

"Before announcing the T20 squad for the Ireland series, we held a very brief meeting with the coach and the captain. When we asked the captain if he was satisfied with Shamim, Litton said 'yes', and he clearly stated he wanted to see Shamim in the team," Lipu said.

"Immediately after the team announcement, I received a phone call from the captain. Upon not seeing Shamim in the squad, he was not happy... I told him this is our decision.

"The selection committee does not always have to be in alignment with the captain and coach regarding a particular player. We are accountable to the board."

Considering the significance of these matches ahead of the World Cup, the players and the management should have ideally be completely focused on on-field matters and come up with plans on how to end the year strong.

But the happenings of Wednesday displayed a rift between the think tank, which has almost become a recurrent theme for the Tigers ahead of World Cups. Only time will tell how this episode affects the team moving forward.



Estevao sprinkles Brazilian stardust

The eagerly-awaited teenage battle at Stamford Bridge was won in emphatic style by Chelsea's Brazilian sensation Estevao Willian on Tuesday as he capped a lively display with a fabulous goal in a 3-0 win, as Barcelona's Lamine Yamal was as anonymous as most of his teammates. The 18-year-old surged past two defenders before slamming an unstoppable shot with his weaker right foot into the roof of the net from a tight angle to put Chelsea 2-0 up in the 55th minute of their Champions League tie after an early Barca own goal, with Liam Delap adding a deserved third. Barca have won at Stamford Bridge only once in nine European visits, losing six times, with their last victory at the ground coming back in 2006.

PHOTO: X

SHORT CORNER

GM Sindarov becomes youngest World Cup winner

Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov became the youngest player to win the chess World Cup when he beat China's Wei Yi in the final's tiebreak in Goa, India on Wednesday. Sindarov, 19, defeated Wei in the second tiebreak game after they drew the classical games as well as the first rapid one, making the most of his opponent's poor time management in a nail-biting finale. He won a cash prize of USD 120,000 prize.

U17s continue dominant run in Asian Cup Qualifiers

Bangladesh maintained their stunning run in the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers with another comprehensive victory, outclassing Sri Lanka 5-0 in their third Group A match in China yesterday.



Sports community protests in Mirpur seeking action against accused officials

Calls for swift and transparent action against sexual harassment in Bangladesh's sporting arena grew louder yesterday as athletes and organisers formed a human chain in front of Gate 2 of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A WAKE-UP CALL?

Bangladesh suffered a 1-0 defeat against Malaysia in the opening match of Infinix Tri-National Football Tournament at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Wednesday. Bangladesh's precarious high-line defence and lackluster attacking moves will raise question marks over a team who have now lost three matches on the trot, with only three months left for the start of the AFC Women's Asian Cup. Peter Butler's charges had lost both their matches in their tour of Thailand by big margin last month -- results which did not please the coach at all. In yesterday's game against Malaysia, ranked 12 places above Bangladesh, the signs of a team lacking sharpness and cohesion was once again evident. The home team will play their second and last match of the tournament against Azerbaijan next Tuesday after a Mayasia vs Azerbaijan showdown next Saturday.

Same old BPL, new 'firefighting' acts

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) governing council promised a unique 12th edition, and that promise appears to be upheld -- but only because all the wrong elements are present.

Historically, the tournament has rarely begun smoothly, and while that has not changed, this year's "uniqueness" lies in how the rules and processes have been set so far.

Initially featuring five teams, the tournament -- scheduled to begin on December 19 and end tentatively on January 16 -- has now expanded to six with Noakhali Express the latest to enter the fray. However, no clear explanation has been provided regarding the payment guidelines being followed by the franchisees.

BPL member secretary Iftokhar Rahman Mithu said they "saw an opportunity at the last minute" to include a sixth team, following a request from the Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) to ensure the participation of "15-16 more local players."

Mithu emphasised that they want this edition to be "very clean in terms of payment and integrity," even warning that the council may "take over teams" that fail to comply with financial and integrity guidelines.

Interestingly, the BPL governing council has already extended the deadline for franchisees to submit bank guarantees multiple times. Yet,

Mithu informed that two teams had still not made the required payments, while four teams had apparently "covered" their part of the agreement through financial instruments provided by the BCB.

With so many inconsistencies emerging ahead of the 12th edition, Mithu was asked whether he was effectively stepping into a fire with this BPL.

"Definitely, it's a tough job. If we had gotten 7-8 months, we could have organised everything properly. Right now, we are firefighting," he said.

Of the 11 entities that originally submitted EOLs (Expression of Interest), five were cleared for participation before Noakhali Express (Desh Travels) "responded by submitting the financial instruments and thus was included." The other five franchisees are: Chattogram Royals (Triangle Services), Dhaka Capitals (Champion Sports Limited), Rajshahi Warriors (Nabil Group), Rangpur Riders (Toggi Sports), and Sylhet Titans (JM Sports and Entertainment).

Meanwhile, Trans Production Technologies (TPT) has been awarded production service rights. Previously, Real Impact served as the production provider, but this time the BCB opted for TPT, considering their experience.

Overall, it appears that the same old process is being followed for yet another BPL edition: grand promises that have little reflection in how things are actually being managed so far.





Attack on bauls a 'heinous act'

Says Fakhrul

STAR REPORT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has condemned the recent attacks on baul singers, terming them "heinous acts".

Referring to Bangladesh's age-old cultural tradition, he said baul songs represent the timeless heritage of rural Bengal.

"Our bauls perform in every corner of the country – in villages, fields and open spaces. I believe these attacks on them are carried out by religious extremists. This is unacceptable. Choosing the path of violence and vengeance is not befitting for anyone."

Fakhrul made the remarks while talking to journalists after inaugurating the newly constructed building of the district unit BNP office in Thakurgaon town yesterday afternoon, reports our local correspondent.

Earlier in the day, two baul artistes were injured in an attack while they were preparing to form a human chain on the Thakurgaon Judge Court premises, demanding the

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A man breaks down in tears in front of the burning high-rise residential towers in Tai Po, Hong Kong, China, yesterday. He said his wife was trapped inside one of the buildings.

PHOTO: REUTERS

HASINA'S EXTRADITION Delhi examining request, Dhaka expects response

STAR REPORT

India yesterday acknowledged receiving a request from Bangladesh for the extradition of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and said that the request was being examined.

"Yes, we have received the request. And this request is being examined as part of ongoing judicial and internal legal processes," Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, told reporters while responding to a question at a regular briefing in New Delhi.

Hasina has been staying in India since her ouster on August 5 last year.

Jaiswal said India remained "committed to the best interest of the people of Bangladesh, including peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country, and will continue to engage constructively in this regard with all stakeholders."

Earlier yesterday, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain said Bangladesh expects a response from India regarding the latest extradition request made after the International Crimes Tribunal-1 convicted Hasina for committing crimes against humanity during last year's uprising.

"I do not expect an answer within a week of Dhaka's request, but we do expect a response," he said during a press meet at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On Sunday, Touhid said that Bangladesh sent a diplomatic note (note verbale) to India through its High Commission in New Delhi seeking Hasina's extradition.

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'832 bhori gold doesn't belong to Hasina alone'

ACC says it was also stored under names of her family members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has recovered 832 bhori (9,707.16 grams) of gold from two lockers at Agrani Bank, with documents showing the assets were not held solely in the name of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The gold was reportedly stored under the names of several family members, including her sister Sheikh Rehana and daughter Saima Wazed Putul. The items include jewellery and gold models of a boat and a deer, said ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain at a press conference at the ACC headquarters in Segunbagicha yesterday.

He said the legality of the gold belonging to Hasina and her family members is under verification.

The lockers were opened on Tuesday at Agrani Bank's principal branch in Motijheel following a court order.

Hasina declared in her 2007 wealth statement that she held one locker at Pubali Bank and two at Agrani Bank.

ACC investigator Md Masudur Rahman applied to the court on September 14 to open them, and the Senior Metropolitan Special Judge's Court authorised the process in the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Phantom bank account linked to S Alam Group

Investigators unable to trace account holder, suspect money laundering

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

More than Tk 549 crore sit idle for over a year now in an account of a suspected shell company linked to S Alam Group, but investigators and Islami Bank officials are unable to trace the account holder.

The account named "Top Ten Trading House" was opened on April 13, 2023, at Islami Bank's Khatunganj branch in Chattogram. Bank documents show the owner is Almas Ali, and the company's registered address is listed as 23/5 Gopalbagh Residential Building, Jatrabari, Dhaka.

Over the last one year, bank officials served six formal notices on the so-called account holder to appear before the bank, but he did not show up. Bank officials also visited both his stated permanent and present addresses, but failed to verify his existence, raising questions about who actually opened the account.

"The owner of this account has never come to the bank. In fact, we could not confirm if he is a real person," Muhammad Jamal Uddin, a senior vice-president and head of Islami Bank's Khatunganj branch, told The Daily Star.

In recent months, several groups allegedly linked to S Alam Group tried to withdraw funds from the account using fake vouchers and cheques, even offering bribes to bank officials, he said but did not give any names.

- Account opened without verification; bank admits failure
- Over Tk 600cr routed through multiple shell firms
- Transactions linked to S Alam went unquestioned during AL regime
- Post-Aug 5 changeover, 200 S Alam-linked accounts seized
- ACC sues S Alam, former Islami Bank DMD Akiz Uddin

"When the account was opened, I was not at this branch. But officials who were posted at the time said they were forced to open it without following proper procedures and verifying documents," Jamal added.

ACC SUES S ALAM

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which is investigating the matter, analysed Top Ten's documents and identified two more shell companies -- Alam Trading & Business House

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

36 killed in high-rise inferno in HK

Hundreds missing

REUTERS, Hong Kong

At least 36 people were killed and 279 were missing yesterday after Hong Kong's deadliest fire in three decades ripped through high-rise residential towers sheathed in flammable bamboo scaffolding, authorities said.

More than 10 hours after the fire started in the northern Tai Po district, flames and thick smoke still engulfed the 32-storey towers as rescue workers swarmed the site and shocked inhabitants watched nearby.

The cause of the blaze was not immediately known, but it was fanned by green construction mesh and bamboo scaffolding which the government began phasing out in March for safety reasons.

Working through the night, firefighters were struggling to reach upper floors of the Wang Fuk Court housing complex, which has 2,000 apartments in eight blocks, due to the intense heat.

One 71-year-old resident surnamed Wong broke down in tears, saying his

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Scientists 'astonished' as moss survives 9 months in space



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A study to see how moss would fare in the extreme environment of space has left scientists "genuinely astonished" after the plant was able to survive nine months outside the International Space Station (ISS).

Moss is one of the most resilient living organisms on the planet, capable of surviving in the harshest environments – from the peaks of the Himalayas, to the Antarctic tundra.

The plant species has also survived several mass extinction events, leading researchers to wonder how it would cope beyond Earth.

A series of lab tests at Hokkaido University in Japan were undertaken to see how a type of moss called spreading earthmoss fared under stresses like UV radiation, extreme high and low temperatures, and vacuum conditions.

Hundreds of moss sporophytes – the reproductive structures that encase spores – were sent to the ISS in March 2022, where astronauts places them outside the orbiting laboratory for 283 days. They were then returned to Earth for further testing.

জাতীয় প্রাণিসম্পদ সপ্তাহ ২০২৫
(২৬ নভেম্বর-২ ডিসেম্বর)

সকল জেলা ও উপজেলায় নানা কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে এই সপ্তাহ উদযাপন করা হচ্ছে। এই উপলক্ষে পুরাতন বাণিজ্য মেলার মাঠ, শের-ই-বাংলা নগর, ঢাকায় আকর্ষণীয় প্রাণিসম্পদ মেলা ও ফুড ফেস্টিভ্যাল এর আয়োজন করা হয়েছে। আপনি সপরিবারে আমন্ত্রিত।

উদ্দেশ্য

১. দেশীয় জাতের প্রাণিসম্পদ সংরক্ষণ ও টেকসই উন্নয়নের গুরুত্ব তুলে ধরা
২. প্রাণিসম্পদ খাতে আধুনিক প্রযুক্তি, উদ্ভাবন ও সফল উদ্যোগসমূহের সম্প্রসারণ
৩. প্রাণিষাচ্ছ সুরক্ষা, রোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ এবং পরিবেশবান্ধব গবাদিপশু ও হাঁস-মুরগি পালনে উদ্বুদ্ধকরণ
৪. গবাদিপশু ও হাঁস-মুরগি পালনে অভিজ্ঞতা বিনিময়ের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি
৫. খামারিদের সাথে সরকারি ও বেসকারি খাতের সংযোগ স্থাপন
৬. নারী ও যুবসমাজকে প্রাণিসম্পদ ভিত্তিক উদ্যোক্তা কার্যক্রমে সম্পৃক্তকরণ

প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদপ্তর
মৎস্য ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-2560

MORE NEWS

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- Time to recognise the emotional toll of river erosion **P6**
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ফরাজেজি আন্দোলনের নেতা
হাজী শরীয়তুল্লাহ'র
স্মৃতি বিজড়িত

২৭ নভেম্বর, ২০২৫

ভ্রম
মাদারীপুর জেলার
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শুভ উদ্বোধন

মাদারীপুর ব্রাঞ্চ

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