



They [Russia] still aim to destroy our state and inflict maximum pain on our people.  
Volodymyr Zelensky  
Ukrainian president



**Bangladesh holds only 0.01% of global potato market**

B1



**UN chief slams 'relentless' Israeli expansion in West Bank**

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**The Police Commission Ordinance is an eyewash at best**

P6



**11-team Women's Football League from Dec 29**

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## Shooting spate raises concerns ahead of polls

Experts, politicians call for preventive measures

TOUSIF KAUM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Concerns over public safety and law and order are mounting ahead of the February 12 national election, following a series of broad-daylight killings in recent months.

Friday's attempt on the life of Dhaka-8 aspirant Sharif Osman Hadi has further raised alarm, with experts and politicians calling for preventive government action and coordinated intelligence operations.

In recent weeks, several killings involving underground gangs have made headlines.

On November 30, two men linked to organised crime were shot dead outside the Khulna Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

Earlier that month, top-listed criminal Tariq Saif

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**"Despite all the limitations, the police force is confident that it will be able to play its due role in ensuring a free, fair, and credible election."**

IGP BAHARUL ALAM



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus consoling the family members of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho and a potential candidate for the Dhaka-8 constituency for the upcoming polls. Hadi was shot in broad daylight in the capital's Paltan on Friday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Hadi's condition critical, police identify suspect

Tk 50 lakh bounty announced

MUNTAKIM SAAD and TOUSIF KAUM

Police have identified a suspect in the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, an independent MP aspirant for Dhaka-8 and spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, who is currently fighting for his life at Evercare Hospital.

Hadi was shot in broad daylight in the capital's Paltan area on Friday, leaving him critically injured, a day after the Election Commission announced the schedule for the 13th national election.

After analysing CCTV footage, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) released a photograph of the suspect and said operations are underway to arrest those involved. Police requested that anyone with information come forward.

Meanwhile, the government has offered a Tk 50 lakh reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury announced at the Secretariat yesterday.

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## Parties vow unity against plots to derail Feb election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three major political parties yesterday vowed to stand united against any plot to undermine the spirit of the July uprising or derail the upcoming election.

They made the commitment during a meeting with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus at the state guesthouse Jamuna in the wake of the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, independent MP aspirant for Dhaka-8 and spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho.

At the meeting, leaders of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and National Citizen Party urged the government to take a tougher stance to ensure the safety of citizens and their property. They stressed that public trust in the Election Commission hinges on an environment where everyone feels secure.

The chief adviser said the attack on Hadi was a deliberate attempt to disrupt the polls, according to a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

"The conspirators seek to stop the election from taking place. This attack is highly symbolic. They want to

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## ATTACK ON UN BASE

# 6 Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed in Sudan

'Drone attack' injures 8 more

STAR REPORT

At least six Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and eight others injured in an attack on a United Nations base in Sudan's Southern Kordofan region, the Bangladesh Army said yesterday.

In a statement issued last night, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the attack took place in Abyei, a disputed border area between Sudan and South Sudan.

"The situation in the area remains unstable, and clashes with terrorists are ongoing," the statement said, adding that authorities were doing their best to provide medical treatment and carry out rescue operations for the injured.

The ISPR did not provide further details about the incident as of 1:30am, when this report was filed.

AFP, quoting witnesses, reported that the casualties occurred when a drone struck the UN compound in the state capital, Kadugli.

"Six people were killed in a bombing of the UN headquarters while they were inside the building," a medical source at the city's hospital told the news agency.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus expressed deep sorrow over the casualties and strongly condemned the attack.

In a statement last night, he said, "I am deeply saddened by the news that six of our brave peacekeepers have embraced martyrdom and eight others have been injured while carrying out the noble duty of establishing peace and stability."

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## MARTYRED INTELLECTUALS DAY

### Nation pays homage today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation today observes Martyred Intellectuals Day, recalling the ultimate sacrifice of the leading intellectuals killed systematically by the Pakistan occupation army and their local collaborators at the fag end of the country's Liberation War in 1971.

The day marks one of the most tragic days in the country's history, when renowned academics, doctors, engineers, journalists, artists, and other eminent personalities were dragged out of their homes in the capital and killed in cold blood.

Sensing the imminent defeat, the Pakistani occupying army and their local collaborators abducted the luminaries

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*Fifty-three years after independence, many stories of the Liberation War remain untold. The Daily Star, in the 8th instalment of this 12-part series, turns to Saidpur, where Pakistani forces, aided by local collaborators, systematically abducted, tortured, and killed the town's leading intellectuals in March-June 1971 — months before the December 14 massacre.*

## Horrors of Saidpur's intellectual massacre

AHMAD ISTIAK

Around 10:00pm on March 25, 1971, Dr Zikrul Haque had just sat down to eat when one of his sons suddenly announced that the military had surrounded their house in Nilphamari's Saidpur. While panic spread through the family, Zikrul remained calm, as though prepared for what was to come.

"When he was told he had to go with them, he quietly left. That was the last time I saw him," his son Mujibul Haque recalled.

"As they were putting my father



TALES OF FREEDOM

into the jeep, I saw Bihari leader Yusuf Butt sitting in the back. There was no doubt left as to who had brought the Pakistanis."

That night, Pakistani soldiers, aided by non-Bangalee Biharis, abducted Dr Zikrul, a member of the Provincial Assembly and convener of the

All-Party Resistance Committee.

He was not the only one.

The same night, Saidpur Thana Awami League vice-president Dr Badiuzzaman, philanthropist businessman Tulsiram Agarwala, and his son Rameshwar Lal Agarwala were

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## Strengthen security at all polls offices

EC tells police

AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission last night instructed the police to strengthen security at all of its field-level offices.

In a letter sent to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday, it also requested enhanced security for the Chief Election Commissioner, the four election commissioners, and the EC secretary.

The instructions came hours after miscreants set fire to the Lakshimpur District Election Office.

Around 4:00pm on Friday, a masked youth climbed over the boundary wall and entered the office from the west side, set fire to the ground-floor storeroom and then fled through the same path, leaving documents and equipment damaged, according to CCTV footage, police and polls officials.

District Election Officer

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Workers unloading stored mustard at a godown in Baneshwar of Rajshahi's Puthia upazila on Friday, as prices continue to rise ahead of the new harvest. Traders are accused of releasing old stocks to the market and selling at higher rates, even as mustard flowers blanket fields across the region with the season underway. Mustard oil, which sold for Tk 180-190 per kg a few months ago, is now priced above Tk 200, while mustard is being traded at Tk 3,500-3,700 per maund, up from 2,400-2,500.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## POLLS CANDIDATES

# EC circular omits ICT charge-based disqualification

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A recent Election Commission circular regarding candidate disqualifications for the next polls has omitted a provision that bars anyone from contesting if a formal charge has been filed against them at the International Crimes Tribunals.

Expressing surprise, election experts said the EC must officially include this bar to avoid confusion among many, including candidates.

Article 66 of the constitution sets out the rules for qualifications and disqualifications for candidates in parliamentary elections. Clause 66(g) specifies that a person shall be disqualified from election if barred by or under any law.

The circular, issued late Thursday following the announcement of the election schedule, includes a gazette notification of the schedule, appointment of returning officers and assistant returning officers, and other polls-related issues.

It cites candidate qualifications and disqualifications as laid out in article 66 of the constitution and article 12 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

However, it did not mention section 20(C) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, which says that if a formal charge is filed against someone under section



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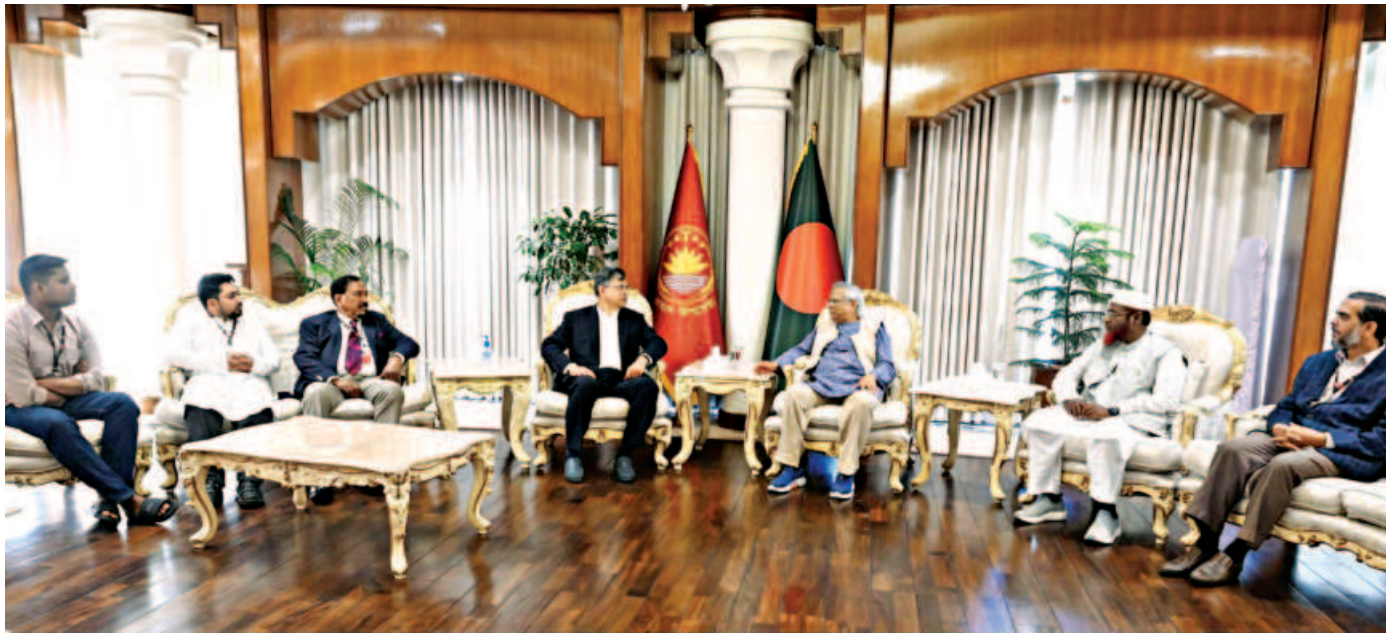
## 'IS attack' kills 3 US personnel in Syria; 3 hurt

REUTERS

Two US Army soldiers and a civilian interpreter were killed in Syria yesterday by a suspected Islamic State attacker who targeted a convoy of American and Syrian forces before being shot dead, the US military said.

The attack was barely a month after Syria announced it had signed an agreement with the US led coalition against IS, which coincided with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa's visit to White House.

The attacker was a member of the Syrian security forces, three local officials told Reuters.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at a meeting with leaders of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Khaleda's condition remains unchanged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remains in critical condition in the intensive care unit of Evercare Hospital in Dhaka, where she has been receiving treatment for the past 20 days. The BNP Media Cell said last night that her condition stays unchanged.

The former PM has been placed on "elective ventilator support" to help rest her lungs and other organs, according to her doctors on Thursday.

Khaleda has developed several additional complications, including ineffective endocarditis, acute pancreatitis, and severe bacterial and fungal infections.

On Thursday, her medical board confirmed that she is also undergoing regular dialysis due to kidney dysfunction. Doctors diagnosed acute pancreatitis on November 27, and treatment for it is ongoing.

Khaleda, 80, has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and chronic issues affecting her kidneys, lungs, heart, and eyes.



## Shooting spate raises concerns

FROM PAGE 1

Mamun was gunned down and killed near the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Old Dhaka. Also in November, Jubo Dal leader Golam Kibria was murdered in Dhaka's Pallabi, while listed criminal Sarwar Hossain Babla was killed in Chattogram.

Police sources say several top-listed criminals, released on bail after the August 5 changeover, have reactivated their gangs and contributed to the recent spike in violent crimes.

There have also been concerns over missing weapons looted during the July uprising last year, when at least 5,753 firearms and 651,609 rounds of ammunition were taken from police stations and outposts across the country.

Although most of the firearms (4,426) and ammunition (around 395,000 rounds) have been recovered, the rest are yet to be retrieved, said AHM Shahadat Hossain, assistant inspector general (media) at Police Headquarters.

Tawohidul Haque, an associate professor at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research at Dhaka University, said that despite a number of attacks and intra-party clashes ahead of the announcement of the election schedule, law enforcers failed to take proactive measures.

"The agencies are not effectively addressing the challenges, and there is also underutilisation of resources at various levels. This encourages criminals to act with impunity," he told The Daily Star yesterday, underscoring the need for preventive measures as the election nears.

Ashraful Huda, a former inspector general of police, pointed out that intelligence failure is a key factor behind the surge in crimes.

"Every incident in this country has happened due to intelligence failure. Unfortunately, the performance of our intelligence agencies is not up to the mark," he told this paper yesterday.

Political parties have also voiced concerns in the wake of the recent shootings, especially after the assassination bid on Hadi, who is now undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital. They also questioned the government's ability to rein in violence and targeted killings.

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain called out the government's failure to recover illegal firearms. "It poses a serious risk to law and order ahead of the elections," he told The Daily Star on Friday.

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam echoed his view and said the government is "consistently failing" to provide adequate security to the public.

"If the government cannot provide security or bring the perpetrators to book, we will have to take action against them," he told reporters on Friday, after visiting Hadi at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He warned that the government's failure to act could lead to further unrest and jeopardise the safety of political activists and the general public.

The lack of security, especially for those involved in political activism, has added to fears, Nahid said, highlighting the increasing threats to those who participated in the July uprising and the families of the martyrs.

"The safety of the general public is also at risk due to the government's failure to control law and order."

Contacted, Khondoker Rafiqul Islam, additional inspector general (crime and operations) at Police Headquarters, said they have already started preparing a list of criminals across the country. "We will decide on the next course of action once the list is finalised," he said.

Omar Faruk, a professor at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said the rise in crimes reflects the police force's weakness and its ongoing struggle to regain public confidence.

Several listed criminals, out on bail after the August 5 changeover, are now committing crimes, including murder and kidnapping. Many are linked to political leaders seeking to exert influence in the run-up to the election, he said.

"If the rising trend in crimes continues, it may be difficult for police to maintain law and order during the next polls."

### CRIMES REMAIN HIGH

The interim government has repeatedly insisted that law and order has steadily improved since the uprising, but the situation on the ground belies the claim.

Murders in broad daylight, muggings, and extortion persist, while the re-emergence of underground gangs has stoked public fears.

Data from Police Headquarters show that major crimes rose sharply in the first 10 months of this year.

For example, murder cases rose to 3,230 between January and October this year from 3,017 during the same

period in 2024. Dacoity and robbery cases also jumped to 2,257 from 1,492.

Kidnapping cases nearly doubled during the same period – from 501 to 921 – while burglary and theft cases jumped to 10,714 from 7,210. Cases involving crimes against women and children rose to 18,947 from 14,914.

Data from rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) show a rise in mob violence over the past year. At least 165 people were killed by mobs between January and October this year, while the number was 96 from August to December in 2024, it said. Dhaka division saw 72 deaths – the highest – followed by 28 in Chattogram.

According to PHQ records, police members themselves have come under at least 723 attacks by mobs or suspected criminals in the 15 months since August 2024, with 531 of them occurring this year alone.

On October 4, for example, an additional superintendent of police was injured in Narsingdi when a mob attacked officers and snatched away two suspects detained for extorting money from vehicles.

Hours later, police launched a drive and arrested seven people after a case was filed over the assault.

The same day, three law enforcers were assaulted and a police vehicle was vandalised by a mob in Sylhet as they tried to rescue a man who allegedly recorded a video on a mobile phone without permission. Additional forces had to be deployed at the scene to bring the situation under control. Later, eight people were arrested.

"Officers are still coming under attack while carrying out their duties. In some cases, they are confined to their stations by mobs demanding the release of detainees," Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam told The Daily Star on December 6.

"How could one expect the force to operate at full capacity under such circumstances?" he added.

He also said that many of the cases filed in recent months involve incidents that occurred during the tenure of the previous government. This means the current figures do not fully reflect the recent crime situation.

Asked about law and order, the police chief said, "I am trying to rebuild confidence among officers so that they play their due role in maintaining law and order. Despite all the limitations, the force is confident that it will be able to play its due role in ensuring a free, fair, and credible election."

## EC circular omits

FROM PAGE 1

9(1) of the act, they shall be disqualified from being elected or being a member of parliament.

This provision was added through an ordinance issued this October.

Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmani Masud told this newspaper the circular includes provisions from the constitution and the RPO. "Since another law imposes a bar on certain individuals from contesting, that should also be added to the circular. We will look into the matter."

He attributed the omission to officials working in haste.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashonno Jonno Nagorik and former chief of the now-defunct Electoral System Reforms Commission, said the disqualification clause in the ICT act should not only be included in the circular but also incorporated into the RPO.

Election expert and member of the reform commission Abdul Alim stressed that the provision is part of

the law and must be reflected in the circular. "If you omit this, how will people know about it? Candidates are usually not aware of the full details of the law. They learn about what qualifies and disqualifies them from the circular. They'll be confused without this. I hope the EC will amend the circular."

According to the constitution, any Bangladeshi citizen aged 25 and above is qualified to contest the national polls.

A person shall be disqualified from running if he or she is declared of unsound mind by a competent court; acquires the citizenship of, or affirms or acknowledges allegiance to, a foreign state; or has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of no less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since release.

An aspirant will also be disqualified if he or she was convicted of any offence under the Bangladesh Collaborators

(Special Tribunals) Order, 1972; or holds any office of profit in the service of the Republic other than an office which is declared by law not to disqualify its holder and other grounds.

The RPO says a person shall be disqualified for election if he or she is not listed in the electoral roll of any constituency; has been declared a fugitive by any court; or has resigned or retired from the service of the Republic, any statutory public authority, or the defence service, unless a period of three years has elapsed since the date of resignation or retirement.

He or she will also be disqualified for being a loanee, other than that of a small loan for agricultural purposes, who has defaulted in repaying before the day of submission of nomination papers any loan or instalment taken from a bank, among other grounds.

The provision disqualifying a person declared a fugitive by any court was introduced in the latest amendment to the RPO, enacted in the first week of November.

## Nation pays homage today

FROM PAGE 1

and killed them to intellectually cripple the soon-to-be-born nation.

Various programmes by the state and different political and socio-cultural organisations have been arranged to observe the day in a befitting manner.

On the eve of the day, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus issued separate messages paying deep respect to the memories of the martyred

intellectuals.

As part of the state programme, both the president and chief adviser will place wreaths at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur.

People from different political and social organisations and walks of life and ages will place floral wreaths at memorials in Mirpur and Rayerbazar as well as elsewhere in the country at daybreak.

Bangladesh Radio, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will

air special programmes highlighting the sacrifices of the intellectuals for national independence.

Moreover, special prayers and services will be held at mosques, temples, churches, pagodas, and other places of worship across the country.

To preserve the sanctity of the day, the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs has requested the public to refrain from using microphones or loudspeakers in the vicinity of the memorial at Mirpur.

## Horrors of Saidpur's intellectual massacre

FROM PAGE 1

also taken from their homes.

With these abductions, Pakistani forces began executing a calculated plan to dismantle Saidpur's intellectual leadership.

Between March 25 and 31, Pakistani soldiers, assisted by Biharis, abducted at least 20 prominent intellectuals from Saidpur, including politician and physician Dr Shamsul Haque; education patron and philanthropist Jamuna Prasad Kedia; Harihar Prasad; Dr Yakub Ali; businessman Harihar Singhania; theatre actor Aminul Haque; businessman Benarasi Lala Gupta; and senior railway officials Ayez Ali, Ashraf Ali, and Abed Ali, according to the book Balarkhail Genocide.

The abductees, it said, were taken to Saidpur Cantonment, where they were subjected to 12 to 20 days of brutal torture. On April 12, they were transported to the Balarkhail killing field near Rangpur Cantonment and

On March 16, committee members hoisted the flag of independent Bangladesh for the first time at the medical hall. On March 21, when National Assembly member Abdur Rouf arrived in Saidpur with a map-embroidered flag on his vehicle, non-Bangalee youths tore it down.

Two days later, Bangalees raised the national flag across the town, triggering widespread tension. At 4:00pm, Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders addressed a meeting at Saidpur High School under Dr Zikrul's leadership to maintain calm, but it failed. Several Bangalees were killed that day.

Rumours soon spread that Dr Zikrul had been killed. Thousands of Bangalees gathered in Saidpur on the morning of March 24 until the rumour was dispelled when he appeared before the crowd.

By then, however, tensions had escalated.

Chanting "Bangalee log ham

Iffat Zaman said her father was bathing at the time and was not even allowed to wipe himself.

On April 1, Pakistani forces arrested senior railway official and cultural figure Ayez Uddin, who had hoisted the national flag at his home days earlier. His son, journalist MR Alam Jhontu, recalled hearing boots kick their door at around 3:00am after a night of fighting. "When my father opened it, the soldiers kicked him in the chest and beat him with the ends of their rifles while dragging him to the quarter guard."

The detainees were held at the quarter guard of Saidpur Cantonment. Jhontu said his sister Asma was allowed to see them twice. "Everyone was covered in blood. Some had slashed cheeks, broken limbs, ripped-out nails, or missing fingers."

On April 11, when she brought new clothes for their father, Ayez told her to take them back, saying he and the others would be given their final bath the next day.

On the afternoon of April 12, families saw blindfolded prisoners being loaded onto military trucks. That night, Pakistani forces executed the detained intellectuals and Bangalee soldiers at the Balarkhail killing field in Nisbetganj, near Rangpur Cantonment. Three people survived and later crossed into India.

Villagers who sheltered survivors recalled the massacre. Balarkhail resident and freedom fighter Shamsuddin Azad described hearing prolonged gunfire amid heavy rain and later discovering a wounded man who told him that respected people from Saidpur had been brought there and killed. "The next morning, bodies were found hastily buried."

The killings continued from March to June.

On March 23, Biharis murdered Maniruzzaman, paint-in-charge at the Saidpur railway workshop. Four days later, railway accountant and homeopathic doctor Abdul Aziz was slaughtered and his body and vehicle burned. His son Manjur Hossain said his father had refused to flee, saying he would die fighting for independence if necessary.

On June 28, abducted theatre actor Aminul Haque was handed over to Bihari leader Izhar Ahmed, who gouged out his eyes, dismembered him, and crushed his body in a jute press machine, according to his son Mizanul Haque.

Such atrocities were not confined to Saidpur.

On the first night, several Dhaka University teachers – Anudvaipayana Bhattacharya, Professor Dr Fazlur Rahman, Dr Muhammad Muqtadir, A R Khan Khadim, Sharafat Ali, Professor Govinda Chandra Dev, and Professor Muniruzzaman – were martyred in a brushfire. Professor Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta, wounded the next day, died on March 30, followed by the killing of Professor Jogesh Chandra Ghosh on April 4.

Outside Dhaka, language movement activist Dharendra Nath Dutta was abducted and killed on March 29. Rajshahi University professors Sukharanjan Samaddar and Habibur Rahman were murdered on April 14 and 15. Nuton Chandra Singh was killed on April 23, and philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha on May 7.

A renewed campaign began on November 15, culminating between December 10 and 15 with the killing of journalists, academics, physicians, and writer Shahidullah Kaiser. On December 16, DU professor Abul Kalam Azad was killed, the last intellectual martyred. Only a handful of bodies were later recovered from Rayerbazar.

Contacted by The Daily Star, genocide researcher and National University history department associate professor Dr Ahmed Sharif said, "The Saidpur intellectual killings were the result of a flawless plan by Biharis and Pakistanis. Their primary objective was to empty Saidpur of intellectuals so that no pro-Liberation War public opinion could emerge."



Dr Zikrul Haque



Dr MA Aziz



Dr SM Yakub



Dr Shamsul Haque



Ayez Uddin



Aminul Haque



Tulsiram Agarwal



Benarasi Lala Gupta



Jamuna Prasad Kediya

executed by brushfire.

The Saidpur intellectual killings are documented in several works, notably Balarkhail Genocide by Ahmed Sharif and The Northern Genocide of 1971 by Manik Mohammad Razzak.

This correspondent visited Saidpur and Rangpur in November and spoke to at least 20 people, including family members of the martyred intellectuals, freedom fighters, and eyewitnesses. Their testimonies describe a carefully coordinated massacre.

Historians, Liberation War researchers, and local residents say Saidpur had been one of northern Bengal's most progressive towns since the British period, with strong educational, cultural, and commercial foundations.

Employment and business opportunities drew Biharis and Marwaris to the town alongside Bangalees.

After Partition, Bangalees and Marwaris largely maintained cordial relations, but hostility grew between Bangalees and Biharis. From the 1960s, Saidpur's political climate remained tense, worsening after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's March 7 speech.

In the second week of March, the All-Party Resistance Committee of Saidpur Thana was formed with Dr Zikrul as its convener. His Ziaratullah Medical Hall served as the committee's office, while prominent citizens also gathered at the town's historic Shilpa Sahitya Sangsad to discuss the struggle for independence.

log ko marne aaya" (Bangalees have come to kill us), Biharis armed themselves and killed many Bangalees. Intellectual Mahatab Beg was martyred that day after arriving with villagers from Chirirbandar, and the town's situation rapidly deteriorated.

From early March 25, Biharis began shooting Bangalees on sight, while Pakistani gunfire claimed many more lives. A night curfew was imposed, followed by the systematic abduction of intellectuals.

### HOW THE KILLINGS WERE EXECUTED

According to Balarkhail Genocide and testimonies from elderly residents, freedom fighters, and genocide researchers, meetings were held in the second week of March at Saidpur College, led by Principal Motin Hashmi of Quaid-e-Azam (now Suhrawardy) College, alongside Bihari leaders. These meetings produced lists of targeted intellectuals, which were sent to Saidpur Cantonment.

Two days after the first abductions, Pakistani forces picked up Saidpur Thana Awami League vice-president and physician Dr Shamsul Haque.

His son Liaqat Hossain told The Daily Star that Biharis broke into their home and that from March 25 onward, intellectuals were effectively trapped, with armed patrols on the streets and threats of death for anyone attempting to flee.

The same day, Pakistani soldiers abducted National Awami Party Saidpur Thana president and physician SM Yakub. His daughter

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## CA holds reception for Begum Rokeya Padak winners

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus accorded a reception to the "Begum Rokeya Padak 2025" winners at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka last evening.

Dr Rubhana Rakib, Nabila Idris, Kalpana Akter and Ritu Parna Chakma won the prestigious award this year.

At the outset of the event, the "Begum Rokeya Padak" recipients expressed concern over the attack on Sharif Osman Hadi, one of the leaders of the July uprising and spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho and a potential independent candidate from Dhaka-8 constituency, according to Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

They urged the government to take strong action over the incident.

The award winners said

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Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan and other distinguished guests cut a cake to mark the 50th anniversary of University Press Limited at a celebratory event held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Freedom to publish will define our democracy

Says Prof Rehman Sobhan at event marking University Press Limited's 50th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent economist and political analyst Prof Rehman Sobhan yesterday expressed concern over the growing mob culture of book burning and attacks on publications which are deemed inappropriate by certain groups.

"This is a very dangerous culture. It takes us back to Nazi Germany and the book-burning practices of that time. I hope this is not something we will see in this new era, which we hope will be democratic," he said.

He made the remarks at an event marking the 50th anniversary of University Press Limited (UPL), an academic publishing house founded by Mohiuddin Ahmed in 1975. The event was held at The Daily Star Centre.

Prof Sobhan said publishers should be free to publish books representing a wide range of views, without regard to the identity or background of the author.

He said this freedom would indicate whether society has truly moved towards a liberal and democratic order.

Referring to recent incidents, he said

some publishing houses have already faced pressure from what he described as an emerging mob culture that finds certain publications unacceptable.

Prof Sobhan said he and Prof Rounaq Jahan have written several books critical of governments, which were often met with concern about how they would be received.

**Publishers should be free to publish books representing a wide range of views, without regard to the identity or background of the author. This freedom would indicate whether society has truly moved towards a liberal and democratic order.**

He noted that English-language publishing has sometimes been protected because those in power do not read much, though intelligence agencies occasionally scrutinise books and flag content they consider "inappropriate".

He said this places a responsibility on publishers, who must show courage in

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## Country drifting from agrarian roots: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is drifting away from its agrarian roots as farmland shrinks due to infrastructure projects and young people turn away from farming, speakers said at a conference yesterday.

They called for urgent measures to reverse the trend and protect the environment at the conference titled "Protection of Rivers, Forests, Hills, Agricultural Land, Environment and Natural Resources," held at Parjatan Bhaban in the capital.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Raise awareness
- Promote environmental education
- Take long-term strategies

The event was jointly organised by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), and the Water Rights Forum.

In her address, BELA Chief Executive Advocate Taslima Islam said Bangladesh is losing rivers, forests, hills, and farmland every day, with marginalised communities suffering the most.

She said Bangladesh ranked 175th

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## 12yrs on, no closure in Gopibagh 6 murder case

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Abdullah Al Faruk still shivers thinking about the evening that shattered his world.

On December 21, 2013, the then 23-year-old was away from their Gopibagh house in Dhaka when a group of assailants stormed in.

That absence saved his life but left him as the only surviving male member of his family.

Just before Maghrib prayer, unidentified attackers slit the throats of his 65-year-old father, self-proclaimed spiritual leader Lutfar Rahman Faruk; his elder brother Sarwar Islam Faruk, 35; and four of his father's followers - Shahin, Majibur, Monzurul Alam, and Rasel Bhuiyan.

The killers, however, spared Lutfar's wife Salma, four other women, two children, and one relative who were inside the house at that time. Law enforcers later rescued the eight, their hands and legs tied, mouths gagged.

Nearly 12 years have passed since that night of horror. Yet

for Abdullah and the families of other victims, the pain has not eased - and the wait for justice continues.

"Year after year goes by, but the investigation hasn't even been completed, let alone the trial. There is no progress at

**According to case records, investigators have sought at least 107 dates over the past 12 years to finish their probe. Yet, the investigation remains incomplete. The probe was first conducted by Wari police, then handed to the CTTC unit and, most recently, to the CID.**

all," Abdullah said, his voice heavy with disappointment. "I hear that one investigating officer comes, then another replaces him. That's how the case has been dragging on."

"My father and brother were murdered. People

can hardly imagine how completely a family can be ruined after such an incident. Of course, we want justice. We have also cooperated in every way," he told The Daily Star.

"Our only demand is that the real culprits face the highest punishment," he said.

At that time, a top Rab official told the media that disputes between religious groups might have been the reason behind the killings, as Lutfar used to describe himself as a "follower of Imam Mahdi" and wrote religious books.

Back then, an additional deputy commissioner (Wari division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said a gang of 10 armed men carried out the murders. "It was a planned murder," he said.

On the day of the killings, Abdullah filed a case with Wari Police Station against 10 to 12 unidentified killers.

According to case records, investigators have sought at least 107 dates over the past 12 years to finish their probe. Yet, the investigation remains incomplete.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



**'BNP won't run country like fugitive autocrat'**

Says Tarique Rahman

BSS, Dhaka

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said that if the party wins the next Jatiya Sangsad polls and forms the government, the BNP will not govern the country the way the Awami League did during its tenure.

"The way the Awami League ran the country in the past, we will not run the country in that way. We will bring about a change, and we will work for the welfare of the country. That's why we have presented this plan to you for building the nation... Insha'Allah, we

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Compensate nations affected by climate change

Say speakers at Climate Justice Assembly 2025

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two advisers of the interim government yesterday accused the Global North of failing to ensure climate justice and urged wealthy countries to provide proper compensation to climate change-affected nations like Bangladesh.

The Global North refers to industrialised and wealthier countries, mainly in North America, Europe, and parts of East Asia, which historically account for the largest share of global emissions.

The advisers made the remarks at the inauguration of the two-day Climate Justice Assembly 2025 at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University.

The assembly was organised by the climate and environmental citizens' platform Dhoritri Rokkhai Amra-Dhora, and was attended by hundreds of local and international activists, researchers, experts, and representatives of climate-affected communities.

Speakers expressed concern over the growing gap between global climate commitments and concrete action, and called for accountability and justice from wealthy countries responsible for climate change.

Social Welfare Adviser Sharmin S Murshid said Bangladesh, despite contributing very little to global carbon emissions, is among the countries most affected by the climate crisis.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Freedom fighters vow to uphold legacy of 1971

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guerrilla fighters of the joint force formed by the National Awami Party (NAP), the Communist Party, and the Chhatra Union during the 1971 Liberation War yesterday took an oath to uphold the spirit of the historic struggle for independence.

They made the pledge at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, where surviving members of the guerrilla force, along with the family members of martyred fighters, gathered to commemorate their wartime sacrifices.

The day-long programme was organised by the NAP-Communist Party-Chhatra Union Special Guerrilla Force Coordination Committee.

Reading out the declaration at the gathering, former president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Mujahidul Islam Selim said, "The Liberation War was an armed political struggle built on the active participation, sacrifice, and self-sacrifice of the masses."

Highlighting the collective leadership of political parties and the sacrifices of ordinary people as the driving forces behind victory, Selim recalled the contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman alongside national leaders such as Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Comrade Moni Singh, Professor Mozaffar Ahmed, Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

## LIBERATION WAR Chhatra Union launches 4-day programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra Union's Dhaka University unit launched a four-day special programme yesterday at the Teacher-Student Centre of DU, marking the 1971 Liberation War.

Titled "Rokter Dolil", the event opened with four exhibitions and a cultural evening, "Mukrir Gaan" (Songs of Liberation). It will run until December 16.

Shimul Kumbhakar, general secretary of a faction of Chhatra Union, said one of the exhibitions, "Razakarer Amolnoma", features various articles published in the Daily Sangram. Another, "Bijoy Gatha", highlights the nation's victory in the Liberation War.

The exhibition, "Opurno Gonojuddho", portrays the struggles people faced even

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Members of Naripokkho, a rights organisation, hold a candlelight vigil at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday in memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the 1971 Liberation War.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 12yrs on

FROM PAGE 3

The probe was first conducted by Wari police, then handed to the Detective Branch (DB) of DMP.

Later, it went to the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit and, most recently, to the Criminal Investigation Department. Thirteen suspects have been arrested so far.

Of them, Hadisur Rahman Sagar, Mamunur Rashid Ripon, Abdul Gaffar, and Jahangir Hossain are now in jail, while Golam Sarwar Rahat went into hiding after securing bail.

Since the political changeover on August 5 last year, eight arrestees – Ajmir Amit, Tariqul Islam Mithu, Abu Raihan, Abdullah Al Tasnim, Syed Ziaul Islam, Al Amin, Zahidul Islam, and Rafiqul Islam Rubel – have also been granted bail at different times.

The previous Investigation Officer SM Mizanur Rahman, an inspector of the CTTC, told The Daily Star on September 24 that the case dockets would be handed over to the CID within a few days.

The handover took place in early October.

Contacted recently, the current IO HM Rezwanaul Islam of CID said they had just received the case documents. "Further steps will be taken after talking to higher officials," he said.

Mohammad Zakir Hossain, a defence lawyer for two of the arrestees, said, "My clients were arrested as suspects. They have consistently maintained their innocence and claimed to have no knowledge of the incident. Yet, year after year, they continue to suffer, though they are on bail now. This case needs a conclusion."

Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan said, "The non-submission of probe reports for years creates serious legal disadvantages. It frustrates the constitutional guarantee of a speedy and fair trial, often leading to prolonged or arbitrary detention of the accused, as well as denying victims timely justice."

"Repeated adjournments due to the absence of reports amount to an abuse of process. Such delays not only weaken the evidentiary value of the case but also erode public confidence in the criminal justice system," she added.



Fishermen prepare for their next voyage aboard two moored vessels at the New Fishery Ghat on the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram. After spending 15 to 25 days fishing in the deep sea, they return briefly to shore to repair boats and nets and stock food and fuel before setting out again. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Open garbage bins a nuisance on Ctg's busy roads



PHOTO: STAR

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Open garbage sheds and bins along busy thoroughfares in Chattogram city have remained a persistent public nuisance for years, despite the Chattogram City Corporation's door-to-door waste collection initiative launched nearly eight years ago.

Overflowing waste from these bins often spills onto the roads, obstructing vehicular movement and posing hazards for pedestrians. This issue is especially noticeable in areas such as Katalganj, Sholashahar Gate No 2, Chittagong College Road (Parade Corner), Nabab Sirajuddaula Road (Machhua Jharna area), and Dampara MM Ali Road.

"I have to hold my breath while passing by the wastebin placed in the middle of the main road just beside the entrance of our lane," said Rupa Dutta, a resident of Machhua Jharna.

An open garbage shed along the Chawkbazar-Muradpur Road, set up three years ago for "effective waste management", has instead become a major source of public discomfort for residents of Katalganj and Panchlaish, as well as for daily commuters.

In particular, patients visiting the many private hospitals and diagnostic centres along the road, as well as students from nearby schools, face

severe inconvenience due to the stench and traffic congestion.

"Can a dustbin be placed on a busy road in a civilised country?" questioned Zahirul Islam, a resident of Katalganj.

The CCC had previously announced plans to remove all open bins and garbage sheds by March 2017. At that time, the city had around 1,350 open bins. The corporation later distributed approximately 9,00,000 bins across 41 wards to promote door-to-door waste collection.

However, eight years on, many open bins and sheds remain in place.

Pranab Kumar Sharma, CCC's deputy chief conservancy officer, said, "These dumpsters allow our conservancy workers to temporarily store household waste before it is transported to landfills."

Regarding the placement of bins along busy roads, Sharma blamed public resistance to allocating land for waste disposal.

"Local people do not want to leave any land for setting up a dumpster. As such, we are compelled to set up the bins on roadsides without finding any alternative," he said.

The CCC is currently searching for land to establish secondary transfer stations, which are intended to temporarily hold garbage before it is taken to landfills, Sharma added.

## Expelled BNP leader Akhtaruzzaman joins Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman, a former lawmaker and a freedom fighter who was expelled from the BNP multiple times on charges of breaking party discipline, has joined Jamaat-e-Islami.

The joining ceremony was held yesterday morning at Jamaat-e-Islami's central office in Moghbazar, Dhaka, in the presence of Jamaat Ameer Shaikhur Rahman.

According to a press release issued from Jamaat's central office, the former BNP leader Akhtaruzzaman expressed deep confidence and satisfaction in Jamaat-e-Islami's principles and ideology, its patriotism, and its steadfast stance on safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty.

He formally joined Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami by filling out the form for primary associate membership, the release said.

The press release also noted that Akhtaruzzaman pledged to remain loyal to Jamaat's rules, ideology, party discipline and organisational allegiance at all times.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar and Assistant Secretary General Maulana Abdul Halim, among others, were present at the event.

Akhtaruzzaman hails from Katiadi upazila in Kishoreganj. He was elected to parliament twice in 1991 and 1996 from the Kishoreganj-2 constituency on BNP ticket. At the time, the constituency comprised only Katiadi upazila. Pakundia upazila has since been added to the constituency.

In the 11th national parliamentary election, he contested the seat on a BNP ticket again but lost to former inspector general of police Noor Mohammad, who contested as an Awami League candidate. Akhtaruzzaman also served as president of the district BNP. He was most recently expelled from the BNP for the fifth time on February 20, 2022.

## Country drifting

FROM PAGE 3

out of 180 countries in the 2024 Environmental Performance Index, compared to 177th in 2022.

"This conference must provide guidance on how we can overcome the environmental crisis."

Chief guest Justice Ainun Nahar Siddiqua of the High Court Division said the country's obsession with "two-bigha plots" has led to rivers being filled, hills cut, and forests cleared.

"Without farmland, agriculture cannot survive," she said, calling for a shift in mindset.

She said young people are increasingly turning away from farming, with many risking their lives to migrate abroad. "We are losing our generation," she said, describing it as the country's biggest bleeding point.

Justice Siddiqua stressed the need for environmental education from an early age, saying children should learn about environmental law from class five.

She expressed hope that long-term planning would empower the next generation to build the country envisioned for decades.

Agriculture Secretary Mohammad Emdad Ullah Mian said raising awareness about environmental disasters and ensuring access to data are essential.

Hesaidagricultureisundergoing transformation, and the ministry is working to involve real farmers and grassroots organisations in long-term strategies based on ground realities.

Presiding over the inaugural session, ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda said protecting rivers, forests, hills, and farmland is inseparable from protecting human rights, dignity, and diversity.

He highlighted the role of women farmers, who contribute 72-74 percent of agricultural labour but remain invisible in policy, and stressed that they must be recognised as equal stakeholders.

He also acknowledged the contributions of marginal farmers, sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, fishers, boatmen, factory workers, and the urban poor.

The first working session on "Land and Agricultural Rights of Marginalised Communities" was chaired by researcher and former Dhaka University professor Meghna Guhathakurta.

Panelists included researcher Pavel Partha, Advocate MM Khalekuzzaman, Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum President Sanjib Drong, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute's Robiul Islam, and poet-journalist Sohrab Hassan.

Speakers criticised existing policies on agriculture, forests, and wetlands as unfriendly to indigenous and marginalised groups.

They accused the state of facilitating multinational investment while neglecting the urban poor and landless communities. They said indigenous and marginalised peoples play a key role in conserving biodiversity and protecting land and forests and should be recognised in government strategies to address climate change.

Echoing the spirit of the July uprising, they called for ending discrimination in land and agricultural rights to build a just and equitable society.

Rights activists, development workers, farmers, and affected communities from across the country attended the conference.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
JAMALPUR PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION,  
JAMALPUR.

Phone-02-997772417.

E-mail: ee\_jmlpr@pwd.gov.bd

### INVITATION FOR TENDER

Memo No. 25.36.3900.164.07.001.24/949

Date: 11-12-2025

E-tender is invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur for the procurement of:

### Tender Description

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Work	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender closing Date & Time
1	1195341	"Establishment of Jamalpur Medical College & Hospital and Nursing College, Jamalpur. Sub-Head: Construction of Hospital Building (6-Storeyed Building with 10-Storeyed Foundation) with a Basement Floor including Civil, Sanitary and Electrical Work. FY-2025-26"	11-Jan-2026 17:00:00	12-Jan-2026 12:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

(Md. Rokunuzzaman)  
Executive Engineer  
Jamalpur PWD Division  
Jamalpur.

GD-2729

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**  
ফার প্রফেশন, বাড়ী # ১১ রোড # ১২, ব্রক-এফ নিকেডন, গুলশান, ঢাকা। প্রধান কার্যালয়ে প্রশাসনিক পদে নিয়োগের জন্য সদ্য অবসরপ্রাপ্ত পুলিশ অফিসার (ক্যাডার) বা সেনা অফিসার (কমিশড) এর কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। যোগাযোগঃ [bantambd@gmail.com](mailto:bantambd@gmail.com)  
# 01711-640277

## Eastern Bank PLC.

HEAD OFFICE, 100 GULSHAN AVENUE, DHAKA-1212

Eastern Bank PLC. (EBL) invites sealed bids from eligible, experienced, and competent bidders for the following services/items:

- Lot 1: Storage
- Lot 2: Server
- Lot 3: License for VMware and Operating System

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending an email from their official email address to [bidit@ebi-bd.com](mailto:bidit@ebi-bd.com) mentioning the name of the company and the authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before **Monday, 29 December 2025**.

Queries are to be mailed by **Thursday, 8 January 2026**.

Bids should be prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document and submitted as per the process described in the RFP document bearing official authorized personnel's seal & signature in two separate sealed envelopes clearly marking 'Technical Offer' (hardcopy and softcopy both) and 'Financial Offer' (hardcopy only) on the envelopes.

Bids should be dropped in the ICT Tender Box, addressing to The Office of the President, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank PLC., 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 (Basement-1, ICT Tender Box) on or before **Tuesday, 20 January 2026**.

Tenderers are allowed to bid for all lots or any lot separately. However, common documents need not to be submitted for multiple lots, submission with one lot is enough.



Workers remove mud accumulated around buses near a landslide-affected area in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah in Maspenna of Sri Lanka yesterday. Tropical storms and monsoon rains have pummelled Southeast and South Asia in December, triggering landslides and flash floods that killed at least 639 people in Sri Lanka and nearly 1,000 in Indonesia. PHOTO: AFP

## Junta denies deadly Rakhine hospital strike

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's military junta yesterday denied killing civilians in a hospital air strike that left more than 30 people dead.

A military jet bombed late Wednesday the general hospital of Mrauk-U in western Rakhine state, bordering Bangladesh, two aid workers said.

"Those killed or injured were not civilians, but terrorists and their supporters," said an article in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The UN on Thursday demanded an investigation.

Health workers and patients were killed, and "hospital infrastructure was severely damaged, with operating rooms and the main inpatient ward completely destroyed," said World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on X.

Rakhine state is controlled almost in its entirety by the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic minority separatist force active long before the military toppled the civilian government of democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

## 'Peace is not far away'

Says Erdogan after Putin meeting; US envoy to meet Zelensky, Europe leaders in Berlin on peace plan

AGENCIES

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, fresh from a meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin, said he hopes to discuss a Ukraine-Russia peace plan with US President Donald Trump, adding that "peace is not far away".

Erdogan met Putin in Turkmenistan on Friday, and they evaluated "comprehensive peace efforts" to end the war, a statement from Erdogan's office said, with Turkey reiterating its readiness to support peace efforts.

"After this meeting with Putin, we hope to have the opportunity to discuss the peace plan with US President Trump as well. Peace is not far away; we see that," Erdogan told reporters on his return flight from Turkmenistan.

Erdogan had told Putin on Friday that a limited ceasefire in the war, focused on energy facilities and ports in particular, could be beneficial.

"The Black Sea should not be seen as a battleground. Such a situation would only harm Russia and Ukraine," Erdogan said in comments released by his office on Saturday.

"Everyone needs safe navigation in the Black Sea. This must be

ensured."

Meanwhile, Trump's special envoy will meet with Volodymyr Zelensky and other European leaders in Berlin this weekend, the White House said, as Washington presses for a plan to end Russia's war with Ukraine.

An 80-year-old woman was killed when a Russian shell hit a residential building in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region, said the regional governor.

Trump has been stepping up pressure on Kyiv to reach an agreement since revealing a plan



Ahead of the meetings, Zelensky yesterday warned that Russia "still aims to destroy" Ukraine, as Kyiv said "massive" Russian strikes on energy facilities overnight had left thousands without power across the country.

Russia said it had hit Ukrainian facilities with hypersonic ballistic missiles, in what it called retaliation for Ukrainian attacks.

to end the war last month that was criticised as echoing Moscow's demands, including Ukraine ceding crucial territory.

The 28-point proposal has triggered a flurry of diplomacy between the United States and Ukraine's European allies, with Kyiv officials recently saying they had sent Washington a revised version.

## Ousted party holds mega rally in Nepal

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Tens of thousands rallied for the party of Nepal's ousted prime minister, KP Sharma Oli, yesterday, in the largest gathering in the Himalayan country since youth-led anti-graft protests forced him out three months ago.

Police estimated 70,000 attended the rally in Bhaktapur near the capital Kathmandu to launch a three-day convention of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

The "Gen Z" protests and subsequent unrest killed 77 people and injured more than 2,000 in September. Oli and some other politicians had to be rescued and kept safe by the army for several days as the Prime Minister's Office, the Supreme Court and parliament were set on fire.

The interim government headed by former Chief Justice Sushila Karki dissolved parliament.

## Trump features in newly released Epstein photos

REUTERS, Washington

Congressional Democrats released 19 new images from the estate of the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Friday, including photos of now-President Donald Trump, as a deadline for an extensive release of documents related to the disgraced financier nears.

Trump is featured in three of the photos shared by House Oversight Committee Democrats, who said they are reviewing more than 95,000 images produced by the estate.

In one black-and-white photo, Trump is seen smiling with several women — whose faces are redacted — on each side of him. A second image shows Trump standing beside Epstein, and a third, less-clear image shows him seated alongside another woman, whose face is also redacted, with his red tie loosened. It was not clear when or where the photos were taken.

"Everybody knew this man," Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday. "He was all over Palm Beach. He has photos with everybody. I mean, almost — there are hundreds and hundreds of people that have photos with him. So that's no big deal."

The Epstein scandal has been a political headache for Trump for months, partly because he amplified conspiracy theories about Epstein to his own supporters. A Reuters/Ipsos poll this week found that just half of Republicans approve of Trump's handling of the Epstein case, well below his overall 85% approval rating in his own party.

## WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS UN slams 'relentless' Israeli expansion

AFP, United Nations

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank is at its highest level since at least 2017, when the United Nations began tracking such data, according to a report by the UN chief seen by AFP on Friday.

In 2025, "plans for nearly 47,390 housing units were advanced, approved, or tendered, compared with some 26,170 in 2024," the report said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the "relentless" expansion, saying it "continues to fuel tensions, impede access by Palestinians to their land and threaten the viability of a fully independent, democratic, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State."

"These figures represent a sharp increase compared to previous years," he added, noting an average of 12,815 housing units were added annually between 2017 and 2022.

Excluding east Jerusalem, which was occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967, some 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, along with about three million Palestinian residents.

Violence in the West Bank has soared since Israel's war on Gaza. Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 1,022 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the conflict, according to AFP.



## Hadi's condition critical, police identify suspect

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also assured Hadi's family that all those involved in the attack would be identified and brought to justice.

Based on video and photo analysis, investigators identified the suspect as Faisal Karim Masud, alias Rahul, alias Daud Khan, 35.

Originally from Patuakhali, Faisal lives in the capital's Adabor area with his family. He became a member of the Chhatra League's central committee on May 11, 2019, sources said.

CCTV footage shows Faisal entering Inqilab Cultural Centre on December 4 with three others and later speaking to Hadi there. Another video from December 9 shows Faisal seated next to Hadi at a meeting. A photo also shows him campaigning with Hadi near Shilpakala Academy.

Investigators reported a match on the clothing of two motorcyclists linked to Friday's shooting and said the duo are believed to have previously taken part in a voter outreach programme with Hadi.

Several photos on Faisal's Instagram and Facebook show him wearing a distinctive wristwatch similar to the one on the gunman's left hand, investigators added.

On November 8 last year, Rab arrested Faisal as the

prime suspect in a robbery case involving the armed looting of Tk 17 lakh at a school in Adabor.

Two foreign firearms, magazines, and ammunition were recovered from him. He was granted bail on February 16, which was extended for one year on August 12, according to the Supreme Court website.

After his name surfaced in connection with the attack on Hadi, photos of him with former president Abdul Hamid and leaders of Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League and Chhatra League units circulated on Facebook.

Faisal's LinkedIn profile lists him as the owner of three companies: Apple Soft IT, Wasiyou Technology, and Enlist Work. According to his profile, Faisal got a bachelor's degree in computer science from a private university in Dhaka in 2013 and later completed an MBA from another private institution.

In 2016, Wasiyou Technology developed a computer game called "Battle of 71" about Bangladesh's Liberation War and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, with support from BASIS and the government's ICT Division.

In the 2018 general election, Faisal was part of the Chhatra League's seat-based election coordination committee for Dhaka-12, where Awami League

candidate and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan contested.

Sources said Faisal was active on the ground with Awami League and allied leaders during the crackdown on last year's July uprising.

DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali said yesterday that police are looking for the suspect. "Hopefully, we will be able to catch him soon. We are seeking public cooperation."

Detective Branch sources said the shooter fled towards Agargaon after firing at Hadi on Box Culvert Road. The suspect used two SIM cards, one of which was switched off at 11:45am and the other around 8:00pm on Friday. Police believe he is currently staying in an area adjacent to Dhaka.

Meanwhile, the Police Headquarters instructed the superintendents of police and officers-in-charge of police stations in border area districts to remain on alert so that the suspects could not flee the country, said Shahjada Md Asaduzzaman, additional deputy inspector general (operations) at the PHQ.

No case had been filed over the incident as of the filing of this report at 10:30pm yesterday.

**'EXTREMELY CRITICAL'** A 14-member medical board led by Dr Md Zafar Iqbal, senior consultant and coordinator (ICU and HDU)

at Evercare Hospital, was formed yesterday to oversee Hadi's treatment.

Hospital Director Dr Arif Mahmud confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

The board has provided a written observation on Hadi's condition to his family so that they can facilitate his treatment abroad if required.

According to the board, Hadi's overall condition is "extremely critical".

The board reported that the patient has suffered severe brain and lung injuries. With surgery completed, he is now under conservative management following a brain protection protocol. Another CT scan may be performed once his condition stabilises.

He remains on ventilator support, with a chest drain tube in place to address a minor blood discharge. His kidney function has recovered, and earlier signs of disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) are largely under control.

Doctors observed fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rate caused by brainstem injury. While blood pressure support continues, the medical team is prepared to implant a temporary pacemaker if necessary.

**GOVT ASSURANCE** Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday met Hadi's family and

assured justice and the best possible treatment, including treatment abroad if needed, the CA press wing said.

"The entire country is praying for him. Everyone is trying to ensure the best treatment. Considering his physical condition, if he needs to be sent abroad, the government will arrange his treatment wherever necessary," Yunus said.

Hadi's brother Abu Bakar Siddique, sister Masuma, and Inqilab Moncho leaders Abdullah Al Jaber, Fatima Tasnim Zuma, and Md Borhan Uddin met the chief adviser at the state guest house Jamuna.

Masuma described Hadi as a lifelong patriot with a revolutionary spirit, adding that he is the family's main support and the father of an infant.

Demanding the immediate arrest of the perpetrators, Abdullah Al Jaber said Hadi embodied the July movement and worked tirelessly for it and urged authorities to investigate how the shooter, who he said had earlier been arrested in a case, secured bail.

Fatima Tasnim Zuma called for steps to ensure the overall security of the July fighters.

Yunus said law enforcement agencies are actively working to arrest those responsible and that instructions have been given to conduct a thorough investigation.




### Promoting Diaspora Investment and Optimal Usage of Remittance Project

**প্রকল্পের উদ্দেশ্য**

- ▶ অনিবাসী/অভিবাসী বাংলাদেশি কর্মীদের প্রেরিত রেমিট্যান্স যাতে তাদের পরিবার উৎপাদনশীল খাতে ব্যবহার করতে পারে, সে বিষয়ে মাঠ পর্যায়ে অনিবাসী/অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের সদস্যদেরকে রেমিট্যান্সের সঞ্চালন ও দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন;
- ▶ বিদেশে স্বচ্ছল বাংলাদেশি ডায়ালগের মাধ্যমে রেমিট্যান্সের বাংলাদেশে তাদের গ্রামীণ জনপদে বিনিয়োগে আকৃষ্ট করা;
- ▶ অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের রেমিট্যান্স নির্ভরশীলতা কমানো;
- ▶ অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের সদস্যদের মাঝারি ও ক্ষুদ্র উদ্যোক্তা হিসেবে তৈরী করার মাধ্যমে কর্মসংস্থানের ব্যবস্থা এবং আয়ের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি;
- ▶ বাংলাদেশের জন্য রেমিট্যান্স বৃদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে সম্প্রসারণ কৌশল প্রণয়ন করা; এবং
- ▶ রেমিট্যান্সের সর্বোত্তম ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত পন্থা উদ্ভাবন করা।

**প্রকল্পের প্রধান কার্যক্রম**

- ▶ বাংলাদেশের জন্য রেমিট্যান্স বৃদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে সম্প্রসারণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা;
- ▶ বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে বসবাসরত বাংলাদেশি ডায়ালগের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশে তাদের জন্মস্থানে বসবাসকারী আত্মীয়স্বজনদের কল্যাণে অবদান রাখতে উত্থুক্ত করা এবং ক্ষুদ্র বিনিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে একটি প্র্যাটফর্ম তৈরী করা;
- ▶ অভিবাসী পরিবারের ৪,৫০০ সদস্যদেরকে রেমিট্যান্সের সঞ্চালন (ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল লিটারেসি) সংক্রান্ত সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান, তন্মধ্যে নির্বাচিত ৩০০ জন সদস্যকে 'ক্ষুদ্র ব্যবসা উদ্যোগ' গ্রহণের জন্য এককালীন আর্থিক প্রণোদনা প্রদান।

**সহকারী: নবদীপী সদর, শিবপুর, রায়পুর** **প্রকল্প এলাকা** **মানিকগঞ্জ: মানিকগঞ্জ সদর, হরিরাপপুর, সিংগাইর**

**গাজীপুর: গাজীপুর সদর, কাপাসিয়া, কালাীগঞ্জ** **রমনেসিং: ভলুক, ফুলবাড়িয়া, গাংকরাও**

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FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## An ominous warning for the February polls

### Violence against candidates threatens public safety

We are shocked and strongly condemn the brutal attack on Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho and an aspiring candidate for the Dhaka-8 constituency. He remains in critical condition. Hadi, also a prominent leader of the July-August uprising, was shot in broad daylight on Friday afternoon while travelling by rickshaw in Dhaka's Paltan area. He was heading towards Bijoy Nagar when two helmet-wearing men on a motorcycle opened fire on him in front of the Baitus Salam Jame Mosque before fleeing the scene. The attack on Hadi appears to be targeted and there are reports that the two assailants could be individuals who had joined his campaign a few days ago. This horrific attack on an election candidate, less than 24 hours after the election schedule had been announced, is an ominous sign for the upcoming February polls. It exposes the precarious state of law and order and could be a precursor to further violence as the election day draws near. On the same day, there was also an arson attack on a bus in the capital.

Both these incidents have created a sense of insecurity among the public and especially for the nominated candidates. Political violence, however, has been creating an atmosphere of unease long before these recent incidents. According to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), political violence between September 2024 and 2025 left at least 160 people dead and over 8,000 others injured in 1,047 incidents. We urge the government to rigorously investigate the attack on Hadi and the arson attack on a bus. Hadi's assailants must be found and brought to book. It is unacceptable that candidates participating in the elections should have to face such insecurity. Unless the government investigates all political killings and punishes the perpetrators, the possibility of more such attacks and violence will increase. This may discourage voters from participating in the elections.

The general state of law and order, with assailants attacking victims in broad daylight in public places, demands that the government adopt effective strategies to ramp up security, especially in certain crime-prone areas all over the country, well ahead of the election day.

As we have reiterated many times, the leaders of political parties must also disassociate themselves from criminal elements who have been patronised for their "influence" in particular areas. The government must bring all such criminals under the purview of the law regardless of their political affiliations. Political parties must shun the age-old practice of confrontation and the use of violence and the legal system to harass, intimidate and remove political opponents. As the police have launched an investigation, identifying one suspect and seeking public assistance, we must refrain from making assumptions and jumping to conclusions. Engaging in a blame game only aggravates political tensions.

At the time of writing this editorial, Hadi is still fighting for his life; we hope and pray for his recovery and that his assailants are quickly caught.

## Protect our migrants from trafficking networks

### Dismantle the gangs, ensure legal labour migration

It is deeply disturbing that our aspiring migrant workers are being subjected to brutal exploitation along illegal migration routes to Europe. According to a report in this daily, traffickers lure young men with promises of well-paid jobs in Greece, only to trap them in a vicious cycle of torture, extortion, and near-death experiences in transit countries such as Libya.

The ordeal of Akbar Samrat, a 25-year-old electrician from Chandpur, exposes the unimaginable cruelty faced by many of our migrants. After selling his property and borrowing heavily, Akbar paid Tk 15 lakh to traffickers who promised him work in Greece. Instead, he was smuggled through Dubai and Egypt to Libya, where armed gangs detained him, subjected him to horrific torture, and demanded ransom from his family. Even after his family paid Tk 11 lakh under duress, his suffering did not end. Akbar spent weeks in captivity before finally being rescued with the help of the International Organization for Migration and returned home.

Investigations by the CID's Trafficking in Human Being unit reveal that at least 18 others were deceived by the same network within a year, with traffickers extracting an estimated Tk 3.5 crore from hopeful migrants. The syndicate operated with chilling efficiency, maintaining contacts in Libya and Greece, extorting families through multiple bank accounts, and sending victims on perilous Mediterranean boat journeys after ransom payments. While some reached Europe, many perished at sea. It was also reported earlier how our migrants who legally travelled to Russia with work visas were coerced into joining the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. These disturbing trends reflect the deep flaws in our migration system and the pervasive networks of traffickers who prey on vulnerable workers. The fact that Bangladeshis now rank highest among nationalities attempting to enter Europe illegally via the Mediterranean, with numbers rising sharply this year, underscores the gravity of the crisis.

We urge the government to treat illegal migration and human trafficking as a national emergency. Law enforcement agencies must dismantle trafficking networks in their entirety, trace financial flows, and pursue collaborators both at home and abroad. Meanwhile, targeted awareness campaigns are essential in high-risk regions such as Madaripur, Shariatpur, Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Narsingdi. Bhairab, where traffickers are most active. It is equally vital for the government to expand legal pathways for migration, so that desperate individuals are not forced into the hands of traffickers. Stronger coordination with international partners, including transit and destination countries, is also crucial to protect our migrants, bring those trapped in foreign countries home, and prosecute the traffickers.

# The Police Commission Ordinance is an eyewash at best



Dr. Iftekharuzzaman is executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). Views expressed here are the author's own.

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The longstanding public demand and decades of relentless advocacy by stakeholders, particularly articulated as a key aspiration of the July movement, for an independent police commission, have been ruthlessly and shamelessly shattered by the Police Commission Ordinance 2025, gazetted on December 09, 2025. The ordinance is conceptually and strategically flawed. It sabotages the whole purpose of an independent police commission.

An outfit created based on this ordinance will not only fail to fit the purpose but also further entrench the government's control, especially the home ministry, through the vested forces of administrative and police bureaucracy, over any possibility of police professionalism and accountability. It will at best become a post-retirement resort for deputed and in-service bureaucrats who will deliver the job of protection, promotion and impunity of police wrongdoings that police of Bangladesh are known for. It will serve no public interest while public money will be unnecessarily wasted under the façade of a police commission.

The framers of this ordinance have failed to realise that the indispensable precondition of a police commission, people expect, is that it must first and foremost be independent and free from any influence of the government and police itself to ensure police accountability, transparency, and professionalism by investigating abuse of power, including all forms of disproportionate use of force and corruption without fear or favour. What we have under the ordinance is an opening to legitimise just the opposite. An outfit created through this ordinance cannot operate independently from political, governmental and police influence—especially that of the home ministry, the clutches of civil and uniformed bureaucratic power. It will not be public interest-oriented where the rule of law prevails; police and citizens' grievances and complaints are effectively addressed; police governance meets the standards of transparency and accountability; and public trust in the police is regained.

Independence of the proposed police commission is crucial, not only because our police force has become infamous for being involved unaccountably in all forms and categories of abuses of power, brutality, and crime, but also due to the deep politicisation of the police. Over the years, it has transformed into a weapon for the "winner-takes-all" game, becoming a pillar of

authoritarianism for 15 years, enabled by both the home ministry and the police rank and file, who were both victims and beneficiaries. This business model of police force's professional bankruptcy cannot be dismantled overnight, though an unprecedented opportunity for comprehensive police reforms was created at high cost in the wake of the July uprising, at the core of which lies the aspiration for an independent police commission.

The Police Commission Ordinance, 2025, issued by the interim government, is regrettably an outrageous affront to this aspiration. It ridiculed the basic

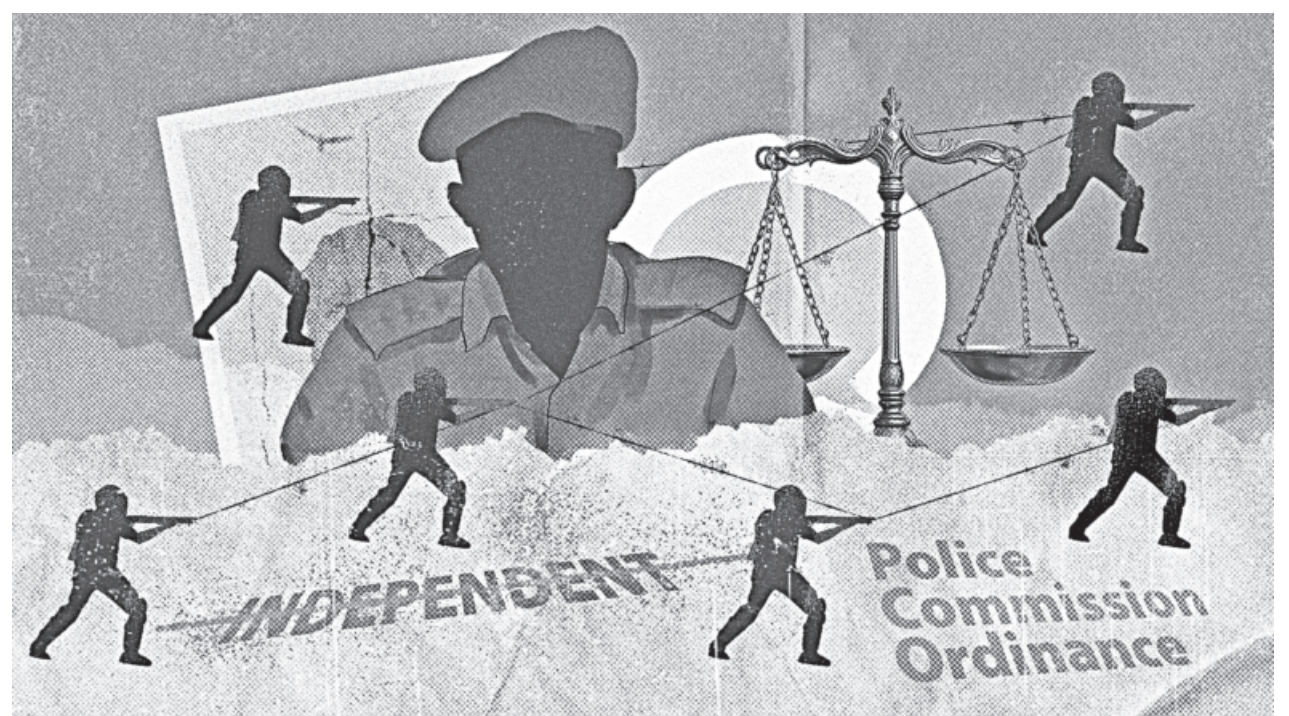
expertise, experience and professional composition of individuals to be represented, there is no example of a priori determination of the specific categories and numbers of individuals to be appointed, and that too with clear conflict of interest. Not only that, while most such commissions typically have a secretary to the commission who works under its supervision, reporting to it and attending meetings ex officio, subject to procedures determined by the commission, nowhere is there a provision for a member-secretary. And that too a representative of the police, who, in all likelihood, will be hand-picked by the government—it will be the determining factor making the commission compliant to government dictates.

Furthermore, the ordinance also renders the selection committee a mere rubber-stamp. Para 9 of the ordinance proposed that the selection committee be composed of six members, including the cabinet secretary and home secretary, who will, quite

Ordinance? The latter provision limits presidential discretion, usually blessed by the ruling party. Also, why should it not be mandatory to disclose the shortlisted names for public information?

The range of items listed under para 13 is also conceptually flawed, lacking a proper understanding of human rights and the role of police. It provides for striking a balance between "public security and human rights," thus failing to ensure precedence of human rights, which by itself is an essential prerequisite of public security. Nevertheless, the term, public security, remains undefined in the ordinance, leaving scope for arbitrary interpretation and abuse. The para also provides the proposed commission with the authority to only recommend measures, with practically no provision for enforcement.

Para 13 also mentions two separate committees—Citizen Complaint Management Committee and Police Grievance Redress Committee—both to



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

requirement of giving the proposed entity—the police commission—the status of independence. The ordinance described the commission as a so-called statutory body, while there is no mention of the term or concept of independence, nor any provision for it to function outside the control of the law ministry and selected police officials and bureaucrats. It will be formed under the full authority of the government and operated as such, which doesn't make any sense for a commission worth its name.

In para 6, the ordinance dictates that it will be headed by five individuals, of whom one must be a retired bureaucrat and another a retired police officer, who will also be the commission's member-secretary, an unusual provision for any such commission. While both national and international good practices do provide the prerequisites, such as

understandably, play the determining role in the proceedings and selection. Additionally, the main opposition party in the parliament does not get to nominate its representative for the selection committee. The ordinance authorises the parliamentary committee on home to carry out that task. Anyone aware of the track record of parliamentary committees would not doubt that this choice would at best be controversial, if not imposed by the ruling party.

Besides, it is not clear why the home ministry has to provide secretarial support to the selection committee and not a separate office so that the scope of conflict of interest can be minimised. Moreover, why should the selection committee recommend two names for appointment against each commission position, instead of one, as in the case of the new National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

be composed of the three commission members. Clearly, their work will be hindered by conflicts of interest due to the influence of bureaucratic and police dominance within the commission, as mentioned earlier. Para 19 (2) authorises the commission to "settle through coordination" any complaint that could be in the jurisdiction of the NHRC, which is another example of a conceptual flaw, because in such instances, NHRC's authority should have precedence.

Finally, the proposed commission under this ordinance will be practically governed, managed and operated by deputed officials from the bureaucracy and police at practically all levels with no financial independence as provided under para 23, 24, and 25.

The key message of the Police Commission Ordinance, 2025, is: forget about police reform in Bangladesh, treat it as an eyewash at best.

## From Jihad to Sajid: Why Bangladesh needs tort law



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MST ASMA MAHMUD

Two-year-old Sajid from Rajshahi was found dead on December 11, after more than 30 agonising hours trapped inside a narrow shaft, approximately 30 feet deep. Rescuers worked day and night tirelessly, while the country watched helplessly. When Sajid was finally pulled out, the doctor declared him dead. This incident once again exposed the shortcomings of our rescue institutions and the legal system. A similar tragic incident occurred back in December 2014 in Shahjahanpur, Dhaka, where a four-year-old boy named Jihad fell into an unsealed deep well shaft. His death shocked the nation. The High Court intervened and, after two years of legal battle, ordered compensation for his family in 2016. Bangladesh Railway and the Department of Fire Service & Civil Defence were each ordered to pay Tk 10 lakh, an acknowledgment that negligence has consequences.

The appeal, however, took two more years to reach its final decision. Unfortunately, that judgment did not lead to any meaningful reform.

These incidents are not accidents. An open tube well shaft is a visible, deadly trap. Leaving such structures uncapped is pure negligence. And when negligence repeatedly causes the death of children, the problem is not individual oversight—it is a systemic failure of legal accountability, most specifically the application of tort law. Bangladesh lacks a strong system of tort law—the set of civil rules that make wrongdoers pay victims and push institutions to prioritise safety. Without the fear of civil liability, negligence becomes normal, hidden, and unquestioned.

In most cases of negligence-related deaths and damages, victims and their families primarily seek justice through criminal cases. However, in instances of

institutional and individual negligence, it is very difficult to establish criminal liability for a specific person, and punishing an individual is often unlikely, but this does not address the broken systems. In such cases, the appropriate remedy is the effective application of tort law: by turning harm into financial accountability, compelling institutions to adopt safer practices because the cost of negligence becomes too high to ignore.

Families like Sajid's face difficulty in filing a writ petition before the High Court Division without a suo-moto ruling from the High Court or NGO-led public interest litigation, as it involves financial expenses, travel to Dhaka, and hiring a lawyer. Besides this, civil courts, although having the jurisdiction to award compensation, lack laws regarding civil negligence and the measurement of damages. Therefore, filing a tort claim in Bangladesh is uncertain, prolonged, and practically inaccessible for ordinary citizens.

This lack of civil accountability also influences how buildings are constructed, roads are maintained, medical services are delivered, and public infrastructure is managed. When hospitals know they will never face serious malpractice lawsuits, safety protocols remain weak. When

transport companies understand wrongful death suits are unlikely, reckless driving continues. When municipalities realise they will not be sued for leaving hazards in public spaces, those hazards stay until someone is harmed or dies. It is not about money; it is about creating a system where safety costs less than carelessness. An effective tort system would compel authorities to seal abandoned wells, conduct regular inspections of public spaces, enforce safety standards, and maintain infrastructure properly. It would provide parents with legal acknowledgment for the wrongful loss of their children. It would push institutions to act proactively before tragedy happens, not after.

The emotional impact of Sajid's tragic death should not fade into another news cycle. His death—and Jihad's before him—should force a national reckoning. Bangladesh urgently needs a modern tort law that clearly defines negligence, imposes strict liability for public hazards, allows quick compensation, and establishes a civil justice pathway that victims can actually access. Without it, we will keep seeing lives lost to hazards that everyone knew existed, everyone knew were dangerous, and yet no one bothered to fix.

MARTYRED INTELLECTUALS DAY 2025

# What does it mean to honour the legacy of Bangladesh's martyred intellectuals?



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ASIF BIN ALI

Occupying powers often follow the same old playbook. They fight not only armed opponents, but also the social conditions that make resistance possible—education, free speech, professional integrity, and the willingness to question authority. If these survive, a society can rebuild even after defeat. But if they are destroyed, even a so-called victory can become a lasting defeat.

Bangladesh in 1971 followed this pattern. The violence carried out by the then-Pakistan army that year was not merely widespread; it was targeted. It focused on two connected groups: spaces where knowledge is produced and people who keep public life active. Dhaka University was not simply caught in the crossfire, nor were journalists, teachers, doctors, writers, and artists randomly targeted later in 1971. They were chosen deliberately. To the attackers, these individuals and institutions were obstacles. This is a truth we must confront. For the perpetrators, ideas were not harmless; they were dangerous.

Operation Searchlight began with an assault designed to paralyse Dhaka. By December 1971, the violence had become more focused. Journalists, university teachers, writers, doctors, thinkers, artists, and other professionals were tracked, abducted, blindfolded, and taken to killing sites around Dhaka, including

carried out these crimes alone. It relied on local networks; groups such as Al-Badr and Al-Shams were tasked with hunting down intellectuals. According to Banglapedia, Pakistani forces killed 1,111 intellectuals during the Liberation War, including 149 in Dhaka alone.

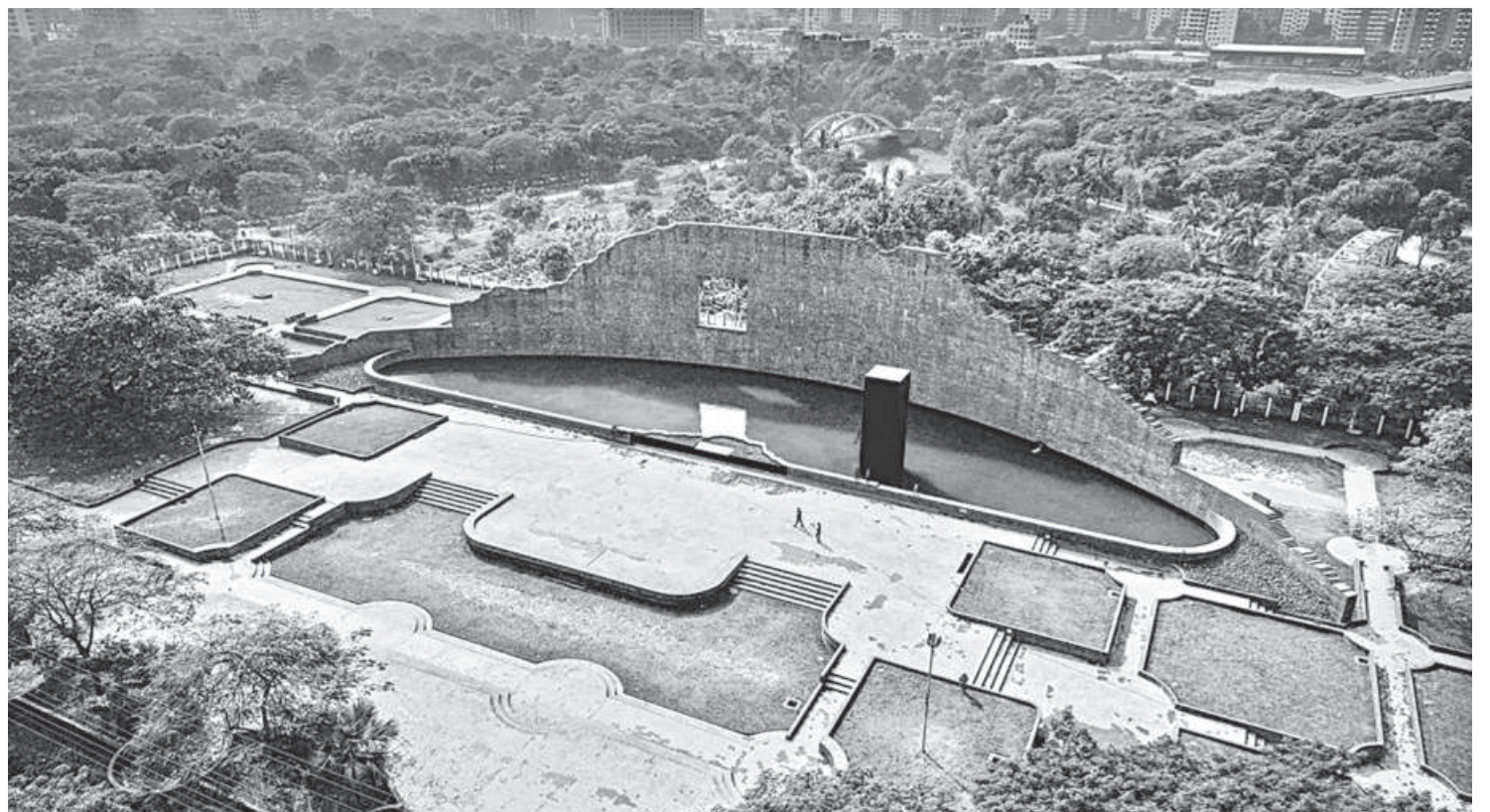
What distinguishes the final phase of 1971 is this shift from mass intimidation to targeted killing. This is why collaboration is central to understanding these events. Targeted violence requires social knowledge. An army can seal off streets, raid neighbourhoods, and spread fear through open force. But it cannot, on its own, locate a person's residence at midnight or know who edits which newspaper, who teaches in which department, or who influences which community. That knowledge comes from within society itself. This is why targeted political killings almost always depend on local assistance. There is always another layer behind what we see—a network behind the network. Ignoring this turns a political crime into a story of faceless violence, and faceless stories are easier to forget.

For this reason, Bangladesh observes December 14 as Martyred Intellectuals Day. It is more than a date marking the end of the war. It symbolises the war's most cynical objective: to cripple the nation's future by destroying its intellectual foundation.

That is why a second battle often begins after the guns fall silent: the battle over narrative. In recent years, a troubling pattern has re-emerged in how some speak about the martyred intellectuals. Instead of asking who abducted and killed them in 1971, some question why they stayed at home, why they did not cross the border to seek shelter in India, why they continued working, or why they accepted salaries from

intellectuals and professionals precisely because they fear organised public life. In occupied Poland during World War II, Nazi policy included systematic attacks on educated citizens and civic leaders, driven by the belief that a society without teachers, cultural figures, and community organisers would be easier to control. In Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, education and professional life were viewed with deep

Ultimately, this commitment must return us to the promise made at Bangladesh's birth: a society founded on equality, human dignity, and social justice. These are not ornamental ideals. They are the standards by which the state should be shaped and civic life conducted. The Constitution of Bangladesh places human dignity at its core, offering rights and legal protections that are not favours granted by power. If we are



The Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial in the capital's Rayerbazar. The monument was designed by architects Farid U Ahmed and Jami Al Shafi to honour the luminaries who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence.

FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

**What distinguishes the final phase of 1971 is this shift from mass intimidation to targeted killing. This is why collaboration is central to understanding these events. Targeted violence requires social knowledge. An army can seal off streets, raid neighbourhoods, and spread fear through open force. But it cannot, on its own, locate a person's residence at midnight or know who edits which newspaper, who teaches in which department, or who influences which community. That knowledge comes from within society itself. This is why targeted political killings almost always depend on local assistance. There is always another layer behind what we see—a network behind the network. Ignoring this turns a political crime into a story of faceless violence, and faceless stories are easier to forget.**

Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Rajarbagh, and Rayerbazar. Many were tortured and murdered, their bodies dumped in mass graves. The Pakistan army could not have

Remembering this day reminds us that sovereignty is not only about borders. It is also about the freedom to think, speak, teach, and build institutions without fear.

the Pakistan government. These questions are sometimes framed as "criticism," but their intent is often political rather than scholarly. They attempt to shift suspicion onto the victims and divert accountability away from perpetrators and collaborators.

This is not a minor shift. It alters the moral structure of the story. Once victims are portrayed as compromised, their killing appears less like a crime and more like an unfortunate consequence. This is how justification takes shape—not through open defence of murder, but through the slow erosion of public sympathy. Such reasoning is morally indefensible. It punishes the dead for being targeted, undermines collective trust, and teaches society to doubt those singled out by terror. In doing so, it leaves space for future violence to be excused in the same way.

History offers many parallels. Across different contexts, regimes have targeted

suspicion. Violence against those linked to learning and urban institutions caused long-term damage to the country's social fabric.

Different places and ideologies share the same instinct: to dominate a population, weaken the people and institutions that help it remain resilient.

What does it mean, then, to honour the legacy of Bangladesh's martyred intellectuals? It requires more than remembrance; it must become a civic practice. It begins with rejecting defamation and continues with defending the idea that citizens contribute in different ways, according to their skills and capacities. In any liberation struggle, some march, some fight, some organise, some write, some teach, some document, and some create art to sustain hope. A movement is built through many roles, not a single model of heroism.

serious about equality, dignity, and justice, they must be practised daily as institutions are built. Universities must allow space for difficult questions. Newsrooms must report facts without fear. Courts must protect people equally, whether powerful or powerless. And as a society, we must allow room for disagreement, because a country that forces everyone to speak in one voice is not stable—it is afraid.

This is the deeper lesson of the 1971 Liberation War. Genocide is not only the destruction of bodies; it is an attempt to shatter a society's confidence. The perpetrators seek to teach that resistance is futile, that truth is dangerous, and that silence is safer than courage. Against this logic, we must defend rights for all, keep institutions fair, and protect the freedom to speak when power demands silence. This is how the legacy of the martyred intellectuals endures—not as ritual, but as responsibility.

## Martyred intellectuals: The torchbearers of our nation



Mohammed Ishtiaque Khan is a journalist at The Daily Star.

MOHAMMED ISHTIAQUE KHAN

I remember reading a memorable quote from one of the characters in Humayun Ahmed's novel *Jochona O Jononir Golpo* (2004). She says something along the lines of: "Muktijuddho touched every Bangladeshi soul. For some, it was intense; for others, it was a light touch. But not a single person was spared."

What the country's most popular novelist tried to convey through this statement is that the reported 30 lakh casualties were not merely a statistic. Every one of the deceased souls belonged to one, two, or even more families. Brothers lost sisters; parents lost children; grandparents lost granddaughters and grandsons; young women lost their betrothed; many lost their friends, and so on. Some even lost their entire family. As a result of the systematic ethnic cleansing carried out by the then-Pakistani army and its cohorts, two or even three generations of a family were simply erased; their names now remain inscribed only on tombstones.

However, the killing of doctors, teachers, educationists, and other prominent "intellectuals" was a particularly horrendous massacre carried out in 1971—one that has very few parallels in human history. This targeted killing affected my family as well. Nevertheless, they were considered lucky in many ways, since only my grandfather, Dr Serajul Haque Khan, was abducted and killed. His wife, five sons, three daughters, brothers, and sisters were somehow left



Martyred intellectual Dr Serajul Haque Khan. PHOTO COURTESY: MOHAMMED ISHTIAQUE KHAN

unharmful.

My grandfather was a prominent educationist and academic at the University of Dhaka. He served as a faculty member at the Institute of Education and Research (IER), where he contributed significantly to the field of education during a turbulent period in Bangladesh's history. After earning his Doctor of Education (EdD) degree in 1967

from the University of Northern Colorado in the US, he joined IER as a senior lecturer. He was respected among his peers, loved by his family, and a central figure in the university staff quarters' community.

On December 14, 1971, my grandfather was abducted and killed by the cohorts of the Pakistani army. The *razakars*, as they have been termed since then—the collaborators

knew him during his brief life, cut short by the Pakistani army.

One of our favourite stories to relive and imagine was the day my grandfather quit his well-paying and influential government job. After his graduation, he began his career as an inspector with the Department of Customs and Excise of the then-Pakistani government. But three months later, when

**On December 14, 1971, my grandfather was abducted and killed by the cohorts of the Pakistani army. The razakars, as they have been termed since then—the collaborators of the repressive West Pakistan regime—killed many others on that same day, and this much information is available on the internet. However, what you may not know is that Serajul Haque was also a loving, albeit tough, father. His eldest son left us a few years back, but until the day he breathed his last, he had many stories to tell about his father. The same goes for everyone else who knew him during his brief life, cut short by the Pakistani army.**

a businessman had the audacity to offer him a bribe, he left the job. Even the prospect of declining such offers disgusted him. After quitting, he moved into the field of teaching. The rest is, obviously, history. My grandfather, as I learned from my uncles and aunts, was a jolly person—a family man, through and through. He enjoyed reading the morning paper while holding

a steaming cup of milk tea. He believed in Ayurvedic treatment. His wife prepared the concoction every day, and she did so even on the fateful day of December 14. But my grandfather never got the chance to take it. He was picked up unceremoniously by members of Al-Badr.

His body was discovered in Mirpur (now the Jollad Khana Boddhoyumi) long after the country was liberated—almost three weeks after the ceremonial red and green flags were hoisted across the country. His young children identified his decomposed body by the expensive watch he wore, which, surprisingly, remained intact, along with the remains of his distinct clothing.

Fast forward many years. Nowadays, I come across questions about why the martyred intellectuals did not flee to safety or why they kept their government jobs under West Pakistan—shocking and offensive questions that fail to comprehend wartime realities. They come across as deliberate insults towards the memories of our martyred intellectuals and their contribution to the Liberation War. It is similar to a certain quarter's overzealous attitude about the actual number of casualties during the war. It is as if every incident, event, memory, and source of pride that revolves around Muktijuddho needs to be "questioned."

It was not like this all the time. Growing up in the 1980s, as a third-generation member of a "buddhijibi poribar," I mostly received respect, admiration, and kindness from others. My grandfather, and the numerous others who were killed on that fateful day still live on as a source of inspiration. If they were still alive, we could have become a different nation. Questions can always be asked, but that does not necessarily mean those questions have any merit. The martyred intellectuals were the torchbearers—each in their own field—and nothing can change this fact. Ever.



## 24th Young artists showcase talent at Shilpakala Academy



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE**  
The inauguration ceremony of the 24th Young Artists' Art Exhibition 2025 was held on December 11 at the National Art Gallery Auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, celebrating emerging artistic talent from across the country.

Although the programme was scheduled to begin at 4 pm, it started at around 5:45pm. Cultural affairs adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki inaugurated the exhibition as chief guest. Renowned artists Professor Dr Abdus Sattar and Professor Mostafizul Haque attended the event as guests

of honour, while Mr Sheikh Rezauddin Ahmed, director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, presided over the ceremony.

Reflecting on the nature of art, Professor Abdus Sattar said, "Every country carries a distinct artistic identity. You can often recognise where an artwork is from at first glance. Take Ravi Varma's *Urvashi*—the story behind it alone could fill a book. Art is not just about visual admiration; every work carries a narrative."

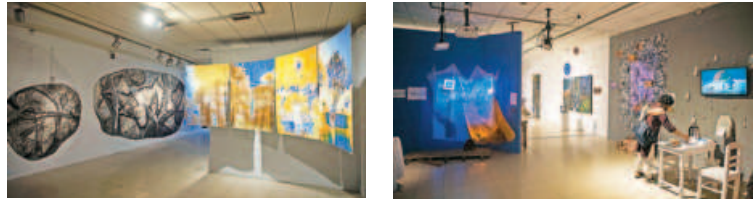
Farooki apologised for arriving late and said he felt

for artists," he said. "But what truly matters is the personal signature in an artwork—just as a Van Gogh painting is instantly recognisable."

Following the speeches, a prize-giving ceremony was held. Seven participatory honour prizes were awarded. Ashfiqur Rahman won the first prize, Sheema Mondol secured second place, and Noor-e-Ala Siddique received the third prize.

The evening concluded with guests visiting the galleries to view the exhibited artworks.

The exhibition will remain open to the public till December



inspired by the young artists on display. "Competition can be both inspiring and unsettling

22, daily from 11 am to 8 pm, at Galleries 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the National Art Gallery.



**'NAKSHIKATHAR JAMIN' TO HAVE SPECIAL SCREENING TO COMMEMORATE VICTORY MONTH**

To mark the month of Victory, the Liberation War-based film *Nakshikathar Jamin*, directed by Akram Khan and starring Jaya Ahsan, is set to return to the big screen.

Based on Hasan Azizul Haque's acclaimed story *Bidhobader Kotha*, the film revisits the trauma of 1971 through an emotional lens. The narrative follows two sisters whose lives are shaped by

love, sacrifice, and survival amid wartime turmoil.

The film will be screened on December 20 at 5:30 pm at the Russian Cultural Centre, in remembrance of the martyrs and war heroines.

Jaya Ahsan and Fariha Shams Sheuti lead the cast, alongside Iresh Zaker, Rawnak Hasan, Dibya Joyti, and others.

## NEWS

### TIB slams bureaucratic

**FROM PAGE 14**  
surrender to bureaucrats with anti-reform interests.

In a statement yesterday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said after the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance was published as a gazette, TIB and other stakeholders—despite weaknesses—had hoped that an opportunity had emerged to free the commission from bureaucratic capture and to constitute it in line with public expectations and international standards.

"However, within just one month, on December 9, 2025, the very selection committee that could have served as the cornerstone for preventing bureaucratic

abuse of power has been transformed into an instrument of government control."

"The Human Rights Commission and other commissions in Bangladesh have long been ineffective due to government influence, and this change in the selection committee is essentially not an isolated incident but rather an example of a conspiratorial attempt to maintain the same process," he added.

Describing this bureaucratic takeover of the selection committee—and the government's acquiescence—as deeply disappointing, Iftekharuzzaman said the amendment includes a commendable provision

to establish a national preventive mechanism to prevent cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

However, the inclusion of the cabinet secretary in the selection committee alone undermines all prospects of the independence, impartiality, and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission and the very spirit of that provision.

Moreover, the TIB chief noted that the ordinance replaces obligatory requirements with permissive provisions. He pointed out that instead of binding requirement to inform the commission about measures taken in response to the commission's orders, the new wording makes it

more flexible with phrases like "may be informed," along with the addition of several similar provisions. This, he said, tramples all positive potential that the ordinance was expected to deliver.

TIB called upon the government to immediately withdraw from this embarrassing position of surrender to a sabotage-driven, anti-reform bureaucratic clique; to repeal all imposed provisions in the ordinance—particularly the decision to include the cabinet secretary in the selection committee—and to completely overhaul the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance anew.

### Parties vow unity against plots to derail

**FROM PAGE 1**  
showcase their strength and sabotage all preparations for the election. These plots must be resisted through unity."

Yunus said the attack was part of a premeditated conspiracy, backed by powerful forces.

"Based on the information received so far, it appears that the conspirators have expanded their network. They have deployed trained shooters on the ground."

The chief adviser urged the parties to move away from the conflicts that have emerged among the forces supporting the July uprising.

"Do not let divisions spread among yourselves. Let there be political statements, but we must move away from a culture of viewing others as enemies or attacking them."

"Elections bring tension, yet it must remain within limits."

BNP Standing Committee members Salahuddin Ahmed and Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmad; Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar and Assistant Secretary Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair; NCP Convener Nahid Islam and Chief Organiser (southern region) Hasnat Abdullah; and Inqilab Moncho Member-Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber and Law Adviser Asif Nazrul took part in the meeting.

Leaders said they would take a firm stance on strengthening communication among parties to prevent any cracks in the unity among anti-fascist political forces, noting that failure to do so would only ease the way for the return of the ousted Awami League.

BNP leader Salahuddin said unity was essential in the current situation, adding that under no circumstances should blame be cast on one

another. "No matter how much our political statements differ, for the sake of the nation and for the spirit of July, we must stay united."

He advised the government to intensify efforts to recover illegal arms and take action against the conspirators. Jamaat leader Porwar said the tendency to blame one another through political statements has increased in recent times, "creating opportunities for opponents."

"For petty party interests, we have turned each other into adversaries. Why should we speak in ways that divide the nation? We must remain united as before. All parties must reaffirm their commitment."

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said coordinated efforts have been underway since the July uprising to diminish its significance, adding that whichever

party comes to power after the election will also face its consequences.

"Narratives are being created in the media and on social media platforms to portray those behind the uprising as criminals, while efforts are underway to normalise the Awami League and Jatiya Party.

"We do not need special security, nor will we accept it. July must be collectively owned. In the tug-of-war over who defines July, we are destroying it ourselves. Conspirators see our disunity as defeat. They are doing whatever they please from India, while we remain powerless."

Nahid Islam further said those operating under the guise of intellectuals and cultural activists to advance the Awami League's agenda must be stopped.

Hasnat Abdullah said no security measure would be enough if parties did not remain united.

### Arrest attackers

**FROM PAGE 14**  
Editor Mahmudur Rahman formally called for the all-party rally at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3:00pm on December 15.

Rahman threatened a larger movement against the government if the attackers were not apprehended within the 48-hour deadline.

The rally was moderated by Inqilab Moncho founding member secretary Masudur Rahman. Other speakers included Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish chief Mamunul Haque, AB Party Secretary Asaduzzaman Fuaad, Inqilab Moncho member secretary Abdullah Al Jaber, and Inqilab Moncho and Ducusu leader Fatema Tasnim Juma.

The programme concluded with a procession.

Meanwhile, BNP senior leader Mirza Abbas termed the attack "a small portion of a big conspiracy" ahead of the national election. He made the remark while addressing a protest rally in front of the party's Nayapaltna central office.

He said, "This is not an isolated incident. First, BNP's candidate Ershad Ullah was attacked in Chattogram, now Hadi has been attacked in Dhaka. This is a small part of a big conspiracy."

Later, the party members brought out a procession that marched through the Bijoynagar and Fakirapool areas.

In Jhalakathi, the district unit BNP organised a procession from its party office, which marched through the town's main roads and ended in front of the press club. In Rangamati and Manikganj, BNP supporters also held protest processions.

Protest programmes were also held in Tangail, Siraganj, Patuakhali, and Kishoreganj.

Hadi was shot by miscreants in Paltan area on Friday. He is now undergoing treatment at a hospital.

### Jail term to be scrapped

**FROM PAGE 14**  
The Medical Education and Family Planning Division of the health ministry prepared the draft and uploaded it on its website last week, seeking public opinion.

Mollika Khatton, joint secretary (medical education) of the division, said the draft was prepared to address some issues that were not covered by the existing 15-year-old law.

"We have sought opinions from stakeholders, and several meetings will be held before the draft is finalised," she told this correspondent.

Experts have welcomed the formation of medical tribunals to address professional misconduct by doctors, but voiced concerns over several other proposals, including the scrapping of jail terms for prescribing banned medicines.

Syed Mahbubul Alam, a Supreme Court lawyer and policy expert, said the proposal to cancel the jail term provision should be reconsidered, as it could drive up the use of banned medicines, posing serious risks to public health.

"Only imposing a fine for this offence is not enough," the public health lawyer told this correspondent.

He also noted that the jail term for those practising without BMDC registration should not be reduced.

"The draft is still under scrutiny, and the authorities should take these issues into account. Otherwise, the move will not yield much benefit."

When asked about scrapping the jail term for prescribing banned medicines, BMDC President Saiful Islam said doctors in Bangladesh sometimes need to prescribe unregistered medicines to patients who return home after receiving treatment abroad.

### BNP assures allies of fair number of seats

**FROM PAGE 14**  
separately, and if necessary, it will withdraw their declared candidates.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, along with Standing Committee

members Nazrul Islam Khan, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, were present at the meeting held at the BNP Chairperson's Office in Gulshan.

"We are continuing our discussions with partners—the seat-sharing issue will be finalised very soon," Tuku told The Daily Star after the meeting.

At the meeting, the 29 party leaders expressed their frustration that the candidate announcements were made without prior consultations with allies, Syed Ehsanul Huda, spokesperson for the I2-party alliance, told The Daily Star.

"Everyone spoke in the same tone—that the BNP's behaviour is disrespectful. It was wrong to announce seats without consulting partners. Are you [BNP] trying to isolate yourself from everyone? If you want to go with a single policy, we need clarity on that," said Huda, the chairman of Bangladesh Jatiya Dal.

So far, the BNP has left out one seat for each of its allies.

While the other parties are trying to bring various groups on board, the BNP appears to be losing its allies in the political field, he said.

"Even if you form a government after the election, don't think all problems will be solved. You will still need these parties," Huda added.

However, most leaders stopped short of cutting ties with the party, believing that the move

would be more harmful than beneficial.

"We had asked, if you don't want to keep us, just tell us," said Fariduzzaman Farhad, coordinator of Jatiyatabadi Somomona Jote.

Fakhru has said they may change candidates for seat adjustments, he said.

Several leaders at the meeting also pointed out that neither of the two rounds of candidate announcements included figures from the July movement.

"Since the BNP had promised to consider the parties participating in the simultaneous movement, they have said they will implement it," said Rashed Khan, general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad.

The BNP has stated that their candidate list, announced in two phases, is a preliminary one and they will sit with partners in 2-3 days to finalise seat adjustments, he added.

The party has promised to resolve seat-related issues by December 17-18, said Saiful of Biplobi Workers Party.

The BNP leaders said that they acknowledged the concerns of their partners, but they said the party does not want to be seen as handing over seats to the opposition.

"Considering the ground reality of the partners, we don't want to lose seats or give away seats," said a senior BNP leader asking not to be named to speak candidly on the party's predicament.

Leaders of Ganasamhati Andolon, Ganatantra Manch, Gonoforum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bhashani Janashakti Party, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh, among others, also attended the meeting.

in response to a question, he said that if a doctor prescribes any medicine banned by the government, it will be considered a criminal offence, and the matter will be handled by a medical tribunal.

When this correspondent told him that the punishment would only be a fine of Tk 5 lakh in such a case, he said they believe the fine is sufficient to deter doctors from prescribing banned medicines.

**CHANGES, NEW PROVISIONS**  
The draft proposes reducing the punishment for any MBBS or BDS degree holder who practises medicine without BMDC registration.

Anyone found guilty of this violation may face one year's imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh, or both, whereas the existing law stipulates three years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both, for the offence.

The draft states that anyone without an MBBS or BDS degree may face up to five years in prison or a fine of Tk 10 lakh, or both, for using the title "Dr". Repeat offenders will face double the penalties.

The existing law stipulates a jail term of up to three years or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both for the same offence.

The draft includes a section that says a doctor or a dentist may face a fine of Tk 5 lakh for using an unauthorised degree, post, or symbol. It also proposes one year's imprisonment for medical technologists for providing services without BMDC registration.

It suggests increasing the fine on a medical or dental institution to Tk 1 crore from Tk 5 lakh for operating without BMDC approval.

There is also a provision for imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of Tk 10 lakh or both for obtaining BMDC registration through deception or for falsely claiming to be registered doctors.

The existing law stipulates three years in jail or a fine of Tk 1 lakh or both for these offences. **INVESTIGATION, TRIAL**  
One or more "medical tribunals" will be set up, and the BMDC may refer any complaints against a doctor to them for disposal.

Each tribunal will be led by a retired district judge. It'll include two professor-level doctors as members, one of whom must be a woman. Any decision made by the Professional Discipline Committee of the BMDC can be challenged before a tribunal. The tribunal will also have jurisdiction over offences such as causing death by negligence, as mentioned in several sections of the Penal Code, 1860. Tribunal verdicts can be challenged before a three-member Medical Appeal Tribunal, headed by a sitting or former Supreme Court judge or an individual of equivalent status. **FUNCTIONING OF BMDC**  
Under the existing law, the president and vice president of the BMDC are elected by its members. The draft proposes that the government form a search committee to select them. It also said the BMDC will hold three meetings annually instead of two, as stipulated in the existing law. The new law will make mandatory annual inspections of medical and dental institutions by BMDC teams, which are not required under the existing law.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.**  
**Office of the Executive Engineer,**  
**Barisal PWD Division, Barishal.**  
[www.pwd.barisal.gov.bd](http://www.pwd.barisal.gov.bd)

Memo...6037/3 Dated:- 11/12/2025

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

SL No	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Name of works	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	1158507	PWD/Bari/BITAC/Li/2/025-26	Establishment of 6 (six) Centers of BITAC in Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Barishal, Rangpur, Jamalpur and Jashore District one at Barishal (Sub Head: Supplying and Installation of Lift)	29/12/2025 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (Email: [helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

  
 (Md. Faisal Alam)  
**Executive Engineer,**  
**PWD Division, Barishal.**  
 Tel- 02478864915  
 e-mail : [ee\\_bari@pwd.gov.bd](mailto:ee_bari@pwd.gov.bd)

GD-2728

**Office of the Sub-Project Manager (SPM)**  
HEAT Sub-Project: "A Study of Microplastic Pollution ....."  
Department of Chemistry  
University of Barishal, Barishal-8254

Reference No. BU/CHEM/HEAT-13838/03 & 05/Advertisement/4 Date: 14 December 2025

**e-Tender Notice 01/2025-2026 (OTM)**

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

SI No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of goods	Last selling date and time	Closing and opening date and time
1	1191996	BU/PIN13838/G-1	Procurement of ICT Equipment for SPMT Office	28/12/25 5:00pm	29/12/25 2:00pm
2	1191732	BU/PIN13838/G-3	Supply and Installation of Laboratory Equipment and Printer	04/01/26 5:00pm	05/01/26 2:00pm

These are online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tenders, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Sd/-  
**Sub-Project Manager**  
HEAT Sub-Project  
Department of Chemistry  
University of Barishal

GD-2733

**People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Court, Dhaka

Present:  
**Mr. Md. Sabbir Faiz**  
(Metro Sessions Judge)  
Metropolitan Senior Special Judge, Dhaka.

**Permission Petition No. 1166/2025**

Order No. 01, Date: 18-11-2025

Investigation officer Mr. Md. Sheikh Rasel, PPM-Seba, BP No. 8214166220, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Financial Crime, Organized Crime, CID, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka submitted a petition under Source Memo-CI/Financial/Crime/BFIU/Verification/22-2025/1987, Dated: 04.06.2025, BFIU(Monitoring-2/DFS and Cyber-01/2025-2670; dated: 01.09.2025 under Sections 2(ক) (5), 2(ক)(14) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 (Amendment-2015) to freeze assets of accused namely Tanvir Ahmad Mishuk and others and 55 Bank Accounts, 20 Credit Card, RFC information and their family members and also related to his interests under Section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

The petition is taken up for hearing, Heard learned Additional Public Prosecutor and gone through the petition as well as the records. It is found that an enquiry is undergoing against the aforesaid alleged accused Tanvir Ahmad Mishuk and others and 55 Bank Accounts, 20 Credit Card, RFC information and their family members and also related to his interests under Section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012. It appears from the record that the alleged offender has acquired huge amount of illegal wealth beyond their known source of income by adopting illegal means and if those assets are not attached and frozen those assets will be laundered or transferred and those cannot be possible to be forfeited after trial which will frustrate this case. Hence those assets need to be frozen and attached.

Considering the facts and circumstances, I am convinced to allow the petition submitted by Investigation Officer Mr. Md. Sheikh Rasel, PPM-Seba, BP No. 8214166220, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Financial Crime, Organized Crime, CID, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka and accordingly the assets as mentioned in the petition are hereby frozen and attached until further order as per Section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

It is hereby further ordered that the copy of this order be issued to the Director, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka to the effect that while the freezing order is in effect regarding the said accounts, the account holders will not be allowed to withdraw any money. But they will be at liberty to deposit only.

Let this order be published in the Government Official Gazette along with widely circulated one daily Bengali and one daily English newspaper under Section 14(3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 for information of the citizens at large.

Let this order along with the photocopy of the application be sent to Investigation Officer Md. Sheikh Rasel, PPM-Seba, BP No. 8214166220, Additional Special Superintendent of Police, Financial Crime, Organized Crime, CID, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka and Publication Department, Tejgaon, Dhaka; Director, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka, and other concerned authorities for necessary action.

Inform all concerned Authorities at once.

Directed & Corrected by me.

Sd/-  
Metro. Sen. Spl Judge, Dhaka  
Memo Number: ১৯০৩৮(৪)/২৫

Sd/-  
**Md. Sabbir Faiz**  
Metro. Senior Special Judge, Dhaka  
Date: ২৭/১১/১৫

GD-2734

"বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয় করি, সমৃদ্ধ দেশ গড়ি"

**Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board**  
Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

e-Tender Reference No. 27.12.0000.019.07.128.25.650 Date: 09.12.2025


**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the purchase of **Insulator, J-39, D-11 Conductor & Super Enamel CU Wire** of which e-Tender submission deadlines are as mentioned below:

Item	Tender ID	Closing date	Closing time
Purchase of Insulator for Storing at Khulna, Dhaka & Chittagong Warehouse (Phase-1)	1192540	05-01-2026	11:10
Purchase of Insulator for Storing at CWH (Dhk/Kln/Ctg)	1192787	05-01-2026	11:20
Purchase of 3-39 for Storing at Dhaka, Chittagong & Khulna Warehouse (Phase-6)	1193215	05-01-2026	11:30
Purchase of D-11 Conductor for Storing at Khulna/Dhaka/Chittagong Warehouse (Phase-4)	1193214	05-01-2026	11:40
Purchase of Super Enamel Cu Wire for Storing at Dhaka, Chittagong & Khulna Warehouse (Phase-4)	1193216	05-01-2026	11:50
Purchase of Super Enamel Cu Wire for Storing at Dhaka, Chittagong & Khulna Warehouse (Phase-3)	1192536	05-01-2026	12:00

These are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details please contact Support Desk (Cell No. 01713796565).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited through online from any e-GP registered bank's branches or another payment procedure prescribed in e-GP System (a-Chalan). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also in E-mail: [rebprocure@reb.gov.bd](mailto:rebprocure@reb.gov.bd)

  
**বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড**  
 Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board

**Director (Procurement)**  
 Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board  
 Head Office Building (7th Floor), Nikunja-2, Khilkhet  
 Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh.  
 Tel: 8900359  
 E-mail: [rebprocure@reb.gov.bd](mailto:rebprocure@reb.gov.bd)

বাপবিবো/জন (২৫১২-৭২) ২০২৫-২০২৬

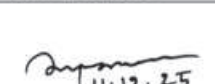
GD-2731

**Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)**  
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
[www.tcb.gov.bd](http://www.tcb.gov.bd)

**Commercial Section**  
**Invitation For Tender (National) for Purchase of**

(a) 1,00,00,000 (One Crore) Litre Refined Soyabean Oil package with 10 (Ten) Lots [Each lot is 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre]  
(b) 10,000 (Ten Thousand) M. Tons Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil package with 10 (Ten) Lots [Each lot is 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Tons]

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Commerce.
2	Agency	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
3	Procuring Entity Name	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable.
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	(a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil
7	Invitation Ref. No.	(a) 26.05.0000.016.08.645.25.3300 (b) 26.05.0000.016.08.645.25.3301
8	Date	11-12-2025
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (National)
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	TCB's Own Fund.
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>		
11	Tender Package No.	(a) TCB/Imp-22/ Soyabean Oil/2025-26, b) TCB/Imp-22/ Red Lentil/2025-26
12	Tender Package Name	(a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil
13	Tender Invitation/ Publication Date	14-12-2025
14	Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time	Date: 28-12-2025 Time: 17:00 P.M
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	29-12-2025 12:00 P.M
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	29-12-2025 12:15 P.M
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	<b>Address</b> - Selling Tender Document of each item can be purchased from the banks & offices as mentioned in right column. - Receiving Tender Document In front of TCB's reception (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. - Opening Tender Document Board Room, TCB.
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>		
18	Brief Eligibility of Tenderer	Bonafide Suppliers. Details conditions have been mentioned in the Tender documents.
19	Brief Description of goods	a) 1,00,00,000 (One Crore) Litre Refined Soyabean Oil Packed in 02 (Two) Litre Food Grade PET Bottle in 10 (Ten) Lots. Description of Lots below: (i) Lot-1: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (ii) Lot-2: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (iii) Lot-3: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (iv) Lot-4: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (v) Lot-5: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (vi) Lot-6: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (vii) Lot-7: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (viii) Lot-8: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (ix) Lot-9: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. (x) Lot-10: 10,00,000 (Ten Lac) Litre. b) 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Tons Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil packed in 50 kg bag in 10 (Ten) Lots. Description of Lots below: (i) Lot-1: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (ii) Lot-2: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (iii) Lot-3: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (iv) Lot-4: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (v) Lot-5: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (vi) Lot-6: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (vii) Lot-7: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (viii) Lot-8: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (ix) Lot-9: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton, (x) Lot-10: 1,000 (One Thousand) M.Ton. <b>NB: Tenderers may submit in 01 (One) or more lots separately.</b>
20	Price of Tender Document	Price of (a) Refined Soyabean Oil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand) & (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil tender document is Taka 5,000 (Five Thousand). Tender Schedule will be lot-by-lot basis.
	Lot No	Location
21	a) Refined Soyabean Oil with 10 lots. b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil with 10 lots.	Lot-1: Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Madaripur, Jhainaidah. Lot-2: Dhaka, Chattogram, Moulavibazar, Cumilla, Gazipur. Lot-3: Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Bogura, Gazipur, Dinajpur. Lot-4: Rajshahi, Rangpur, Moulavibazar, Mymensingh, Bogura, Dinajpur. Lot-5: Chattogram, Khulna, Barishal, Madaripur, Jhainaidah, Cumilla. Lot-6: Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Madaripur, Jhainaidah. Lot-7: Dhaka, Chattogram, Moulavibazar, Cumilla, Gazipur. Lot-8: Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Bogura, Gazipur, Dinajpur. Lot-9: Rajshahi, Rangpur, Moulavibazar, Mymensingh, Bogura, Dinajpur. Lot-10: Chattogram, Khulna, Barishal, Madaripur, Jhainaidah, Cumilla.  Offers are also to be made on District's godown/ Upazila's godown of respective offices of TCB. Destination of delivery will be applicable the above for Soyabean Oil and Red Lentil both.
		Tender Security Amount (BDT)
		Supply Schedule
		Entire quantity of Goods is to be supplied within Lot-1: 06-02-2026 to 12-02-2026. Lot-2: 08-02-2026 to 14-02-2026. Lot-3: 10-02-2026 to 16-02-2026. Lot-4: 12-02-2026 to 18-02-2026. Lot-5: 14-02-2026 to 20-02-2026. Lot-6: 16-02-2026 to 22-02-2026. Lot-7: 18-02-2026 to 24-02-2026. Lot-8: 20-02-2026 to 26-02-2026. Lot-9: 22-02-2026 to 28-02-2026. Lot-10: 24-02-2026 to 02-03-2026.  Supply Schedule will be applicable the above for Soyabean Oil and Red Lentil both.
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>		
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Golam Khorsheed
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Director (Commercial), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No. 8180074 Fax No. 88-02-55014279 E-mail: <a href="mailto:tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd">tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd</a>
26	Special Instruction	a) All terms and conditions related to the tender and product details are mentioned in the tender document. b) The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender in whole/in part without assigning any reason.

  
 (Md. Golam Khorsheed)  
 Additional Director (Commercial)  
 Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

GD-2730

LAW OPINION

# The intersection of transboundary water conflicts and human rights

**The convergence of transboundary watercourse law and human rights law creates a composite legal framework in which upstream states bear enforceable obligations toward downstream populations, not merely toward downstream states. It transforms the character of state responsibility. Breaches of watercourse obligations, violations of the no-harm rule, failure to cooperate, or inequitable water allocation simultaneously constitute human rights violations when they deprive populations of water necessary for life, health, and subsistence.**

SHARMISTA BANIK

When the United Nations General Assembly, in 2010, affirmed that 'the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation' (Resolution 64/292) is a human right, it impliedly recognised water as a fundamental legal entitlement connected to dignity, health, and life. However, across various river basins, such as the Teesta, the Nile, and the Euphrates, upstream states have often used water as tools of geopolitical leverage. This article highlights that complex and uncertain nature of the right's implementation despite its acknowledgment as a right.

The legal frameworks, such as the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention or the 1992 UNECE Water Convention, which govern transboundary watercourses mainly focus on several key principles, such as the fair and reasonable use of shared water resources, the obligation to avoid causing significant harm to other states, and the requirement for cooperation and notification before undertaking major projects that may impact transboundary waters. Importantly, Article 10 of the 1997 Convention requires that, in allocating uses of a river, 'special regard' be given to the requirements of vital human needs. The International Court of Justice in the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project case between Hungary and Slovakia held that Czechoslovakia, by unilaterally diverting the course of Danube, deprived Hungary of its right to an equitable share of shared natural resources. Yet the law provides no formula for determining what constitutes 'equitable' when populations compete in the face of insufficient water, and most critically, with no compulsory mechanism for adjudicating this balance when parties disagree.

International human rights law already contains a firm basis for claims to water. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), read with General Comment No. 15 (2002), recognises that water is necessary to secure an adequate standard of living and the highest attainable standard of health; the water entitlement must be 'sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable'. Child and gender-specific instruments (CRC Art. 24, CEDAW Art. 14) reinforce the special protection duty for vulnerable groups. These sources therefore impose on states obligations to respect, protect and fulfill access to potable water for their populations.

But two doctrinal complications arise when these obligations intersect with transboundary rivers. First, human rights law traditionally operates vertically i.e., it governs obligations a



state owes to persons within its jurisdiction. Second, remedies and enforcement for extraterritorial harms are weak. The Teesta River is a case study of these doctrinal limits. The river's seasonal lean flows are vital to northern Bangladesh's agriculture, livelihoods and food security. But international politics has frustrated Bangladesh's efforts to translate legal principles into flows. Bangladesh and India reached draft agreements on how to divide the Teesta River's water in 1983 and again in 2011. The 2011 draft proposed giving Bangladesh about 37.5% of the river's lean-season flows, but the agreements were never finalised. While Bangladesh has joined UNECE/UN instruments, showing willingness to implement international principles, India prefers bilateral agreements, and internal political factors have effectively blocked the implementation of any treaty.

The Teesta conflict is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a systemic pattern revealing how transboundary water wars violate the human right to water across multiple river basins globally. Turkey's Southeastern

Anatolia Project, which includes 22 dams such as the Atatürk Dam, has significantly reduced the Tigris-Euphrates' flow to Syria and Iraq by 30-60%. Turkish claims of sovereignty over its water rejecting the idea of shared water resources, has had severe human rights consequences, particularly in Iraq, where water shortages threaten the Mesopotamian Marshes, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and risk displacing communities. This situation undermines not only the right to water but also the rights to food, livelihood, housing, and cultural heritage.

Such cases illuminate the legal challenge between state sovereignty over watercourses and human rights obligations to people. The lack of compulsory dispute resolution is a key issue in transboundary water conflicts. The UN Charter's Article 33 calls for peaceful dispute settlement, but all methods require the consent of both parties. This means that an upstream state with greater power can simply refuse binding dispute resolution, leaving downstream populations with no remedy even as their basic rights are

violated. Thus, the downstream states have to either accept unfair bilateral agreements dictated by power, or take unilateral actions that may be seen as hostile and provoke further retaliation.

Water is the basis of the right to life (ICCPR Art. 6), the right to health (ICESCR Art. 12), and the right to food (ICESCR Art. 11). General Comment No. 15 of the ICESCR explicitly states that water is essential for the realisation of all other human rights. The Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 31 affirms that ICCPR obligations may arise where a state exercises effective control over individuals, even outside its territory—a principle also reflected in the Maastricht Guidelines. When applied to shared rivers, these principles therefore, indicate that the victims of water diversion are not downstream states, they are downstream populations. More recently, the ICJ's Silala River judgment (Chile v. Bolivia, 2022) reaffirmed that the customary obligation to prevent transboundary harm applies to all shared waters. On the other hand, treaty bodies have recognised water access for downstream populations in situations

of armed conflict or occupation (e.g. CESCR and HRC citing Israeli control over Palestinian water).

The convergence of transboundary watercourse law and human rights law creates a composite legal framework in which upstream states bear enforceable obligations toward downstream populations, not merely toward downstream states. It transforms the character of state responsibility. Breaches of watercourse obligations, violations of the no-harm rule, failure to cooperate, or inequitable water allocation simultaneously constitute human rights violations when they deprive populations of water necessary for life, health, and subsistence. This dual character implies that remedies must address not only state-to-state relations but also the actual harm suffered by rights holders. In this sense, the governance of transboundary rivers must be guided by the principle that the basic needs and dignity of all people come before political convenience or power.

*The writer is official contributor to Law & Our Rights.*

LAW VISION

# Recognising a judicially enforceable right to education

ZAID EKRAM

Education has long been called the backbone of the nation, yet Bangladesh's Constitution refrains from recognising this basic human right in a way that would be meaningful for the people of the country. Article 17 of the Constitution promises free and compulsory education. However, this right has been placed, quite systematically, in Part II of the Constitution, as a Fundamental Principle of State Policy, rendering it judicially unenforceable. In simple terms, the right exists in writing, but the government cannot be held judicially accountable for not giving effect to it.

Currently, Bangladesh is suffering from a crisis of quality education as evidenced by the World Bank's Human Capital Index (2024). A Bangladeshi child entering school at age 4 can expect to complete around 10.2 years of schooling by age 18. Yet, when adjusted for learning outcomes by the Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) metrics, this falls to only 6 effective years, i.e. a loss of nearly four years of education quality. The 2022 National Student Assessment revealed that nearly half of primary students cannot read Bangla at their grade level, and two-thirds cannot perform basic arithmetic operations. Other studies conducted by governmental and non-governmental agencies, such National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) lend credence to this.

If there was an accountability framework in place, through a justiciable right to education, and if there was an accountability



PHOTO CREDIT: PANOS PICTURES

metric in place, through the LAYS and other formats, then that could strengthen rights-based governance. Ministries would be compelled to publish learning outcome data, audit resource use and justify any deviations. This would enable the civil society, concerned citizens, parents, and stakeholders to exercise their constitutional right to challenge government policy decisions, thus building a culture of participation and transparency.

On the other hand, a judicially enforceable right to education is supported by the people as well. A survey carried out by BANBEIS in 2024, revealed that an overwhelming number of the Bangladeshi people supported the inclusion of the right to education, amongst other rights, as a judicially enforceable

right in the Constitution. 98.4% of 45,925 respondents to the survey said they want food, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare to be constitutionally recognised.

Besides the above, the most compelling argument for the recognition of the positive right to education is that it creates a constitutional framework for accountability. Making it enforceable will imply that in the event the State fails to take adequate and necessary measures to protect it, citizens will be able to hold the government accountable by instituting a writ petition under Article 102 of the Constitution. Once education becomes justiciable, governments will be required to justify their actions, or lack thereof, against constitutional benchmarks.

Courts could demand periodic progress reports, ensure that funds are allocated fairly, and compel authorities to remove systemic barriers. The object of such judicial review is not to replace policymaking but to ensure that policy meets principle.

Critics often argue that Bangladesh lacks the resources to make education a fundamental right. However, international jurisprudence recognises that states are obligated to realise rights such as education within the resources available. Article 2(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enunciates the principle of progressive realization of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights. This approach is not theoretical. Globally, courts have veered towards recognising the justiciable right to

education despite resource constraints. Like in South Africa, the Constitutional Court in the Governing Body of the Juma Musjid Primary School v. Essay N.O. (2011) held that the state bears the duty to ensure access to education, even when resources are constrained. Notably, the court here distinguished between the right to 'basic' education and the right to 'further education' and held that basic education is unqualified and immediately realisable while further education should be progressively realised (emphasising the availability of resources argument).

Bangladesh can learn from its neighbour, India, as well. Because of similar constitutional provisions and identical socioeconomic and political scenarios, Bangladeshi jurisprudence often mirrors that of India. Yet, India has already constitutionalised the right to education by inserting Article 21A in the Constitution through its 86th Amendment. This came in line with the 1993 judgment of Unni Krishnan v State of Andhra Pradesh which recognised the right to education as a fundamental right.

Finally, a justiciable right to education will not merely strengthen institutions but also discipline political will and create a durable and sustainable accountability mechanism which may be used to keep education-related policymaking in check. For an array of social, legal and economic reasons, Bangladesh should recognise the right to education as an enforceable right.

*The writer is student of law, University of Dhaka.*

**A justiciable right to education will not merely strengthens institutions, but also discipline political will and create a durable and sustainable accountability mechanism which may be used to keep education-related policymaking in check. For an array of social, legal and economic reasons, Bangladesh should recognise the right to education as an enforceable right.**

## Strengthen

FROM PAGE 1

Md Abdur Rashid said the fire was detected quickly, preventing major damage.

Police have launched an investigation and operations to arrest those involved.

Seeking enhanced security for the CEC during the upcoming polls, the EC in its letter requested an additional vehicle with a police escort for him and round-the-clock police escort with vehicles for the election commissioners and the secretary as well, covering their residences in Dhaka, offices, and travel to and from work.

It said that police escort security with a vehicle is currently in place for the CEC. "However, since the schedule for the 13th national parliamentary election was announced on December 11, special security is required for the CEC, election commissioners and the senior secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat."

The commission also wrote to three metropolitan police forces to provide round-the-clock security by appointing armed officials to the regional election offices in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna.

In a third letter issued the same day, the commission instructed authorities to deploy an adequate number of police personnel to ensure overall security and protection at regional election offices and district and upazila election offices across the country.

It noted that following the announcement of the election schedule, miscreants set fire to the Lakshimpur District Election Office and Pirojpur's Mathbaria Upazila Election Office.

Important election-related documents, materials and equipment are stored at field-level regional, district, upazila and thana election offices nationwide.

The EC directed police to also ensure the safety of important documents and other election materials.

## HADI'S SHOOTING AN 'ISOLATED INCIDENT'

Meanwhile, the EC termed the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho and an independent aspirant for Dhaka-8, an "isolated event".

Speaking to The Daily Star at the EC headquarters, Election Commissioner Abdur Rahman Masud said, "The commission is currently observing the overall situation, and we have instructed our upazila election offices to remain alert. An investigation into this specific incident is underway, and it will determine who was involved.

"We won't make any formal comments at this moment.... We'll respond only once it is clear who was involved and what their motives were."

He added, "For now, if you ask for our reaction... at this stage, we can describe it as an isolated incident."

About whether the fire at the Lakshimpur election office on Friday was also an isolated incident, he said, "At this moment, what else can we call it? Right now, we are fully focused on conducting the election. The government will surely look into the matter."

About Hadi's shooting, EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told this correspondent, "The police are handling the matter. The EC has been in discussions with the police since [the shooting occurred] on Friday afternoon. The necessary instructions have been given."



Nazrul Sangeet exponents came together for "Shur Shadhonar Shonali Abhijatra", a celebratory programme honouring Khairul Anam Shakil's 50-year musical journey, at the Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhavan auditorium in the capital's Dhanmondi on Friday. A renowned Nazrul Geeti exponent, teacher, and cultural advocate himself, Shakil took to the stage and emphasised that music enriches minds, builds character, and helps a nation progress by understanding itself.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## Govt to provide firearm licence to candidates

FROM PAGE 14

improve law and order and bring criminals to justice.

"Operation Devil Hunt Phase Two would significantly strengthen law enforcement's efforts to recover illegal weapons and crack down on criminal activity. This operation will be accelerated to help ensure public safety and combat the growing threat of illegal arms," Jahangir said.

Experts, however, criticised the decisions.

The state must take full responsibility for ensuring security and not resort to stopgap measure like providing firearm licences, said Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star.

"How many people will be given licences? Is it enough to secure the candidates? The government must take proper steps to address security concerns."

Besides, granting licences could lead to potential misuse of firearms as many would get one for the sake of it, he added.

Ashraf Huda, former inspector general of police, stressed that incidents of violence are often viewed through political lenses, skewing their significance and allowing criminal

activity to thrive.

"Downplaying violence as isolated incidents undermines the electoral process," he said.

Huda further emphasised that a fair election requires a conducive environment, which is currently lacking. "Swift, coordinated action by law enforcement is crucial to restoring confidence and security. Only through such efforts can a peaceful, participatory election environment be achieved, fulfilling the democratic aspirations of the public," he added.

The core committee meeting also decided that a gunman can be assigned to those candidates assessed to be at high risk, The Daily Star has learnt from officials present at the meeting.

Besides, instructions are also given to carry out notifications to high-profile candidates to improve security at their residences, said a high official of the ministry, requesting anonymity.

The measures include installing surveillance cameras at their residences, hiring watchmen and utilising detective equipment. Instructions would be given to law enforcers on recovering looted and illegal arms.

On election security,

Jahangir said election participants will be allowed to apply for weapon licences if necessary, in a departure from previous policies that allowed only government employees to possess firearms.

Weapons that were previously deposited will be returned to their rightful owners, who are participating in the election process.

"Any attempts to disrupt or hinder the election will be met with a strong response from the interim government. We will not tolerate any attempts to destabilise the democratic process," he added.

Earlier on November 5, one person was killed and two others were injured in an attack on an election rally of Ershad Ullah, convener of the Chattogram city unit of the BNP and the party's nominated candidate for Chattogram-8, in the city's Purbo Bayezid.

Not only in these two cases, but the use of firearms was found in several murder incidents in the last month alone.

On November 5, a BNP leader's body was found under a bridge in Teknaf, and on November 6, an expatriate was killed by unidentified criminals in Khulna, who fired eight rounds at him.

On November 10, in a film-style execution in Old

Dhaka, Tariq Saif Mamun, a listed criminal, was shot dead by two armed men. Later, on the same day, BNP activist Arif Mir was shot dead in Munshiganj.

On November 11, Chhatra Dal leader Sourav was hacked to death in Dhaka's Gulshan. Similarly, on November 12, a man named Mamun Sikdar was found shot dead in a house in Badda, while on the same day, a man was shot in Faridganj, Chandpur.

According to the database, a total of 5,753 firearms and 651,609 rounds of ammunition were looted from police stations and outposts. Law enforcers were able to recover 4,426 so far.

Meanwhile, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) has instructed to beef up security measures across the country and set up additional check posts, according to officials.

Talking with The Daily Star, Mobarak Hossain, the officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station of DMP, said that they have received an instruction from the police headquarters and set up check posts along with increased surveillance.

Addressing reporters at Rajarbagh after an event yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali said that they are taking measures to ensure the safety of all candidates.

## Freedom to

FROM PAGE 3

deciding what to publish. "Now we are hopefully moving into an era in which apprehension about what can and cannot be published will be somewhat eased," he added.

Speakers at the event praised UPL and its founder, Mohiuddin Ahmed, for producing professional and high-standard publications that have helped introduce Bangladesh to the world.

Prof Ali Riaz, special assistant to the chief adviser, said UPL has been a leading name in academic publishing in Bangladesh since the 1980s and described it as a matter of pride.

He said Mohiuddin Ahmed managed to build and sustain such an institution despite a political culture that often undermines institutions.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue, described Mohiuddin Ahmed, who died in 2021, as an optimistic, patriotic, and learned individual - something that drove him to bring out quality books as a way of establishing a knowledge-based society.

"We remember him more and more when we find ignorance all around," he said.

Dr Debapriya said Mohiuddin Ahmed taught him that institutional education alone does not define learning, and lamented that he did not receive state recognition. "We, therefore, dearly call him publisher emeritus," he said.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam fondly recalled his memories of Mohiuddin Ahmed, who always advocated for quality books that he strongly believed are a vehicle for building a knowledge-based society.

He said Mohiuddin Ahmed was a dedicated soul for the intellectual development - something that can be a lesson for others to follow.

Noted photographer Shahidul Alam said Mohiuddin Ahmed consistently stood for truth and justice and protested what he considered unfair.

Former adviser to a caretaker government, Rasheda K Choudhury, said she learned a great lesson from Mohiuddin, who not only led an essential institution for many years, but also developed the next ladder of leadership.

Noted actor Ramendu Majumder, Prof Swapan Adnan, Prof Syeed Ferdous, Prof Perween Hasan, Dr Tafvique Joarder, ornithologist Enam-Ul-Haque, and UPL Managing Director Mahrukh Mohiuddin also spoke, among others.

## Chhatra Union

FROM PAGE 3

after independence, while "Jara Chilen Jara Achen" focuses on the left-leaning intellectuals martyred on December 14, 1971.

The remaining arrangement, "Gonohotta Sakkho", documents both the mass killings carried out by the Pakistani Army and the struggles of women during the war.

Meghmalla Bosu, president of the DU unit of the Chhatra Union, said the Awami League "monopolised" the Liberation War narrative during its rule, erasing its "people's war character". He said the anti-liberation forces have been attempting to "diminish the war's significance since

the July uprising".

"We organised this event primarily to counter these intellectual distortions. Through meticulous research, we've brought forward the reality of the people's war. We've also highlighted the genocide and exposed how Razakars manufactured consent for genocide," he said.

Regarding the event, Maeen Ahmed, general secretary of the unit, said this year's victory month holds special significance as an "organised group has been questioning the Liberation War since the July uprising".

"We see this time as both a crisis and an opportunity full of possibilities," he added.

## BNP won't run country

FROM PAGE 3

will implement it if we are elected," he said.

Tarique Rahman was virtually addressing the final-day event of the BNP's seven-day programme titled "Plan for Nation Building" at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) Convention Hall in Dhaka as the chief guest.

Mentioning the party's 31-point demand, he said, "When we presented the 31-point proposal about two and a half years ago, no one was using the word 'reform'. The BNP put forward this proposal

despite the threat of autocracy. It prioritises improving the living standards of the general populace."

He noted that the plan encompasses women's development, farmers' fair dues, students' education, employment for the youth, and dignity for imams and muezzins.

Tarique also said that if the party's proposed 31-point reform and nation building plan is implemented, it will gradually lead to a positive transformation in the lives of the people of Bangladesh.

## Compensate nations

FROM PAGE 3

"We are not indebted to industrialised nations; rather, they are indebted to us. Climate justice is now a matter of accountability and effective action," she said.

Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter said climate change should not be treated only as a technical or economic issue. "Climate justice means justice, survival, and accountability," she said, adding that the Global North often offers loans instead of justice.

Eminent economist Prof Anu Muhammad said the interim government had an opportunity to address climate and environmental issues after setbacks during the previous 15-year regime.

"But they failed to do so," he said, warning that taking loans in the name of climate finance could increase the country's risks.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said poor countries like Bangladesh are facing severe losses due to climate impacts.

She said the lives and livelihoods of people in char areas, haor regions, and coastal zones are under threat, with women and children being the most affected. Women's health, education, livelihoods, and overall lives are being

seriously jeopardised by climate change, she added.

Sharif Jamil, member secretary of the organising committee, conducted the opening session, while convener Dr Mujibur Rahman Howlader chaired it. Three technical sessions were held later.

## Freedom

FROM PAGE 3

He also noted that despite achieving victory in 1971, the full realisation of the spirit and achievements of the Liberation War remains incomplete. "Various vested quarters and political interests are attempting to distort history," he said.

At the programme, guerrilla fighter Mizanur Rahman shared memories of a battle fought on November 11, 1971, in Betiara village against Pakistani forces. "In that battle, we lost 11 fellow fighters. That struggle, like the entire Liberation War, was made possible by the sacrifices of our martyred comrades and the courage of the masses," he said.

As part of the event, photographs and archival reports published in different media during the Liberation War were displayed at the Shaheed Minar premises.

## 6 Bangladeshi peacekeepers

FROM PAGE 1

Calling attacks on peacekeepers a serious crime against international peace and humanity, he urged the UN and the international community to strengthen the security of peacekeepers.

Bangladesh government will continue to maintain close communication with the UN to ensure the swift repatriation of the bodies and proper medical treatment for those injured, he added.

The chief adviser prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls of the fallen peacekeepers and extended his deepest condolences to their bereaved families.

"The government will stand by the families of the peacekeepers during this difficult time," Yunus added.

The foreign ministry strongly condemned the attack on the Bangladeshi peacekeepers and said the Bangladesh Mission in New York is working together with UN to extend all support to the Bangladeshi peacekeeping contingent in Sudan.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman also expressed his deep sorrow over the deaths

of peacekeepers and the injuries of eight others, including three female soldiers.

In a Facebook post, he called the soldiers' sacrifice a source of immense pride for the nation. He extended his condolences to the families of the fallen peacekeepers and also wished a speedy recovery of the injured.

Bangladesh is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, and its troops have long been deployed in Abyei.

The Sudanese government also condemned the attack. The army-aligned government based in Port Sudan accused the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of being behind it.

In a statement, the Sovereignty Council, headed by army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, described the attack as a "dangerous escalation".

Kadugli, where famine was declared in early November, has been besieged for a year and a half by the RSF.

Kordofan is a vast agricultural region divided into three states. It lies between RSF-controlled Darfur in the west and

army-held areas in the north, east and centre.

Its location is crucial for maintaining supply lines and moving troops.

The RSF has been at war with the military since April 2023 and has deployed fighters, drones and allied militias to the fertile region.

Analysts say the RSF seeks to break through the army's defences in central Sudan, paving the way for recapturing the Sudanese capital, Khartoum.

## CA holds

FROM PAGE 3

they are excited to receive the award from the chief adviser.

They told the chief adviser that it is necessary to enhance the unity among political parties and the people for holding the upcoming general election.

About the attack on Hadi, Prof Yunus said the attack was carried out in a pre-planned manner.

"I am maintaining regular contact with the family and getting updates on Hadi's treatment. I have also spoken with political parties, and they are extending their cooperation in this regard," he said.

**PRAYER TIMING**

DECEMBER 14

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Social Forest Division, Kushtia  
[www.forest.kushtia.gov.bd](http://www.forest.kushtia.gov.bd)

Memo No. 22.01.5000.341.10.002.25.1711 Date: 11.12.2025

**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for following Packages as follows:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Reference No.	Name of work	Tender last selling (date and time)	Last date & time for security submission	Tender/proposal closing & opening date and time
01	1194425	SFDK/2025-26/Tender-1	Construction of Boundary wall at Bheramara SFNTC, Bheramara, Kushtia	28-Dec-2025 12:00	28-Dec-2025 13:00	28-Dec-2025 14:00
02	1194161	SFDK/2025-26/Tender-2	Repair & Maintenance work of different Centre of Social Forest Division, Kushtia (a. Damaurhuda SFPC Office Building b. Divisional Forest Officer's Office Room, c. Chuadanga SFNTC Office Building d. Jibannagar SFNTC Office Building)	28-Dec-2025 12:00	28-Dec-2025 13:00	28-Dec-2025 14:00
03	1194177	SFDK/2025-26/Tender-3	Repair, Maintenance & upgradation of different civil works of Social Forest Division, Kushtia (a. Grill height increase works of Mujibnagar Complex b. Soil filling & repairing of surface drain of the DFO's residential area c. Repair & maintenance of boundary wire net in Mirpur SFPC)	28-Dec-2025 12:00	28-Dec-2025 13:00	28-Dec-2025 14:00

01. This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.  
02. e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required to submit the tender.  
0. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

MD-2735

Md. Rezaul Alam  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Social Forest Division, Kushtia

## New guidance backed GLP-1 therapies in fight against global obesity

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released its first guideline on the use of Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) therapies to address obesity, a growing global health challenge affecting more than 1 billion people worldwide. Obesity affected every country and was associated with 3.7 million deaths globally in 2024. Without decisive action, the number of people living with obesity was projected to double by 2030.

GLP-1 therapy is usually given as a small injection under the skin, taken once daily or once weekly, depending on the medicine, and some newer forms are available as a daily tablet. The new guideline issued conditional recommendations for using these therapies to treat obesity as a chronic, relapsing disease as part of a comprehensive approach that included healthy diets, regular physical activity and professional health support.



The guideline made two key conditional recommendations. GLP-1 therapies could be used for the long-term treatment of obesity in adults, excluding pregnant women, although the recommendation was conditional due to limited long-term data, high costs, health-system readiness and equity concerns. Intensive behavioural interventions, including structured diet and physical activity programmes, could also be offered alongside medication to improve outcomes.

WHO emphasised that obesity was a complex disease driving noncommunicable conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, and contributing to poorer outcomes from infectious diseases.

Obesity is not only an individual concern but also a societal challenge that requires multisectoral action. Addressing obesity requires a fundamental reorientation of current approaches to a comprehensive strategy.

Source: World Health Organisation



## BANGLADESH'S UNTAPPED GOLDMINE

# Why Bangladesh is missing the ayurvedic market boom

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

Bangladesh has a long tradition of using alternative medicine – mainly Ayurvedic and Unani – alongside modern allopathic care. From village kavirajs to branded herbal tonics in urban pharmacies, plant-based remedies remain a first line of treatment for many people. Today more than 550 manufacturers (around 201 Ayurvedic, 275 Unani and 40 herbal companies) are formally producing traditional medicines in the country.

Despite this scale, the sector is still treated as a peripheral cousin of mainstream pharmaceuticals. A World Bank-supported study estimated the formal herbal medicine market (Ayurvedic, Unani and homoeopathy) at about Tk 3,300 million – roughly US\$60 million – already over a decade ago, with growth outpacing that of allopathic drugs. Yet this sizeable domestic demand has not been translated into a strong export presence.

Official trade data show that the total export value of medicinal plants from Bangladesh – the raw materials that feed Ayurvedic and other herbal industries – was only about US\$0.59 million in FY2013-14, falling to US\$0.39 million in FY2014-15. More recent disaggregated figures are scarce, but available evidence

suggests export earnings from herbal and Ayurvedic products remain in the range of a few hundred thousand dollars annually. This is minuscule when contrasted with more than US\$205 million in pharmaceutical exports in FY2023-24 and around US\$213 million in FY2024-25.

Weak legislation and administrative fragmentation are major reasons for this underperformance. Regulatory responsibilities are spread across the Directorate General of Drug Administration, the Bangladesh Unani & Ayurvedic Board and the Herbal Product Development Council under the Ministry of Commerce, often without clear coordination or enforcement capacity.

But there is a huge potential for the local companies to expand their product lines and build trust-driven brands. One example is Antique Pharmaceuticals, a rising Bangladeshi manufacturer that has blended traditional formulations with modern delivery systems and digital sales channels. The company has already gained traction in international marketplaces, selling Ayurvedic products through Amazon and eBay across Europe, North America and the Middle East, with plans now underway to expand into Alibaba to tap into Asian and global wholesale buyers. These

platforms have opened direct pathways for Bangladeshi herbal products to reach diverse global consumers seeking natural health solutions.

“Ayurvedic medicine is no longer only a practice of the past. It is a growing component of the future of health – sustainable, preventive, and deeply human-centric” says Saniat Hossain, the CEO of Antique Pharmaceuticals. “For Bangladesh, the path forward is clear: preserve the heritage, strengthen the science, modernise the delivery, and embrace the global market. If these steps are taken, Ayurveda could emerge not only as a cultural asset but also as a major contributor to the country's health sector and economic growth” he believes.

With international consumers seeking sustainable, natural, and culturally rooted health solutions, Bangladesh's Ayurveda industry has a chance to position itself as a credible global supplier. Locally, the approach must focus on education – helping patients understand proper use, benefits, and limitations of herbal medicine. Bridging the gap between tradition and modern scientific understanding will be key to building lasting trust.

E-mail: tareq.salahuddin@thedailystar.net

## Single-dose drug shows promise against drug-resistant gonorrhoea

A new oral medicine called zoliflodacin is showing strong potential as a treatment for antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea, according to a phase 3 clinical trial published in *The Lancet*. The study found that a single dose of the drug worked just as well as the current standard treatment, which involves an injection of ceftriaxone followed by oral azithromycin.

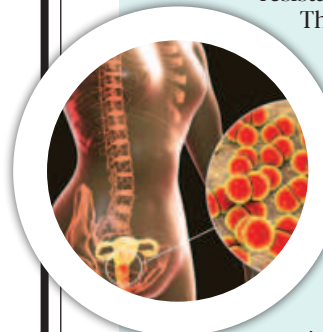
Gonorrhoea is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the world, affecting more than 82 million people every year. Treating it is becoming increasingly difficult because the bacteria that cause the infection are developing resistance to existing antibiotics.

This makes new treatment options urgently needed. Zoliflodacin could help slow the spread of drug-resistant gonorrhoea and make treatment easier and more accessible, especially in settings where injections are difficult to provide.

The international trial involved over 900 participants from five countries: the United States, South Africa, Thailand, Belgium and the Netherlands. Participants were given either a single dose of zoliflodacin or the standard two-drug treatment. Results showed that more than 90% of genital gonorrhoea infections were cured in those who received the new medication.

The drug was well tolerated, with side effects similar to those seen with current treatments, such as mild stomach discomfort. Importantly, no serious safety concerns were reported during the trial.

Zoliflodacin is now awaiting approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If approved, experts say it could significantly strengthen global efforts to control antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea, support community-based care, and help protect the sexual and reproductive health of millions of people worldwide.



## Empowering youth for a healthier future

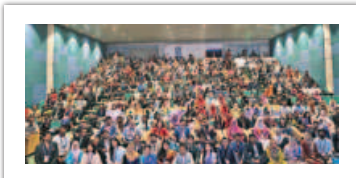
STAR HEALTH REPORT

The 10th National Youth Family Planning Conference (BNYCFP) was successfully held on 11 December 2025, bringing together over 500 youth representatives, policymakers, health experts, and stakeholders from across the country, says a press release. The primary objectives of the conference were to strengthen family planning initiatives, accelerate adolescent health development, ensure gender equality, and integrate climate action into health and development policies.

The theme of this year's conference was “*Advocate, Accelerate, Amplify – Together we transform the future.*” The event was inaugurated by S M Shaikat, Executive Director of SERAC-Bangladesh and Secretary General of the conference, in the presence of representatives from national and international development organisations, as well as adolescents and youth, accompanied by the national anthem and cultural performances.

The Chief Guest at the opening ceremony was Dr Ashrafi Ahmad, NDC, Director General (Grade-I), Directorate General of Family Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In his welcome address, S M Shaikat emphasised that youth are the centrepiece and driving force of the global development agenda. Their active participation and leadership form the foundation of an integrated, rights-based health system.



Dr Ashrafi Ahmad, NDC, highlighted that sexual and reproductive health, family planning, climate change, and youth engagement are deeply linked to the country's sustainable development. With one-third of the population being youth, effectively engaging and empowering them will accelerate national development.

During sessions, discussions focused on adolescent and youth health services and access to reproductive health, nutrition, prevention of child marriage, youth leadership, and evidence-based policy formulation. Experts emphasised health awareness, data-driven decision-making, and integrated service delivery.

The conference was supported by Sida, BYHAN, CYOB, Marie Stopes Bangladesh, Plan International, Share-Net Bangladesh, SMC, UNFPA, and other national and international partners. Through active youth participation and leadership, the event established itself as a strong platform for advancing inclusive, effective, and sustainable health and family planning initiatives in the country.

The closing ceremony featured Md Saidur Rahman Khan, Director General of the Department of Social Services, as Chief Guest. Md Saidur Rahman Khan stressed the need to create “corridors” for youth participation in decision-making across all sectors, noting that active youth involvement in social initiatives contributes significantly to national development.

## THE GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASE

### Fewer infections, more chronic illness: The world's changing health crisis

The world has achieved impressive success in reducing deaths from infectious diseases. Since the 1990s, illnesses such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS have caused far fewer deaths and disabilities, while survival among newborns has improved dramatically. These gains reflect decades of investment in vaccines, treatment and maternal care.

However, the Global Burden of Disease survey by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington School of Medicine warns that a different set of threats is rapidly taking centre stage.

Non-communicable diseases now account for half of the ten leading causes of early death and disability worldwide. Heart disease remains the top cause, but diabetes has risen sharply and is now among the leading contributors to poor health. Mental health conditions, particularly anxiety and depression, are also increasing at an alarming pace.

From 2013 to 2023, healthy years of life lost due to diabetes and common mental disorders rose steadily across the globe. Unlike infectious diseases, these conditions often affect people for decades, limiting their ability to work, care for families and live independently.

The report points to familiar but stubborn risk factors. High blood pressure continues to be the single biggest cause of early death and disability, followed by air pollution and smoking. While progress has been made in reducing harm from tobacco use and polluted air, health loss linked to high blood sugar and excess body weight is growing. Rising obesity and poor diet are fuelling this trend.

The findings underline a clear shift in global health priorities. Winning the fight against infections is not enough. To protect future generations, governments and communities must focus on prevention – promoting healthier lifestyles, tackling environmental risks and expanding support for mental health.



## Retrogradation: When starch takes a step backward and why it matters

RAISA MEHZABEEN

Retrogradation sounds like a nostalgic move from a retro fashion show, but in the quiet chemistry of our everyday foods, it is a small rebellion of starch molecules. This phenomenon occurs when gelatinised starch swollen and softened by heat cools down and begins to reorganise into a firmer, more crystalline structure. In simple terms, it is starch pressing the rewind button.

Fresh rice that turns dry and hard the next morning, bread that loses its softness, or pudding that suddenly “weeps” water are all everyday examples of retrogradation. At the molecular level, amylose, one of the two main components of starch, realigns quickly when cooled, forming strong hydrogen bonds. Amylopectin, the bulkier sibling, follows more slowly. Together, they squeeze out water, creating a firm, sometimes unappetising texture.

Yet this sleepy rearrangement of molecules carries consequences beyond texture. Retrograded starch is less digestible, making it a type of resistant starch: a starch that behaves like fibre. This offers metabolic benefits, including improved gut health and reduced post-meal blood glucose spikes. Nutrition science



finds a quiet ally here: leftovers, when reheated, may actually be healthier than their freshly cooked counterparts.

Food industries and culinary practices constantly wrestle with retrogradation. Bakers work hard to slow bread staling, while nutritionists appreciate the metabolic advantages of resistant starch formation. It is a tug-of-war between texture and health; between culinary expectation

and biochemical reality. Retrogradation reminds us that food is not static. Even after leaving the stove, it continues to evolve. Understanding this molecular choreography opens doors to better cooking, longer shelf life, and healthier dietary strategies. In the world of starch, stepping backward is not always a bad thing.

The writer is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com

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## From Messi mania to mayhem



The pull of eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi was meant to offer fans the satisfaction of at least a fleeting glimpse, but the frenzy surrounding his arrival in India spiralled into chaos instead. Messi touched down in Kolkata at around 2:26am on Saturday, beginning his three-day, four-city GOAT India Tour 2025. Despite the late hour, thousands gathered outside the airport and later near his hotel, creating a carnival-like atmosphere with chants, flags and phone lights as the Argentine great was escorted through heavy security. Hours later, Salt Lake Stadium was packed with fans hoping to see Messi, who briefly walked around the pitch waving before leaving within about 20 minutes amid mounting unrest. Frustration over tight security and mismanagement boiled over as spectators tore down banners, hurled water bottles and stormed the pitch, forcing authorities to remove Messi for safety. The chief organiser, Satadru Dutta, was detained, while West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee issued a public apology and ordered a probe. Earlier, Messi met Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan at a closed-door event. He will next visit Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi, where a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled.

PHOTO: AFP/FACEBOOK



## Junior Tigers seal opening win with record chase

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19s pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory over Afghanistan Under-19s on Saturday at the ICC Academy Ground in Dubai, chasing down the highest target ever successfully chased in ACC U-19 Asia Cup history. Riding on an exceptional 151-run opening stand between Zawad Abrar (96) and Rifat Beg (62), the two-time defending champions got off to a perfect start in their first Group B fixture, which also includes Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Afghanistan won the toss and elected to bat, posting a formidable 283 for 7 in their allotted 50 overs. The innings was anchored by Faisal Shinozada, who struck a fluent 103 off 94 balls with 8 fours and 4 sixes, helping the Afghan side build a competitive total. Useful contributions from Uzairullah Niazi (44) and a late flourish from Azizullah Miakhil (38 not out) and Abdul Aziz (26 not out) ensured Afghanistan finished with plenty for the bowlers to defend.



In reply, Bangladesh got off to a flying start. Openers Zawad and Rifat put on a commanding partnership of 151 runs for the first wicket, effectively taking the game away from the Afghan bowlers early. Abrar looked in complete control, scoring 96 before being dismissed just shy of a century, while Rifat supported well with 62, giving Bangladesh the platform they needed.

Once the opening stand was broken, captain Azizul Hakim Tamim joined the crease and guided his side through the nervy middle overs with a 48-ball 47. There was a late stutter, though, as Bangladesh lost a few wickets towards the end, but the Junior Tigers eventually scraped across the line.

In the other match of the day, Sri Lanka thrashed Nepal by eight wickets.



Award winners pose for a group photograph during the Max-BSPA Journalist Award 2024, organised by Bangladesh Sports Press Association, at a hotel in the capital yesterday. A total of 24 awards were given in eight categories among sports writers and photographers for their outstanding work in the field of sports journalism in 2024. Among the winners were The Daily Star's sub-editor Ashfaq-Ul-Alam and senior photographer Firoz Ahmed.

PHOTO: BSPA

## Abahani return to winning ways

SPORTS REPORTER

Reigning runners up Abahani returned to winning ways in the Bangladesh Football League with a commanding 5-0 victory over hosts Fakirerpool Young Men's Club in Manikganj on Saturday.

Malian forward Souleymane Diabate struck a brace, while Mirajul Islam, Sheikh Morsalin and Al Amin added one goal apiece as the Sky Blues registered their second league win. Abahani now sit fourth in the 10-team table with eight points from six matches.

Fakirerpool showed early resistance but fell behind in the 32nd minute when Diabate tapped in a square pass from Mohammad Ibrahim. The hosts had a chance to respond four minutes later, but Ivorian forward Ouattara Ben Ibrahim missed a penalty. Diabate doubled the lead in the 41st minute before Mirajul made it 3-0 just before the break.

Abahani maintained control after the interval, with Morsalin and Al Amin adding further goals to seal the 5-0 win.

In the day's other match, newcomers PWD held Bangladesh Police to a goalless draw. Police slipped to sixth place with seven points while PWD are eighth with six points.

## Eleven-team Women's Football League from Dec 29

SPORTS REPORTER

The long-awaited Women's Football League will kick off on December 29 following the opening of a 13-day transfer window, with each of the 11 participating clubs allowed to register up to 35 players for the month-long competition.

The decision was finalised yesterday after a meeting between Mahfuza Akter Kiron, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Women's Wing chairman, and club representatives. Five teams will feature in the top-tier league for the first time, joining six returning sides.

"We are going to start the Women's Football League... as per the recommendations from the FIB [First Instant Body]," Kiron told The Daily Star after the meeting at the BFF House.

She added that the league will be played in a single-league format and conclude on January 31, allowing the national team to depart for their maiden AFC Women's Asian Cup campaign in early February.

The inclusion of 11 teams ensures each club plays at least 10 matches -- a key requirement for eligibility in the AFC Women's Champions League -- giving the league champions a pathway to continental competition.

Despite earlier suggestions of a pool system for top players, Kiron confirmed



**TRANSFER WINDOW:**

December 14-26

**LEAGUE STARTS:**

December 29

**TEAMS: 11**

Nasrin FA, Bangladesh Army SC, Suddopuskorini Jubo SC, Siraj Srity Sangsad, Farashganj SC, Dhaka Rangers FC, Jamalpur Kacharipara Ekadash, Ansar & VDP FC, Bangladesh Police FC, BKSP FC, Rajshahi Stars FC

**TOTAL MATCHES: 55**

**VENUE:** Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, Kamalapur

there will be none. Clubs must field at least four age-group players in their starting eleven -- two each from U-17 and U-20 -- with substitutes also drawn from those groups to maximise match exposure and development.

The quota for foreign players has been increased to four from two -- featured in the last edition held in March-April last year -- although only three can feature in a single match.

While the league will be completed within a tight timeframe, fixtures have been arranged to ensure a minimum two-day rest between games.

On sponsorship, Kiron said Walton has, in principle, agreed to support the women's league with Tk 10 lakh, while the BFF is also considering providing participation fees to clubs after discussions with federation president Tabitha Awal.

There will be no national team training camp during the league, but the women's team coaching staff will closely monitor players and coordinate with club coaches to track form and fitness.

Looking ahead, Kiron said plans are in place to arrange two practice matches for the national team in early February en route to Australia, with discussions ongoing with Malaysia over possible friendlies. English coach Peter Butler, she added, will return in early January after a Christmas break.

## CONFLICT LINGERS as First Division League starts

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

A starkly contrasting scene unfolded at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, on the eve of the Dhaka First Division Cricket League 2025-26 curtain-raiser.

While representative cricketers from 12 confirmed clubs attended a trophy-unveiling photo session near the National Cricket Academy, as many as 50-60 players from eight absentee clubs and beyond staged a human-chain protest at Gate 2, citing Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election rigging and other disputes which led to the conflict between the BCB and 44 Dhaka-based rebel clubs from various leagues.

It was a disheartening sight for players who rely on the league for both competition and livelihood. Zakaria Masud, who played last season for Amber Sporting Club, called it unprecedented.

"I have been playing in the Dhaka League since 2005. In all these years, including stints in the Premier League and First-Class cricket, I have never faced such a situation," Zakaria told The Daily Star.

"They are unveiling the trophy over there while we, who cannot play, are standing here. This is truly a sad sight for every player. It's not just about the 8-10 teams; nearly 700-800 players are affected."

He continued, "If we have to repeatedly protest just to play, cricket in our country



**PARTICIPATING CLUBS:**

BKSP, Bangladesh Police Cricket Club, Baridhara Dazzlers, Dhanmondi Sports Club (formerly Bashundhara Riders), Blues Cricketers (formerly Dhaka United), Tri State Cricketers (formerly Dhaka Spartans), Lalmatia Club, Old DOHS Sporting Club, Prime Daleshwar Sporting Club, Sheikh Jamal Cricketers, Shinepukur Cricket Club, Uttara Cricket Club

**NON-PARTICIPATING CLUBS:**

Partex Sporting Club, Gazi Tyres Cricket Academy, Amber Sporting Club, Khelaghar SKS, Surjotorun Club, Kakrail Boys Club, Kalabagan Krira Chakra, Orient Sporting Club

will never progress. We seek talented players, but our structure is flawed. Everyone claims they want the good of cricket, but the reality seems different.

"If the board truly cared about cricket, they would allow the game to continue without disruption."

At the trophy ceremony, participating

players expressed relief but also lamented the absence of colleagues. Sheikh Antor of Tri State Cricketers -- formerly Dhaka Titans -- said they felt "sad that many brothers cannot play this year."

Following the protest, a delegation met BCB officials, including directors Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Itekhhar Rahman Mithu,

Abul Bashar, and CEO Nizam Uddin Chowdhury. Players handed over a letter to the CEO requesting uninterrupted participation, protection of professional interests, and clarification on league operations.

Asaduzzaman Prince of Khelaghar SKS, whose team is not participating, outlined four demands: a fixed schedule, prompt resolution of disputes, a stable professional structure, and increased match fees and daily allowances. He added that players also sought clear guidelines on payments and called for either a full 20-team league or a franchise-based tournament.

"Their (BCB officials') response was that the president is currently outside the country, and so they are not able to make an instant commitment about what support they can provide," said Prince, further informing that the board is willing to proceed with the 12 participating teams but promised to explore franchise options for the remaining eight clubs.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis chairman Adnan Rahman Dipon expressed hope that absent clubs might join. He said he would wait until the following day, noting no communication from the rebel clubs.

As the league opens, uncertainty lingers. The main losers remain the players, and by extension, Bangladesh cricket, as board-club disputes show little sign of resolution.



Having missed Wednesday's Champions League defeat by Manchester City due to injury, Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe is fit to face Alaves in LaLiga on Sunday. With just two wins in their last eight games and sitting four points behind league leaders Barcelona, Xabi Alonso's side hope to turn their fortunes around.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID



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## TIB slams bureaucratic control over the NHRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed deep concern and disappointment that the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025 places the commission under bureaucratic control.

TIB said this will completely destroy the possibility that had emerged for constituting a genuinely independent human right watchdog from government influence.

The organisation cited the fact that stakeholders involved in drafting the ordinance were kept in the dark, which illustrates how bureaucratic rigidity and even sabotage hold the long-anticipated reform process hostage.

The cabinet secretary was included on the selection committee solely to confirm government control of the process by maintaining authoritarian practices. Furthermore, the organisation described these developments as embarrassing examples of the government's

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A Palestinian worker involved in a rubble management project maneuvers a digger to shift debris of destroyed buildings and houses in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BNP assures its allies of fair number of seats

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP yesterday assured more than two dozen of its allies that they will not field candidates in a reasonable number of seats to give those parties a fighting chance in the upcoming national election.

The development comes after its allies, who participated in the BNP's movement to restore democracy over the years, expressed dissatisfaction over the party's announcement of candidates in seats they had hoped to field candidates themselves.

The BNP has so far announced candidates in 272 out of 300 seats.

A distance has been created with the BNP regarding the issue of seat-sharing, said Saiful Haque, general secretary of Biplobi Workers Party, one of the 29 parties that joined in the BNP's movement during the previous regime's tenure.

"Misunderstandings have been created -- there have been questions on whether the BNP is running alone," he said.

Subsequently, at a meeting yesterday with leaders of the 29 political parties, the BNP leaders have assured their allies that the issue will be resolved by December 18, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the discussions.

The party will meet with the alliance members

SEE PAGE 8 COL 7

## Humans made fire 350,000yrs earlier than we thought

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



The earliest known evidence of human fire-making has been discovered in the UK, dating back over 400,000 years, in a new groundbreaking discovery.

Fire-cracked flint, hand axes and heated sediments have been found at a disused clay pit near Barnham, Suffolk, pushing the timeline back 350,000 years from the previous record of 50,000 years ago in northern France.

Crucially, two fragments of iron pyrite – a spark-striking mineral – were also found at the site, which is located between Thetford and Bury St Edmunds.

Geological studies confirm pyrite's local rarity, suggesting deliberate transport for fire production.

It took four years for a team, led by researchers at the British Museum, to demonstrate that the heated clay was not caused by wildfire.

## Jail term to be scrapped for prescribing banned drugs

Draft ordinance proposes easing some punitive measures against doctors for rules violations

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government plans to ease punitive measures against doctors for violating rules, with a draft ordinance seeking to scrap jail terms for prescribing banned medicines.

The draft of the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Ordinance 2025 also proposes reducing the jail term from three years to one year for doctors found guilty of practising medicine without registration with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC).

According to the existing law, a doctor may face up to three years in prison or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both, for prescribing banned medicines.

The draft, however, proposes imposing only a fine of Tk 5 lakh.

➔ "Medical tribunals" to handle cases of professional misconduct

➔ Jail term of up to 5yrs for unauthorised use of "Dr" title

➔ Search committee to select BMDC president, senior VP

➔ Mandatory annual inspection of health facilities by BMDC

To deal with allegations against doctors, one or more "medical tribunals" will be formed under the ordinance, which will replace the existing BMDC Act 2010, said ministry officials.

As in the existing BMDC Act, the draft ordinance states that only holders of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degrees can use the title "Dr" before their names.

Formed in 1972, the BMDC is responsible for registering new doctors, dentists, and medical technologists; renewing their licences; handling disciplinary issues; formulating undergraduate and postgraduate curricula; and accrediting public and private medical and dental colleges and institutes.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Govt to provide firearm licence to candidates

July warriors to get security; govt to start Operation Devil Hunt phase-2

BAHARAM KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The government has decided to provide personal security to individuals who played key roles in the July uprising in the wake of several shooting incidents, including the Friday attack on Sharif Osman Hadi, an independent MP aspirant from Dhaka-8.

Intelligence agencies have been instructed to compile a list of high-risk individuals after thorough scrutiny.

Additionally, the government will offer a firearm licence to candidates in the upcoming election, in a departure from previous policies that allowed only government employees to possess firearms.

To address the growing threat of illegal arms and criminal activities, Operation Devil Hunt - Phase 2 will be launched, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, told a press briefing after a core committee meeting on law and order at the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday, where the decisions were taken.

Earlier on February 8, the government launched Operation Devil Hunt- phase 1 to combat terrorism.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Inqilab Moncho staged a rally that marched from Shahbagh to Raju memorial sculpture at Dhaka University, protesting the shooting of its spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi, an MP aspirant for Dhaka-8. Inset, BNP held a similar demonstration in the capital's Nayapaltan area, home to its central office. Both photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN

## THAI-CAMBODIA ROW Fighting rages on despite Trump's ceasefire claim

AFP, Bangkok

Cambodia shut its border crossings with Thailand yesterday, after Bangkok denied US President Donald Trump's claim that a truce had been agreed to end days of deadly fighting.

Violence between the Southeast Asian neighbours, which stems from a long-running dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre border, has displaced around half a million people on both sides.

At least 25 people have died this week, including four Thai soldiers the defence ministry said were killed in the border area yesterday.

The latest fatalities were followed by Phnom Penh announcing it would immediately "suspend all entry and exit movements at all Cambodia-Thailand border crossings", the interior ministry said.

Each side blamed the other for reigniting the conflict, before Trump said a truce had been agreed.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Trump "didn't mention whether we should make a ceasefire" during their Friday phone call.

The two leaders "didn't discuss" the issue, Anutin told journalists on Saturday.

Trump had hailed his "very good conversation" with Anutin and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Friday.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord" agreed in July, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

## SHOOTING OF HADI 'Arrest attackers within 48hrs'

STAR REPORT

Protesting the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, an aspiring candidate for the Dhaka 8 constituency and spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, several political parties and platforms demonstrated across the country yesterday.

In Dhaka, Inqilab Moncho held a protest rally titled "Aggrieved Citizens' Assembly and Mass Resistance", where they issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the government to arrest those responsible for the shooting.

Speakers at the rally described Hadi's attack as an assault not only on an individual but also on Bangladesh's independence and the July movement. They announced plans for an all-party rally at the Central Shaheed Minar on December 15.

Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator of the southern region of the National Citizen Party, said, "The bullet fired at Osman Hadi did not just pierce his head; it pierced the head of every citizen of Bangladesh."

Echoing the sentiment, Daily Amar Desh

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**BANGLADESH TERRY TOWEL & LINEN MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION**

Following distinguished members have elected Office Bearers and Board of Directors for the tenure: 2026-2027

 <b>M Shahadat Hossain</b> President, BTLEMA Managing Director Towel Tex Limited	 <b>Abdullah Mohammad Talha</b> Senior Vice President, BTLEMA CEO & Managing Director Noman Terry Towel Mills Limited	 <b>Belayet Hossain</b> Vice President, BTLEMA Managing Director RTT Textile Ind. (Pvt.) Limited
 <b>Main Uddin Ahmed</b> Director, BTLEMA Managing Director Shamsuddin Towels Limited	 <b>Md. Naser Kamal</b> Director, BTLEMA Managing Director Stylus Towels Limited	 <b>Faizah Mehmood</b> Director, BTLEMA Deputy Managing Director Anwar Silk Mills Limited
 <b>Umney Rowman Hoq, FCCA</b> Director, BTLEMA Director Nasco Textiles Limited		

## CUTTING BILLS

without cutting comfort



TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Imagine a small family in Dhaka: two working parents, two school-age children, and a modest apartment with a decade-old refrigerator, a forty-inch television, a thirty-litre storage geyser and several incandescent bulbs. They replace three bulbs with LEDs, swap the old fridge for an inverter model, and fit a small on-demand water heater. Within a single billing cycle they observe lower kilowatt-hour consumption, reduced standby losses and fewer reheats of stored hot water, while the home remains comfortable during short voltage dips. When replicated across many households, such switches reduce peak demand and help avoid costly emergency generation. Lighting alone accounts for roughly 3,500-4,000 MW of Bangladesh's electricity demand, so shifting millions of fixtures and appliances toward efficiency eases grid stress and lowers bills. This is what "power-saving appliances" means in practice: devices designed or controlled to deliver the same service while using less electricity through better hardware and smarter controls.

### THE VARIETY OF POWER-SMART APPLIANCES

Refrigerators use inverter compressors, thicker insulation and AI or IoT diagnostics that modulate cooling to usage patterns and minimise cycling losses. Local and regional brands such as Walton and Singer-Beko supply inverter and smart models across compact to large sizes, with typical retail bands like Walton costing roughly from Tk 15,000 to Tk 200,000 depending on capacity and features. Televisions are predominantly LED backlit smart sets with auto-dimming, sleep timers and low standby draw, and prices generally range from about Tk 18,000 to Tk 130,000 depending on size and smart capability. Entry-level 32" Samsung models start around Tk 20,000-40,000, while feature-rich 4K sets (50"-65") range from Tk 40,000 up to Tk 130,000 or more. Local brands like Walton and Vision also sell affordable smart TVs (often in the Tk 20k-50k range). All these TVs come with Wi-Fi apps and sometimes voice control, adding convenience with minimal extra power. Heaters and geysers now include instant tankless units that eliminate stored-water standby waste, better-insulated storage geysers and

SEE PAGE J2



## LIVE COMFORTABLE SAVE SMARTER

GREE AI Inverter Technology saves up to 63% energy for a comfortable now and better tomorrow



Smart AI Inverter



Cold Plasma



UV-C Sterilization

save energy

up to  
**63%**



**12+**  
YEARS  
COMPRESSOR REPLACEMENT  
WARRANTY

# Smart living for a sustainable nation

**As electricity costs rise and environmental concerns take centre stage globally, the demand for smarter, power-saving home appliances has never been higher. For LG, meeting this demand is the core of their global design philosophy.**

### Science of Savings

LG's approach to energy efficiency relies heavily on hardware innovation. The strategy focuses on eliminating energy waste through intelligent automation. They achieve this through advanced inverter platforms and intelligent sensors that adjust power consumption automatically based on usage patterns.

This technology manifests differently across

manufacturing facilities but has also strategic alliances for local assembly. In Bangladesh, they work closely with Butterfly Group and Rancon Electronics (Rangs Group) for the local assembly of selected LG products. All LG appliances—whether imported or assembled locally—are designed and tested against rigorous global performance and safety standards. They undergo certified evaluations for efficiency and durability before hitting the market, ensuring full compliance with Bangladesh's regulatory requirements.



### GERALD CHUN

Managing Director  
 LG Electronics, Bangladesh

- LG is investing heavily in next-generation technologies such as AI-based power optimisation, advanced Smart Inverter Compressors, Eco-Hybrid Heat Pump Systems, Door Cooling+ improvements, etc. Integration with the LG ThinQ platform will also allow users to monitor and manage energy usage more intelligently. Our commitment is to help build a more energy-conscious and environmentally responsible Bangladesh.

product lines. LG's refrigerators utilise Inverter Linear Compressors and Multi-Air Flow systems to maintain stable temperatures with minimal energy loss. Meanwhile, their washing machines are equipped with AI Direct Drive (AIDD) motors that detect fabric types and optimise wash motions accordingly.

However, the standout performer in the Bangladeshi market is LG's cooling technology. Their LG Dual Inverter Air Conditioners lead the way, offering up to 70% reduced energy consumption compared to non-inverter models, highlighting that smart inverter refrigerators are also major contributors to household electricity savings.

### Global Standards, Local Assembly

The company operates globally certified

### Next Generation of Home Tech

LG is doubling down on R&D to push the boundaries of efficiency even further. The company is investing heavily in next-generation technologies, including AI-based power optimisation, Eco-Hybrid Heat Pump systems, and improvements to their Door Cooling+ technology.

A key part of this future is the LG ThinQ platform, which connects appliances to a central digital ecosystem, allowing users to monitor and manage energy usage intelligently. LG WashTower—a unit featuring AI washing and heat pump drying—is a prime example of this new direction, delivering premium performance with significantly reduced energy use.

# Sustainable Appliance Manufacturing in Bangladesh

**Electro Mart Group shares insights into the company's strategy for promoting energy efficiency and sustainable living. Md. Nurul Afser, Deputy Managing Director, explores the challenges and opportunities of manufacturing smart, eco-friendly appliances in Bangladesh.**

The Daily Star (TDS): *Do you have any initiatives that promote energy efficiency or sustainable living in Bangladesh?*

Md. Nurul Afser (MNA): We drive energy efficiency through both consumer education and technological innovation. On the consumer side, we use transparent labelling, cost comparison campaigns, and energy audits to demonstrate potential savings of 30–60%. Technologically, we feature Gree's G-Boost inverter (60% savings)

South Asian Business Excellence Awards. We are currently designing platforms to meet rigorous global standards, including IEC/ISO, Energy Star equivalents, and regional regulations like SASO, ESMA, and BSTI.

TDS: *Do you have any targets for reducing the average power consumption of your appliance portfolio over the next 5 years?*

MNA: We have observed a 35% market surge in energy-efficient appliances over the last two years. Driven by rising electricity tariffs, consumers are increasingly choosing inverter technology (ACs,



### MD. NURUL AFSER

Deputy Managing Director  
 Electro Mart Group  
 Konka, Gree & Haiko  
 Electronics & Home Appliances

- The future role of smart appliances and IoT in reducing household energy consumption in Bangladesh is set to be transformational and is actively supported by the government's Smart Bangladesh Vision and the National IoT Strategy.

and Solar Hybrid ACs with PV Direct Drive, which eliminates conversion losses. Additionally, Konka and Gree washing machines utilise AI load detection and Eco-Wash systems to optimise water and electricity usage automatically.

TDS: *Which national or international energy/performance certifications or test standards do your power-saving products hold?*

MNA: Our products are backed by comprehensive national and international certifications, including BSTI, BUET, ISO 9001:2015, and UKAS. Our manufacturing excellence has been recognised globally, with Gree winning multiple Superbrand Awards and our facility being named the 2025 Best Manufacturer of the Year (Electronics) at the

fridges, washing machines) to lower the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). These appliances offer 30–60% energy savings, justifying the higher initial investment through long-term bill reduction and lower emissions.

TDS: *What role does government policy or incentives play in encouraging manufacturers like you to innovate in energy saving?*

MNA: Regulations, such as minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) and mandatory energy audits, create market demand for efficient products and processes, forcing manufacturers to innovate to remain competitive. These government actions stimulate the industry's transition towards green manufacturing, fostering a cleaner, more secure, and affordable energy future.

# Cutting bills without cutting comfort

FROM PAGE J1

Solar water-heating options, with household prices starting from Tk 12,000. A new trend is Wi-Fi-enabled geysers. These units let users schedule heating or remotely turn off the heater via a smartphone app. By avoiding unnecessary heating cycles (for example, ensuring no water is warmed when nobody's home), these devices can knock 10–30% off a household's water-heating energy.

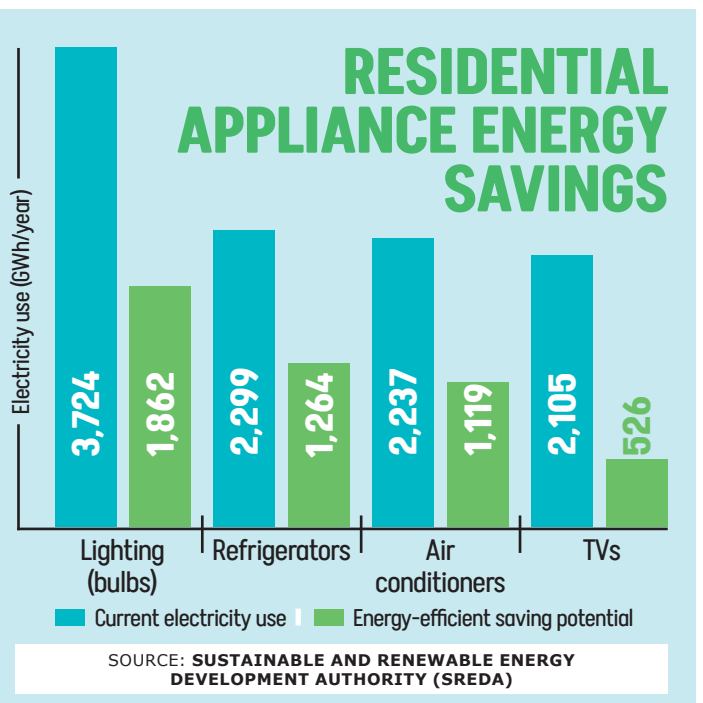
Bulbs and lighting are dominated by LEDs and smart bulbs with dimming, motion sensors and timers; a household LED bulb price band is approximately

and energy-monitoring tools globally. Electro Mart retails, imports and manufactures a wide smart-appliance selection. Local firms adapt features to Bangladesh's intermittent grid and routines. Examples include scheduled water heating, motion-sensing lights and timers too. Adaptive compressor speeds and better insulation cut cycling energy significantly. Smart diagnosis provides push alerts, simplifying repairs and warranty claims. Retailers bundle IoT ecosystems, making multi-device control easier for consumers. Price tiers range from budget models to premium connected refrigerators. These offerings shrink energy bills when families adopt efficient habits. Government labelling and checks help buyers choose verified efficient products. IoT features also enable energy monitoring that shows kilowatt-hour reductions. Manufacturers tailor firmware and hardware for humid, tropical, voltage-unstable conditions. Consumers gain application control, scheduled automation, diagnostics and improved efficiency. Together Walton, Jamuna, LG, Electro Mart and many others are reinventing Bangladesh's appliance market.

Every modest swap is simple, affordable and replicable: lower monthly bills, fewer wasteful cycles and reduced strain on the electricity system. Power-saving appliances combine improved hardware— inverter compressors, better insulation and long-life LEDs—with smarter controls such as timers, motion sensors and scheduling. With accessible price bands for fridges, TVs, geysers and bulbs in Bangladesh, families can pick solutions that fit budgets and reduce household electricity consumption immediately. These pragmatic steps deliver personal savings and contribute to national energy resilience when multiplied across communities. Start with LEDs and an inverter fridge for the quickest, most affordable gains, then layer in smart plugs, timers, occupancy sensors and an on-demand heater where they match routines; each small change reduces kWh use, lowers bills and makes homes more comfortable and resilient while helping Bangladesh reduce peak load, lower generation costs and use energy more sustainably for the long term.

Tk 100–Tk 800 per unit. These categories replace standby waste and old inefficient loads with controlled, lower-power devices that deliver similar comfort at far lower energy use.

**BANGLADESH'S SMART UPGRADE**  
 Bangladeshi brands are rapidly integrating IoT into everyday appliances now. Walton produces AI-enabled refrigerators with inverter compressors and diagnostic features. Their AI Doctor monitors faults and reduces energy use and maintenance. Jamuna sells affordable smart TVs, compact fridges and app-controlled devices. LG brings ThinQ connectivity, remote control



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**Technology completes art**

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