



"Anyone who lives in Venezuela and who wants to speak the truth is in danger".
Nobel Peace Prize winner
Maria Corina Machado

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY



DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 320

AGRAHAYAN 27, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADUS SANI 20, 1447 HIJRI

20 PAGES: Tk 15.00

Election on February 12

Referendum on same day; CEC urges all to play 'historic role' in advancing country's democratic journey

Dec 29, 2025
NOMINATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Final day for candidates to submit their nomination papers

Dec 30 to Jan 4
NOMINATION SCRUTINY
ROs to review nomination papers of the candidates

Jan 20, 2026
LAST DAY FOR CANDIDATURE WITHDRAWAL
Candidates have until this date to withdraw from the election

Jan 21, 2026
PUBLICATION OF FINAL CANDIDATE LIST
The list of candidates and allocated symbols will be unveiled

Jan 22 to Feb 10
OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD
Candidates are permitted to campaign during this timeframe

Feb 12, 2026
ELECTION DAY
Voting takes place for 300 seats and referendum on July charter

42,761 polling centres, 2,44,739 booths planned for 12.76cr voters
Polling hours: 7:30am to 4:30pm
More 'secret booths' to be added
Referendum ballot colour: pink
National polls ballot colour: black & white
Ballots will be placed in one box

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

In a major step toward restoring democratic rule, the Election Commission yesterday announced the schedule for the 13th national election and the referendum on the July charter, both to be held on February 12.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin made the announcement in a televised address, ending weeks of speculation and setting political parties on course for final campaign preparations.

"I call upon all political parties, contesting candidates, and voters to participate sincerely and extend active cooperation in the electoral process," Nasir Uddin said in his 13-minute address.

Along with the national election to choose the next government, voters will cast their ballots in the referendum to decide the

- Yunus terms announcement milestone
- All major parties welcome schedule
- 3 EC officials made ROs for first time

fate of key constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening fragile democratic institutions and rebalancing state powers.

The CEC urged everyone to help make both exercises a success and "together play a historic role in advancing the country's democratic journey".

"Rise above fear, temptation, deception, and limitations, and exercise your right to vote

without hesitation. To ensure your safe and festive participation, all relevant institutions and forces will be working."

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus congratulated the EC, calling the announcement an important milestone. "Following the historic mass uprising, the country is now advancing on a new path. This election and referendum will strengthen that trajectory, give priority to the will of the people, and further consolidate the foundation of a new Bangladesh."

Assuring full cooperation of the interim government, he expressed confidence that the EC would perform its duties independently and impartially.

"Bangladesh now stands at the threshold of a new future. Through your active participation and responsible conduct, I firmly believe we will succeed in building a modern, just, and prosperous state," he said.

MORE STORIES ON PAGES 3, 12

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Nation's heart breaks as fight for little Sajid ends in tragedy

2yr-old found dead after 32 hours in abandoned shaft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi



As rescuers finally lifted two-year-old Sajid from the suffocating darkness of the narrow shaft, the entire nation held its breath.

For a fleeting moment, hope dared to rise — that perhaps the toddler who had been trapped underground for 32 agonising hours might somehow be saved.

In Rajshahi's Tanore upazila, villagers stood frozen, praying for the little boy to return to his mother's

arms. But that fragile hope shattered.

Less than an hour after being pulled from the muddy shaft, Sajid was declared dead, ending a vigil that had united the country and breaking the hearts of all who prayed for a

miracle.

After more than a day of relentless search, little Sajid was found dead, officials confirmed last night.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials leading the rescue said the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Hundreds of people watched in silence as Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel yesterday continued the rescue operation for two-year-old Sajid.

Trader shot dead in broad daylight in Old Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman was shot dead in broad daylight yesterday in Old Dhaka's Shyambazar area, allegedly over a longstanding rivalry, adding to a recent spate of similar killings.

Abdur Rahman, 55, a spice trader and the former president of the Shyambazar Kachabazar Traders' Association, was shot around noon in front of the Maula Buksh Sarder Eye Hospital in Shyambazar.

Critically injured, Rahman was rushed to the emergency department

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Richest 10% hold nearly two-thirds of wealth

Says World Inequality Report on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The richest 10 percent of people hold 58 percent of total wealth in Bangladesh, according to the World Inequality Report 2026.

Wealth is even more concentrated among the top one percent, who alone control around 24 percent of all assets, said the report released by the Paris based World Inequality Lab yesterday.

By contrast, the bottom 50 percent of the population own just 4.7 percent of total wealth, while the middle 40 percent hold 36.9 percent.

The report said this distribution reflects a highly uneven concentration of wealth, though overall inequality has remained moderate with little change over the past decade.



The top 10 percent of earners receive about 41 percent of national income, while the bottom half capture only 19 percent.

The income gap between these groups narrowed slightly, from a level of 22 to 21, between 2014 and 2024, suggesting broadly stable inequality levels.

"Female labour participation remains low at 22.3 percent, indicating persistent gender disparities in economic activity," the report added.

Overall, inequality patterns in Bangladesh remain largely unchanged, with limited progress toward a more balanced distribution of income and wealth.

Globally, the report found that the richest 10 percent of the world's population own nearly three-quarters of all wealth, while the poorest half hold barely 2 percent.

Fifty-three years after independence, many wartime operations remain buried in footnotes and family archives. Part 7 of this 12-part series tells how freedom fighters and civilians in Kurigram carried out two of the Liberation War's most daring missions: raiding a bank and a treasury to secure crores in cash and gold for the Mujibnagar government.

Kurigram bank, treasury raided to fund war

AHMAD ISTIAK

During the 1971 Liberation War, a series of daring operations unfolded across the country, with civilians and trained freedom fighters jointly conducting raids to secure funds for the resistance.

In the early months of the war, freedom fighters broke into government treasuries and bank vaults in various districts and sub divisions, with most of the recovered money deposited into the Mujibnagar government treasury to finance the war.

Two of the most significant missions took place on April 16 and 18, when freedom fighters raided the National Bank and the Kurigram Treasury, both in the Kurigram subdivision. Together, they recovered over Tk 3 crore and 15kgs of gold jewellery.



TALES OF FREEDOM

These operations are documented in multiple books.

The National Bank operation is described in Tajul Mohammad's "Muktijuddher Itihashe Khoje Kurigram" and Akhtaruzzaman Mondol's "1971: Uttar Ronangone Bijoy".

On the other hand, the Treasury operation is documented in Hamidul Haque's "Boibhobe Ekattor" and Akbar Ali Khan's memoir "Purono Shei Diner Kotha".

Akhtaruzzaman Mondol, a former Awami League politician and Liberation War organiser from Bhurungamari, Kurigram took part in the April 16 bank raid.

According to Purono Shei Diner Kotha, the Pakistan government imposed strict restrictions on cash withdrawals at the start of the war.

Faced with a growing need for resources, Captain Nawazesh Uddin, deputy commander of the EPR's Rangpur Wing, advised National Assembly member Riaz Uddin Ahmed, Provincial Assembly member Shamsul Haque Chowdhury and Sub-divisional

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

"নিশ্চয় প্রত্যেক প্রাণিকে মৃত্যুর স্বাদ গ্রহণ করতে হবে"
- সুরা আল ইমরান

বাংলাদেশের ক্যান্সার ওষুধ শিল্পের কীর্তিমান পুরুষ এর মৃত্যুতে

আমরা গভীরভাবে
শোকাহত



মোহাম্মদ এবাদুল করিম বুলবুল

(২৭শে ডিসেম্বর ১৯৫৬ - ১৯ই ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫)

ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক

বীকন গ্রুপ

BEACON
Light for life

GULSHAN-2 FLAT ACC approves charge sheet against Tulip

BSS, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday approved a charge sheet against British lawmaker Tulip Siddiq in a case alleging she unlawfully obtained a flat from Eastern Housing Limited in Gulshan-2 in exchange for undue benefits.



ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain said Tulip's name had appeared in the note sheet of the flat owners' list submitted to the Rajdhami Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk).

The ACC filed the case on April 15 this year against Tulip and former Rajuk officials Shah Khasruzzaman and Sardar Mosharraf Hossain.

In July, Khasruzzaman secured a High Court order staying the investigation against him for three months.

When the ACC sought to vacate the stay through the Supreme Court's Chamber Judge, it received a "no order" ruling. With no further legal avenue over the past five months, the ACC dropped Khasruzzaman from the case and completed the investigation against Tulip and Mosharraf, Akhter said.



Displaced people arrive at a temporary camp in Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province yesterday amid clashes along the Cambodia-Thailand border.

PHOTO: AFP

Students led by Ducsu leader harass pro-AL DU teachers on campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least three teachers of Dhaka University, who belong to pro-Awami League teachers' panel "Neel Dal", were harassed and assaulted yesterday allegedly by a group of students led by a Ducsu leader.

The incident occurred around 1:30pm on the campus after the three teachers submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor's office, demanding that the teachers barred from taking classes be allowed to give lessons.

A video clip circulating on social media shows AB Zubair, social welfare secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union, grabbing Prof Abul Kashem Mohammad Jamal Uddin, convener of "Neel Dal", on the Faculty of Social Sciences building. Prof Jamal is seen trying to escape, and Zubair is seen chasing him and attempting to prevent him from leaving in a car.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Jamal said, "We submitted a seven-point memorandum to the VC's office, including the demand for reinstating the teachers barred from taking classes. Afterwards, while having tea at the teachers' lounge, a group of students entered, called us accomplices of fascists, and said they would not let us leave."

He added that his sweater was pulled off during the scuffle.

He alleged that his bag, containing cheque books, bank cards, and journals, was taken away.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Election on February 12

FROM PAGE 1

Although national polls are normally held every five years, this election is taking place just two years after the last one in January 2024, as the Sheikh Hasina government was ousted in August last year.

KEY DATES

According to the timeline released yesterday, nomination papers must be filed by December 29.

Returning officers will scrutinise these between December 30 and January 4, with January 11 set as the final day for appeals.

The EC will dispose of these appeals between January 12 and 18.

January 20 is the last date for withdrawing candidature, and the final list of candidates will be published on January 21.

Symbols will be allocated the next day, marking the start of the campaign period, which will continue until 7:30am on February 10.

CEC Nasir warned that "no negligence will be tolerated" as the country heads toward what he called a "unique and significant" twin election in the nation's political history.

He said the moment demands a renewed culture of "cordial democratic competition" among political parties, one rooted in the nation's larger interest rather than partisan divides.

But the campaign season is unfolding with misleading information being spread widely on social media. In particular, the use of artificial intelligence to generate falsehood and political propaganda is "increasing day by day".

"Necessary measures will be taken under the country's existing laws to prevent this," he said, reminding the public that the sharing of false information is itself a punishable offence.

The CEC urged everyone involved in the election process to carry out their responsibilities with "transparency,

impartiality, and firmness".

"No laxity or negligence will be tolerated in this regard," he warned.

"Election is the only path to establish representative ownership by the people," he said. "Sadly, the absence of quality elections has often dimmed our traditions and collective expectations."

ELECTORAL CODE TAKES EFFECT

The electoral code of conduct came

WHAT'S NEW

The EC last night issued a gazette appointing 69 returning officers for 300 constituencies. They include two divisional commissioners, 64 deputy commissioners, and for the first time in history, three EC officials.

This election will introduce several other new features.

Polling will run from 7:30am to 4:30pm, an hour longer, as voters will cast both election and referendum ballots.

The referendum ballot will be pink, the national election ballot will be black and white.

Both will be dropped into a single ballot box.

Additional secret booths will be set up to allow more voters to cast their ballots at a time.

Constituencies with only one candidate will include a "no vote" option. For the first time, campaign posters are banned nationwide to reduce environmental damage.

The EC has launched an online postal-ballot registration system for expatriates, with around 2,97,000 having registered by yesterday evening.

Their ballots, containing only party and independent symbols rather than candidate names, must reach returning officers before the close of polls.

All candidates, or their proposer or seconder, must now submit nomination papers in person.

All polling materials, including ballots, will reach centres the day before voting.

The Election Commission has already published the final voter list, completed the delimitation of 300 constituencies, registered two new political parties, and updated the electoral code.

It has finalised preparations for 42,761 polling centres and 2,44,739 booths for around 12.76 crore voters.

Several lakh officials - presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and polling officers - are being appointed and trained.



Rise above fear, temptation, deception, and limitations, and exercise your right to vote without hesitation.

CEC AMM Nasir Uddin

into effect immediately after the announcement.

The EC has asked the public administration ministry to deploy two executive magistrates to each upazila to enforce it until two days after voting.

Parties and candidates must remove posters, placards, banners, and billboards from public spaces within 48 hours from the announcement of the schedule.

According to the electoral code of conduct, advisers and senior officials will be barred from using government facilities for campaigns. The government will also not be allowed to approve or inaugurate development projects that may influence voters.

Kurigram bank, treasury raided to fund war

FROM PAGE 1

Officer (SDO) Mamunur Rashid to consider organised raids on banks and treasuries to support the war effort.

A plan was soon made to break into the National Bank vault in Kurigram on April 16.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Akhtaruzzaman Mondol said that, following Captain Nawazesh's suggestion, SDO Mamunur met with members of the local Sangram Committee.

They later consulted EPR officers Subedar Arab Ali and Subedar Borhan Uddin and Bhurungamari Thana Magistrate Ziauddin Ahmed, who all agreed to participate.

After Juma prayers, freedom fighters broke into the bank while 20 EPR members stood guard. "We brought shovels and broke a hole in the wall, then threw a grenade inside," Akhtaruzzaman said.

"I entered and opened the door. When others came in, we broke the vault and began filling bundles of cash into wooden boxes and sacks."

The team recovered Tk 1,60,60,000."

He also said that two EPR trucks and a jeep transported the money, with EPR guards providing security. The freedom fighters had earlier informed the Indian authorities and the BSF that they might cross the border, but they had not disclosed the scale of the operation.

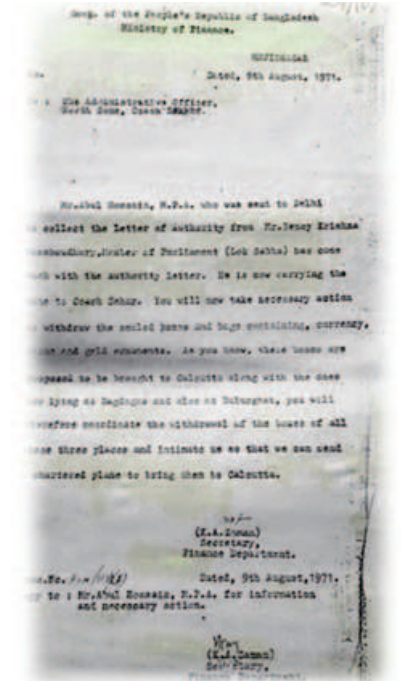
According to Muktiujddher Ithasher Khoje Kurigram, After crossing, they took the cash to the State Bank of India's Cooch Behar branch. Central approval for the deposit came within two days. Of the recovered amount, Tk 60,000 was kept at Bhurungamari for immediate wartime needs, and the rest was deposited in bank accounts.

The Kurigram Treasury was raided on April 18.

According to Boibhobe Ekattor, the operation was led by National



Shamsul Haque Abul Hossain



Mujibnagar government's letter to the Cooch Behar administration requesting withdrawal of treasury fund.

Assembly member Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Provincial Assembly

members Abul Hossain and Sadakat Hossain Chowdhury, Abdullah Sarwardi and others. Hossain, general secretary of the Kurigram Mahkuma Awami League and convener of the Lalmonirhat Thana Struggle Committee.

His son, Professor Hamidul Haque compiled his wartime documents and wrote "Boibhobe Ekattor".

According to Hamidul, SDO Mamunur asked Hossain to lead the raid. The fighters broke the small opening above the treasury door, allowing Haider Ali to squeeze through and unlock it from inside.

They then smashed open cupboards and safes using hammers, crowbars and shovels. The haul was enormous: 57 sacks of currency notes, 25 sacks of coins and 29 wooden boxes of gold.

Earlier, freedom fighters had derailed a freight train at Rajarhat Station, but on April 18 they learned Pakistani forces were repairing the tracks and could enter Kurigram at any moment.

The book also mentions that they pressed ahead, using 15 bullock carts to move the money and gold towards the border. Subedar Arab Ali, Subedar Borhan Uddin, Ansar Commander Mohiuddin Ahmed, and several EPR members joined the mission.

At the border, with help from local Congress leaders, they rented two trucks and transported the money to the Cooch Behar District Council office.

According to the letter with references, Lok Sabha member Binoy Krishna Chowdhury and the district magistrate rushed in and immediately sought permission from Delhi.

Once approved, the cash and gold were counted and weighed in their presence, totalling Tk 1,40,00,000 and 15kg of gold. Twenty-nine sacks of metal coins were handed to Shamsul Haque for wartime use.

The letter references also confirm

Nation's heart breaks as fight for little Sajid ends in tragedy

FROM PAGE 1

child was located around 9:00pm, hours after a press briefing in which they had said they were still unable to find him despite digging 40 feet into the pit.

At 9:10pm, Tanore Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Shahinuzzaman said the child had been taken to Tanore Upazila Health Complex by ambulance. Thirty minutes later, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Barnabus Hasdak declared him dead. The body, he said, had already been handed over to the family.

As no autopsy was conducted, the exact cause of death could not be determined.

Lt Col Tajul Islam, director (Operations) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said, "The operations we usually conduct are very different from this one. There were many challenges here, many complications, and despite all limitations, we worked together as a team. It was through the tireless efforts of our firefighters that this operation could be completed."

"Given the child's initial condition, the more he moved, the further down he slipped. If any pressure was applied from above, even a small weight could become heavy at that depth. At 30, 40 or 50 feet underground, even a small piece of brick can become dangerously heavy or cause a serious accident, especially because oxygen levels are extremely low."

He added, "When we finally reached him, we found him unconscious and immediately sent him to the hospital. As you know, the hospital later declared him dead."

Earlier, Tajul said eight units were deployed. Rescuers dug a parallel pit using an excavator, but the shaft repeatedly collapsed and merged with surrounding soil, complicating the mission.

Rajshahi division Fire Service Deputy Director Monzil Haque said the presence of a pond just 8-10 feet from the shaft made excavation even riskier, slowing efforts to reach the boy in time.

After news of his recovery spread, netizens held out hope, which lasted less than an hour.

An outpouring of grief filled social media after the child was declared dead, with people expressing sorrow and offering prayers for his soul. One Facebook user wrote, "I had been following the news since he fell and praying. Many portals posted that he was rescued alive, and I was so hopeful. But those weren't true. Then I learned he actually died. It was devastating."

Sajid fell into the shaft, estimated to be around 30 feet deep, at Koel Hat Purbo Para village in Panchandar union, around 1:00pm on Wednesday.

By 10:50pm that night, rescuers had dug nearly 18-20 feet into the soil, said Abdur Rouf, a Tanore fire service official. Three units worked through the night, with an excavator digging a parallel pit while two tractors cleared soil. Oxygen was pumped continuously into the shaft.

Police said the accident happened after a soil-laden trolley suddenly sank into the ground around noon. Curious about the scene, the child's mother, Runa Khatun, went to the field with her son. As they walked,

Sajid suddenly slipped into the shaft. She later heard faint cries of "Ma, Ma" from underground.

Runa said the opening of the shaft had been covered with straw, making it impossible for her to see it.

Locals said groundwater levels in Koel Hat village have dropped significantly, prompting villager Kochir Uddin to dig the shaft to check water levels.

Breaking down in tears early yesterday, Runa said, "My child died in such a way that his body cannot even be found."

She said Kochir had dug three holes in search of groundwater to install a tube well for irrigation, but after failing to find water, left them uncovered for over a year, loosely covered with straw and foliage.

Runa demanded exemplary punishment for Kochir.

Kochir's neighbour Delwar Hossain said Kochir had been missing since about an hour after the incident.

Tanore police OC Shahinuzzaman also confirmed that law enforcers have not yet located him.

Relatives of the family also sought justice. Speaking to Channel 24 shortly after Sajid was found, an uncle of the child's mother said, "He is my grandson. When we heard he was found, we felt so good and thanked Allah. After he was taken to hospital, we learned that he is dead...."

"May Allah bless all those who did all they could to rescue the child. Those who left these shafts illegally open for as long as a year should be brought to justice so that no such incident occurs ever again."

Trader shot dead

FROM PAGE 1

of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital by pedestrians, where doctors pronounced him dead around 1:30pm, said Motiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sutrapur Police Station.

"According to locals, a man named Noyon, 45, a neighbouring shop owner, shot him and fled the scene," the OC said, adding that they are working to arrest the shooter.

A CCTV footage shows a suspect wearing a black mask and a black jacket walking briskly down the street moments after the shooting. Locals were seen rushing to the scene.

At the hospital, the victim's wife Shahinur Begum told reporters that her husband left home hurriedly around 11:45am for a meeting.

"He received phone calls twice before leaving and said, 'I'm on my way.' He ate in a hurry, standing. Then he rushed out," she said.

Within five minutes, she heard a loud bang.

Shahinur said locals saw Noyon, also a spice trader, running away from the shooting scene with a pistol.

"In broad daylight, on a public road, he killed my husband. My three children have now become orphans. I want justice," she said.

Abdur Rahman's brother-in-law, Md Wasim, said Rahman, owner of Shakil Moshla Ghor, had been the president of Shyambazar kitchen market two years ago. At the time, a dispute arose with Noyon over a plan to convert a single-storey market into two or three storeys.

Rahman opposed the proposal, saying the construction would be illegal and authorities might later demolish the structure. The disagreement escalated, but business association leaders eventually mediated a settlement between them,

Wasim added.

Wasim accused Noyon of shooting Rahman in front of numerous spectators. He said Noyon and two of his associates fled the scene as locals gave them a chase.

Locals said everyone in the area knows Noyon, proprietor of Noyon Enterprise.

Shakil Ahmed, son of Abdur Rahman, told The Daily Star that his father had run his business with a good reputation for many years, and tensions over a piece of land with Noyon, had persisted for a long time.

"This long-running dispute led to my father's killing," Shakil alleged.

He said he has already filed a murder case against Noyon and several others and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Sub-Inspector Apurba Chandra Das of Sutrapur Police Station said locals informed police that Noyon shot Rahman over a business dispute.

"An investigation is ongoing to know what really happened and who are involved with the killing," he said.

A spate of killings, including targeted daylight shootings in crowded places, has renewed concerns over law and order ahead of the national election.

A few days ago, two men linked to a criminal gang were gunned down outside the Khulna Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court. On November 17 in Dhaka's Mirpur, assailants entered a shop and shot dead Golam Kibria, member secretary of Pallabi Thana Jubo Dal.

Days earlier, listed top criminal Tariq Saif Munun was shot dead near Dhaka's busiest court area, and earlier last month, Chattogram's underworld figure Sarwar Hossain Babla was killed during a voter outreach event.

HC upholds RPO clause on party symbols

Parties have to contest polls using own symbols, even if part of alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld the amended provision of the Representation of People Order (RPO) that requires political parties to contest national elections using their own symbols, even when they are part of an electoral alliance.

The court discharged the rule it had issued on December 1, asking the government and the Election Commission to explain within 10 days why the provision should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Fatema Anwar delivered the verdict after hearing arguments on the rule.

Petitioner's lawyer Ahsanul Karim told The Daily Star that his client plans to appeal the HC judgment before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Advocate SM Azmal Hossain Bachchhu, convener of the National Lawyers Alliance (NLA), supported by the National Citizen Party, expressed satisfaction at the HC verdict,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



Children stroll past a pile of burning trash at Kamrangirchar in Dhaka, forced to inhale toxic fumes as they look for a place to play. The smoke from the burning waste poses serious air-pollution and health risks for residents, especially children. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

FOUR CONSTITUENCIES EC officials made ROs for the first time

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

For the first time in history, three Election Commission officials have been appointed as returning officers (ROs) for four constituencies in the upcoming general election scheduled for February 12.

Hours after the announcement of schedules for the 13th national polls and the referendum on the July Charter, the EC appointed 69 returning officers for 300 constituencies.

According to the gazette notification, the appointments include three EC officials, two divisional commissioners, and 64 deputy commissioners.

Dhaka Regional Election Officer Younus Ali will serve as RO for Dhaka-13 and Dhaka-15, Chattogram Regional Election Officer Belayet Hossain Chowdhury for Chattogram-II, and Khulna Regional Election Officer Faysal Kader for Khulna-3.

The divisional commissioners of Dhaka and Chattogram have been appointed as ROs for the remaining constituencies in those two cities. Deputy commissioners will serve as ROs for constituencies under their respective districts.

The EC also appointed upazila nirbahi officers, other government officials, and upazila-level EC staff as assistant returning officers (AROs).

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Bhasani's 145th birth anniv today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today marks the 145th birth anniversary of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the legendary political leader and visionary who inspired the struggle for an independent Bangladesh.

Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Bhasani Parishad and various social and political organisations will place wreaths at his grave in Santosh, Tangail. A doa and milad mahfil will also be held at the university central mosque after the Zohr prayers.

Born in 1880 in Dhangara village of Sirajganj, Bhasani was the founder and president of the Awami Muslim League, which later evolved into the Awami League.

He also formed the left-leaning National Awami Party.

Bhasani played a key role in the 1969 mass upsurge and led the historic Farakka Long March in 1976, demanding Bangladesh's fair share of Ganges water.

Known as "Mazlum Jananeta" (leader of the oppressed), he spent his life championing the rights of the poor and marginalised. Bhasani passed away on November 17, 1976.

2 mild quakes jolt Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two mild earthquakes were felt in Sylhet early yesterday, occurring just five minutes apart at 2:50am and 2:55am.

According to the Seismic Observatory Centre of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, the first tremor measured 3.5 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre in Beanibazar upazila of Sylhet.

The second quake, recorded at 3.3 magnitude, originated in Barlekha upazila of neighbouring Moulvibazar district.

Shah Md Sajib Hossain, assistant meteorologist at the Sylhet Met Office, confirmed the information, citing the seismic centre. Despite the late-night tremors, no damage or casualties were reported as of yesterday morning.

'Silence no longer an option'

Speakers express concern over rising rights violations at MJF event, urge citizens to speak out against injustice



PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday strongly condemned the recent wave of derogatory remarks and online harassment directed at Begum Rokeya, calling it a stark reminder of the shrinking space for women and dissenting voices in Bangladesh.

They expressed concern over rising human rights violations, noting that women, children, minorities, and other marginalised groups continue to be disproportionately affected.

Speakers urged citizens to speak out against injustice, saying silence is no longer an option.

The dialogue was organised by Manusher Jonno

Foundation (MJF) as part of this year's International Human Rights Day observance and the closing of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. It was held at the MJF Tower in Rupnagar, Mirpur.

In her welcome remarks, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam expressed sorrow and outrage, saying the growing normalisation of humiliation, hate, and abusive language is a violation of human rights.

She said the recent derogatory and obscene comments on social media about Begum Rokeya — a trailblazer of women's emancipation who can no longer defend herself — are unacceptable in any civilised

society.

She questioned the state's silence even when a Rajshahi university teacher publicly made derogatory comments about Rokeya on the day the Rokeya Padak was awarded. Such silence, she warned, signals a worrying decline in social values.

Shaheen Anam said people may disagree with Rokeya's ideology, but that does not give anyone the right to use abusive language. She also expressed concern over the lack of public protest.

She also said rights are not only about protecting one's own freedoms but also about speaking out when others' rights are violated. She stressed the need to recognise

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

'An attack on dignity of women'

ASK, Teachers' Network condemn RU teacher's derogatory remark on Begum Rokeya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and the University Teachers' Network yesterday strongly condemned Rajshahi University physics teacher Khandaker Mahmudul Hasan for calling women's rights pioneer Begum Rokeya a "murtad" (apostate) and "kafir" (non-believer) in a Facebook post.

In separate statements, both organisations demanded the immediate withdrawal of the remarks, calling them hateful and inflammatory.

ASK said Begum Rokeya — a pioneer of Bangalee and Bangladeshi women's awakening whose work shaped the region's education, social thought, and intellectual progress — had been targeted with hateful and provocative comments.

Such remarks, it said, were not only condemnable but also a direct attack on the dignity of women.

Begum Rokeya's educational and social movements liberated Bangalee women from the chains of subjugation and superstition, regardless of religion, caste, or social identity, the statement said.

For such comments to come from a university teacher — who is expected to embody professional ethics and progressive values — is entirely unacceptable, said ASK.

Hate-driven and misogynistic speech from a higher education teacher constitutes a serious breach of professional integrity, it added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Election will not be easy

Tarique urges party workers to mobilise public opinion in favour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's existence and sovereignty will be at risk if the BNP's leaders and activists do not take the upcoming national election seriously, said its Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday.

"Dear colleagues, do you remember when I said one year ago that the upcoming election would not be as easy as you thought? Today, my words are slowly being proven right. Only you — each and every member of Bangladesh Nationalist Party — can save democracy and strengthen its foundation."

Tarique's comment came at the closing session of the fifth day of BNP's 'Plan to Build the Country' six-day workshop in the capital. "You have already fought against the conspiracies of fascists and the 1/11 government, and you will be able to face future conspiracies by establishing the foundation of democracy."

The BNP's leaders and workers have been tested through years of oppression and struggle.

"You have held this party through all kinds of oppression and torture, from the conspiracy of 1/11 to the 15 years of conspiracies under the last autocratic government. Now, why can't we face this upcoming election battle?"

He went on to emphasise the importance of reaching voters at their homes and galvanising public opinion for the party symbol, the sheaf of paddy.

"You need to make sure the sheaf of paddy wins."

Tarique urged the party's leaders and activists to stay vigilant and present on the ground.

"If the party workers are not on the ground,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Disclose wealth statements of Asif, Mahfuj

Demands students' platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Students' Platform has demanded the disclosure of wealth statements of Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and Mahfuj Alam, both of whom resigned from their posts as advisers to the interim government yesterday.

They also demanded that records of "corruption" happened under the two former advisers' supervision over the last 17 months be made public.

They further said Asif and Mahfuj should not be allowed to contest the upcoming election without a proper corruption investigation.

The organisation formed a human chain formed yesterday in front of the Anti-Corruption Commission headquarters in Segunbagicha.

Former Chhatra Union president Deepak Shil said, "Asif's office had turned into a hub of corruption. A corruption syndicate grew around him and his APS Moazzem. The APS was later removed... and the ACC investigated it. We want to know the progress of that investigation."

Speakers also alleged that the ACC has remained silent about corruption allegations against the personal assistants (PS) of the two former advisers.

They called on the Election Commission and the interim government to bar them from participating in the election.



Farmers harvest ripe Aman paddy in Khulna and then thresh and dry the crop from dawn to dusk, filling the air with the scent of fresh rice. The newly harvested grain is used to make pitha and payesh during the traditional Nabanna festival. The photo was taken at Gangarampur village in Batiaghata upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

JCD leader stabbed to death during BNP clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist was stabbed to death during a clash between two BNP groups in Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram on Wednesday evening over what police described as a trivial issue.

The victim, Mohammad Tahmid Ullah, 19, of East Hinguli union under Baroiarhat municipality, was a Class 9 madrasa student, police said.

Jorarganj Police Station OC Kazi Nazmul Haque said the clash began when an activist placed his foot on a chair during a local arbitration meeting.

Tahmid was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, where he died around 1:00am yesterday, he said, adding that police are investigating.

However, Didarul Alam Miaz, former president of BNP Baroiarhat municipality unit, claimed the incident was not political but a personal dispute. He said Tahmid had recently joined JCD.

Miaz said a Swechasebak Dal leader, Abdullah Al Jubair, had placed his feet on a chair at Baroiarhat Bazar, prompting a rebuke from Nazrul Islam Liton. The altercation later escalated into a clash between the two groups, during which Tahmid was stabbed.



PHOTO: STAR

7 UPAZILAS IN BANDARBAN

60 sawmills operating without DoE clearance

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Nearly 60 sawmills across the seven upazilas of Bandarban have been operating without any environmental clearance from the Department of Environment, according to the official record of DoE.

There are a total of 81 sawmills in the district. Of those, 36 are entirely illegal, while about 20-25 have been provided environmental clearance. Investigation is still pending for the remaining mills, according to DoE sources.

Although many mills hold licences from the Forest Department, at least 31 have not renewed their documents for years.

"Around 20-25 mills that have environmental clearance are all new mills, but the oldest mills do not have a single valid environmental certificate," said Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, assistant director at the DoE's Bandarban office.

Under the Sawmill Establishment and Operation Rules 2012, mills cannot be set up within 5-10 kilometres of any residential areas, government offices, courts, hospitals, health centres, educational or religious institutions, or other environmentally sensitive areas. "Otherwise, the licence will be treated

as cancelled," he added.

Residents, however, say sawmills have been set up near residential clusters, educational institutions, reserve forests, and religious establishments, causing continuous noise and dust pollution, and disrupting their daily lives.

Three forest divisions are responsible for forest protection in the district: the Bandarban Division, the Bandarban Pulpwood Division, and the Lama Forest Division.



The Bandarban Division and Pulpwood Division cover Bandarban Sadar, Ruma, Rowangchhari, and Thanchi upazilas, while the Lama Division covers Lama, Alikadam, and Naikhyangchhari.

According to Bandarban Forest Division data, the division has 13 sawmills, of which only four are legal. The Pulpwood Forest Division reported eight sawmills under its jurisdiction -- all of which are legal. Lama Forest Division data shows

there are a total of 60 mills, of which 28 are legal. However, DoE officials say most of the sawmills across the district are illegal due to the absence of environmental clearance.

During visits to Balaghata area and Thanchi upazila, this correspondent found at least seven sawmills running for years without formal approval.

Md Rafiq, president of the Sawmill Owners' Association, said, "We have licences from the Forest Department, and those were renewed this year, but we have not taken any clearance from the DoE."

Most mill owners declined to comment on the legality of their operations. Workers at several mills said they were unaware whether their mills held valid licences.

Mustafizur Rahman, divisional forest officer of Lama Division, said many mill owners in Alikadam and Naikhyangchhari did not obtain licences despite repeated reminders.

"We will soon launch drives against those who fail to renew their licences or obtain clearance," he warned.

DoE Assistant Director Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said notices have already been issued instructing mill owners to follow the rules and obtain environmental approvals.

MORRELGANJ, SHARANKHOLA Locals demand river ambulance as bridge delay drags on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Around four lakh residents of Morrelganj and Sharankhola, on the far side of the Panguchi River in Bagerhat, have urged the authorities to provide telemedicine and river ambulance services until construction of a long-awaited bridge is completed.

A project to build the bridge, meant to connect with the Signboard-Morrelganj-Rayenda-Sharankhola road, was approved between 2021 and 2022 but has yet to see implementation.

Cut off from the mainland in the absence of the bridge, residents have long struggled to reach the district hospital in Bagerhat or Khulna Medical College Hospital during emergencies. Even travelling to Morrelganj Upazila Health Complex becomes difficult when the river turns rough in monsoon.

Ferries and boats are their only means of crossing, often delaying the transport of

critical patients to hospitals on the other side.

"For patients with cardiac issues, pregnant women, elderly patients or those in need of urgent treatment, the delay can be life-threatening. During high tides or late at night, boats stop operating, leaving patients stranded. The services at the local clinic barely cater to their needs," said Sanjib Mollick, a resident of Kontakata in Sharankhola upazila.

"Telemedicine and river ambulance services can save lives of patients stranded at night or during disasters," said Alamin Farazi, a local resident. Contacted, Dr Md Habibur Rahman, deputy civil surgeon of Bagerhat, said, "I can relate to the situation. More than half of the district's population resides across the river. While building a bridge immediately is not possible, we will certainly sit down and discuss what measures can be taken regarding this issue, including the possibility of launching a river ambulance service."



PHOTO: STAR

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 12

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-15	12-30	3-45	5-19	7-00
JAMAAT 5-50	1-15	4-00	5-22	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

University of Asia Pacific UAP
74/A Green Road, Dhaka-1205
Tel: (PABX) (+880-2) 46010626-9, Website: www.uap.ac.bd

Invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Position of Vice Chancellor

The Board of Trustees (BOT) of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) cordially invites **Expression of Interest (EOI)** from qualified academicians for the position of **Vice Chancellor of UAP**. Interested candidates are required to meet the criteria set by Private University Act 2010, Clause 31, Sub-Clause 3 which states that the candidate must have 1st Class or equivalent Graduate and Post Graduate Degree or PhD, and a minimum of 10 years of teaching experience in a recognized University, along with research or administrative experience for a total of 20 years. Such candidates are requested to send their **EoI** via email to vcsearch.botoffice@uap-bd.edu by **December 22, 2025**. Upon receipt of the EoI, the BOT office will provide the candidate with instructions for submitting credentials in a standardized format.

Ctg Wasa workers demonstrate for job regularisation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Daily wage workers of Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) staged a demonstration yesterday, wearing shrouds as they protested a new recruitment circular they claim undermines their long-standing demand for regularisation of their jobs.

Over 100 workers gathered in front of the Wasa main gate around noon, accusing the authorities of attempting to sideline temporary employees despite a pending High Court case involving their employment status.

The demonstrators alleged that Wasa issued a fresh recruitment circular without addressing the fate of more than 150 daily wage workers who have been serving the utility for years.

They termed the move "planned and discriminatory," saying it directly contradicts earlier assurances that existing temporary workers would be regularised before any new appointments.

OTHER DEMANDS

- Adjust current temporary workers against vacant posts before new recruitment
- Suspend or withdraw the new recruitment circular
- Directly recruit current daily wage workers into permanent positions

"We have long been demanding regular posts. We were told that contractual staffers would be adjusted against vacant positions and only then would new posts be advertised," said Mamunur Rashid, one of the protesting workers. "But issuing a new circular while the case is still ongoing is nothing short of defying the High Court."

The protest continued from 2:00pm to 5:00pm, causing significant disruption at the entrance of the Wasa building.

When contacted, Chattogram Wasa Deputy Secretary Nazim Uddin said workers' salaries had already been increased under the new circular and that they had initially accepted the revised structure. "Now they are demanding direct recruitment," he said.

"But under the law, there is no provision to directly appoint those hired on a daily-wage basis," he added.

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, WAPDA Building, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka
Tel: 02223383081 www.bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date time
1.	1193176	PG-1 FY 2025-26	27.11.0000. 304.26 .408.25 date: 09/12/2025	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 268kWp Grid Tied Rooftop Solar PV Net Metering System at Khulna 330 MW CCPP, BPDB, Khulna, Bangladesh on Turn key Basis	30-12-2025 13.00	30-12-2025 14.00	30-12-2025 14.00

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01755575443).

Md. Nanuu Miah
ID No. 1-01304
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka
E-mail: dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৩৯৮(৩)/১১/১২/২৫
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বাংলাদেশ ডাক বিভাগ
পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, পূর্বাঞ্চল, চট্টগ্রাম-৪১০০
pmgctg.bdpost.gov.bd

নথি নং: এম এম-১৫/অচলগাড়ি/ডিরেকশন/২৫ তারিখ: ০৯/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ

অকেজো ঘোষিত মোটরযান/গাড়ী নিলামের বিক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল, পূর্বাঞ্চল, চট্টগ্রাম এর প্রশাসনাধীন (চট্টগ্রাম, রাঙ্গামাটি ও বান্দরবান জেলা) রক্ষিত বিভিন্ন কাটাগারীর স্মি-ইউইলার-২০ (দশটি)টি, মোটরসাইকেল-১২ (বার)টি, কাভার্ড ভ্যান-৫ (পাঁচটি)টি, পিকআপ-৭ (সাতটি)টি, মাইক্রো-১(১)টি, জীপ-২ (দুইটি)টি, বাস-১ (একটি)টি সর্বমোট ৩৮ (আটত্রিশটি)টি মোটরযান "যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সে অবস্থায়" এবং "উহার রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ট্যাক্সটোকেন ও ফিটনেস সনদ যে পর্যন্ত নবায়ন আছে" ভিত্তিতে নিলামে বিক্রয়ের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিক/প্রতিষ্ঠান ও আগ্রহী ক্রেতার নিকট থেকে সরাসরি সিলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আবেদন করা যাবে।

অকেজো ঘোষিত গাড়ীর গুণ নম্বর ও সংখ্যা	গুণ নম্বর: "এ" চট্টগ্রাম জেলায় রক্ষিত ১১ (এগার)টি গাড়ী গুণ নম্বর: "বি" চট্টগ্রাম জেলায় রক্ষিত ৭ (সাত)টি গাড়ী গুণ নম্বর: "সি" চট্টগ্রাম জেলায় রক্ষিত ১২ (বার)টি গাড়ী গুণ নম্বর: "ডি" বান্দরবান জেলায় রক্ষিত ১ (একটি) গাড়ী গুণ নম্বর: "ই" রাঙ্গামাটি জেলায় রক্ষিত ৭ (সাত)টি গাড়ী
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২। দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) যে কোন ডাকঘরে এসিডি-৬৭ এর মাধ্যমে (অর্থনৈতিক কোড-১৪৪১২৯৯)-এ জমা দিয়ে নিম্নলিখিত স্থান হতে অকেজো ঘোষিত গাড়ী ও মোটরসাইকেল এর দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করা যাবে।

ক) পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, আগ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম- ৪১০০।
খ) ডেপুটি পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল কাম সিনিয়র পোস্টমাস্টার, চট্টগ্রাম জিপিও।
গ) ডেপুটি পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেলের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম।
ঘ) ডেপুটি পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেলের কার্যালয়, রাঙ্গামাটি/বান্দরবান বিভাগ।
ঙ) পোস্টমাস্টার, রাঙ্গামাটি/ বান্দরবান প্রধান ডাকঘর।

৩। অকেজো ঘোষিত গাড়ী এবং মোটরসাইকেল এর দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রি, দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়, দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান নিম্নরূপঃ

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির শুরু ও শেষের তারিখ এবং সময়	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র সিডিউল গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
১।	১৪/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ হতে ২৩/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ০৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত	২৪/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ০২.৩০টা পর্যন্ত	পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, পূর্বাঞ্চল, আগ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম।	২৪/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ০২.৩৫টা পর্যন্ত

৪। দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রাদি (রেকর্ডসমূহ) সংযুক্ত করতে হবেঃ

ক) পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল, পূর্বাঞ্চল, চট্টগ্রাম বরাবর পে অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাক্ট।
খ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (এনআইডি)
গ) টিআইএন সনদ (টেক্স আইডেনটিফিকেশন নম্বর)
ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ।

৫। দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী নিম্নরূপঃ

ক) দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় ব্যতিরেকে কোনো দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে না। দরপত্র সিডিউলের ফটোকপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
খ) একই ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান এক বা একাধিক গুণের সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে পারবেন। তবে সিডিউলে অবশ্যই প্রতিটি গুণের মোট উদ্ধৃত দর এবং প্রতিটি গাড়ীর পৃথক উদ্ধৃত দর অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
গ) বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।
ঘ) আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ব্যক্তিকে সিডিউলের বর্ণিত স্থানে রক্ষিত পুরাতন গাড়ী অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরেজমিনে পরিদর্শন করা যাবে। তবে কোন গুণে গাড়ী পরিদর্শনের জন্য কার সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে হবে তা সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।
ঙ) প্রতিটি গুণের ক্ষেত্রে দরদাতা কর্তৃক মোট উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের উপর ৩ শতাংশ (৩%) হারে দরপত্র জামানত/আর্নেস্টম্যানি "পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল, পূর্বাঞ্চল, চট্টগ্রাম" এর অনুকূলে পে অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাক্ট দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
চ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো দরপত্র বাস্তব অথবা গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মুহাম্মদ আবদুল্লাহ
ডেপুটি পোস্টমাস্টার জেনারেল (তদন্ত)
পূর্বাঞ্চল, চট্টগ্রাম- ৪১০০
ও
সদস্য সচিব
অকেজো গাড়ী নিলামে বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে সার্কেল পর্যায় গঠিত কমিটি
ফোনঃ ০২৩৩৩৩২১৭১০
মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১৫-৩০২১২৬

GD-2718

Ukraine hits Russian oil rig in Caspian Sea Says Kyiv; drones over Moscow trigger airspace shutdowns

AGENCIES

Ukrainian aerial drones struck a Russian oil platform in the Caspian Sea for the first time yesterday, halting production at the facility owned by Lukoil, according to an official from Ukraine's Security Service.

The attack on the Filanovsky rig - part of Russia's largest Caspian oil field - is the latest sign that Ukraine is trying to step up its campaign to disrupt Russian oil and gas output, reports Reuters.

At least four drone strikes hit the platform, forcing extraction to stop at more than 20 oil and gas wells, the official said.

Meanwhile, Russia shot down nearly 300 Ukrainian drones overnight, one of Kyiv's largest attempted attacks of the four-year war and a barrage that forced Moscow airports to temporarily close, Russian officials said yesterday.



Mourners grieve as bodies are laid out at a cemetery before burial, following a Myanmar military air strike on a hospital that killed more than 30 people in Mrauk U in western Rakhine state yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Nepal signs pact with Gen Z on reforms, curbing corruption

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepalese officials on Wednesday inked a landmark agreement with representatives of the Gen Z movement, whose September uprising toppled the Himalayan nation's government.

The agreement lays out measures aimed at curbing corruption, strengthening governance and provisions for electoral and constitutional reforms.

It also commits the government to address the demands of families of those killed or wounded during the uprising and adds to the mandate of the commission investigating the events.

The demonstrations on September, initially triggered by anger over a brief government ban on social media, were spearheaded by protesters under the loose "Gen Z" umbrella title. They were fuelled by deeper frustration over economic hardship and corruption.

At a ceremony in the capital Kathmandu, the room clapped as interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki and Bhoj Bikram Thapa, who represented those who were killed or injured during the protest, signed the agreement.

"This is a milestone," Karki said.

US seizes sanctioned oil tanker off Venezuela Says Trump; Caracas condemns 'act of piracy'

REUTERS, Washington

The US has seized a sanctioned oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela, President Donald Trump said on Wednesday, a move that sent oil prices higher and sharply escalated tensions between Washington and Caracas.

"We've just seized a tanker on the coast of Venezuela, large tanker, very large, largest one ever, actually, and other things are happening," said Trump, who has been pressuring Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to step down. Asked what would happen with the oil, Trump said: "We keep it, I guess."

In response, the Venezuelan government in a statement accused the US of "blatant theft" and described the seizure as "an act of international piracy". It said it would denounce the incident before international bodies.

Trump has repeatedly raised



the possibility of US military intervention in Venezuela. The seizure is the first of a Venezuelan oil cargo amid US sanctions that have been in force since 2019. It is also the Trump administration's first known action against a Venezuela-related tanker since he ordered a massive military buildup in the region.

The US has already carried out several strikes against suspected drug vessels.

Meanwhile, Venezuela's Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) committed serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity over more than a decade in targeting political

opponents, often with impunity, a UN Fact-Finding Mission found yesterday.

The independent mission's latest report details GNB involvement in acts that may constitute crimes against humanity, including arbitrary detentions, sexual violence, and torture during protest crackdowns since 2014 under President Nicolas Maduro.

US Attorney General Pam Bondi posted on X that the FBI, Homeland Security and Coast Guard, along with support from the US military, carried out a seizure warrant for a crude tanker used to transport sanctioned oil from Venezuela and Iran.

Bulgarian govt resigns after anti-graft protests

AFP, Sofia

Bulgaria's prime minister announced yesterday that his government was resigning after less than a year in office following a series of anti-graft protests.

Jeliazkov's announcement came just ahead of a vote in parliament on a no-confidence motion against the government that the opposition had filed.

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets across Bulgaria on Wednesday to protest against the government and corruption in the latest rally since the end of last month.

The demonstrations were sparked by a 2026 draft budget, which protesters branded as an attempt to mask rampant corruption. The government withdrew the budget last week, but anger has persisted.

Thailand, Cambodia continue fighting Await call from Trump; death toll rises to 19

AFP, Surin

Fighting raged yesterday along the border of Cambodia and Thailand, with explosions heard near centuries-old temples ahead of US President Donald Trump's planned phone call to the leaders of both nations.

At least 19 people have been killed in the latest round of border fighting that reignited last week, officials said. More than half a million people, mostly in Thailand, have fled border areas near where jets, tanks and drones have waged battle.

The Southeast Asian nations dispute the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre frontier, where both sides claim a smattering of historic temples. "I think I'm scheduled to speak to them tomorrow," Trump told reporters at the White House on Wednesday.

Speaking to journalists yesterday, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said there had been "no coordination" yet with Trump.

"But if there's a call from the US president, we definitely will answer the phone and we will explain to him... He does not have more details of the situation than me," Anutin said.




"This is an issue between two countries. He has good intentions to see peace but we have to explain what the problems are and why it turned out this way," the prime minister added.

Both sides blame the other for reigniting the conflict, which has expanded to five provinces of both Thailand and Cambodia, according to an AFP tally of official accounts.

In Thailand's northeast yesterday morning, hundreds of evacuated families woke inside a university building in Surin city that has been transformed into a shelter.

A few older women pounded chilli paste while volunteers stirred big pots of food. Nearby, 61-year-old farmer Rat said she had to leave her home before she could plant a cassava crop this season, fleeing with her family of eight.

- Move is first known tanker seizure since US build-up began
- Venezuela's GNB committed crimes against humanity: UN report




বাংলাদেশ মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি

ফ্যাকাল্টি অব মেরিটাইম গভর্ন্যান্স এ্যান্ড পলিসি
প্লট নং- ১৪/৬-১৪/২৩, পল্লবী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২১৬

২০২৫-২০২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষে LLM in Maritime Law (০১ বছর) প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি-এর ফ্যাকাল্টি অব মেরিটাইম গভর্ন্যান্স এ্যান্ড পলিসি এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত মেরিটাইম ল' এন্ড পলিসি বিভাগে LLM in Maritime Law প্রোগ্রামে ২০২৫-২০২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ভর্তিচ্ছুক বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে নির্ধারিত ফরমে অনলাইনে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। যে সকল শিক্ষার্থী বাংলাদেশ/অন্য কোন দেশের স্বীকৃত কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে LLB Degree অর্জন করেছেন সেসকল শিক্ষার্থী ২০২৫-২০২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষে নির্ধারিত শর্ত পূরণ সাপেক্ষে ভর্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

প্রোগ্রাম-এর নাম	LLM in Maritime Law
প্রোগ্রাম-এর মেয়াদ	০১ বছর (২ সেমিস্টার)।
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	(ক) LLB Degree (খ) Minimum CGPA 2.5 Out of 4.00
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পদ্ধতি	(ক) সময় -৯০ মিনিট এবং পূর্ণমান-১০০। (খ) পরীক্ষার পদ্ধতি-নৈব্যক্তিক। (গ) প্রতিটি ভুল উত্তরের জন্য ০.২৫ করে নাখার কাটা যাবে।
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার বিষয়সমূহ ও নম্বর বন্টন	English -40 Analytical Ability -20 Critical Reasoning - 20 General Knowledge -20
গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তারিখসমূহ	(ক) অনলাইনে আবেদনের সময়সীমা : ১৮ ডিসেম্বর-২০২৫ থেকে ১৫ জানুয়ারি-২০২৬ (খ) Admit card উত্তোলন : ১৬ জানুয়ারি-২০২৬ থেকে ১৯ জানুয়ারি-২০২৬ (গ) লিখিত পরীক্ষা : ২০ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ (ঘ) ভাইবা তারিখ : ২০ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ (ঙ) ক্লাস আরম্ভ (সম্ভাব্য) : ১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬
আবেদন ফি	আবেদন ফি 1000/- (প্রেসেসিং ফি সহ টাকা এক হাজার মাত্র)। নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফি মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং (নগদ/বিকাশ/রকেট/মাই ক্যাশ/ টি-ক্যাশ ইত্যাদি) এবং ডেবিট/ক্রেডিট কার্ড (VISA, Master Card) এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করা যাবে।
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার কেন্দ্র	বাংলাদেশ মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি 'পদ্মা ভবন'।
প্রোগ্রাম সম্পর্কিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ	০১৭৫১-২১১২২২ (সহকারী অধ্যাপক, এলএলবি)
অনলাইনে আবেদন সংক্রান্ত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ	০১৭৬৯৭২১০১৫ (প্রোগ্রামার, বিএমইউ), ই-মেইল : mastersadmission@bmu.edu.bd
ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ	০১৭১৫১৪২৪৯৬ (প্রভাষক); ওয়েবসাইট applyonline.bmu.edu.bd -এ ভর্তি সম্পর্কে যাবতীয় তথ্যাদি দেওয়া আছে।
বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্য	প্রোগ্রাম ও ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত তথ্যের জন্য মোবাইল নম্বরসমূহ সকাল ৯:০০ টাকা থেকে বিকাল ৫:০০ টা পর্যন্ত খোলা থাকবে।



কিশোরগঞ্জ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

কিশোরগঞ্জ-২৩০০
বাংলাদেশ।

স্মারক নং-কিবি/জনবল/শিক্ষক/২০২৫/৭৪৯
তারিখ ২৬ অগ্রহায়ণ, ১৪৩২ বাল্ম
১১ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৫ খ্রি.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কিশোরগঞ্জ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় নিম্নোক্ত পদগুলো পূরণের নিমিত্ত বর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম	বিভাগ	পদের নাম	পদসংখ্যা ও বেতন স্কেল	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতার তথ্য ও নির্দেশনাবলী
০১.	ইংরেজি বিভাগ	সহকারী অধ্যাপক	১টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/- (৬ষ্ঠ গ্রেড)	আবেদনকারীকে jobs.kiu.ac.bd ওয়েবসাইটে গিয়ে ইমেইল দিয়ে অ্যাকাউন্ট তৈরি করে অনলাইনে আবেদন সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। আবেদনের প্রয়োজনীয় সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য তথ্য jobs.kiu.ac.bd/qualifications-announcements?type=eligibility লিঙ্কে গিয়ে পাওয়া যাবে। এছাড়াও আবেদন করার নির্দেশিকা jobs.kiu.ac.bd/uploads/user_guideline.pdf লিঙ্কে পাওয়া যাবে।
		প্রভাষক	২টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (৯ম গ্রেড) * ২ টি পদের মধ্যে ১ টি স্থায়ী প্রভাষক পদ এবং সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে নিয়োগ লাভের ফলে তাৎক্ষণিক সৃষ্ট শূন্য পদের স্থলে একজন প্রভাষক নিয়োগ করা হবে।	
০২.	গণিত বিভাগ	সহকারী অধ্যাপক	১টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/- (৬ষ্ঠ গ্রেড)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল কাগজপত্রের Scanned কপি ও আবেদন ফি প্রদান করে ১২.১২.২৫ খ্রি. তারিখ থেকে ০১.০১.২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ রাত ১১:৫৯ মিনিটের মধ্যে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। সংযুক্ত করতে হবে: (ক) সকল শিক্ষাগত সনদ, নম্বরপত্র, অভিজ্ঞতা (যদি থাকে), প্রকাশনা ও অন্যান্য নথির তথ্য (খ) স্বাক্ষর ও সাদা তোলা ছবি (গ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (ঘ) চাকরির তথ্য প্রার্থীদের অনুমতিপত্র
		প্রভাষক	১টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (৯ম গ্রেড) * সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে নিয়োগ লাভের ফলে তাৎক্ষণিক সৃষ্ট শূন্য পদের স্থলে একজন প্রভাষক নিয়োগ করা হবে।	
০৩.	কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স অ্যান্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ	সহকারী অধ্যাপক	১টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/- (৬ষ্ঠ গ্রেড)	প্রয়োজনীয় সকল কাগজপত্রের মূল কপি সঙ্গে আনতে হবে। অসম্পূর্ণ, ক্রটিপূর্ণ বা ভুল তথ্য সহায়িত আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সকল বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।
		প্রভাষক	৩টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেল: ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (৯ম গ্রেড) * ৩টি পদের মধ্যে ২ টি স্থায়ী প্রভাষক পদ এবং সহকারী অধ্যাপক পদে নিয়োগ লাভের ফলে তাৎক্ষণিক সৃষ্ট শূন্য পদের স্থলে একজন প্রভাষক নিয়োগ করা হবে।	

দ্রষ্টব্য:

- আবেদন ফি ১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
- যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের আডমিট কার্ড পোর্টালে এবং লগইন ইমেইলে পাওয়া যাবে।
- পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোনো প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।
- সাক্ষাৎকারের সময় সকল কাগজপত্রের মূল কপি সঙ্গে আনতে হবে।
- অসম্পূর্ণ, ক্রটিপূর্ণ বা ভুল তথ্য সহায়িত আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সকল বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।

রেজিস্ট্রার
কিশোরগঞ্জ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

We must not leave the economy on autopilot

Economy remains at a critical point despite some stability

The interim government has stopped the economic bleeding, but now the nation faces a nervous wait for a turnaround after the February election. Having navigated a period of acute political upheaval, the economy has regained a semblance of stability, yet it now stands at a perilous crossroads, according to a candid report from the General Economics Division (GED). Economists warn that the risk is not immediate collapse but stagnation. The diagnosis was reinforced by the Asian Development Bank, which cut its growth forecast for the current fiscal year to 4.7 percent, down from an earlier optimism of 5.1 percent. The downgrade is particularly stinging given the neighbourhood context: while Bangladesh stalls, the outlooks for Pakistan and Sri Lanka are improving.

The vulnerabilities cited by the GED are symptomatic of an economy caught in a bind. Investment is subdued amid uncertainty ahead of the national election. Private sector credit growth has slumped to 6.23 percent, the slowest pace in at least 20 years. Businesses are effectively sitting on their hands, spooked by high borrowing costs and political jitters. Although foreign exchange reserves have stabilised, the broader outlook remains dismal. As an economist observes, while the situation has not collapsed, the "negative basket outweighs the positive."

Nowhere is this clearer than in the export sector, the engine of Bangladesh's historic rise. Government officials speak of modernising the Chattogram port, but the reality on the ground has been less rosy. A major strike at the port in October, which handles over 90 percent of the country's trade, severely disrupted supply chains. At the same time, Bangladesh saw an anaemic export growth of just 0.62 percent year-on-year in the July-November period. A question remains: will reliance on the ready-made garment sector provide sufficient insulation against domestic disruptions and global headwinds?

The central dilemma is a classic policy bind. To curb inflation, the central bank has maintained high policy rates. This is orthodox and necessary. Yet, as noted by Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, high rates are feeding a "vicious cycle." The cost of capital is high, but the "cost of doing business"—a euphemism for governance failures—is higher still. With entrepreneurs squeezed at both ends and the political sky overcast, investment appetite has evaporated. Without structural reforms to reduce corruption and streamline bureaucracy, monetary tightening merely strangles growth without fully curing the inflationary disease.

The era of autopilot growth is over. For years during the past regime, GDP figures were massaged while revenue collection withered. The post-election period will determine whether the economy can truly reset. The new government must not view reforms as mere technical exercises designed to flatter statistics. Without rapid structural changes and a robust effort to mobilise domestic revenue, Bangladesh risks sliding into a debt trap. This is an unsustainable path: unless the state can generate the resources to fund its own recovery, today's stagnation could calcify into a permanent crisis. Bangladesh has a genuine opportunity to re-accelerate the economy, and we must not squander it.

Climate migrants need urgent state action

Address internal displacement through coordinated response

Bangladesh's escalating internal displacement crisis can no longer be treated as a series of isolated shocks. The first comprehensive nationwide estimate by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reveals that nearly 50 lakh people are currently living as internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to natural disasters. The scale alone is staggering. Chattogram Division hosts 12 lakh IDPs, followed by Dhaka with 7.9 lakh and Rajshahi with 6.6 lakh. Four districts—Chattogram, Sirajganj, Bhola, and Noakhali—account for a quarter of all displaced people. Most of them, around 85 percent, remain in rural union areas, struggling with prolonged uncertainty as floods, cyclones, and river erosion continue to uproot lives.

The findings also reveal that two in three IDPs were displaced before April 2020, signalling years of unresolved displacement that have effectively turned temporary crises into chronic living conditions. The updated estimate—based on thousands of field visits and over 29,000 interviews—provides a clearer picture of a long-neglected issue. It also validates what communities, particularly those in coastal and riverbank regions, have been warning for years: that recurrent disasters are outpacing both local coping capacities and state mechanisms meant to support them. The persistence of long-term displacement indicates policy gaps in relocation planning, social protection support, and climate adaptation initiatives.

What is evident is that Bangladesh cannot rely on piecemeal interventions. River erosion alone continues to erase entire villages, while cyclones and seasonal flooding push families into repeated cycles of loss. Without comprehensive planning, displaced communities face unstable shelter, shrinking livelihoods, and limited access to services. Government representatives have acknowledged the significance of the new estimate and its role in improving the implementation of the National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management. But acknowledgement must now translate into coordinated action—not only between ministries responsible for disaster management, land, and social protection, but also across local government bodies charged with tracking and supporting displaced populations.

The government must accelerate the integration of IDP data into national planning systems and ensure that relocation initiatives are safe, humane, and sustainable. Stronger social protection schemes, climate-resilient housing programmes, and long-term livelihood support are essential if displacement is to be managed rather than merely recorded. Development partners must also align their efforts with national frameworks to avoid duplication and ensure resources reach the most vulnerable. With nearly 50 lakh people already displaced, and many more at risk as climate impacts intensify, Bangladesh needs decisive, well-coordinated action to protect communities whose lives have been reshaped by disaster.

Bangladesh needs more dynamic Islamic discourse

We protest what the university teacher said



THE THIRD VIEW

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MAHFUZ ANAM

Recently, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Roquiah Sakhawat Hossein, popularly called Begum Rokeya, a university teacher of physics—one of the most advanced and vital subjects of modern education—has reportedly referred to her as a "murtad" and "kafir." Begum Rokeya (1880-1932), a pioneer of Bangalee Muslim women's education, transformed the lives of Muslim women in South Asia, especially in Bengal. She was instrumental in helping them become more knowledgeable and skilled in every aspect of their lives. Her work revolutionised the intellectual, social, and educational landscape of Bangalee Muslim women at a time when illiteracy, exploitation, and poverty dominated their lives.

In 1916, she founded the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School in Patna, which later moved to Kolkata. It became one of the earliest and most effective institutions of modern education for Muslim girls. She worked tirelessly to ensure access to English and science education for girls. In *Sultana's Dream* (1905), she envisioned a world where women led and men followed. Not that she ever advocated female domination of men, but her point was to make men aware of the oppressive conditions in which women lived. In her essays, including "Stri Jatir Abanati," she highlighted the deeply suppressed world of women. She advocated for their legal and social rights, opposed child marriage, and compelled reformers to rethink gender roles in society. She founded a women's organisation called Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam. She believed that Islam permits rationalism and women's empowerment.

So, despite all that, why would a university teacher—whose name I am deliberately omitting to keep this from becoming personal—condemn her as a "kafir" and "murtad"?

Every writer, scholar, or social reformer can be subject to divergent and critical views. In fact, throughout history, they have been debated, questioned, or reinterpreted in light of changing social contexts. But shouldn't an attack on an intellectual icon be based on facts and logic? Can anyone simply castigate another using terms that carry deep significance for Muslims in general? In another Facebook post, the teacher also wrote: "No Muslim can take a position that would put their faith in question and raise allegations of being involved in kufur. I am talking about democracy, socialism, feminism, and Lalonism." (Translation ours.) So, this teacher, whose salary is paid by

taxpayers, considers "democracy" to be "kufur" and Begum Rokeya to be a "murtad" and "kafir"! What kind of education he is imparting to the younger generation is a question that we cannot avoid.

Begum Rokeya led a deeply pious life, full of respect for Islam and its values. Never did she write anything remotely against the religion she loved. In all the years since she died, no Islamic scholar has used such derogatory terms against her. In fact, she saw all her social activism as part of her duty as a Muslim to support her coreligionists.

I am not an Islamic scholar, but merely an ardent learner. So while writing this piece, I conducted some internet searches and spoke to several people. Below are some relevant



FILE VISUAL: AMREETA LETHE

findings that I wish to share here.

There are many world-renowned Muslim women scholars who have spent years researching fundamental issues relating to Islam and women that are of vital importance to our society. Many of us probably don't know much about them or their work. For example, Asma Barlas, an American-Pakistani scholar, is known for her groundbreaking work on women's rights—*Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*—in which she argues that patriarchal readings of the Qur'an are historically constructed and not divinely mandated. She emphasises "justice" as the core basis of all Islamic values.

Fatema Mernissi of Morocco, a scholar of Hadith, revolutionised Islamic understanding of women's issues, highlighting politically motivated

findings that I wish to share here. Patriarchal cultural norms took root, and women's voices in religious interpretation declined, a stark contrast to the time of the Prophet (PBUH).

Much later, in the 19th century, Jamaluddin Afghani, Muhammad Abdur and Qasim Amin argued that Islam inherently supports women's rights, laying philosophical foundations for later scholarship emphasising women's rights.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesian Muslim women scholars have played a transformative role in shaping debates on gender, religion, and social reform. They argue that while the Qur'an is a Revealed Book, its interpretation has long been controlled by men, creating challenges for women. They promote *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in understanding the Qur'an, arguing

from various countries have made significant contributions to this field.

Today, the political use—and misuse—of Islam, combined with widespread misinformation and distorted interpretations, have made unverified claims commonplace. The rise of social media preachers, unqualified "scholarly" lectures, and political activists using religion for influence is a new reality. This makes genuine Islamic scholarship more urgent than ever. Selective quoting, often taken out of context, has left us all vulnerable in different ways. Because we take pride in our religion and seek to live by it, its misuse and distortion make it imperative that we nurture authentic scholarship and follow the global trend of rigorous, research-based study of Islam.

We cannot allow teachers such as the one mentioned at the outset to shape our understanding of religions.

Harnessing faith to protect environment

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MEZBAH UDDIN AHMED and
NM BAKI BILLAH

The recent tremors in Bangladesh have reminded us of an uncomfortable truth that we remain profoundly vulnerable to forces beyond human control. Although this time the quakes caused no significant destruction, they raised concerns about the potential for a more severe one with dire consequences. But a less dramatic, far more enduring threat continues to unfold around us: the accelerating deterioration of the environment.

Unlike an earthquake, environmental deterioration unfolds gradually and attracts far less attention despite its lasting consequences. In a recent study titled "The Future Climate of Bangladesh," the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, together with the Norwegian Meteorological Institute, predicted that Bangladesh is likely to experience more intense heatwaves and heavier monsoon rainfall in the coming decades. The average temperature is projected to rise by 1-2 degrees Celsius by mid-century and by 1.5-4.5 degrees Celsius by 2100. Winter

may nearly disappear, reduced to a brief cold spell lasting only a day or two in many parts of the country. Monsoon rainfall is expected to increase by up to 15 percent, particularly in the northern districts. These changes will intensify flooding and heat stress, posing serious threats across various sectors and further worsening pre-existing vulnerabilities. Agriculture, water resources, climate-sensitive livelihoods, public health, social well-being, and the broader economy are all at heightened risk. Combined with worsening air pollution, the environmental risks facing Bangladesh are undeniably alarming.

This vulnerability did not emerge in isolation. It is the cumulative outcome of countless economic, behavioural, and ethical choices, each carrying profound implications for a densely populated nation like ours. Beneath these choices lies an economic logic rooted in self-interest, as humans tend to prioritise short-term personal satisfaction even when such decisions jeopardise the future. These impulses, resulting in irrational and excessive use of resources, have pushed the planet towards severe and, in some cases, irreversible environmental degradation. These tendencies are evident worldwide, and Bangladesh is no exception.

In this moment of reckoning, Islamic economics offers an ethical lens that is profoundly relevant, especially for a Muslim-majority nation like

Bangladesh. In this moral economy, doing good for others becomes a form of enlightened self-interest, as divine rewards are promised for acts of generosity. If properly channelled, this can transform social responsibility from a voluntary virtue into both a moral obligation and a practical pathway towards collective well-being. Islamic teachings also articulate a hierarchy of needs—necessities, complementary needs, and refinements—mirroring contemporary resource economics by urging societies to prioritise essential uses over extravagant or discretionary consumption. These values also resonate with modern sustainability principles.

Together, these foundations form a coherent economic ethos that Bangladesh can embed in its development pathway. Encouragingly, several Muslim-majority nations are already demonstrating how Islamic finance can support environmental sustainability. Malaysia's Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) Sukuk Framework directs investment towards projects aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including initiatives such as green building development, afforestation programmes, and low-carbon transportation systems.

Oman is harnessing waqf resources to install solar systems that help mosques operate as energy-efficient buildings. Indonesia has pioneered

green sukuk to fund renewable energy, watershed protection, and overall infrastructure requirements for climate adaptation. Its Eco-Mosque programme promotes solar power and sustainable waste management systems. In fact, the Indonesian Ulama Council has issued a fatwa declaring any human activity that degrades natural ecosystems or worsens the climate crisis as haram (prohibited). Across the UAE, anti-food-waste campaigns draw directly on Quranic guidance, while Jordan and Saudi Arabia have revived the traditional "hima" system for nature conservation. Zakat institutions in several countries now regularly allocate funds for climate adaptation and disaster resilience. These examples demonstrate that Islamic values can be effectively translated into policy, community action, and financial innovation, providing a coherent framework for sustainability grounded in faith.

While we cannot control tectonic plates, a renewed awakening to religion-guided ethical values can help reshape economic behaviour in ways that protect both society and the environment. That said, no system, Islamic or otherwise, can succeed without collective commitment. With greater awareness, shared responsibility, and positive social encouragement, our collective willingness to act can become a powerful force for meaningful change.

Antimicrobial resistance threatens to collapse our health system



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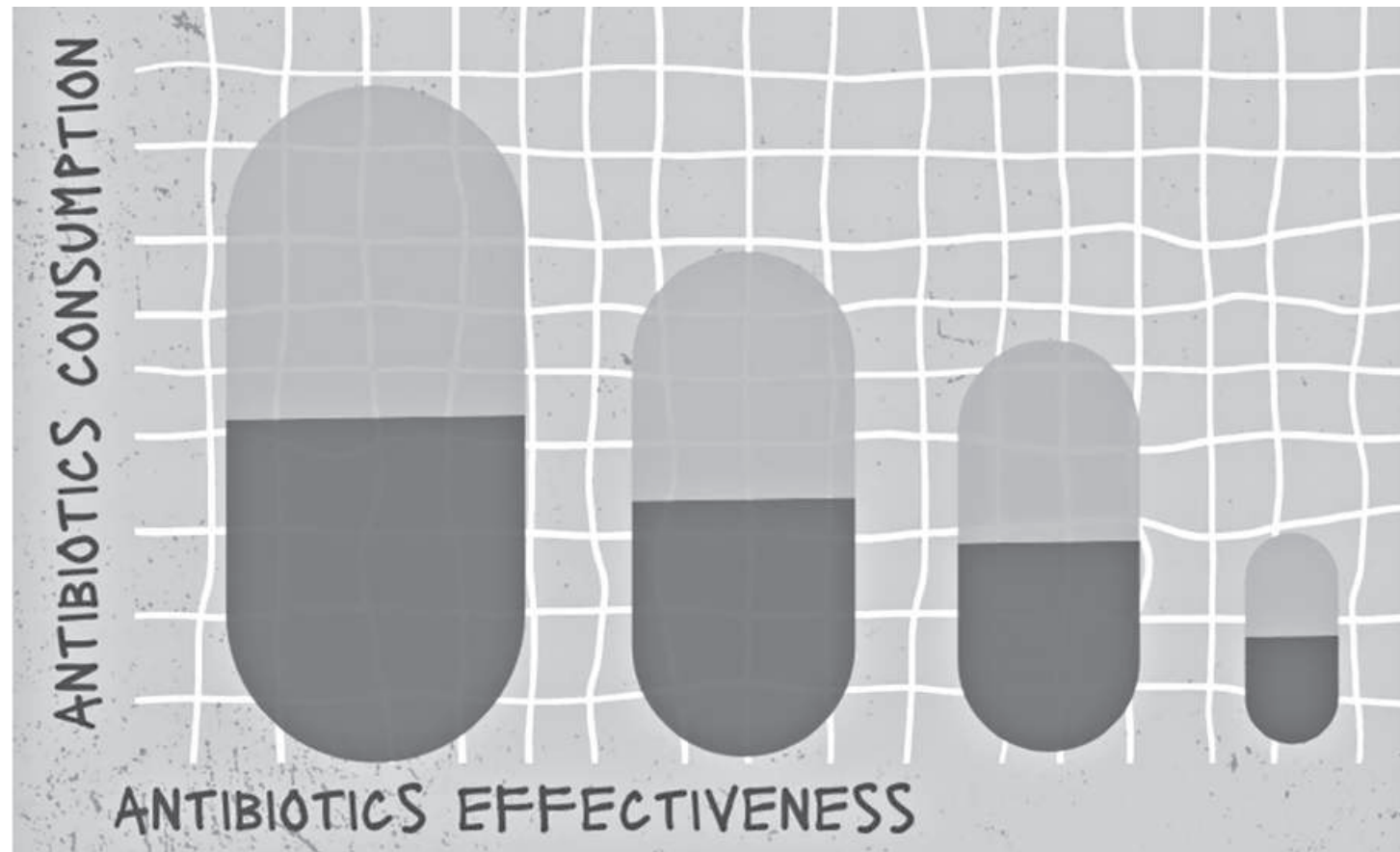
SYED ABDUL HAMID

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is no longer a distant threat; it is an unfolding national catastrophe already claiming lives inside our hospitals. Newly released data from the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) exposes the extent of this crisis with chilling clarity. Four in every ten patients admitted to intensive care units (ICUs) are no longer responding to available antibiotics. This single statistic signals a full-scale collapse of our ability to treat infections that should be curable. Many patients who survive traumatic injuries, major surgeries, or life-threatening conditions are dying from infections that antibiotics can no longer control. What was once the cornerstone of modern medicine is crumbling before our eyes.

The situation becomes even more alarming when examining resistance trends to critical antibiotics. Meropenem—one of the most powerful drugs reserved for severe infections—has seen resistance rates jump from 46.7 percent in 2022 to an astonishing 71 percent in 2025. Several other essential antibiotics now face resistance levels between 79 and 97 percent. These medicines represent our last line of defence, and they are rapidly losing their potency. Compounding this crisis is the surge in the use of WHO-classified “watch-group” antibiotics, which should be used sparingly. Their usage has escalated to 91 percent this

People routinely purchase antibiotics without prescriptions, take incorrect doses, or stop midway when symptoms subside. Each incomplete course allows the strongest bacteria to survive and multiply, ensuring that the same drug will not work again. The ease with which antibiotics can be bought over the counter creates the perfect breeding ground for resistance.

year, up from 77 percent the year before. This heavy dependence is accelerating resistance even further, leaving us with dwindling



FILE VISUAL: AFIA JAHIN

options and fragile reserves of once-reliable drugs.

Although the ICU data is the most dramatic, AMR’s impact spreads far beyond hospital walls. Globally, drug-resistant infections directly caused 1.27 million deaths in 2019 and were linked to nearly five million deaths. The trajectory is even more frightening: by 2050, AMR could kill 10 million people annually—surpassing cancer and overwhelming global health systems. The economic toll is equally devastating. The World Bank warns that AMR could strip \$1 trillion to \$3.4 trillion from the global GDP every year by 2030, driven by longer hospital stays, rising treatment costs, reduced labour productivity, and disruptions in agriculture and food production. Without urgent intervention, AMR could erase decades of medical and economic progress.

This crisis is pushing us dangerously close to a pre-antibiotic era, when infections were the leading cause of death and routine medical procedures carried enormous risks. Organ transplants, cancer chemotherapy, intensive care, and even simple Caesarean sections depend on effective antibiotics to manage secondary infections. If these drugs fail, many of today’s life-saving procedures will become too dangerous to perform.

Even trained doctors sometimes prescribe antibiotics without proper diagnostic justification, while unregistered healthcare providers prescribe indiscriminately. The IEDCR has repeatedly emphasised the need for culture and sensitivity tests before prescribing antibiotics, but this essential step is still not universally practised. The culture of “prescribing first and investigating later” is fuelling resistance

populations, creating a vicious, unending cycle. Meanwhile, the pharmaceutical industry faces little incentive to develop new antibiotics. These drugs are costly to produce but generate low profits compared to long-term treatments for chronic diseases. As a result, the pipeline for new antibiotics has slowed to a trickle just when we desperately need innovative solutions.

Addressing AMR demands urgent, aggressive, and coordinated action across all sectors. Regulation must be strengthened immediately to end unauthorised antibiotic sales and ensure prescriptions are based on proper diagnostic practices. Hospitals must implement strong, well-monitored antibiotic stewardship programmes (strategies for prescribing and administering antimicrobials) and enforce infection control strictly, treating stewardship as a core institutional priority rather than an optional guideline. Governments and global health organisations must intervene to address the market failure in antibiotic research by incentivising investment in new drugs, rapid diagnostic tools, and vaccines that reduce reliance on antibiotics.

From a One Health perspective, antibiotic use in agriculture must be tightly regulated. Alternatives to antibiotics for growth promotion should be mandated, and strict oversight is necessary to prevent environmental contamination from pharmaceutical manufacturing. Without addressing the animal and environmental dimensions of AMR, human health interventions alone will fail. Equally important is public education. A sustained national awareness campaign is essential to communicate clear, consistent messages: antibiotics do not cure viral infections; self-medication is dangerous; and completing the full course of prescribed antibiotics is mandatory. Changing public behaviour is critical because misuse at the community level is one of the primary drivers of resistance.

The rise of AMR is not an unavoidable twist in microbial evolution; it is a direct consequence of human negligence, weak regulation, medical shortcuts, and system-wide complacency. The warning signs are everywhere, and the data is undeniable. Four in ten critical patients in our ICUs are already losing the fight against infections that should be treatable. If we continue on this trajectory, we will enter a post-antibiotic world where minor injuries become life-threatening and modern medicine becomes a gamble.

Antibiotics are not infinite commodities; they are fragile, irreplaceable resources. We must protect them with the seriousness they deserve. The window for decisive action is closing rapidly, and the cost of inaction will be measured in lives lost, economic devastation, and the collapse of medical systems we once believed were unshakable.

The medical system we rely upon—built on the confidence that antibiotics can control infections—is being dismantled one resistant organism at a time.

The tragedy is that AMR is overwhelmingly man-made. Its drivers are fully within our ability to control, yet remain neglected across the entire health ecosystem. At the community level, self-medication continues unabated. People routinely purchase antibiotics without prescriptions, take incorrect doses, or stop midway when symptoms subside. Each incomplete course allows the strongest bacteria to survive and multiply, ensuring that the same drug will not work again. The ease with which antibiotics can be bought over the counter creates the perfect breeding ground for resistance.

The medical system itself is not blameless.

at a terrifying pace. Inside hospitals, poor infection prevention and control practices allow drug-resistant microbes to spread, turning healthcare facilities into hotspots for resistant infections.

The crisis expands further when viewed through a “One Health lens”—looking at health problems through an integrated approach recognising the connection among human, animal and environmental health. Antibiotics are widely misused in agriculture and livestock production to promote growth and prevent disease, resulting in resistant bacteria entering the food chain and environment. Pharmaceutical waste, often released untreated into water bodies, further contaminates ecosystems with antibiotic residues and resistant organisms. These environmental reservoirs continually feed resistance back into human

How remittances can be reframed for shared community development



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LUTFUL KABIR

Millions of Bangladeshi migrants living abroad send money home. This transfer for their left-behind families reflects the love and obligation that ripple through villages and towns, supporting livelihoods and boosting income. Although billions of dollars of remittances enter the country through the formal banking system, one question remains: what do these remittances really build beyond the front gate of a family home?

For most of these households, remittances are a lifeline. This is considered a private transfer by migrants to their families, to assist payments for food, rent, medical care, school fees, and other day-to-day necessities. While these outcomes may appear promising at the household level, their impact tends to lose its lustre when examined through a broader socio-economic lens. Research shows that most remittances often fuel conspicuous consumption rather than long-term investment and savings. In a 2014 survey, Bangladesh Bank found that 55.6 percent is spent on different types of expenditure, of which 33 percent was spent on food alone. The pattern is understandable. The country’s migrants are mostly low- or semi-skilled, working in construction sites, agricultural plants, or in domestic service across the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Moreover, higher migration costs, combined with shorter durations or less secure employment, are common in destination areas. The precarious migration process often leads to indebtedness, which erodes the capital and production capabilities of the households left behind. So, this seems to be a paradox of progress. The country’s

foreign exchange increases, yet remittances rarely contribute to empowerment and sustainable community development. Much of the money circulates in what economists call “consumption loops,” money in, money out, leaving little lasting trace.

Remittances are a private fund; they cannot replace public spending to create jobs, strengthen local economies, or improve community infrastructure. Let us envision this system through a different lens. What if a tiny slice of each remittance, say, fifty cents per remittance transaction (without reducing the remitted amount received by families), could be redirected into a national fund for community development? Half a dollar may sound trivial, but when considered alongside aggregated remittance flows, it could represent a powerful opportunity. Last year, the country received a total of \$30 billion in remittances. Now, imagine what a slice of fifty cents could produce in terms of resources and opportunities if we could manage both the fund and its utilisation properly.

However, this calculation is not straightforward, as remittances are processed on a per-transaction basis. Therefore, it is important to know the average amount sent per transaction, but Bangladesh Bank does not publish transaction-level remittance data, which limits the precision of any estimation. Therefore, for the estimation of per-transaction remittance transfers, I rely on empirical data from IOM and ILO studies that show that migrants send money home three to four times a year, with an average total of \$1200. This \$300 average

benchmark per transaction is actually very similar internationally. The World Bank’s Remittance Price Worldwide (RPW) methodology uses \$200 and \$500 as global reference amounts for small and medium-sized remittance transfers, allowing for consistent comparison of transfer costs across countries. Let’s use \$250 as a conservative midpoint and divide the total remittances (\$30 billion) Bangladesh

received by the average transaction amount (\$250). The result will give an estimated 120 million remittance transactions per year. Now imagine, if just 50 cents from each transfer were voluntarily allocated to this development fund, it would generate nearly \$60 million annually (120 million x 0.5 cents), which is equivalent to around Tk 700 crore to Tk 750 crore. If the contribution were set at 1 dollar, that amount would simply double. And this can further reinforce the transformative potential of remittance-driven development and investment in the rural economy.



FILE VISUAL: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

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This kind of model is not new; a

forging partnerships between diaspora associations and local councils to co-finance development projects. Bangladesh, too, is not starting from zero. Like the Philippines’ Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Bangladesh already operates a worker-contribution mechanism through the Wage Earners’ Welfare Board under the Wage Earners’ Welfare Board Act, 2018.

Moreover, the current 2.5 percent cash incentive has significantly boosted remittance inflows through formal banking channels. As a result, commercial and private banks have enjoyed higher transaction volumes and profits, benefiting both from government

incentives and transaction fees from global remittance providers such as Western Union and MoneyGram. Within this ecosystem, a modest contribution of 50 cents or even one dollar per remittance transaction would hardly affect profitability. Crucially, it could also change how migrants feel about sending money home. When workers from abroad see that even a fraction of their hard-earned income is building schools, training centres, or health facilities in their own villages, it could foster a sense of ownership and pride. That trust can, in turn, encourage more migrants to remit through formal banking channels for expanding both national reserves and community investment.

Strengthening confidence in formal systems and linking remittances to visible community outcomes could amplify a natural solidarity effect. The purpose of this proposed fund would be clear: converting short-term household consumption into long-term social and economic investment. It could support returnee migrants facing debt and unemployment, offer business start-up grants and psychosocial support, and finance training for aspiring workers to move into higher-value occupations abroad. It could also build rural infrastructure, including roads, and build climate resilience and clean water systems that migrant families rely on.

Of course, the key lies in trust. Migrants must believe that their 50 cents or \$1 will not be swallowed up by bureaucracy. A transparent system needs to demonstrate where every dollar goes—every school built, and community initiatives are launched. Only this could help build that confidence. Trust can be strengthened by establishing an accountable mechanism with multi-stakeholder oversight complemented by a public digital dashboard and an annual independent audit. Most importantly, such a mechanism could provide a financial foundation for the effective implementation of the updated National Reintegration Policy for Migrants 2025, turning policy intent into measurable outcomes.

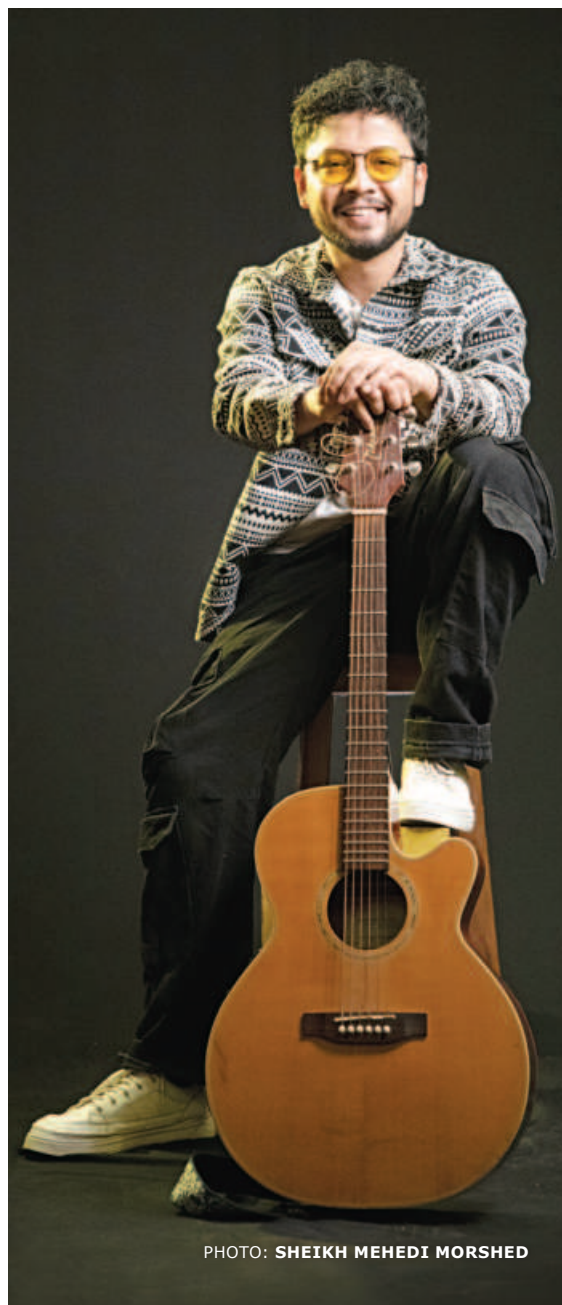


PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

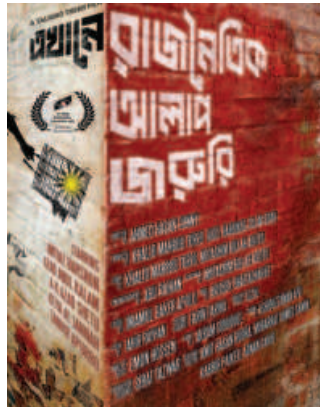
‘Ekhan Rajnoitik Alap Joruri’: Sunny’s bold political statement

DOWEL BISWAS

Ahmed Hasan Sunny built his reputation through music — with tracks like *Shohoror Duita Gaan*, *Amra Hoyto*, *Manush Keno Erokam*, and *Kemne Ki* — but he has always insisted cinema was his first language.

This December, he steps into public view as a filmmaker with his debut feature, *Ekhan Rajnoitik Alap Joruri*, releasing on December 26. The film unfolds against the tremors of the 2024 student-public uprising, stretching across multiple generations of political unrest.

Sunny traces the impulse back to a much earlier moment: watching *Ora II Jon*. Long before his songs found an audience, he was making short films and commercials, learning by trial and repetition. A feature, he says, demanded a different posture. “A feature film is a whole other responsibility,” he reflects. “I wanted to make it in silence. Maybe I got things wrong, maybe I



got things right — but I tried to do it my way.”

The cast includes Imtiaz Barshon, Keya Al Jannah, Azad Abul Kalam, A K Azad Shetu and Tanvir Apurbo. Yet the film’s core tension is carried by two brothers caught in the emotional drift of political upheaval — a mirror, Sunny says, of the psychological descent he witnessed across the country.

He pushes back against the idea that the film has been years in the

making. “I’ve imagined fifteen different films, and this wasn’t one of them. It came suddenly. The shifting political climate made it feel like the right time.” The July Movement, he insists, is not the centrepiece but a pressure point: a way of exploring how ordinary people absorb political shock.

For Sunny, the film is not “urgent” — a word he resists — but it offers a revision of political history told through lived experience rather than rhetoric. “We’ve been mistreated by the British, by India, by Pakistan, by our own governments. These layers flow through the film. If it does anything, it helps us see where we stand politically, socially, and economically.”

The film also pushes back against recent attempts to diminish the Liberation War. One character — a Hindu survivor of 1971 who returns to agricultural life — anchors the story’s historical weight and its contrast between urban detachment and rural political consciousness.



Raihan Khan’s ‘Tribunal’ aiming for Eid release

Raihan Khan’s upcoming film *Tribunal*, a courtroom drama rooted in a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2001, is moving toward completion.

The film delves into the fraught interplay of justice, morality and political influence. The team introduced the project at a press conference in Dhaka on Tuesday, December 9. Khan said the film is being made “in a completely different approach” and is being prepared for an Eid release.

Nusraat Faria stars as a barrister, alongside Mousumi Hamid, Tania Brishty, Saira Akhter Jahan, Ador Azad and others. Inspired by true events, *Tribunal* features 26 witnesses and an eyewitness, played by Mousumi Hamid.

Over 50 artistes to honour Zakir Hussain on first death anniversary



More than 50 acclaimed artistes from India and around the world will gather at Mumbai’s National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) for *Maestro Forever*, a two-day tribute marking the first death anniversary of legendary tabla maestro Zakir Hussain.

The event, scheduled for December 14 and 15, will bring together globally renowned musicians including John McLaughlin, Louis Banks, Dave Holland, Ganesh Rajagopalan, Ranjit Barot, V Selvaganesh, Shankar Mahadevan, Chris Potter, Sanjay Divecha, Gino Banks, Ajay Chakrabarty, Amjad Ali Khan, and Niladri Kumar. Many of these artistes had long shared the stage and a deep musical camaraderie with Hussain.

Hussain’s wife Antonia, daughters Anisa and Isabella, and his brothers will also be present in the event.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Guardians of the Gods’

Prachyanat and Sweden’s Unga Klara unite for a rare global project exploring childhood under the rule of adults. Drawn from interviews across 11 countries, the play captures the quiet bravery of children who see through power, offering a tender, radical portrait of youth demanding to be heard.

DATE: SATURDAY | DECEMBER 13, 2025

TIME: 6PM AND 7:30PM ONWARDS

VENUE: STUDIO THEATER HALL, BSA



NEWS

Govt to go tough on disruptive activities

FROM PAGE 12
mode. After the announcement of the schedule, any protest or movement on the streets will be handled very strictly. We are preparing for a good election.”

There have been 2,000 protests in the last 16 months.

The new government decided to deal with these protests peacefully. Except for a few incidents of baton charge, nothing else happened. The law enforcement agencies have shown a great level of patience, which is rare in Bangladesh’s history,” he said.

Also at the meeting, the advisory council exempted the value-added tax (VAT) on metro rail tickets.

Though the government would

get about Tk 40 crore per year, the government exempted the VAT considering that the metro rail is playing an important role in the transportation of the city dwellers, Shafiqul said.

The government also reduced the tax incidence on dates to 40 percent from the existing 52 percent to facilitate the consumers in the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

Three ordinances were also approved: the Commercial Court Ordinance 2025, the National Legal Aid (Second Amendment) Ordinance 2025, and the Registration (Amendment) Ordinance 2025.

However, the drafts of the Telecommunication Ordinance,

the SME Policy, and the National Qualifications Framework Policy were placed before the advisory council but did not receive approval, Shafiqul said.

The meeting also adopted a thanksgiving motion for the two outgoing advisers.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan moved the motion highlighting the biography of outgoing advisers Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and their contributions to the 2018 anti-quota movement and the 2024 July Uprising.

Yunus also hosted a luncheon in their honour after the meeting of the advisory council at his office.

Burn mark, past thefts

FROM PAGE 12
A Dhaka court yesterday placed Ayesha on a six-day remand and Rabbi on a three-day remand in the case filed over the murders.

At a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre, Nazrul Islam said Ayesha had joined the household only four days before the killings.

She stole Tk 2,000 on her second day at work and when Laila questioned her the next day, an altercation broke out, with Ayesha denying to have taken the money.

Last Tuesday, the fourth day, Ayesha reportedly arrived with a switchgear knife, Nazrul said.

“As Laila was preparing to call her husband about the missing money, Ayesha attacked her to stop the call,” he said.

Hearing her mother’s screams, Nafisa ran out of her room. “Ayesha then stabbed the teenager multiple times,” the police officer said.

Nafisa attempted to call the building’s security guard through the intercom, but the main cable had allegedly been torn out.

Both mother and daughter died of excessive blood loss, Nazrul said.

Ayesha also injured her own hand during the attack.

Afterwards, she went to the bathroom, changed out of her bloodstained clothes, and put on Nafisa’s school uniform to disguise herself.

She washed the two knives — the one she brought and another she allegedly picked up from the kitchen — and left them in a bucket before fleeing the flat with a laptop, a mobile phone, and other valuables stuffed in a backpack.

According to police, she later changed clothes again at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, then headed toward Savar.

On the way, she allegedly dumped the stolen phone and her bloodstained garments into the river from Singair Bridge to destroy evidence.

“She had a history of theft. Her mother confirmed that Ayesha had allegedly stolen Tk 2 lakh and four bhoris of gold jewellery from her sister’s home,” Nazrul said.

Because she wore a burqa when entering and leaving the home, CCTV footage did not clearly capture her face, and the family had no accurate address for her.

The burn mark on her neck became the key to identifying her, the police officer said.

Investigators reviewed house-help theft cases reported to Mohammadpur Police Station over the past year and found similarities with a July 2025 incident on Humayun Road, where Tk 8,000 and a gold ring were stolen.

The suspect in that case was also named Ayesha and also had a burn injury on her neck.

Police said they collected a phone number Ayesha had used from the victims’ family, which led them to Hemayetpur in Savar, where she and her husband had rented a flat.

Information from Ayesha’s mother and technological surveillance then helped the law enforcers track Ayesha to Rabbi’s parental home in Charkaya village, Jhalakathi, where she was arrested.

Regarding the burn injury, Nazrul Islam said investigators received conflicting accounts. “One version is that Ayesha, being short tempered, set fire to herself after an argument with her mother. Another claim is that she was burned while working at someone’s home. We are verifying the information.”

Khaleda Zia

FROM PAGE 12
On Wednesday night, Khaleda’s personal physician Dr Zahid Hossain said she is receiving treatment in ICU.

The BNP chief has long been battling multiple complications, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and chronic issues affecting her kidneys, lungs, heart, and eyes.

“Due to the increase in her breathing difficulty, the decrease in oxygen levels in the blood, and the rise in carbon dioxide levels, she is being treated with a high-flow nasal cannula and a BIPAP machine,” the statement read.

“However, as her condition did not improve, she has been placed on elective ventilator support to rest her lungs and other organs,” it added.

Elective ventilator support is a planned medical decision, rather than an emergency intervention.

Moreover, due to gastrointestinal bleeding and disseminated intravascular coagulation, Khaleda is receiving blood and blood product transfusions.

“Despite all the treatment, as her fever did not go down, and during the regular echocardiography, as some problems were found in the aortic valve, a transoesophageal echo was done, and infective endocarditis was diagnosed,” said Shahabuddin.

Following the advice of local and foreign doctors, treatment according to standard guidelines for the disease was started immediately, he added.

Urging people not to spread misinformation, the doctors requested everyone to pray for Khaleda’s speedy recovery. Though BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman who has been in exile in Britain for 17 years, has not yet visited her, Dr Zubaida Rahman, wife of Tarique, arrived in Dhaka on December 5 to look after her treatment.

Demand for 20% allowance ‘unjustified’

FROM PAGE 12
200 non-cadre staffers demanded that the government issue a gazette immediately to address their demand.

After the incident, Salehuddin did not appear at the Secretariat yesterday, while police and Rab members were seen deployed in the area.

Law enforcers also detained five individuals for demonstration inside the Secretariat, a Key Point Installation (KPI) where processions and gatherings are prohibited.

“They violated the rule and are now being interrogated over the motive behind the demonstration,” said Mainul Islam Pulok, sub-inspector of Shahbagh Police Station, adding that the decision on whether a case would be filed has not been made yet.

When approached, experts said that demanding a special allowance while a new pay scale is being prepared raises questions of justification.

Sheikh Yusuf Harun, former public administration secretary, told The Daily Star that when the government is working to implement a new pay scale, it is natural for questions to arise over the justification of demanding a special allowance for the Secretariat staffers.

“The government has already met many demands, including promotions

and pay hikes at different levels. If all the revenue is spent on salaries, how will development work continue?” he asked, adding that such tactics to force the government into a corner in its final days are “not acceptable.”

MK Muzeri, former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said the timing of the pay commission was problematic as the country’s financial situation is already strained.

“Implementing the pay commission now will be very difficult for the current government due to the financial challenges.”

With the national election nearing, he warned that any rise in allowances could set off a chain reaction of demands across various sectors.

“This situation has become volatile, and now, every part of the government workforce expects similar allowances,” he added.

A former cabinet secretary, speaking on condition of anonymity, said if the Secretariat employees are given the 20 percent special allowance, then field-level administration employees should be given 40 percent.

According to him, Secretariat staffers, being close to policymakers, often try to get additional benefits for them. He

cautioned that meeting their demand could prompt government employees nationwide to initiate protests that the administration may struggle to control.

A senior finance ministry official told this newspaper that no directive has been received from the government regarding any initiative to address the demand of the Secretariat employees.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Sarkari Karmochari Dabi Adai Oikyo Parishad wrote to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday, urging the issuance of the 9th Pay Scale gazette for all government employees by December 15, instead of granting a 20 percent allowance to the Secretariat employees.

The letter also criticised a small group of Secretariat employees who, bypassing the pay scale process, confined the finance adviser to realise their demand.

It also added that granting the demand for an increase in allowance without implementing the 9th Pay Scale would deepen discrimination among government employees.

Ronaldo investing

FROM PAGE 12
Ronaldo, writing on X, framed his involvement as rooted in a mindset that has guided his career. “Curiosity is a requirement for greatness... You win when you keep asking new questions every day.”

At the centre of the company’s strategy is Ronaldo’s global reach. His CR7 brand, which appears on products ranging from fragrances to hotels and fitness centres, functions as a commercial identity with an audience comparable to major media organisations. For Perplexity, access to hundreds of millions of followers across Latin America, the Middle East and Asia offers a route into regions where it faces strong competition and long-established search habits. The partnership signals a shift in how AI search tools are promoted, with companies increasingly seeking broad cultural visibility rather than focusing solely on technical communities or enterprise clients.

Donald Trump

FROM PAGE 12
“apply now” button, allows interested applicants to pay a \$15,000 fee to the Department of Homeland Security for speedy processing.

After going through a background check or vetting process, applicants must then make a “contribution” — the website also calls it a “gift” — of \$1 million to get the visa, similar to a “Green Card,” which allows them to live and work in the United States.

Rab official's wife killed in Jamalpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Jamalpur

The wife of a Rab official was found murdered at their residence in Sarishabari upazila of Jamalpur early yesterday.

The incident occurred around 3:30am at Simlabazar. The victim, Lipi Akter, 35, was the wife of ASI Mohor Uddin of Rab-2 in Dhaka's Mohammadpur.

Quoting the couple's daughter, Sarishabari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Bachchu Mia said a group of thieves broke the grille of the veranda and entered the house in the middle of the night. When Lipi saw them, they allegedly strangled her with a scarf.

Their daughter, fifth-grader Mithi Akter, then called her maternal uncle, who rushed to the house with other family members. They took Lipi to the Sarishabari Health Complex, where doctors declared her dead.

Police recovered the body around 11:30am and said it would be sent for autopsy.



Women brave the winter chill, collect tokens, and wait in long queues to buy rice and flour at fair prices. With the cost of essentials rising, low-income families depend on OMS (open market sale) dealers for subsidised staples. The photo was taken on Sher-e-Bangla Road in Khulna recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Silence no longer

FROM PAGE 3

the struggles of those who are "held back" instead of labelling them as "left behind".

Presenting the keynote paper, Banasree Mitra Neogi, director of Rights and Governance Programmes at MJF, said human rights are not distant legal concepts but are rooted in dignity, safety, and equality in everyday life.

She said development and digital progress cannot be sustainable without justice and equal rights. "Human rights are universal, regardless of birth, religion, gender, or social identity."

She emphasised speaking against injustice and amplifying marginalised voices, especially amid global crises, rising inequality, and climate-related vulnerabilities.

Freedom fighter and rights activist Sultana Kamal said ensuring freedom of expression does not require new policies but requires the state to fulfil its responsibilities.

She called for a future government that prioritises protecting civil liberties over retaining power. She added that people's rights to be heard, understood, and informed are being gravely violated.

Sultana Kamal stressed the need to protect freedom of thought. "What I believe is my personal choice, and others may believe differently — that is tolerance. Our society fails to teach this, leaving children at risk," she said.

Speaking as the chief guest, Md Daud Miah,

director general of the NGO Affairs Bureau under the Chief Adviser's Office, said, "Sympathy alone is not enough. We must develop empathy."

He urged development organisations to work closely with communities "as members, not just beneficiaries," adding that empowering people to make their own decisions is key to sustainable progress.

Representatives from youth groups, development partners, civil society, journalists, and marginalised communities — including persons with disabilities, indigenous groups, Dalits, and the Hijra community — called on the state to ensure proper application of the law, guarantee justice, and establish accountability.

They also called for renewed efforts to foster a culture of respect, empathy, and equality within families, communities, and society as a whole.

The event also included a musical performance by the country's first all-female indigenous band, F Minor.

HC upholds RPO clause on party

FROM PAGE 3
saying that candidates must now contest the national election using their own parties' symbols, following the judgement.

On November 27, Momintul Islam, secretary general of the National Democratic Movement, filed the petition seeking a directive to overturn the amended provision, arguing that it restricts

EC officials made

FROM PAGE 3

Former EC joint secretary Asaduzzaman Arzu and election expert Abdul Alim confirmed that this is the first time EC officials have been appointed as ROs. Both welcomed the decision.

"It is positive and could have been expanded further," Alim said.

He said the constitution clearly states that all other departments must assist with the election. If that assistance fails, then the Election Commission can take action against them.

"Capacity, competence, and leadership matter in conducting elections, so this is crucial for their success," he said.

Faysal Kader said they are prepared for the challenge and will make every effort to conduct the election in a free and fair manner.

Arzu noted that EC officials previously served as ROs in by-elections and city corporation polls in Dhaka and Chattogram, where their leadership was widely praised.

Under the Representation of the

People Order, 1972, the EC can appoint anyone as a returning officer. The law states that the commission must appoint an RO for every parliamentary constituency and that one person can serve as RO for more than one seat.

Typically, field-level EC officials handle tasks such as distributing election materials before polling day, monitoring voting, resolving logistical issues, and helping prepare and send result sheets to the EC.

BNP and several other parties had proposed during pre-election dialogues that EC officials be appointed as returning officers.

Meanwhile, the commission yesterday sent demi-official letters to the Cabinet Division, seeking its assistance in conducting the election and referendum.

It also requested that field-level government officers not be transferred without prior consultation with the EC from the date of the schedule announcement until 15 days after the results are published.

Students led by Ducusu

FROM PAGE 2

Prof Azmal Hossain Bhuiyan of botany department was also harassed, added Prof Jamal.

Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association, who was harassed at the teachers' lounge of the Faculty of Social Sciences building, expressed shock over the incident.

"How could such an incident involving teachers happen in broad daylight on a campus like Dhaka University?"

Talking to this correspondent, Zubair said he and Ducusu members, along with the proctorial team, went to hand the teachers over to police.

He alleged that Prof Jamal commented that "the self-proclaimed sons of

Razakars should be killed" during the student-led July mass uprising. Zubair also accused "Neel Dal" teachers of siding with ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina at that time.

He alleged that Prof Jamal and Prof Zeenat had met with Hasina at the Gono Bhaban during the uprising.

SI Mainul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station said no complaint was filed over the incident.

Despite repeated attempts, DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed could not be reached for comments.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University Teachers' Association condemned the incident and demanded the formation of an impartial investigation committee to ensure punishment for those involved.

Election will not

FROM PAGE 3

someone else will spread lies among the people. The only way to stop these false confusions is when you appear on the ground. When you appear, no one can spread confusion anymore."

Tarique also touched upon electioneering taking place in mosques by some parties.

"If they can say something, why can't you? If they can speak, then everyone should have the same right to speak. You should handle it properly in your area. If there are rules that prevent this, then they should apply to everyone. It cannot apply to only a select few."

In his virtual address, he told his party workers that if they keep thinking about who will be in power and how to round someone up politically, the country cannot move forward.

"If BNP forms the government, it will not be a party government, but the government of the people. It will be a government for those who voted for us and for those who didn't. Everyone must work

together and we will not work for any one specific individual. This is the main goal and objective."

Unlike the other political parties, the BNP has already made clear and practical plans for the country's development.

"We are not giving false promises. We are making plans, and we want to implement them. The other parties haven't provided any plans yet. But in a few days, they will come up with something and say, 'We have plans too!'"

The BNP's plans are based on reality and have been in the works for long.

"Many will speak unrealistic things for cheap popularity," he said, adding that the party is only proposing what it can deliver.

Criticising the past government, he said: "The autocratic government has destroyed the economy, education system and everything in the country for the past 15 years. They have left the country in a war-torn state, and we must work hard to fix all of this."

An attack on dignity

FROM PAGE 3

ASK further said such comments fuel division, misogyny, and hate speech in society, violating human rights standards, state laws, and academic ethics.

It emphasised that Begum Rokeya is not just a historical figure, but the foundation of the Bangalee women's liberation movement, and demeaning her is an attack on collective progress.

In a separate statement, the University Teachers' Network said it was shocked that an associate professor would label Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain — a pioneer of women's awakening and rights — as a "murtad kafir".

"It is unbelievable that a teacher could make such an irresponsible remark," the statement said.

They said such comments make life more unsafe for women, especially Bangalee


Muslim women. Attempting to demean Rokeya on her birth anniversary does nothing to diminish her contributions, they added.

Instead, they said, it exposes extreme narrow-mindedness. They also noted the irony that while the state honours Rokeya, a university teacher is spreading hatred against her.

The statement warned that such remarks fuel religious intolerance and encourage violence against women, both online and offline.

Labelling someone as an "atheist" or "murtad" in a way that makes them "killable" cannot be considered freedom of expression, it said, but must be recognised as hate speech.

The Facebook post, shared last Tuesday by Associate Professor Hasan, read, "Today is 'Murtad'—'Kafir' Rokeya's birthday."



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Batali Hill, Chattogram
www.ccc.gov.bd

সিদ্ধান্ত পৌর কর
পরিষদ করণ

Memo No: 46.11.1600.002.06.2025.200-272 Dated: 10/12/2025

e-Tender Notice-XEN1/Elect/2025-26/02

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

Sl. No.	Package No	Name of works	Tender ID	Tender Document last selling/ downloading Date and Time	Tender Closing & Opening Date And Time
1.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/44/23	Supply & installation of GI pole, LED street light and necessary goods at Teri bazar Nalapara (newly made road) in 32no ward.	1179031	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
2.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/180/25	Supply of fitting fixing of LED flood light at different circles of Reazuddin Bazar and Submersible pump at Laldighi Library Bhabon and Laldighi park under Zone 3.	1179032	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
3.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/164/25	Supply of fitting fixing of LED street light and other accessories at Chattogram College Pared walkway.	1179033	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
4.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/49/25	Supply & installation of AC and other necessary accessories at Chawkbazar Jame Mosque under 18no ward.	1179035	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
5.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/210/25	Electrical re-wiring work of west site flat of 2nd floor, 02no building and supply, fitting fixing of Centrifugal pump for 02no building of Madarbari Staff Quarter.	1179036	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
6.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/147/25	Lighting Development work at Hafiz Munir Uddin Nurullah (Rah.) Mosque road in 37no ward under Zone 6.	1179038	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
7.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/93/24/26	Supply and installation electrical re-wiring work of City Corporation City Health Center and Ahmedur Rahman City Corporation City Health Center under ward no 40 & 41.	1179039	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
8.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/207/25	Supply & fitting fixing of LED street light, bracket, cable & other accessories for Nirbil R/A at 24no ward under Chattogram City Corporation.	1179042	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
9.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/184/25	Supply & Fitting Fixing Necessary Electrical Goods for Lighting at Ajom Fateh Jame Mosque Grave Yard.	1179043	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
10.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/202/25	Supply & installation of GI pole, street light, bracket, cable for Harech Shah Mazar Road under 8no ward and IPS & other accessories for Panchalish Syed Mohammad Nasir Uddin City Corporation Mohila College, 7no ward office, Urban Primary Health Care & Electrical Region 1 office at 7no ward.	1179045	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
11.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/96/25	Supply & fitting fixing for LED light, bracket, cable & other accessories at Nazir Para Model Society under ward no 7.	1179046	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
12.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/114/25	Supply & installation of solar street light at DGF1 front office and another road under region 1.	1179047	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
13.	ccc/elect/xen/2025-26/148/25	Supply & installation of LED street light, bracket, cable & other materials at Rahman Nagar by lane under ward no 8.	1179048	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00
14.	ccc/elect/xen/84/25/22	Supply of LED street light driver, magnetic contractor, auto timer & circuit breaker for central and ward road at Region 2 under Chattogram City Corporation.	1193378	24.12.2025 12.00	24.12.2025 14.00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following packages from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd/>)

Mohammad Shafkat Bin Amin
Executive Engineer (Elect.)
Chattogram City Corporation

CCC/PRD-69/25-26 (9)*x4

GD-2724



Dhaka North City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Engineering Department, Electrical Circle
Gulshan Center Point, level-9, Plot-23-26,
Road-90, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

Memo No. 46.10.0000.037.07.249.22-13 Date-10/12/2025

Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

Sl. No.	Tender ID No, Reference No.	Name of the Works	Document last selling Date & Time	Tender Closing /Opening Date & Time
01.	1193665, 46.10.0000.107.14.1 407.25 date:06.10.2025	Providing & fitting fixing of Decorative Street Light poles including Smart LED Light, Cables and related accessories at Shyamoli shishumela to Mazar road Crossing under Zone-4 of DNCC (FY-2025-2026).	07-Jan-2026 12:00	07-Jan-2026 14:00
02.	1193666, 46.10.0000.121.14.2 30.25 date:26.12.2025	Providing & fitting fixing of Decorative Street Light poles including Smart LED Light, Cables and related accessories at (a)Dhanmondi 27 to Shyamoli shishumela (b) Green road crossing to FDC Rail gate (c) Bijoy shoroni crossing to rangs Flyover under Zone-5 of DNCC (FY-2025-2026).	07-Jan-2026 12:00	07-Jan-2026 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches. Further information and guidelines are available in National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

10-12-25
(Md. Abdur Rahim Miah)
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GD-2721

Let's talk about lifestyle inflation

TAASEEN MOHAMMED ISLAM

If there was a defining keyword for the current decade aside from pandemic, it would be inflation. In simple terms, inflation is why being able to afford eggs is more of a status symbol than having a brand-new iPhone. It's also why eating out is getting costlier, yet portion sizes are getting smaller. Ultimately, this phenomenon is a reflection of the current socio-economic and political state of the world, but that is an article for another time. Today, we'll talk about a less common but equally dangerous form of inflation that creeps up on you out of nowhere, aptly termed "lifestyle inflation".

When you're in school or college, you are usually on a tight budget, usually pocket money or earnings from tutoring gigs, which isn't much but enough to get a burger once in a while. However, from university onwards, the amount of money you earn usually increases. Be it part-time roles, internships, or eventually a full-time job, you are suddenly earning far more money than the 17-year-old version of you could even comprehend. Such an increase is an intrinsically good thing, as being in a good financial position is very important to a better quality of life, but this also slowly changes the decisions you make. You may have taken the bus to get somewhere before but decide to take an Uber now that you can afford it or buy the pricey gelato you've never had the courage to try before.

Generally, lifestyle inflation seems harmless; after all, don't we all deserve to treat ourselves once in a while? Yes, but having expensive coffee daily, even as a coping mechanism for your dreadful job, can add up in the long run. At the end of the month, you'll be surprised by the amount of money that funnels into eating out, impulsive purchases, and general unchecked spending.

While I don't intend to shame anyone for their decisions and personally have fallen into the lifestyle inflation trap, it is an unsustainable financial situation.

Although unpleasant to hear, we are all one rainy day or hospitalisation away from debt. The economy hasn't been great for quite a while, and



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

it does not seem to be getting better anytime soon. So how can I combat lifestyle inflation? There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to this, but starting small, like logging down your expenses and seeing how much you are spending on non-essentials, is a start. Let's say, seeing that a 500 taka coffee per workday leads to around BDT 10,000 a month can usually provide the jolt needed to commit to better financial decisions.

If you find yourself with some extra disposable income that you don't want to blow on compulsively buying clothes online, it may be a good idea to actually open a savings or deposit scheme, as doing so is far more accessible now. And if it all fails, just give it to your mother to hold on to for you, but there's a chance you'll never see that money again.

Finances are a tricky part of growing up that no one ever prepares you for, and it's not uncommon to want to give yourself things that you may not have otherwise had growing up. But there is a difference between buying a plushie vs putting down a 12-month instalment plan on a new phone. The cost of living is barely affordable as is, and it is important to do some planning alongside treating yourself to make sure you can survive when artificial intelligence takes away all entry-level jobs in the next five years.

Taaseen's finances are in shambles send him financial advice at taaseen.2001@gmail.com



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

THE TROUBLING ETHOS behind anti-AI rhetoric

NUZHAT TAHIYA

Over the past few years, a trend has emerged on social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram: online jokes referencing "anti-AI" pejoratives. There are videos going around in which creators berate robots and chatbots in fictional scenarios as if they're second class citizens, repackaging Jim Crow-era segregation in the context of an imagined cyberpunk future, and skits depicting scenarios along the lines of a man pretending to be a cop making fun of a robot lamenting, "My cooling fans won't work."

As the backlash against artificial intelligence (AI) continues to escalate, so does the popularity of fictional slurs. While

oversaturation of "slop".

This particular technological encroachment on daily life has led to frustration, prompting backlash as people seek to reclaim agency in various ways – one of which is the strategic weaponisation of language.

Finding its origin in a 1958 article by William Tenn, who used the word to describe robots from science fiction films, "clanker" entered the popular lexicon thanks to the Star Wars franchise, wherein clone troopers would use the term as a slur against enemy battle droids. Recently, it has been adopted by naysayers of AI. However, these derogatory terms mirror real-life racial rhetoric. Most of the words people use as anti-AI slurs are derived from and employed in the same ways as actual slurs against minorities. Regardless of its origins, "clanker" is now commonly used in lieu of the N-word; "wireback" is a riff on wetback, which is a slur against immigrants in the US; "Rosa Sparks" and "George Droid" parallel Rosa Parks and George Floyd, civil rights activist and victim of police brutality, respectively – members of existing groups of marginalised people.

By calling machines derogatory terms inspired by real-life slurs, users of such pejoratives normalise racist and ableist patterns of thought. It may be a form of protest done in jest, but jokes are rooted in real ideas, which are reinforced through repeated usage. Participating in the "palatable" version of racism and ableism equips individuals with the unsavoury knowledge of how to successfully marginalise a population, sentient or otherwise. According to linguist Adam Aleksic in an National Public Radio (NPR) piece published on August 6: "...the people saying clanker are assigning more personality to these robots than actually exist."

In other words, they simultaneously humanise AI and exhibit dehumanising behaviour by using the schema of actual racism. Not equating robots with people fails to justify this phenomenon, because calling someone a slur is dehumanising behaviour to begin with.

The emergence of slurs aimed at AI shows how quickly prejudiced language forms. Derogatory terms spread online, wrapped in humour but replicating the structure of real hate speech: defining a group through contempt, and building an in-group identity around shared hostility. Even though AI is not "alive", participating in such language trains people to normalise cruelty. Regularly repeating statements that "ironically" borrow from the language of bigotry alters the taboo surrounding the usage of discriminatory speech. In other words, using slur-like or slur-derived language makes us more likely to use actual slurs.

This phenomenon also reveals that edgy racist humour is no longer confined to niche far-right online spaces, but has seeped into and spread across the greater digital landscape. Hate speech and reactionary rhetoric on the internet have existed long enough that the line between parodic anti-AI language and actual racist dog whistle has blurred.

Despite these troubling patterns, acknowledging the existence of racism-adjacent behaviour toward AI doesn't necessarily require granting them the same moral status as humans. The key concern here is what this behaviour reveals about us. Disparaging attitudes toward AI may not cause them emotional harm, but they shape the social environment in which technology operates. If people grow comfortable demeaning things that talk and respond like humans, it may dull the reflexes that support empathy in general.

Ultimately, the proliferation of anti-AI slurs should force us to engage in critical self-examination and reckon with uncomfortable truths. The "othering" of AI isn't just a futuristic metaphor, it's a mirror. In making fun of machines using denigrating language, we may be revealing how much of our own bigotry we are willing to recycle.

Nuzhat is a compulsive doodler and connoisseur of bad early aughts television. Send her recommendations at nuzhat.tahiya@gmail.com

By calling machines derogatory terms inspired by real-life slurs, users of such pejoratives normalise racist and ableist patterns of thought. It may be a form of protest done in jest, but jokes are rooted in real ideas, which are reinforced through repeated usage. Participating in the "palatable" version of racism and ableism equips individuals with the unsavoury knowledge of how to successfully marginalise a population, sentient or otherwise.

it reflects legitimate anxieties surrounding AI infestation in every aspect of our lives, this brand of humour is underpinned by real tension. When we direct contempt, abuse, and demeaning behaviour toward AI, what does it reveal about us?

AI has permeated every facet of our lives, inciting polarising reactions. There are a lot of aspects warranting legitimate concern regarding AI as both a product and an industry, such as its integration into production pipelines, customer service, internet browsers, search engines, and operating systems, and how it's making it easier to pump content of questionable quality out into online spaces that already have problems with an

friend with honest takes or a random hilarious user, a try-hard with detailed analysis or even your objectively annoying cinephile friend who only watches obscure movies with no discernible plot – the world of Letterboxd is your oyster.

The people you follow make up the most interesting part of this app, its activity page. This is every film enthusiast's dream come true. Almost everything you do is logged for your followers to see. This means your friends know when you rate *Sinners* two stars (for the sake of being a contrarian), what movies you add to your watchlist, and whose reviews you've liked.

In retrospect, it might sound intrusive, but the whole point of using Letterboxd lies in its ability to make space for a community that enjoys the act of connecting through shared tastes. Instead of being a doomscrolling medium, your feed is meant to encourage the consumption of more art by allowing for a place to share your opinions and to



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

find others.

Browsing lists and reviews

There are thousands of rated reviews for just about any film left by Letterboxd users, ranging from one-liners, jokes, and quotes to full-fledged, detailed breakdowns. You can like your favourite reviews, read the reviews your friends have left, and even the ones they've liked. This turns out to be a great way to debrief when the end credits start rolling in, giving you a more unique chance to relive and react to your newest experience.

Letterboxd also houses hundreds of user-made lists that compile films of similar themes, genres, vibes, and just about any other factor. Find lists of people's favourite movies by genres, ranked lists of their favourite directors, top picks, tearjerkers, and even most hated; you name it and it exists.

Ever wanted a list of movies that feel like Hozier songs? There's probably a list out there with *Phantom Thread* on it.

Compiling the ultimate watchlist

It's time to delete the messy watchlists on your notes app and invest your time in adding to your Letterboxd watchlist instead. It's not just more fun to be able to scroll through all the posters and pick, but it's also significantly more efficient since you get to filter and sort your list in multiple different ways to find exactly what scratches your itch.

Just like most things on Letterboxd, you can view other people's watchlists, maybe steal a film or two, and even filter

your watchlists with your friends to save the hour you'd otherwise spend arguing on what to watch.

Decking out your profile

The more you use the app, the more it builds onto your profile, where your friends can see what you've watched recently, how many movies you've logged, and your top four favourite picks. And just like other medium that curates art, each year they send you an overview of your year in film, much like a Spotify Wrapped.

More than a social media profile, Letterboxd allows you to use it as a personal diary, a way in which you can revisit and remember your journey in film. In a world where we often consume more than we have the capacity to recall, Letterboxd allows you to be more intentional in your film consumption.

Faiza has an ungodly screentime on Letterboxd, indulge her hyperfixation with suggestions on IG @fizouis

Loving films in the age of social media An intro to Letterboxd

FAIZA ADIL

If you're like me and have a million ever-changing interests, chances are your social media algorithm is not doing them all justice. Talk about the wrong thing too close to your phone, and the next day, it might be your worst nightmare on Instagram. You might follow a few amateur film critics, some TikTokers, and a handful of curators. But what you might not be doing is using Letterboxd.

Loved the last movie you watched, but don't want to be that guy on your Instagram stories? There's an app that's made just for that. From rating and reviewing your newest watch to curating watchlists to pick your next, this is a one-stop solution for any film enthusiast's needs. This guide will give you a rundown on how to best utilise the platform.

Curating your feed

The most important part is following the right people. This could be anyone – a



If you are positive, sponsors come, government supports, then things happen. If that doesn't happen in three weeks or one month, it's gone. You have the momentum now in Bangladesh, so you should not let it go.

Bangladesh U-21 hockey head coach Siegfried Aikman



Joyous members of the Bangladesh U-21 hockey team pose with their Challenger Trophy at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday, having arrived from India after participating in their maiden FIH Hockey Junior World Cup campaign. Bangladesh put up some scintillating performances against a number of superior opponents to finish 17th in the competition -- top among the bottom eight -- for which they were awarded the Challenger Trophy, introduced for the first time in the tournament. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BCB tightens integrity rules ahead of BPL 12

SPORTS REPORTER

In its bid to ensure a corruption-free 12th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has adopted a "prevention is better than cure" approach, said Alex Marshall, chairman of the newly formed BCB Integrity Unit, while speaking to reporters yesterday.

As part of this approach, Marshall said the BCB has revised the payment structure for Integrity Unit officials -- formerly Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) officials -- who were previously paid by the franchisees they were assigned to.

"There will be no relationship, financial or otherwise, between individual franchises and anybody working for the ACU," Marshall said, adding that the Integrity Unit has been keeping tabs on suspected officials.

The BPL governing council recently excluded nine players from last month's auction -- the first in 12 years -- based on Marshall's review of a 900-page report detailing irregularities and fixing allegations from previous editions.

The Integrity Unit stated yesterday that they "have evidence" supporting the exclusions. Asked whether the evidence was concrete, BCB lawyer Barrister Mahin M Rahman, who also serves as



general counsel to the Integrity Unit, said: "The 900-page report is not an essay. There is evidence there and interviews along with reports."

Questions have arisen over why the excluded players were allowed to compete in other tournaments, such as the recently concluded National Cricket League. The Integrity Unit said that because it is a "live investigation" and involves a "long legal process," the BPL exclusions are being implemented as a "safety measure".

Marshall also noted allegations of franchise officials breaching the anti-corruption code, identifying the Players and Match Officials Area (PMOA) and team hotels as hotspots for corrupt approaches.

"I can already see from my live investigations that PMOA regulations were breached last year and in previous years. There was communication from inside the PMOA to people outside, which facilitates breaches of the anti-corruption code and could lead to inside information being leaked to people who would use it for nefarious purposes.

"The hotel environment is very interesting because some breaches of the anti-corruption code are generated through casual conversations and informal meetings," he added.

Marshall said he will hold discussions with franchise owners, and that the ICC is assisting the Integrity Unit in keeping suspect officials away. BCB officials also said they are pursuing "specialised laws" and are in talks with the government to make corruption in cricket a criminal offence.

'I see myself as a genuine all-rounder'

Known primarily for his bowling, Mymensingh Division's Abu Hider Rony produced a sensational batting display in this year's National Cricket League (NCL), amassing 421 runs in just seven innings at an average of 105.25. The 29-year-old smashed 32 sixes, struck two centuries, and maintained a staggering strike rate of 116.94 alongside taking 12 wickets. In an interview with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan, Rony spoke about his journey to rebuilding himself as a pace-bowling all-rounder, and his plans ahead. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Your performance with the bat was outstanding in this year's NCL. How did it come about?

Abu Hider Rony (AHR): Over the last three or four years in red-ball cricket, especially in NCL and BCL [Bangladesh Cricket League], things have been going well for me with the bat. I didn't start the season thinking I would score two centuries, but I did plan to get big runs this year. I was even telling my teammates before the tournament began that a century would come this year.

DS: You bat quite low in the order and often without recognised batters around you. Did that push you into playing more attacking cricket?

AHR: I batted at No.8 this time, which means I usually walk in with only the bowlers left. What often happened was that when I reached 30 or 40 and started settling in, the main batter at the other end would get out. Then I had to score the remaining runs with the tail. That made me think differently. In previous years, I had a few fifties but never converted

them into hundreds. So, this year I planned to face as many balls as possible if there is no recognised batter with me at the crease. My approach was simple: if the ball is in my zone, I will hit it, whether it's the



first ball or the last.

DS: You've been part of many understudy teams but have been out of the Bangladesh team for around eight years. Why is that?

AHR: Selection is entirely up to the management. My job is to keep trying. Of course, everyone has shortcomings. My batting is good now, but sometimes my bowling fluctuates. If you assess me purely as a pacer, I would need to perform

really well as I'm competing with the current national team pacers, who have performed extremely well in the last few years. But I see myself as an all-rounder, and I'm trying to perform in that role.

DS: So, you're trying to establish yourself as an all-rounder to return to the national team?

AHR: Absolutely. After I was dropped from the national team in 2018, many pacers have come through and have done brilliantly. That made me realise that if I wanted to survive at the top level, I had to improve my batting. I had never seriously thought about elevating myself as a batter before, but circumstances pushed me to do it. Now I'm much more mature and confident. Today, I can genuinely call myself a pace-bowling all-rounder.

DS: At 29, how confident are you about making a national comeback?

AHR: Many from my batch are representing the national team. Definitely, the plan is to make a comeback. Things are going well, and I'll continue pushing myself.



Nico O'Reilly's maiden Champions League goal and a penalty earned and converted by Erling Haaland in the first half saw visitors Manchester City come from behind to beat Real Madrid 2-1 on Wednesday. Without injured superstar Kylian Mbappe, Real took the lead through Rodrygo, who broke his goal-scoring duck after 32 games across competitions. The victory pushed Pep Guardiola's side up to fourth in the Champions League standings with 13 points from six games, while Real Madrid dropped to seventh with 12 points after suffering their second straight defeat in all competitions, mounting pressure on coach Xabi Alonso.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Can MSC halt Kings' winning streak?

SPORTS REPORTER

League leaders Bashundhara Kings will host defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in a Bangladesh Football League (BFL) clash today that could define the early dynamics of the season.

For the popular Black and Whites, the match is more than just three points -- it is an opportunity to turn the tables on the dominant Kings and close the six-point gap separating them from the summit.

Mohammedan, last season's surprise champions under Alfaz Ahmed, have struggled for consistency in this campaign. Two losses, two wins, and a draw leave them eager to reclaim the momentum that once saw them conquer Kings twice in last season.

Despite a squad depleted from last season, Alfaz remains confident, though he was slightly disturbed by the silence from the authorities regarding permission to hold their last training session at the match venue.

Kings, however, have been relentless. After a sluggish start with a draw, Mario Gomez's charges have stormed to four consecutive wins, scoring 16 goals in the last five matches alone.

Dorienteon Gomes and Faisal Ahmed Fahim lead the charge, combining for 11 of those goals. The absence of last season's nemesis Soleymane Diabate removes one obstacle, yet, Mohammedan's newest weapon, Ghanaian forward Samuel Boateng, has been lethal -- four goals in five matches -- making him the player Kings will watch most closely.

Historically, Mohammedan has been the only outfit to consistently trouble Kings, with four wins in 13 league encounters, and today they seek to build on that legacy.

The crucial sixth round will also see two more matches -- Rahmatganj MFS vs Fortis FC in Munshiganj and Arambagh KS vs Brothers Union in Manikganj -- on the same day.



SHORT CORNER

Jahanara submits written statement to inquiry committee

Former Bangladesh women's team captain Jahanara Alam has submitted her written statement to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) inquiry committee, marking the latest development in her sexual harassment allegations against former team officials.

Women's team slip eight places in FIFA rankings

Bangladesh women's football team have slipped eight places in the latest FIFA rankings, falling to 112th among 198 nations after suffering four straight defeats in recent international friendlies. The women in red and green made a remarkable 24-place jump in August, climbing to 104th following their historic maiden qualification for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup but they lost all four encounters in a recently concluded tri-nation tournament, resulting in their drop in Thursday's updated FIFA rankings.

'Feels amazing'

Bangladesh leg-spinner Rishad Hossain took to social media to express his excitement about his Big Bash League participation. Rishad posed for a photo wearing the Hobart Hurricanes jersey and, posting the photo on Facebook, he wrote: "Finally wearing the Hobart Hurricanes kit -- feels amazing to have it on! Eyes on the game."

**Read full stories on The Daily Star's website



Captains of the eight participating teams, including Bangladesh skipper Azizul Hakim Tamim, pose for a picture with the trophy on Thursday, on the eve of the 12th edition of the ACC Under-19 Asia Cup. Hosted by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) for the first time, the tournament will be played across two venues in Dubai, and the opening day will feature Group A fixtures, with India taking on the UAE and Pakistan facing Malaysia. Vying for a hat-trick of titles, Bangladesh, placed in Group B, will begin their campaign against Afghanistan at the ICC Academy Ground tomorrow. Sri Lanka and Nepal are the two other teams in Group B. The final is scheduled for December 21 at the ICC Academy Ground.

PHOTO: ACC



NATIONAL POLLS Govt to go tough on disruptive activities

BAHARAM KHAN

Any group trying to create trouble and disrupt the election environment will face a strong response from the government.

This decision came at yesterday's advisory council meeting, where the situation post the announcement of the election schedule was assessed, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the matter.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus instructed all advisers to closely monitor the law-and-order situation after the announcement of the election schedule, they said.

The interim government will show a tougher approach after the announcement of the election schedule.

About the protesting staff at the Secretariat, they said the government has no scope to meet any demands after the schedule is announced -- whether they are Secretariat employees or metro rail workers.

Meanwhile, at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy after the advisory council meeting, Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said: "We are now in election

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



HOPE ON A PAVEMENT ... Sangita, Afia, Liza, and Maria, four HSC students of Siddheswari Girls' College, teach street children near their campus. Sangita said she would often spend time with the children, and about a month and a half ago, they told her they wanted to study and asked if she could help. Since then, the four friends have been giving the children a few hours of learning, laughter, and a sense of belonging, five days a week. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Khaleda Zia on elective ventilator support: doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remains under close observation in the intensive care unit of Evercare Hospital in Dhaka and has been placed on elective ventilator support to rest her lungs and other organs, said her doctors yesterday.

The former prime minister has also developed several additional complications, including ineffective endocarditis, acute pancreatitis and severe bacterial and fungal infections, and is receiving necessary treatment, Prof Shahabuddin Talukder, who is leading her medical board, said in a press release.

She is also undergoing regular dialysis as her kidneys are not functioning properly.

The medical board, led by cardiologist Shahabuddin and comprising specialists from Bangladesh, the UK, the US, China, and Australia, is overseeing her treatment.

Khaleda, 80, was admitted to the hospital on November 23 on the advice of her medical board after being diagnosed with infections in her heart and lungs.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Demand for 20% allowance 'unjustified' Say experts on Secretariat staffers' protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts have said the Secretariat staffers' demand for a 20 percent allowance is unjustified at a time when a new pay scale is being prepared. They warned that meeting this demand could trigger similar demands across other sectors and destabilise the situation.

On Wednesday, employees from various ministries and departments demonstrated at the Secretariat by confining Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed for around six hours until police dispersed them. Witnesses said around 150-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

MOHAMMADPUR DOUBLE MURDER Burn mark, past thefts helped cops trace suspect

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Domestic worker Ayesha allegedly killed her employer, Laila Afroz, and Laila's 15-year-old daughter, Nafisa Nawal Binte Aziz, at their Mohammadpur home after a confrontation over the theft of Tk 2,000, police said yesterday.

Ayesha's full name and age could not be confirmed because she has no NID and had provided no personal



Ayesha

details to the employer. Police estimate her to be about 23 years old.

Police identified her through a distinctive burn mark on her neck and a history of theft at previous workplaces, DMP Additional Commissioner SN Nazrul Islam said yesterday, a day after Ayesha and her husband, Mohammad Rabbi Shikder, 26, were arrested from Jhalakathi.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

BNP, Jamaat, NCP hail end to polls uncertainty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Welcoming the announcement of the schedule for the 13th national election, all major political parties yesterday said it has removed the uncertainty surrounding the polls.

However, the parties, including BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party (NCP), put the onus on the Election Commission to hold a free and fair polls.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday announced that the 13th national parliamentary election and the referendum would be

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Donald Trump launches \$1m 'gold card' visa programme

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump's administration officially launched his "Trump Gold Card" visa programme on Wednesday to provide a pathway, with a steep price, for non-US citizens to get expedited permission to live in the United States.

The website Trumpcard.gov, complete with an

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

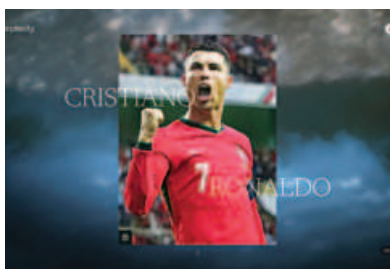


Tejgaon College students blocked the Farmgate intersection for over two hours till 1:00pm yesterday, demanding justice for fellow student Sakibul Hasan Rana, who died on Wednesday, four days after sustaining injuries in a dormitory attack. The blockade brought traffic in Farmgate and nearby areas to a standstill. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Ronaldo investing in Perplexity. Here's why.

ZARIF FAIAZ

Cristiano Ronaldo has become an investor and global ambassador for Perplexity, the San Francisco based AI search platform -- linking one of the world's most recognisable sporting brands with a fast-growing challenger in the search technology sector.



The partnership, announced in early December, comes as AI driven search tools compete for users in a market long dominated by Google and reshaped by models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT. Perplexity, known for its cited sources and direct answers, is positioning itself as a consumer-focused alternative.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Architects of AI Time's 'Person of the Year'

REUTERS, New York

Time magazine named the architects of artificial intelligence its "Person of the Year" yesterday, citing their ability to deliver the age of thinking machines with transformative technology.

"Person of the Year is a powerful way to focus the world's attention on the people that shape our lives. And this year, no one had a greater impact than the individuals who imagined, designed, and built AI," Time Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs wrote in a letter to readers.

Jacobs described the architects as "wowing and worrying humanity" and "transforming the present and transcending the possible."

The 2025 "Person of the Year" issue features a cover story that explores how AI changed the world over the year in new and "sometimes frightening ways." It includes interviews with Nvidia Chief Executive Jensen Huang, whose chips are powering the AI boom, and AI investors such as SoftBank CEO Masayoshi Son.

It explores such troubling aspects of AI as the death of a 16-year-old Californian who committed suicide, after which his parents sued ChatGPT maker OpenAI, blaming the company for their son's death because of conversations he had with the chatbot.



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THE MOBILE RESET

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025 AGRAHAYAN 27, 1432 BS



S1

The Crackdown That Could **REWRITE THE PHONE MARKET**

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Bangladesh's mobile market is at a turning point. The government is rolling out the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) to block unregistered and smuggled phones. In recent weeks mobile traders staged protests over high duties and NEIR enforcement. BTRC chairman Maj Gen (ret) Md Emdad ul Bari counters that legal devices, those brought in through official channels, will remain active and even be made more affordable. Importantly, regulators say NEIR and new tax measures aim to curb massive revenue losses and support local industry.

SEE PAGE S2



ILLUSTRATION: E. RAZA RONNY

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*T&C apply. Image simulated. The Superbrand title has been awarded by Bangladesh Brand Forum in the Bangladesh market on behalf of Superbrands UK for the year 2025-2026. Galaxy A17 5G, Galaxy A26 5G, Galaxy A36 5G, Galaxy A56 5G, Galaxy S25 FE and Galaxy S25 Ultra are 5G ready. 5G network availability and actual speed may vary depending on country, network provider and user environment.



THE MOBILE RESET

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025 AGRAHAYAN 27, 1432 BS



S2



SAVING MONEY or buying trouble?

LANG GUO, Country Manager, HONOR Bangladesh.

With the government implementing NEIR to curb illegal handsets, we speak with Lang Guo, Country Manager of HONOR Bangladesh. He explains how this move protects consumers and why official devices are the safer choice.

The Daily Star(TDS): The government has recently taken stricter steps to curb the usage of unofficial/illegal handsets (NEIR implementation). How do you evaluate this move?

Lang Guo (LG): I see this as the beginning of a sustainable 'New Era' - one where innovation, quality and service are the core drivers of growth. With the implementation of NEIR, consumers can know for sure that they're buying genuine, safe devices in a transparent market. It creates a level playing field that enables us to operate properly and contribute to the country's digital growth.

TDS: How severely has the grey market impacted your potential growth, and how do you see that changing post-regulation?

LG: It's been a real challenge. The grey market has pulled customers away from official channels and created this uneven playing field that has held us back. But with NEIR, we're expecting things to



"Your smartphone is your identity and your personal security. Saving a bit of money up front just isn't worth the risks - no warranty, potentially fake parts, security threats, and higher repair costs down the line. With NEIR in place, official devices are now the safest, most reliable, and most future-proof choice you can make."

shift. We are expecting fewer grey devices coming in, more trust and stronger demand in official channels. Overall, we expect a more stable market condition.

TDS: How does buying an official device contribute to the national exchequer compared to the unofficial market?

LG: Every official device

contributes to VAT, customs duty, and taxes that go straight into supporting national development and the country's digital infrastructure. The government can then invest in connectivity, innovation, and technology. Grey market devices skip all of these. This hurts the economy and local jobs. Compliance creates a healthy ecosystem where brands like us can invest more confidently, partners can grow, and consumers get reliable service.

TDS: What are the specific risks they face regarding data security, hardware authenticity, or after-sales support that they avoid by choosing an official unit? How do you ensure after-sales service to the customer?

LG: When you buy unofficial, you're risking serious data security issues, potentially fake or tampered hardware, no warranty, no access to genuine parts, and unreliable software updates. All these can seriously compromise your device's safety and lifespan. With HONOR, we have built a nationwide after-sales network with authorised service centres, original spare parts, transparent warranty policies, and continuous OTA updates.

The Crackdown That Could Rewrite the Phone Market

FROM PAGE S1

CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL IMPORTS

Under NEIR, any phone without a valid IMEI (identity number) will be deactivated after a grace period. This is intended to stop unauthorised, cloned and refurbished phones from flooding the market. Without this, prices of large volumes of illegal and refurbished sets enter the country. NEIR will help detect these devices and protect domestic manufacturers.

Consumers have been reassured that phones already active on networks will stay on, and even expatriate workers get relaxed rules: those with BMET registration can bring in up to three phones tax-free (one personal plus two new). In short, the government is phasing in enforcement and easing some import rules to prevent a sudden supply shock.

TAX AND DUTY REFORMS

Simultaneously, officials are preparing sharp duty cuts on legal imports. Smartphones through official channels currently carry about a 58%-61% tax burden.

Crucially, the cuts will be coordinated with local industry: any duty reduction on imported phones will be matched by lower VAT and other taxes for the 13-14 domestic assembly plants. As Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, explained, the aim is "fair competition" - protecting the Dhaka factories that build phones for brands like Samsung, Walton, Vivo, Oppo and others. In fact, the government has already instructed that tariffs on handsets assembled locally be lowered in step with import cuts. This alignment is meant to keep foreign investment coming into Bangladesh's budding phone-making industry.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF LEGAL IMPORTS

"The most important phenomenon is that official imports generate broad, measurable economic value far beyond the product itself," said Md Asaduzzaman, Director of Marketing in Xiaomi Bangladesh. "They contribute directly to government revenue through customs duties, VAT, and income taxes, while also creating formal, salaried employment across logistics, sales, finance, compliance, and after-sales services." At the same time, they increase local demand for packaging, transportation, retail infrastructure, and other supplier

services, keeping a meaningful share of the value chain within the domestic economy. Official brands also invest significantly in nationwide spare parts and technical training, which improves consumer protection, skill development, and service-sector growth. Collectively, these factors support business formalisation, strengthen investor confidence, and lay the groundwork for future local manufacturing and higher foreign direct investment.

In contrast to the informal grey market, this is stable employment with benefits. Beyond factories, official imports support a wide network of distributors, retailers and service technicians. Bangladesh had around 38 lakh of total handset sales in the first half of 2024, and each legal sale involves logistics, retail staff, and warranty support.

Official phones come with valid warranties and certified quality. Illegally imported sets often lack any warranty and can be substandard. By contrast, legally imported smartphones must meet regulatory standards and can be repaired or exchanged locally.

CONSUMER ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

A key concern is whether clamping down on grey phones will make handsets unaffordable. For example, an iPhone 17 Pro Max is officially around 220,000-250,000 taka, but in the grey market, the cost decreases to 180,000-190,000 taka. "While illegal phones may appear cheaper, they evade taxes and provide no warranty or consumer protection," Asaduzzaman added. "To keep phones affordable, we are expanding locally assembled models and strengthening entry-level offerings, and many brands are providing financing and instalment plans so consumers can access reliable devices at fair and comfortable prices."

In practice, companies are also looking at ways to keep prices competitive. On balance, authorities say, consumers will gain safer, guaranteed phones at gradually lower net prices once the policy changes settle in.

Overall, in the long term, these measures will strengthen Bangladesh's digital ecosystem. Greater formal imports mean more tax revenue for infrastructure, more jobs in tech and retail, and higher-quality devices for users. Once the NEIR is fully enforced and duties are adjusted, the expectation is for sustained growth in smartphone adoption, which will serve as a key driver of the country's digital economy.

"Official imports ensure quality, safety, and reliable after-sales support. They increase the local demand for packaging, transportation, retail infrastructure, and other supplier services, keeping a meaningful share of the value chain within the domestic economy."

Md Asaduzzaman
Director of Marketing
Xiaomi Bangladesh

8 STEPS TO CHECK IF YOUR PHONE IS LEGAL

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Bangladesh will use the NEIR system to block unregistered or cloned phones. Here are some quick checks to keep your handset working.

STEP 1:

Find the IMEI

Dial *#06 → #note the 15-digit IMEI.



STEP 2:

Instant SMS check

Type KVD <space> <15-digit IMEI> → send to 16002. You'll get an instant reply saying if the device is valid.



STEP 3:

Always check first

Before payment, run the SMS check (step 2) or ask the seller to show a valid NEIR confirmation.



STEP 4:

Got a phone from abroad?

Register it online. Go to neir.btrc.gov.bd → create an account → choose "Special Registration" → enter IMEI → upload documents → submit. You'll get SMS confirmation.



STEP 5:

Documents to upload

Passport, purchase receipt, customs duty certificate (if applicable).



STEP 6:

Check phones already in use

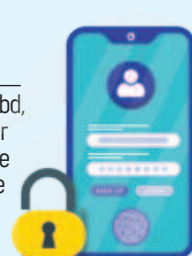
Dial *1616#, follow prompts and enter IMEI or check via the NEIR portal or your operator's customer care to confirm registration.



STEP 7:

De-register first

De-register via neir.btrc.gov.bd, your operator's app/portal, or *1616#. The SIM on the phone must be registered under the seller's NID.



STEP 8:

Lost phone? Block it fast

Block or unblock a device anytime through the NEIR portal or call your operator's helpline.



HONOR

PROUDLY MADE IN BANGLADESH



THE MOBILE RESET

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025 AGRAHAYAN 27, 1432 BS



How will NEIR change the BANGLADESHI SMARTPHONE INDUSTRY

MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

Bangladesh is set to officially launch the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system on December 16, 2025, to curb mobile smuggling, tax evasion, and the circulation of cloned or refurbished devices. However, following discussions with the business community, the government has extended the deadline for registering existing unregistered phones until March 15, 2026. By tracking each handset through its International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number, a unique 15 digit code assigned to every mobile phone.

A MARKET DOMINATED BY GREY DEVICES
For years, Bangladesh's smartphone

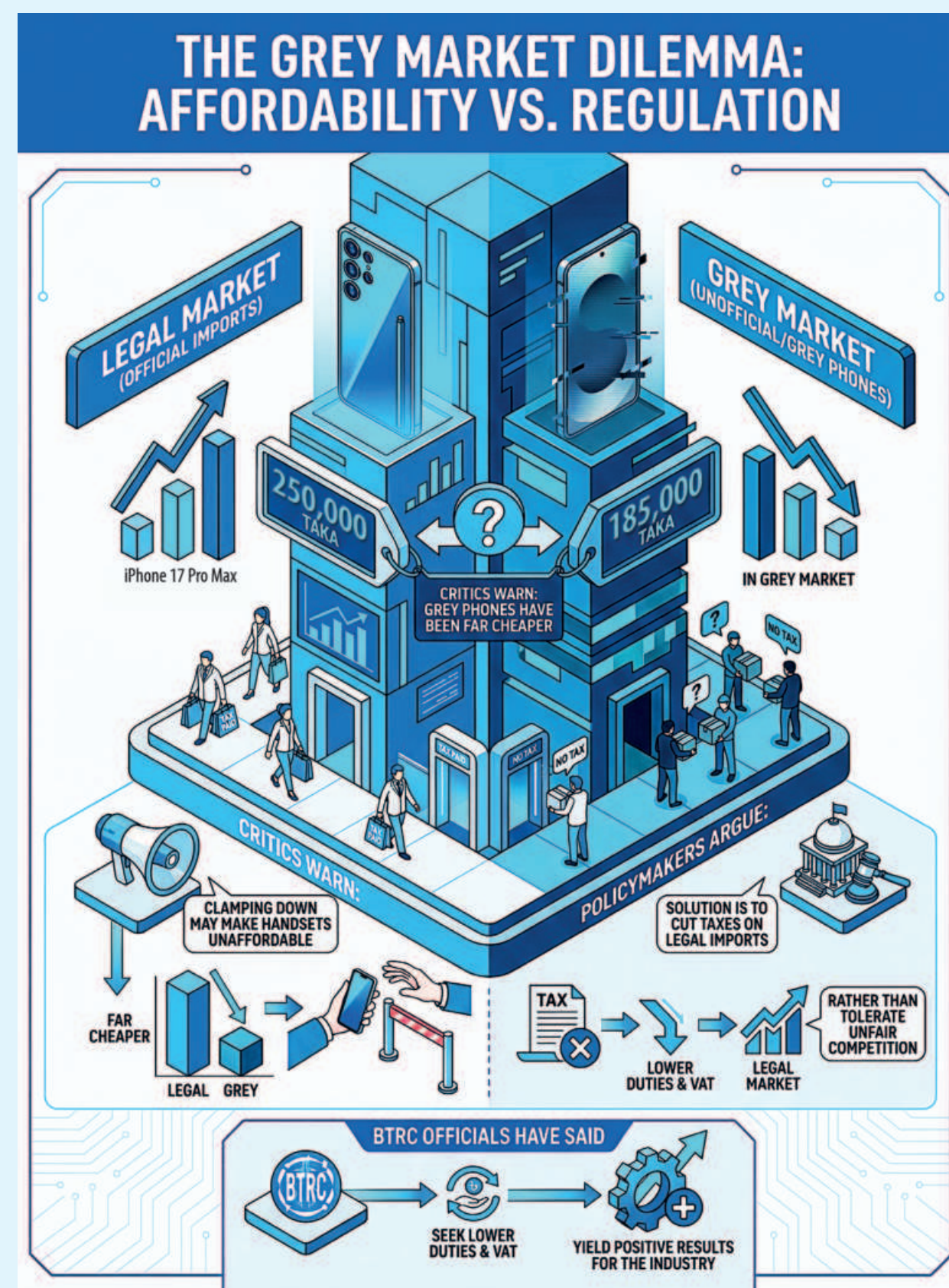
Despite the regulatory rationale, the introduction of NEIR has triggered strong opposition from segments of the mobile retail sector. In late November and early December of 2025, hundreds of mobile shops across the country closed in protest, citing high import taxes and the anticipated obsolescence of significant portions of their inventory. The Mobile Business Community Bangladesh (MBCB) argued that the new system would render unsold stock of grey-market phones worthless, creating financial losses for traders who have invested heavily in such devices.

market has been heavily reliant on unofficial imports. According to the Mobile Phone Industry Owners' Association of Bangladesh (MIOB), nearly 60 per cent of mobile devices in use are unregistered or grey-market handsets. These phones are often cheaper than authorised versions, drawing cost-conscious consumers. Many buyers seek second-hand iPhones or other popular models from local traders, benefiting from lower prices but taking on the risk of limited warranty or service support.

The prevalence of these unofficial devices has long posed challenges for regulatory authorities. Without proper documentation or registration, tracking stolen or counterfeit phones has been nearly impossible. Unofficial devices are often used for criminal activities like fraud and scams, according to the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (BTRC). NEIR represents the government's effort to introduce a standardised, enforceable system for device registration, aiming to protect consumers and formalise the market.

HOW NEIR WORKS

The NEIR system functions by verifying IMEI numbers at the point of network activation. Mobile phones that are not registered in the NEIR database, including stolen or unauthorised devices, will



be blocked from accessing mobile networks after March 15, 2026. Any mobile that has been connected to a mobile network before December 16, 2025, will be automatically registered in the NEIR database.

As the NEIR moves toward full activation, regulators say the system will address one of the industry's most persistent problems: widespread IMEI cloning, which allows stolen or unauthorised phones to masquerade as legal devices. BTRC has said preventing cloning is central to NEIR's design, noting that a secure, tamper-proof IMEI database

is essential for curbing theft, illegal imports, and the resale of modified handsets. Consumers and business owners can check the legality of their devices online before NEIR comes into effect.

Nilima Hossain, an Android enthusiast said, "I was concerned that my phone would be disconnected after NEIR. But seeing that it would be automatically connected to NEIR gives me comfort. I hope that after NEIR implementation, the Police will take prompt action in recovering stolen mobiles."

RESISTANCE FROM TRADERS

Despite the regulatory rationale, the introduction of NEIR has triggered strong opposition from segments of the mobile retail sector. In late November and early December of 2025, hundreds of mobile shops across the country closed in protest, citing high import taxes and the anticipated obsolescence of significant portions of their inventory. The Mobile Business Community Bangladesh

(MBCB) argued that the new system would render unsold stock of grey-

market phones worthless, creating financial losses for traders who have invested heavily in such devices.

With the ongoing situation, the closure of major shopping complexes in Dhaka and Chattogram highlighted frustrated consumers unable to access their usual sources for affordable smartphones. For some families and university students, the sudden shutdown represented both wasted time and missed opportunities to purchase second-hand devices at more accessible prices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSUMERS

For everyday users, NEIR promises both advantages and challenges. On the one hand, it will likely reduce the circulation of stolen and counterfeit phones, providing a safer and more reliable consumer environment. Devices registered in the NEIR system are easier to track and recover if lost or stolen. Additionally, the move may drive broader adoption of official channels, which offer warranty protection, software updates, and after-sales support.

On the other hand, consumers accustomed to low-cost grey-market devices may face higher prices and reduced availability, at least initially. The transition could particularly affect those in lower-income brackets who rely on the secondary market to access popular smartphone models, including iPhones and mid-range Android devices.

Ahmed Iftekhar, an Apple enthusiast, said, "My wife's SIM was registered in my name. For income tax, I had to correct it in her name. This way, fraud detection can be easier. I hope the same thing will happen with the launch of NEIR in Bangladesh. But I would urge the government to reduce tax and VAT so that the consumers can benefit."

LONG-TERM INDUSTRY EFFECTS

Success depends on effective enforcement, tax reduction, and consumer education. If large numbers of users continue to seek grey-market options or if traders find ways to bypass the system, NEIR's impact may be limited. Moreover, the industry may experience short-term disruptions, as retailers adjust pricing, inventory, and sales strategies to comply with the new requirements.

With the implementation of NEIR, the government has announced plans to ease the transition by cutting mobile import taxes, which are currently at 61 per cent. The reduced duty structure - paired with tax and VAT adjustments for locally assembled mobiles - is designed to make legal handsets more affordable and limit the shock to consumers and traders once unregistered phones begin to be blocked.

Whether these measures can stabilise prices and steer buyers toward the formal market will become clearer only after NEIR takes effect. Ultimately, the buyers expect only one thing from the government and the business owners - good quality mobile devices at an affordable price.



THE MOBILE RESET

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025 AGRAHAYAN 27, 1432 BS



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NEIR and the Battle for Bangladesh's Mobile Future

FARHAN MUSFIQUE

Bangladesh's mobile market has grown rapidly with rising incomes and smartphone use, yet the industry has been steadily hollowed out by a fast-expanding grey market that undermines the formal ecosystem.

FIRST YEARS OF THE GREY MARKET

Early signs appeared quietly: unfamiliar brands in small shops, phones without warranties and unusually low prices. Even as consumer demand rose, official distributors saw revenues

shrink. Multinational brands that had invested in factories, retail networks and service centres suddenly faced competition from devices that bypassed regulatory costs. Government tax receipts from handset imports also began to fall, signalling a widening problem and raising concern across the still-nascent local manufacturing industry.

RISE OF AN UNCHECKED MARKET

Official companies began

shifting to local production in 2017-18, strengthening the industry and lifting revenues; FY2021-22 saw sales reach 13 million units. This stability collapsed after the 2022-23 VAT changes. The previous 5 per cent VAT was replaced with levies at every stage of the supply chain, pushing up costs and contributing to an almost 35 per cent production drop by FY2024-25.

Higher prices drove consumers toward the grey market, where industry estimates indicated that about one in three devices sold, and in some assessments 50-60 per cent of the market, were unofficial. The impact was severe. Official manufacturers saw revenues fall sharply, while

companies that once paid significant VAT, import duties and corporate taxes struggled to stay profitable. Planned investments in local assembly stalled as grey imports bypassed both duties and compliance.

Distributors closed, authorised retailers saw margins shrink to unsustainable levels, and unofficial sellers expanded rapidly without regulatory costs. Job losses followed

safeguard but as a policy measure to protect jobs, revenue and long-term industry stability.

REINSTATEMENT: A TURNING POINT

The government's decision to reinstate NEIR is a major turning point for Bangladesh's digital future. It signals a shift toward long-term market stability.

NEIR also aligns Bangladesh with global best practices. Countries like Turkey and India saw major revenue gains and sharp reductions in counterfeit and stolen devices after adopting similar systems. Bangladesh stands to recover a large share of taxes previously lost to smuggled handsets, strengthening its development budget.

The system further supports manufacturing and FDI by creating a predictable, fair market. Local assembly plants can expand, new factories can open and jobs can grow across production, engineering, logistics and service networks.

For consumers, NEIR delivers safer, verified devices backed by proper warranties. It does not raise handset prices; it simply ensures buyers receive genuine, compliant phones.

A COLLABORATIVE FUTURE AHEAD

As NEIR will become operational from December 16, official mobile companies remain committed to working closely with the government to ensure its success. Multinational brands such as Samsung can collaborate even more deeply with regulators to strengthen compliance mechanisms and support initiatives that bring unofficial sellers into the formal economy.

There is also a meaningful opportunity here: those who previously operated in the grey market can now become official distributors/authorised retailers. They can continue running their businesses, only now with better protection, better product quality, and full alignment with the law.

Bangladesh loses hundreds of crores in revenue each year to grey imports. NEIR directly targets this leak.

across retail, logistics and assembly. The government forfeited hundreds of crores in annual revenue that could have supported healthcare, education or infrastructure. The need for a corrective mechanism became unavoidable: Bangladesh required a system capable of protecting both public revenue and consumer safety.

NEIR: TOWARDS A SOLUTION

NEIR is straightforward: every mobile phone must be authenticated through its IMEI to access Bangladesh's networks. Registered devices stay active; unregistered ones do not. Countries like Turkey and India use similar systems to curb smuggling, support local manufacturing and protect consumers.

Implementing NEIR, however, required coordination across agencies. NBR, BTRC and law enforcement assessed the scale of grey-market inflow, while media reports highlighted the risks of unofficial devices. Brands such as Samsung also ran awareness campaigns to educate consumers. Gradually, a broad consensus emerged that NEIR was essential not just as a technical



IMEI: Phone's Digital Fingerprint

ADRIN SARWAR

We protect our phones with cases, screen protectors, and complex passcodes. But deep within the settings of your device lies a 15-digit code that is more important than your password: the IMEI. Usually, it's written on a small label either on top of the box or on the phone itself. Most of us ignore this string of numbers until disaster happens. IMEI can save you a significant amount of money to protect your data and render a stolen phone useless to thieves.

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN IMEI?

IMEI stands for International Mobile Equipment Identity.

Think of it as the "Social Security Number" or the "Vehicle Identification Number" (VIN) for your mobile device. Every legitimate phone manufactured in the world comes with one. Oftentimes, people confuse the IMEI number with a SIM. SIM identifies you and your phone number. You can take a SIM out and move it to another phone, whereas IMEI identifies the device. It is permanent and hard-coded into the phone itself. When your phone connects to a network tower to make a call or use data, it shows this number. The network checks it, recognises the device, and decides whether to grant it access.

YOU CAN EASILY FIND IT

IMEI is a universal number, so you don't need to be a tech wizard to find yours. There are three easy ways to locate it:

1. Go to your dialer keypad and type *#06#. The IMEI will instantly pop up on the screen. This works on almost every smartphone, feature phone, and tablet.

2. You can also look for it in your device's Settings menu. For iPhone: Settings > General > About. And for Android: Settings > About Phone > Status.

3. The most evident way to look for it is on the back of the original box, on the SIM card tray. For older phones with removable batteries, underneath the battery.

Save this number for later because if your phone is lost, you won't be able to look it up using the phone itself.

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

1. The "Kill Switch" for Stolen Phones

If your phone is stolen, your first instinct is to cancel your SIM card. However, the thief can simply put in a new SIM and still use your device.

This is where the IMEI becomes essential. By reporting the IMEI to your carrier or police, the number can be blacklisted. Once blacklisted, that specific device is blocked from connecting to any network in the country (and often internationally). The phone becomes a "brick"—capable of turning on, but unable to make calls or use mobile data, effectively destroying its resale value for the thief.

2. Buying Used Phones Safely

The grey market is flooded with stolen devices. If you buy a phone that has been blacklisted, you have wasted your money. So before buying a device, check for its IMEI.

- Ask the seller to show you the IMEI by dialing *#06#.

- Use a free online IMEI checker (like IMEI info or Swappa) to see if the phone is reported as lost, stolen, or still under a financial contract.

- If the IMEI on the screen doesn't match the IMEI printed on the back of the phone, walk away. The phone has been tampered with.

3. Warranty and Unlocking

When you send a phone in for repair, the



knowing just your IMEI? Usually, No.

Hackers cannot access your photos, messages, or bank accounts simply by having your IMEI number. However, you should still keep it private. Bad actors can use valid IMEI numbers to "clone" devices (making a stolen phone look like your legitimate phone to the network), which can cause your phone to get blocked by mistake.

THE HERO OF MOBILE SECURITY

The IMEI bridges the gap between the physical hardware in your hand and the vast digital networks that connect us. So, dial *#06#. Screenshot it, write it down, and file it away. Hopefully, you will never need it—but if you do, those 15 digits will be the most valuable numbers you own.

manufacturer uses the IMEI to check your warranty status and purchase date. Additionally, if your phone is "locked" to a specific carrier, the IMEI is the code used to process an official unlock, allowing you to switch providers.

DUAL SIM, DUAL IMEI?

If you have a phone that supports two SIM cards (Dual SIM), you will notice you have two IMEI numbers. This is normal. Since the phone has two modems to connect to two different networks simultaneously, each slot needs its own unique identification.

BE AWARE

As IMEI is such a functional number in case of your device, can someone hack your device