



HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025

Accelerate your international success

Congratulations to the winners of the HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025, for their remarkable contribution in taking "Made in Bangladesh" to global markets and boosting the country's economic progress.

At HSBC, we have been connecting businesses to opportunities for almost three decades, and globally for more than 160 years.



Visit to know more:
business.hsbc.com.bd/eea2025

In association with:



Ministry of
Commerce



British
High Commission
Dhaka



Award presentation highlight



The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited in Bangladesh announced the winners of the 'HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025'.

Four Bangladeshi businesses have been recognised and honoured as 'Exporter of the year' for their leadership and continuous contribution in promoting Bangladesh in the global stage and enabling sustainable growth of the country.

The programme was in association with the Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and The British High Commission Dhaka. Technical partner, KPMG Advisory Services Limited, was engaged for auditing purposes.

Quotable moments

"We are committed to ensuring that businesses of all sizes can grow globally with confidence; whether they are emerging entrepreneurs or well-established exporters."

Chief Guest

H.E. Sk. Bashir Uddin

Honourable Adviser
Ministry of Commerce
Government of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh



"That's the bottom line. To survive, maintain standard of living, maintain exchange rate stability, maintain balance of payments strongly and sustainably, we have to export."

Guest of Honour

Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur

Honourable Governor
Bangladesh Bank



"Success in trade is not just about numbers; it's about people, partnerships, shared values. The UK is proud to be a partner in Bangladesh's ambition to become a diversified, export-driven economy."

Special Guest

H.E. Sarah Cooke

The British High
Commissioner
to Bangladesh



"We celebrate the grit and ambition of our exporters, but the path ahead requires strategic evolution. We must work collaboratively to achieve greater market diversification, and maximise the benefits of existing and future preferential trade agreements."

Md Mahbub ur Rahman

Chief Executive Officer
HSBC Bangladesh



Four enterprises coined 'Exporter of the year' across four award categories



Received by:

M A Rahim (Feroz)
Vice Chairman
Flamingo Fashions Limited
DBL Group

M A Jabbar
Managing Director
Flamingo Fashions Limited
DBL Group

Category: Export Excellence
in Ready-made Garments



Received by:

**Md Saleudh
Zaman Khan**
Managing Director
NZ Tex Group

Category: Export Excellence
in Ready-made Garments
Backward Linkage



Received by:

Helal Ahmed
Deputy Managing Director
Janata Jute Mills Limited and
Sadat Jute Industries Limited

Category: Export Excellence
in Non-traditional and Emerging
Sectors – Manufacturing



Received by:

**Mohammed
Enayetur Rahman**
CEO and President
Ulkasemi Pvt. Limited

Category: Export Excellence
in Non-traditional and Emerging
Sectors – Service

Flamingo Fashions Limited

Flamingo Fashions Limited is a highly export-driven, vertically integrated apparel manufacturer, combining spinning, knitting, dyeing, printing, recycling, and garmenting to supply major global brands across the globe.

NZ Tex Group

NZ Tex Group provides strong backward linkage to the ready-made garments sector through its vertically integrated spinning, woven, denim, and linen operations, ensuring reliable supply of high-quality yarns and fabrics for global brands.

Janata Jute Mills Limited and Sadat Jute Industries Limited

Janata Jute Mills Limited and Sadat Jute Industries Limited stands out as a non-traditional and emerging force in Bangladesh's manufacturing sector, transforming jute from a conventional commodity into a platform for high-value, diversified products.

Ulkasemi Pvt. Limited

Ulkasemi Pvt. Limited is a leading example of Bangladesh's emergence in non-traditional, high-tech services, delivering world-class semiconductor design from its major engineering center in Dhaka.



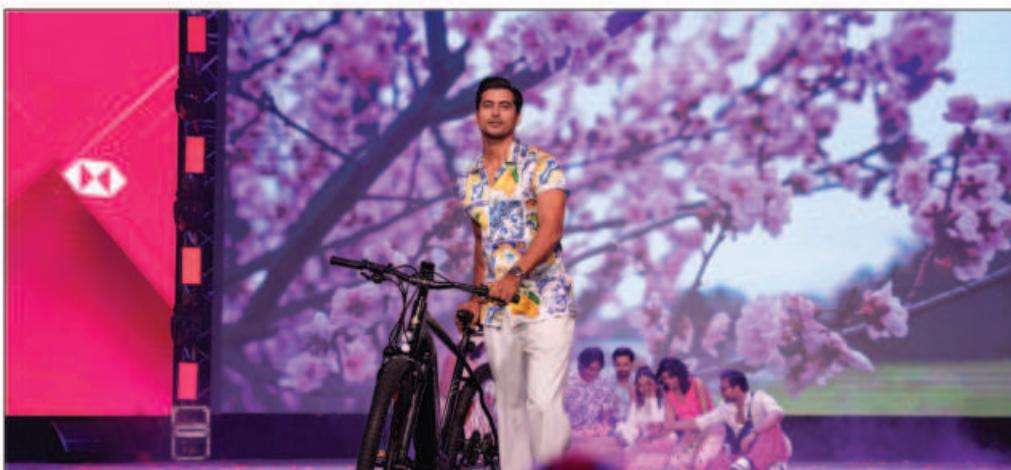
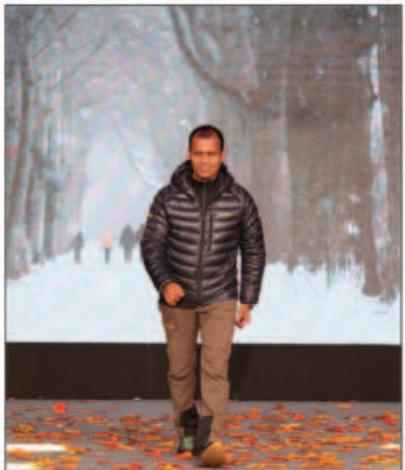
HSBC recognises and connects global export ambitions

HSBC remains committed to enabling Bangladesh's businesses to achieve their ambitions by connecting them to global opportunities and supporting their growth journey, as displayed by this year's HSBC Export Excellence Awards.

To take a deeper look into how trade shifts are reshaping global business, view our second edition of the 'HSBC Global Trade Pulse Survey' below.



Scan to view
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'Made in Bangladesh' fashion show unfolds

The evening concluded with a fashion showcase themed 'Made in Bangladesh', presenting lifestyle apparel, accessories, and products manufactured locally and contributed by their respective exporters.

Structured as a journey through the seasons, namely Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, the showcase illustrated how Bangladesh's export sector adapts to the climate, moods, and cultural rhythms of global markets.

Each segment of the runway concluded with a showstopper moment, and included Adil Hossain Noble, Aupree Karim, Muhammad Abdul Mohit, Sadia Islam Mou, and Tariq Anam Khan appearing as symbolic markers of confidence.

The showcase was accompanied by music inspired by folk traditions. Curated by runway director Azra Mahmood, the presentation closed the night as a statement of adaptability, identity, and pride in what is 'Made in Bangladesh'.

In tribute to timeless craftsmanship

The HSBC Export Excellence Award trophy holds a distinctive place in Bangladesh's cultural and design history. The sculptural work was created by Professor Hamiduzzaman Khan (1946–2025), one of the country's most respected artists.

Among his many public works, the HSBC Export Excellence Awards trophy carries special significance. It was one of the first award trophies he ever designed for a bank, and his first for HSBC Bangladesh. The form includes a globe, reflecting global connection and Bangladesh's place in international trade.



Musical 'love affair' set the melody of the night

The Awards Night opened with a musical performance by Animes Roy, a Bangladeshi singer, composer, and songwriter known for blending folk traditions with contemporary expression. Folk music, much like export, speaks of connection beyond borders. Rooted in Bangladesh yet embraced globally, it reflects shared histories, exchanges, and mutual dependence.



Session on 'marginal gains'

Jake Lovelock, Performance and Wellbeing Psychologist at Cognacity, delivered a session on 'marginal gains' at the HSBC Export Excellence Awards 2025. He emphasised how sustained high performance is built through mindset, intentional rest, and recovery; showing how consistent improvements help leaders maintain focus, resilience, and long-term effectiveness.

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India-Bangladesh relations moving towards crisis

Foreign adviser questions why Indian authorities allowed protest near Bangladesh High Commission

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The India-Bangladesh ties, which came under strain following the August 5 political changeover, have deteriorated further, with both countries voicing concerns over security of their missions.

Yesterday, the Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) in Chattogram city suspended its operations until further notice, citing the recent security situation at the Assistant High Commission of India (AHCI) in the port city.

Last week, the IVACs in Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi remained partially closed for one day each, citing security concerns amid protests in the three cities.

Dhaka and New Delhi issued conflicting statements yesterday over a demonstration near the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi.

The Indian external affairs ministry said a group of 20-25 youths protested

on Saturday against the killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a garment worker, by a mob in Mymensingh, and called for the protection of all minorities in Bangladesh, but did not create any security situation.

At a media briefing, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Indian external affairs ministry, said they noticed misleading propaganda by some sections of the Bangladeshi media regarding the incident.

He said there was no attempt to breach the fence or create a security situation at any time, and that the police stationed at the spot dispersed the group after a few minutes.

In Dhaka, at a press briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain questioned why the Indian authorities allowed protesters to enter and demonstrate in the secure

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Dr Kamal Hossain, along with other members of the Gono Forum, yesterday visited The Daily Star Centre in the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue to inspect the destruction left behind after the building was attacked and set on fire on December 19.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Take firm action against vandalism, arson attack

EC tells law enforcers; armed forces assure all necessary measures taken for fair, smooth polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday warned that it will not tolerate any activities that disrupt the election environment and directed law enforcement agencies to act firmly, if necessary, to prevent such incidents.

In a meeting with top military and law enforcement officials, the commission urged them to show "humane behaviour" only towards those who act humanely. It also instructed the joint forces to intensify operations to recover illegal weapons and arrest terrorists.

The EC noted that the recent vandalism and arson attacks on the offices of The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, and other locations have "undeniably" affected the election atmosphere following the announcement of the schedule on December 11.

In a separate meeting with the EC, the chiefs of the three services – Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood

Khan assured the commission that all necessary measures have been taken to ensure a fair and smooth election. They confirmed that deployments will be made as required, with the army alone deploying around 100,000 personnel.

At a press briefing after the meetings, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (Retd) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah said he said that the law enforcement agencies had been instructed to act with humanity, but many people took undue advantage of this.

"Now the message is very clear. We have instructed all forces and agencies that we will be humane towards those who act humanely. But there is no need to act humane towards those who seek to carry out banditry, vandalism, destroy the election environment, or kill our brothers," he said.

Asked about the recent attacks on The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, and other locations, as well as the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, coordinator of Inqilab Moncho and a frontline figure of the July uprising, Sanaullah said, "The election

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Democracy slipping into 'mobocracy'

Says BNP; editors call for tolerance, assurance of environment to practise independent journalism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The demand for democracy after the July uprising is now sliding towards "mobocracy" and the interim government's weakness is to be blamed for it, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

Speaking at the same event, editors and senior journalists said attacks on media houses were attacks on Bangladesh itself. They sought assurances that, if voted to power, the BNP would demonstrate tolerance and ensure an environment where independent journalism could be practised.

The discussion, organised by the party, was held at a city hotel ahead of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman's homecoming.

Salahuddin said Bangladesh's image had been damaged globally by the attacks and arson on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, adding that mob rule must be suppressed firmly.

"The government had the biggest responsibility in this incident. There should have been predictions, intelligence reports, and preparations to prevent it. We also came to know about such reports. But why were those reports not taken into account?" he said.

Referring to the delayed response, he said they had heard that even after law enforcement agencies were informed, action came one to two hours later.

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'Terrible moment for Bangladesh's democracy'
Says EU ambassador Michael Miller



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo were a "terrible moment" for Bangladesh's democracy, said Michael Miller, the EU ambassador to Bangladesh.

"These are attacks on freedom of the media and on freedom of expression. And I can only underline how critical it is to maintain space for freedom of expression in Bangladesh as you head towards elections," he said during a solidarity visit to the offices of Prothom Alo yesterday.

He interacted with the Prothom Alo journalists and inspected the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

ATTACK ON STAR, PROTHOM ALO Outcry for press freedom resounds at home, abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violent attacks on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star continued to draw sharp condemnation from political leaders, journalist organisations, civil society members and international press bodies yesterday.

The incidents, involving vandalism, looting and arson on Thursday night, have reignited concerns over press freedom and the safety of journalists in the country.

Senior jurist and Gono Forum president emeritus Dr Kamal Hossain visited the damaged offices yesterday.

Speaking to reporters during the visit, he said, "Those who set fire to media offices and vandalised them are acting against the interests of the people and the state."

He warned that such organised violence posed a grave threat to democracy, media freedom and public safety. "If the government fails to stop these forces, the safety of the state itself will be at risk," he told reporters.

Dr Kamal said Prothom Alo and The Daily Star have long played a vital role in promoting democracy, human rights and good governance in Bangladesh.

"The government's failure to ensure the safety of these media institutions is unacceptable."

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NOTICE

Today's edition is published in a reduced 12 page format. We regret the inconvenience and are making every effort to return to full capacity.

Several attackers of media houses identified
Says religious affairs adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain yesterday said several people involved in the arson attack on the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo have been identified.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat, he said steps are underway to arrest them and bring them to book.

The adviser also condemned the killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a garment worker in Bhaluka, who was beaten and burned to death. Terming the act "heinous," he said the government will not allow anyone to take the law into their own hands.

He also condemned the attack on the cultural organisation Chhayana in Dhaka.

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The namaz-e-janaza of the six UN peacekeepers, who lost their lives in a terrorist drone attack in Sudan, being held at the Central Mosque of Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Farewell to fallen soldiers of peace with flags, tears

Janaza held in Dhaka Cantonment

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Mohammad Alamgir, father of private Shamim Reza, stood solemnly beside his son's coffin, draped half in the national flag and half in the UN flag.

"My son was my banyan tree. Now it is no more, all my dreams... shattered."

The namaz-e-janaza of six Bangladeshi peacekeepers, killed in a terrorist drone attack, was held yesterday around 9:00am at the Central Mosque of Dhaka Cantonment.

The attack took place on a United Nations peacekeeping base in Sudan's Abyei area on December 13.

The bodies arrived in Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on an Emirates flight on Saturday.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz-Zaman, Chief of Navy Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan, Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, and senior armed forces officers were present.

Alamgir said, "Shamim had told his younger brother that he would 'show him a path' for his future when he returned. He had also told his young daughter not to worry and that he would bring her a necklace for her wedding."

Soldier Rony, mourning the loss of his elder brother Corporal Mohammad Masud Rana, asked everyone

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Jamaat seeks gunman, police protection for its ameer

BAHARAM KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has sought round-the-clock deployment of a gunman for its ameer, Dr Shafiqur Rahman, and the posting of armed police personnel for the security of his residence.

The party sent a letter to the home adviser with the request, which was received at the ministry on December 21.

The letter, a copy of which The Daily Star obtained, said Jamaat has long been engaged in what it described as a "just struggle" to establish people's fundamental rights, build a justice-based society and consolidate democracy, and that it has become a popular political party through that process.

It claimed that during the previous "fascist" government, Jamaat's leadership faced "inhuman" torture, oppression, killings and enforced disappearances. The party further alleged that for building movements against "wrongdoing and misdeeds",

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India-Bangladesh relations

FROM PAGE 1
diplomatic zone where the Bangladesh High Commission is located.

He rejected the Indian press note regarding the event, and said the matter was not as simple as it was portrayed.

"Our mission, the Bangladeshi mission, is located deep within the diplomatic area. It is not situated on the outskirts or at the entrance of the diplomatic zone," he said.

"How could a group of 25 or 30 people from a Hindu extremist organisation manage to reach so far into a secure area?"

Touhid said those individuals normally would not have been able to enter in this manner unless they were permitted.

"Standing there, they did not just give slogans protesting the killing of the Hindu man; they said much more."

He said the information he received suggested that death threats were issued to Bangladesh High Commissioner Riaz Hamidullah, who resides there with his family. They felt threatened and panicked due to inadequate security as only two guards were present.

"Therefore, we believe it is the responsibility of that country to handle the situation more effectively."



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus pays respects to Abdul Karim Khandker, former deputy commander of the Liberation War and the first chief of the Bangladesh Air Force, by placing a floral wreath on his coffin after the funeral at BAF Base Bashar Parade Ground in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Usually, when a protest group marches toward such a secure area, police stop them at a considerable distance from the zone. This is standard practice everywhere, including in Bangladesh, he said.

Touhid further said a Bangladeshi citizen was brutally murdered, and there is no justification for equating this with minority security issues here. Bangladeshi authorities took immediate action.

"Such incidents occur not just in Bangladesh; they happen across all countries in this region, and it is every country's responsibility to take appropriate measures. Bangladesh is taking such measures; others should do the same."

Referring to New Delhi's statement, he said Dhaka has taken note of India's commitment to ensuring the security of all Bangladesh missions in Bangladesh.

It also requested India twice -- once in December last year and again in November this year -- to extradite Hasina after the International Crimes Tribunal sentenced her and ex-minister Asaduzzaman Khan to death.

In a recent media interview, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said it was up to Hasina to decide whether to return home -- a statement analysts view as an indication that India is unlikely to extradite Hasina anytime soon.

The ministry also said Hasina has been calling on her supporters to engage in terrorist activities aimed at destabilising the country and derailing the election.

It urged New Delhi to ensure the immediate arrest and extradition of suspects involved in the shooting of Hadi -- a key figure of the July uprising -- should they enter Indian territory.

Delhi rejected Dhaka's assertions the same day, saying India "never allowed its territory to be used for activities inimical to the interests of the friendly people of Bangladesh".

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On Thursday night, following news of the death of Inqilab Monch spokesman Sharif Osman Hadi, the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, located in the capital's Kawran Bazar, were vandalised, looted and set on fire. The fire was extinguished in the early hours of Friday.

At least 28 journalists and staff of The Daily Star were trapped for several hours before they were rescued around 5:00am on Friday.

The Daily Star and Prothom Alo could not bring out their Friday's print edition and the website remained non-operational.

"I hope we never see anything like this again -- it was a terrible moment for Bangladesh democracy. Now you must be resilient, get back on your feet, keep

The latest escalation in Dhaka-Delhi tensions followed the shooting and subsequent death of Inqilab Monch leader Sharif Osman Hadi. There were news reports that the alleged shooter reportedly fled to India.

On December 14, Bangladesh's foreign ministry summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma and drew attention to "anti-Bangladesh activities" by fugitive Awami League members currently based in India.

"These activities include planning, organising and facilitating terrorist acts inside Bangladesh with the objective of disrupting the forthcoming elections," said the ministry statement.

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On December 17, the Indian foreign ministry summoned the Bangladesh High Commissioner to India to express strong concerns over the "deteriorating security environment" in Bangladesh.

In a statement later that day, it said, "India completely rejects the false narrative sought to be created by extremist elements regarding certain recent events in Bangladesh."

"It is unfortunate that the interim government has neither conducted a thorough investigation nor shared meaningful evidence with India regarding the incidents."

Delhi also said it supports peace and stability in Bangladesh and has consistently called for free, fair, inclusive, and credible elections conducted in a peaceful atmosphere.

In reaction to the statement, Touhid said that no advice was needed from India, which did not speak about any elections during the AI regime.

The same day, the IVAC at the Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka was shut at 2:00pm, citing security situation.

The announcement came as people under the banner of July Oikya planned to lay siege to the Indian High Commission, demanding repatriation of Hasina and her aides who fled to India. Police intercepted the march at Rampura.

Liberation War dep commander AK Khandker laid to eternal rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Karim Khandker, former deputy commander of the Liberation War and the first chief of the Bangladesh Air Force, was laid to rest with full state honours yesterday.

Khandker, who was awarded Bir Uttam, was buried at the Shaheen Graveyard at BAF Base Bashar in the capital, said an ISPR press release.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janaza and a funeral parade were held at the BAF Base Bashar Parade Ground after Zohr prayers.

The imam of the BAF Base Bashar central mosque conducted the janaza, attended by advisers of the interim government, chiefs of the three services, senior civil and military officials, and members of the armed forces.

Earlier, pallbearers slow-marched the coffin to the stage while a funeral parade was held, according to a state salute to Khandker.

BAF Air Secretary Air Vice Marshal Abdulla Al Mamun read out the war hero's biography. Khandker's son, Jafrul Karim Khandker, also spoke.

Following the prayers, tributes poured in.

On behalf of President Mohammed Shahabuddin, his military secretary paid homage to Khandker by placing a wreath on his coffin.

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Farewell to fallen soldiers

FROM PAGE 1
to forgive his brother for any pain he may have caused during his service.

Masud served in the Bangladesh Army for 19 years and left behind an eight year old daughter, he said, urging prayers for the deceased and his family.

Mizanur Rahman, brother-in-law of private Mohammad Mominul Islam, also sought forgiveness on behalf of the fallen soldier and asked for prayers.

He said Mominul is survived by a younger brother, a sister, his wife, and two children -- one aged two and the other 12. Rahman requested the authorities to keep the family under their care.

Abu Taher Mondol, uncle of private Shanto Mondal, said Shanto was the son of his cousin Nurul Islam Mondal, who had also served in the army.

"Both of Nurul's sons served in the force. Shanto joined the Bangladesh Army after completing school. Had Nurul been alive today, he would have been proud of his martyred son who sacrificed his life on duty."

"Shanto's mother had been running the household relying on her two sons," he said, requesting that service related opportunities and benefits be ensured for the family.

Waliullah, brother-in-law of mess waiter Mohammad Jahangir Alam, said Jahangir had been married to his younger sister for around seven years and left behind a three year old son.

He recalled that Jahangir was not present at the child's birth but had asked to name the baby. "He named him Irfan" after his sir. So deep was his loyalty to the force."

Abdul Hamid, uncle of martyred washing man Mohammad Sobuj Mia, said Sobuj was serving in Bogura. Seeking forgiveness on his behalf, he added that Sobuj left behind an elderly mother and a wife he had recently married.

At the funeral, Boris-Ephrem Tchoumav, chief community liaison officer of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), offered gratitude and condolences to the government of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Army, the people of Bangladesh, and the families of the fallen peacekeepers.

He described them as soldiers of peace who served not for glory, but to protect the vulnerable, bridge divides, and work for peace and stability. "They did their duties with professionalism and commitment despite the inherent dangers of the mission, and this became their ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace."

Boris urged the families to remember not only how the peacekeepers died, but how they lived, citing their vigilance, integrity, and camaraderie. "Their legacies will live on."

Before the funeral prayers, brief life sketches of the six were read out, and floral wreaths were placed on the coffins on behalf of the president, the chief adviser, and the three service chiefs.

They were then accorded state honours in line with military tradition.

Afterwards, their bodies were sent by helicopter to their ancestral homes -- Natore, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rajbari, and Kishoreganj -- where burial was completed with due dignity.

Sobuj Mia was laid to rest in his village in Gaibandha around 2:00pm, while Corporal Masud's burial was also completed in Natore, report our district correspondents.

challenge, he said, "People want to feel safe going forward. But at present, people do not feel safe."

"The offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo were attacked. What will happen next, no one knows. In this situation, people have higher expectations from the BNP," he said.

He added that journalists wanted safety, freedom to write, and freedom of expression, and that they would welcome it if BNP ensured these.

"But if these are not ensured, we will criticise. To face the challenges ahead, we must remain united. If we fail to do so, the state will be at risk," he said.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman said creating an environment of national unity and understanding was now the most important task for Bangladesh.

"No country can survive with so much conflict, division, and crisis. No government can run a country effectively in such a situation," he said.

He said the coming period would be the most difficult for any party that forms the next government.

"It is the independent media that will tell you the truth about the country. If you do not want to hear that truth, you will make mistakes," he said.

Kamal Ahmed, chief of the Media Reform Commission, said the BNP must ensure not only the safety of journalists in Dhaka, but also protect working journalists at the grassroots from harassment by party leaders and activists, so they can work without fear.

Bonik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud said the country was going through a critical time and that an attack on the media meant an attack on the country, free thinking, and the structure of the state.

Inqilab Editor AMM Bahauddin, Jugantor Editor Abdul Hye Shikder, Kaler Kantha Editor Hasan Hafiz, UNB Editor Mahfuzur Rahman, Naya Diga Executive Editor Masudur Rahman Khalili, Bangladesh Pratidin Executive Editor Manjurul Islam, Channel 24 Managing Director Jahirul Alam, and Jamuna TV Chief Executive Fahim Ahmed, among others, also spoke at the event.

Several attackers of media houses

FROM PAGE 2

"Setting fire to institutions and burning people to death are unjust and unacceptable crimes," he said, reiterating the government's determination to punish the perpetrators.

On the night of December 19, The Daily Star and Prothom Alo came under an organised attack. Both newspapers suspended publication the following day but resumed on December 21 under special arrangements. Their offices, however, remain in ruins.

He urged political parties to accept critical journalism as essential

publishing, keep reporting and hold everyone to account in order for the elections to proceed smoothly," Miller said.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey has expressed deep concern about the situation in Bangladesh following the recent violence in Dhaka and other areas of the country.

She urged respect for the rule of law and for the authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety of all, including the media.

Botchwey welcomed the statement of the interim government that promised to hold those responsible for violence to account and called for restraint, responsibility and an abiding commitment to reject hatred.

She also appealed for calm and the highest degree of prudence and forbearance at this critical time.

BONDI BEACH SHOOTING

Australia falls silent, lights candles for victims

AFP, Sydney

Australians fell silent in flickering candlelight yesterday in memory of the Bondi Beach shooting victims, one week after gunmen fired into crowds celebrating a Jewish festival.

"Last week took our innocence and, like the grass here at Bondi was stained with blood, so too has our nation been stained," said David Ossip, president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies.

Summer winds buffeted flags lowered to half mast across the country, including over the famed Sydney Harbour Bridge.

A candle was lit before thousands of people held their silent vigil at Bondi Beach.

windowills with candles in a gesture of "light over darkness", a key theme of the Hanukkah festival.

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SOLIDARITY IN ACTION NATIONWIDE

Civil society members, cultural organisations, and political parties stage protests across the country yesterday condemning the recent attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star. Demonstrations were held by the Gazipur Press Club, Narayanganj Cultural Alliance, Satkhira Press Club, the Society of Cultural Activists and Artistes of Cumilla, Journalists Working in Cumilla, and Ganosamhati Andolon in their respective areas, demanding that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

PHOTOS: STAR



Police yet to trace prime suspects' locations

FROM PAGE 10
on December 12 while travelling on a battery-run auto-rickshaw in Dhaka's Paltan area. He breathed his last on December 18.

The briefing came amid questions over whether law enforcement agencies were taking the case seriously enough, as large-scale violence has been witnessed across the country in recent days centring on the incident.

Responding to the concern, Rafiqul said the authorities were taking the matter "very seriously".

So far, 10 people have been arrested, while the motorcycle used during the incident has been recovered. The weapon used in the shooting has been identified, he said.

He pointed out that multiple agencies were present at the briefing and said all relevant forces had been engaged from the very beginning of the incident.

"Therefore, claims that the government has not given importance to the matter are incorrect."

Asked about a photo circulating online of Faisal and Alamgir claiming to have been sent from India, Rafiqul said the matter was under investigation.

"Information is also circulating on social media that he may be hiding somewhere within Dhaka. We are verifying all such information with due importance."

Cyber experts are verifying claims that IP address tracking shows the accused has gone to India, adding that action will be taken against those spreading rumours, Rafiqul added.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed two individuals — Sibion Dew and Sanjay Chisim — on a fresh five-day remand for allegedly assisting Faisal to flee to India through illegal routes.

At the briefing, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Detective Branch Chief Shafiqul Islam said that at the preliminary stage, nothing definitive was known about the motive behind the killing of Hadi.

"However, it appears that this was not a killing driven by personal

enmity; rather, it may have been politically motivated. That is our initial assessment," he said.

Police have not yet been able to arrest the main accused, Faisal and Alamgir, and therefore cannot make any conclusive comments about the motive.

"However, we are advancing the investigation by interrogating all those who provided shelter, assistance or stored weapons related to the incident," he said.

Questions were also raised about how, after being released from jail, a Chhatra League leader Faisal was able to carry out the incident in Dhaka and move freely.

"This issue was an important part of the investigation," Shafiqul said, adding that police are investigating the video footage of Hadi's alleged shooter sitting next to him on December 12.

Police are investigating who the person was, how he managed to sit beside Hadi, and through whose contact he reached there.

Asked how long it would take to reach a conclusion, the DB chief said it was not possible to give a specific timeframe but the case is being handled with the highest priority.

Responding to a question on whether the failure to identify the main accused's location even after 10 days indicated a failure of law enforcement, Rafiqul said the assessment of success or failure was up to others.

"However, we are continuing our best efforts. Police Headquarters, DMP, DB, RAB and BGB are all working together. Since there is a possibility of crossing the border, BGB has been involved from the very beginning."

Arrests sometimes happen immediately after a crime, while in other cases it takes time, he said, while urging fair assessment of law enforcement efforts.

About the possibility of Hadi's assassination being a political killing, Shafiqul said investigators had not yet reached a clear conclusion about whether any political party was

7, was standing amid the flames, repeatedly crying, "Abbu, save me! Take me with you!"

"The intensity of the fire was such that despite hearing my daughter's screams, I could not save her. What could be more tragic for a father?" he said, demanding justice.

Ayesha died on the spot. Salma and Samia are now undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka.

Additional Superintendent of Police Md Rezaul Haque said police are investigating the incident.

Contacted, Abul Hashem denied the allegations. "It is true that I have a land dispute with Belal, but I am not involved in such a heinous act," he said.

Lakshimpur Sadar Model Thana OC Md Wahid Parvez said no complaint had been filed as of yesterday evening.

Additional Superintendent of Police Md Rezaul Haque said police are investigating the incident.

RUCV Naqib could not be reached for comment.

Ducsu blocks VC

FROM PAGE 10

"Sitara Begum Hall," he said, adding that Ducsu would submit a memorandum to the university administration regarding the demands.

The demonstrators also demanded action against teachers and officials who, they alleged, opposed the July uprising.

Shadik alleged that collaborators of fascism were still operating from the registrar building and engaging in conspiracies to destabilise the state.

"We have already lost Osman Hadi. We will allow no more concessions," he said, adding that Ducsu expects the university syndicate to swiftly meet the demands.

After the protest, Ducsu leaders submitted a memorandum to Pro VC Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha.

RU students

FROM PAGE 10

However, the university administration decided to extend their tenure until fresh elections are held.

The decision was taken by Vice-Chancellor Saleh Hasan Naqib and Registrar Iftekharul Alam Masud.

Rucusu General Secretary Salauddin Ammar, general secretary of the Rajshahi University Central Students Union (Rucusu), objected to the extension and demanded the immediate resignation of the six deans.

In a Facebook post, Ammar said that despite the expiry of their tenure, the administration allowed the "pro-Awami League deans" to remain in office and extended their terms until the next parliamentary elections scheduled for February 12 next year.

He warned that students would intensify their movement if the deans did not resign voluntarily.

In another post, Ammar said he would personally visit the six deans with resignation letters and hoped they would step down peacefully, warning of further mobilisation if the demand was ignored.

Also yesterday, Ammar and several students went to the chambers of some deans and teachers accused of Awami League affiliation, but none were present on campus at the time.

"We have prepared a documented list of teachers who stood against students during the July movement. The deans were informed by phone about the demand, but none came to campus. I called the six deans personally. We will publish a final list and press for their resignation accordingly," Ammar said.

RUCV Naqib could not be reached for comment.

Continue movement

FROM PAGE 10

Mogbazar, marking the martyrdom of Osman Hadi, an aspirant for Dhaka 8.

On December 12, Osman Hadi was attacked while travelling by rickshaw near the water tank area in the capital's Bijoyanagar. Two assailants arrived on a motorcycle and shot him at close range before fleeing.

Osman Hadi, who was later flown by air ambulance to Singapore for advanced treatment, died on Thursday.

Amid the state mourning on Saturday, he was laid to rest beside the grave of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in the Dhaka University area following his janaza, attended by hundreds of thousands of people.

At the doa mahfil, Omar Bin Hadi recalled his brother's struggle to establish an "Insaaf-based Bangladesh".

He stated that they were not seeking any financial assistance or donations for Osman Hadi's family. "Our only demand is that you complete Osman Hadi's unfinished revolution. If you agree, pledge that you will not rest until an Insaaf-based Bangladesh is established."

"The revolutionary movement that Osman Hadi started, the movement for which he was martyred, must be completed by the people of this country."

Meanwhile, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, who presided over the doa mahfil, said the nation was concerned about who among the July fighters might be targeted next after Osman Hadi.

Calling on the government to take swift action, he said the shooting and

killing of Hadi left candidates in all 300 constituencies worried about their safety.

The Jamaat leader said, "A section of journalists and stakeholders are saying on television talk shows, and poets and writers are writing, as if there can be no election unless the Awami League participates. Through this narrative, anti-hegemony forces are being taken to the brink at gunpoint."

He added that the shooting of a candidate the day after the election schedule was announced showed it was not an isolated incident but part of a "package programme", warning that there might be more in the series.

The Jamaat leader opined that the chief adviser and the chief election commissioner could not evade the responsibility for the killing.

It is shameful that the chief election commissioner termed the attack an isolated incident, he said.

According to Porwar, attempts to re-establish "fascists" into the polity in the name of an inclusive election and a "refined Awami League" would not be accepted by the people, as it would endanger the nation's identity.

He also urged the government to place before the nation the steps taken so far to arrest the killers and ensure justice since Osman Hadi was shot.

"If the killers have fled abroad, there are foreign missions and embassies, as well as various mechanisms, including prisoner exchange agreements with India. All of these must be used. The United Nations has expressed interest in investigating Osman Hadi's killing; if necessary, their logistical support should be taken," he said.

Three drown as vehicles

FROM PAGE 10

At the time of the incident, she and the children were standing beside the motorcycle while her husband was on it. When the truck hit the bike, she fell onto the ferry's deck with her two children, but her husband fell into the river along with the motorcycle and went missing.

In another development, the district administration has formed a nine-member committee, led by Additional District Magistrate Naima Islam, to investigate the incident, and the body has been asked to submit a report in the next seven working days.

Serious act

FROM PAGE 10

Hubbard and a former OFAC investigator, said the vessel has not been sanctioned by the US.

"The seizure of a vessel that is not sanctioned by the US marks a further increase in Trump's pressure on Venezuela," Paner said. "It also runs counter to Trump's statement that the US would impose a blockade of all sanctioned oil tankers."

Slain 7-year-old's father blames rival

FROM PAGE 10

setting the house on fire. His wife, Nazma Begum, managed to break through a tin fence and escape with their sons — Md Habib, 4, and four-month-old Amir Hossain.

Belal said he suffered severe burns while trying to rescue his daughters Salma Akter Smriti, 18, and Samia Akter Bithi, 14. At the time, his youngest daughter Ayesha Akter,

7, was standing amid the flames, repeatedly crying, "Abbu, save me! Take me with you!"

"The intensity of the fire was such that despite hearing my daughter's screams, I could not save her. What could be more tragic for a father?" he said, demanding justice.

Ayesha died on the spot. Salma and Samia are now undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka.

Additional Superintendent of Police Md Rezaul Haque said police are investigating the incident.

Lakshimpur Sadar Model Thana OC Md Wahid Parvez said no complaint had been filed as of yesterday evening.

Additional Superintendent of Police Md Rezaul Haque said police are investigating the incident.

RUCV Naqib could not be reached for comment.

Persistent violence must be reined in

Brutal attacks in Mymensingh, Lakshmipur continue trend of violence

We are deeply alarmed by the terrifying speed with which law and order is fraying, and we unequivocally condemn the authorities' failure to halt this slide. This lawlessness was again on full display in two atrocities committed less than 48 hours apart—one in Mymensingh, the other in Lakshmipur—united by their sheer, uninhibited brutality.

On Thursday night, outside a knitwear factory in Bhaluka, a small industrial town in Mymensingh, a mob bated for the blood of Dipu Chandra Das, a 27-year-old employee falsely accused of "hurting religious sentiments." Inside, factory staff feared for the safety of their building. Their decision was morally repugnant as the worker was forcibly ejected from the premises to "protect the factory." The mob promptly beat him to death, hung his body from a tree on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, and set it on fire. The horror of the lynching is compounded by its baselessness. The Rapid Action Battalion later confirmed there was no evidence—digital or otherwise—against the worker. It now appears he was murdered over a rumour. But the guilt extends beyond the mob. The decision by factory management to hand a worker over to a violent crowd is grotesque. It suggests that factory managers have become complicit in the barbarism outside their gates.

This ghastly spectacle is not an isolated incident but part of the prevailing anarchy in the country. On Saturday in Lakshmipur, the target was a politician. Belal Hossain, a local leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, was asleep when unidentified assailants locked his family's doors from the outside and set their home ablaze. Belal narrowly survived, but his seven-year-old daughter, trapped in the inferno, did not. Two other daughters are now in a burn unit, severely injured and fighting for their lives. There is nothing that can excuse such depravity. Locking a family inside a burning home is an act of barbarism that transcends any claim of political rivalry.

Taken together, these atrocities paint a terrifying picture for the interim government as it prepares for a national election in less than two months. It must be careful as violence has been evolving and changing colour. In Lakshmipur, it appears to be a political vendetta executed with extreme cruelty. In Mymensingh, it was the weaponisation of religious sentiment, where an accusation alone has become a death sentence.

This lawlessness must be met with unyielding resolve. The prompt arrest of seven suspects in the Mymensingh case is a start, but it is reactive. The government must make it unequivocally clear that neither mobs nor arsonists will find sanctuary in the chaos of transition. It is the state's paramount duty to ensure that citizens are protected from such brutalities and intimidation. Bangladesh stands at a perilous juncture. The authorities must arrest this slide into lawlessness and ensure that the rule of law is not supplanted by the rule of the mob. The culture of impunity must be crushed.

Better regulation of hate content a must

Meta, state institutions all must do their part

There is no denying the role played by social media in spreading misinformation and hate content in Bangladesh. While this has been more or less the pattern since the 2024 uprising, recent weeks have sharply highlighted the dangers of the unchecked circulation of such content, with open calls for violence preceding vicious attacks on The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Chhayanaut and others. Against this backdrop, we support the call of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and the National Cyber Security Agency for Meta, which owns Facebook, to take urgent, responsible action to prevent its misuse.

The BTRC's letter rightly situates the problem within Bangladesh's fragile political transition, with the law enforcement agencies struggling, and often failing, to uphold the rule of law. In such a context, the unchecked spread of incendiary content online has emerged as a big obstacle. The speed with which online incitement sometimes translated into physical attacks, including vandalism and arson, has been terrifying. When social media posts precede and seemingly facilitate such acts, platforms can no longer hide behind claims of neutrality or abstract commitments to "freedom of expression."

In this connection, we note BTRC's concerns about delays in removing or blocking incendiary content. "The amount of time being taken by Meta to take action... is creating an opportunity for further incitement and mobilisation of violence through those accounts," it said. In moments of volatility, time is critical. Even a few hours of inaction can allow harmful content to spread and mobilise groups. Meta's lack of a local office here further compounds the problem, creating a gap between reported content and meaningful intervention. For a platform with such deep penetration and influence in the country, this absence is increasingly indefensible.

At the same time, content removal is only one part of the solution. Equally important is strengthening Bangla-language moderation, investing in local expertise, and applying community standards with sensitivity to prevailing sociopolitical realities, as blanket algorithms designed elsewhere cannot adequately grasp local triggers, historical grievances, or the coded language often used to incite violence. That said, responsibility does not lie with Meta alone. Our state institutions and political camps must also do their part.

First, they must avoid selective outrage. Condemning online incitement while tacitly tolerating or exploiting it when convenient only deepens cynicism. Any engagement with social media platforms must also be transparent, rights-respecting, and free from the temptation to use "security" as a pretext for suppressing dissent or critical journalism. We must remember that the integrity of the ongoing political/electoral process, the safety of vulnerable groups, and the survival of an independent media ecosystem are all intertwined with the digital space. We must all be very careful.

Budget increases alone cannot fix public healthcare



Dr Syed Abdul Hamid
is professor of health economics at Dhaka University, convener of Wellbeing First Initiative Bangladesh (WFIB), and chief adviser of Universal Research Care Ltd.

SYED ABDUL HAMID

Government allocation for Bangladesh's health sector has long been inadequate, compounded by weak implementation mechanisms. As a result, our out-of-pocket (OOP) payments for healthcare continue to rise, and access to quality services is becoming increasingly difficult for millions of citizens.

According to the Bangladesh National Health Accounts (1997-2020), nearly 69 percent of total health expenditure comes directly from individuals' OOP payments, one of the highest rates in South Asia. The WHO warns that OOP spending above 30-35 percent poses serious financial risk; Bangladesh's rate is more than double this threshold. In contrast, the government contributes only 22-23 percent of total health spending.

Public health allocation has remained at around five percent of the national budget, reaching just 5.3 percent in FY 2025-26. As a share of GDP, public spending stands at only 0.74 percent, far below the WHO-recommended five percent. Even when public and private health expenditures are combined, the figure is merely 2.34 percent of GDP. Beyond low allocation, implementation inefficiency remains severe as poor planning, weak project execution, and the trend of unspent funds persist. Consequently, poor and lower-middle income families face growing financial hardship and often avoid necessary care. Ineffective public hospitals—plagued by management failures, staff shortages, inadequate infrastructure, weak supply chains, and medicine shortages—often force patients towards costly private care.

Addressing these systemic weaknesses requires urgent, coordinated, and structural reform. However, restoring a health system long burdened by mismanagement, complexity, and inefficiency first requires answering three fundamental questions: whether citizens are empowered to seek public healthcare services, whether public service providers are adequately motivated and incentivised to deliver services, and whether there is sufficient political will and attractiveness towards investment in the health sector.

Unfortunately, under the current reality, the answer to none of these questions is satisfactory. This failure is closely linked to three critical unknowns: patients remain unaware



FILE VISUAL: STAR

of the value of the services they receive; providers lack a clear understanding of the value of the care they deliver; and the government does not adequately know the monetary value, or returns, of its spending in the health sector. Addressing these questions and unknowns necessitates a policy framework capable of delivering positive change across all three areas.

First, consider how the public can be empowered to access public healthcare. Citizens are not adequately empowered due to insufficient priority given to health in personal and family life, the absence of health awareness and practical health education in educational institutions, and weak enforcement of the rule of law. As a result, many people do not know when, where, or what kind of healthcare to seek, nor are they fully aware of their rights as consumers of the health system. A lack of confidence in making health-related decisions is also evident.

To ensure access in this context, the public needs an entitlement-based system that effectively empowers them to receive necessary healthcare. Such a system could be operationalised through the introduction of a health card that legally assures citizens' access to healthcare. Each family could be provided with a ceiling

based family health card with a defined annual limit on healthcare utilisation. The card would specify the monetary value of healthcare that a family is entitled to receive annually through public institutions. This would encourage people to return to government hospitals and foster a clearer understanding of the services to which they are entitled.

remote areas.

This leads to the question of how interest in health sector investment can be strengthened in Bangladesh. Valuing healthcare services is crucial to creating attraction towards such investment. To achieve this, the value of each healthcare service must be determined based on its diagnostic group. Doing so would

allow patients to understand the value of the benefits they receive, thereby increasing trust, respect, and loyalty towards public hospital providers. At the same time, service providers and hospital authorities would gain clarity on the value of the services they deliver, enabling them to identify strengths and weaknesses, develop improvement plans, and foster healthy competition within the hospital system to accelerate quality improvement.

The ceiling-based family health card is central to this transformation. When services are accessed through this card, the government can clearly assess the value created for patients. If the value of the service is found to be two to ten times higher than government expenditure, the political importance of investing in healthcare will become evident. If, however, the value is lower than the expenditure, the source of inefficiency can be identified and addressed promptly.

Advancing the health sector primarily requires coordination among three elements: empowered citizens, motivated service providers, and politically valued investment. If this is prioritised and the above conditions are met, the public health system can certainly be revitalised.

They want our silence, but we will not give it to them



Nazifa Raidah
is a journalist, researcher and development practitioner.

NAZIFA RAIDAH

From late Thursday night through the early hours of Friday, December 19, my colleagues at *The Daily Star* were trapped on the roof of their burning workplace, unsure if they would survive. Journalism is not a vocation that pays, nor does it sustain our lives fully, but we do it anyway because we find immense value in keeping readers informed and voicing the truth against autocrats, censorship, and potentially a threat to our lives. Yet, last night, the same premise set *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo* offices ablaze.

Mobs have no regard for the truth; they only care about a skewed sense of justice. They care about their unification under the banner of violence because it makes them feel like they are doing something. Mobs have not only bent the will of the interim government, but they are surely pushing journalists towards self-censorship—something the now-repealed Digital Security Act, 2018, had once accomplished.

The question "Who does this

violence benefit?" does not occur to the perpetrators. But I'll add a layer to this and still ask—Who does a post-truth society benefit?, one where public opinion is shaped more by swaying emotions than objective facts. The answer is simple—it benefits extremism, populist leaders, and it benefits Bangladesh's personal favourite word of the year—fascism. It is because emotional narratives (fear, anger, belonging) are greater mobilisers than rationality and facts—the more politically polarised a society is, the easier they are to control. Which is why, since August 5, 2024, any and every criticism against the establishment or radicalised figures is viewed as anti-establishment.

We are now living in a post-truth society where discrediting experts, science, and traditional media has created a vacuum filled by partisan sources and conspiracy theories, making populations easier to sway. People retreat into "truth" bubbles within their communities, resisting outside facts—a phenomenon

amplified by social media. What they fail to notice is that the Awami League government used these same tactics to subdue us. Populist figures are now using the violence we witness today as a tool. The AL government normalised violence against the public to such an extent that succumbing to revenge politics now seems like a justifiable course of action for many. The AL

government promoted a political identity which centres around the belief that if you criticise our ways, you are the enemy. Besides, the Awami League also bears a large part of the blame for the role allegedly played by it in inciting or perhaps committing some of the recent violence. Sadly, the AL era mindset persists, and my words, along with those of many other journalists, continue to receive the "enemy" label. But we are stubborn; in the face of fear, our voices grow louder.

Our constitution mandates the protection of journalists, which the interim government's home ministry has failed to provide. Despite the instigators discussing this violence for days prior, the interim government's home ministry failed to reinforce tight security measures around media houses and important cultural institutions. With elections announced and the government's willingness to hand over power to the democratically elected, the government's muted response to stop mob violence appears puzzling. Identifying the perpetrators should

not be difficult, since mobs mostly make sure to show off their actions on social media. Otherwise, in the absence of strict legal action, mob violence will continue.

Seeing the pictures of harmoniums being thrown to the ground with such determined rage and passion at Chhayanaut, and seeing archives and dreams burn at *The Daily Star* and the daily *Prothom Alo* offices, made me feel hollow. I couldn't help but wonder where this rage is coming from. How can an average individual with a family at home suddenly resort to such violence? It may be due to record-low employment rates, inability to afford necessities, years of pent-up frustration and radicalisation, or simply because they are being paid or incentivised in other ways to instigate this. Whatever the case, the enemy they've chosen, the very institutions they are trying to harm now, are the ones that stood by them when the Awami League tried to subdue their right to freedom of speech. The journalists of these two media outlets have done so over the 15 and a half years of AL rule, though their phones were tapped and their existence threatened with the possibility of enforced disappearance.

That's why even after a harrowing night, these people have cleared the ash and rubble from their desks and returned to work. The sky fell on journalists in the wee hours of Friday. I hope they continue to use it as a blanket.

DARFUR MARKET

Sudan drone attack kills 10: rescuers

AFP, Port Sudan

A drone attack on a busy market in Sudan's North Darfur state killed 10 people over the weekend, first responders said, without saying who was responsible.

The attack comes as fighting intensified elsewhere in the country, leading aid workers to be evacuated yesterday from Kadugli, a besieged, famine-hit city in the south.

Since April 2023, Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have been locked in a conflict, which has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced nearly 12 million and created the world's largest displacement crisis.

The North Darfur Emergency Rooms Council said a drone strike hit Al-Harra market in the RSF-controlled town of Malha on Saturday. The council did not identify who carried out the attack.

BAR ATTACK

Gunmen kill 9, hurt 10 in South Africa

AFP, Bekkersdal

Nine people were killed when gunmen opened fire at a bar outside Johannesburg early yesterday, police said, in the second such shooting in South Africa this month.

Ten more were wounded in the early morning attack at the tavern in the impoverished Bekkersdal township in a gold mining area around 40 kilometres southwest of the city.

It follows a shooting at a tavern near Pretoria on December 6 when gunmen killed a dozen people, including a three-year-old child. Police initially said 10 people were killed when the Bekkersdal bar was attacked just before 1:00 am, but later revised the toll downwards.

Most of the attackers were armed with pistols and one had an AK-47 rifle, deputy provincial police commissioner Major General Fred Kekana told SABC television from the scene.

"They entered the tavern and randomly shot at the patrons, unprovoked," he said. Three people were killed inside the bar and others as they fled the scene, with the attackers continuing to shoot as they left, he said.



Protesters march through frigid conditions in a Minneapolis neighborhood, Minnesota, US on Saturday, where many Somali, Latino, and Hispanic immigrants live and work, during the "MN Love Our Immigrant Neighbors – ICE Out of MN!" rally calling for the removal of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement from Minnesota.

PHOTO: AFP

Thai border clashes displace half a million

Says Cambodia ahead of talks to ease tensions

AFP, Phnom Penh

More than half a million people in Cambodia have been displaced by two weeks of deadly border clashes with neighbouring Thailand, Phnom Penh said yesterday, ahead of regional talks aimed at easing tensions.

The renewed fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours this month, including with tanks, drones and artillery, has killed at least 22 people in Thailand and 19 in Cambodia, officials said.

The conflict stems from a territorial dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre (500-mile) border and a smattering of ancient temple ruins situated on the frontier.

Cambodia and Thailand both said yesterday that a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers hosted by Malaysia today is expected to de-escalate tensions, with Bangkok calling it "an important opportunity for both sides".

Thai foreign ministry spokeswoman Maratee Nalita Andamo reiterated earlier conditions for negotiations, including Bangkok's demand that Phnom Penh be first to announce a truce, and cooperate in de-mining efforts at the border.

Those conditions, Maratee told reporters, "will guide our interaction in the discussions



People look at a damaged bridge after Thailand carried out air strikes in an area between Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

tomorrow in Kuala Lumpur".

Cambodia's foreign ministry said the meeting aimed to restore "peace, stability and good neighbourly relations".

Phnom Penh would "reaffirm its firm position of resolving differences and disputes through all peaceful means, dialogue and diplomacy," it added.

Cambodia's interior ministry said more than 518,000 people were "suffering severe hardship due to forced displacement from their homes and schools" to escape Thai artillery and air strikes.

The fighting has displaced around 400,000 people in Thailand, Bangkok has said.

Thailand's defence ministry spokesman Surasant Kongkiri told reporters yesterday that more than 200,000 remained in shelters.

"There are some villagers that can return home," he said, warning however that there may still "be some dangerous mines or bombs left".

Each side has blamed the other for instigating the fresh fighting and traded accusations of attacks on civilians.

Epstein files full of famous names, but not Trump
Victims slam partial release

AFP, Washington

Victims of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Saturday expressed anger after a long awaited cache of records from cases against him were released with many pages blacked out and photos censored.

The trove of material released by the US Justice Department included photographs of former president Bill Clinton and other famous names in Epstein's social circle including Mick Jagger and Michael Jackson.

But blackouts of many of the documents -- combined with control over the release by officials in President Donald Trump's administration -- fueled allegations of a high-level cover-up.

Democrats on Saturday demanded answers after one image that included a photo of Trump was no longer visible in the Justice Department's online release.

"If they're taking this down, just imagine how much more they're trying to hide," said senior Democrat Chuck Schumer. "This could be one of the biggest cover ups in American history."

UKRAINE PEACE PLAN

Kremlin denies three-way talks in preparation

AFP, Miami

The Kremlin yesterday denied that three-way talks between Ukraine, Russia and the United States were on the cards, as diplomats gathered in Miami for talks on ending the conflict.

A day earlier, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had said that Washington had mooted the trilateral format, which would mark Moscow and Kyiv's first face-to-face negotiations in half a year, but expressed scepticism that they would lead to progress.

"At present, no one has seriously discussed this initiative, and to my knowledge, it is not in preparation," Russian President Vladimir Putin's foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters, according to Russian news agencies.

After revealing the US three-way proposal, Zelensky added that European envoys could be present and said that it would be "logical to hold such a joint meeting".

But he then told journalists, "I am not sure that anything new could come of it," and urged the United States to step up pressure on Russia to end the war.

Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev arrived Saturday in Miami, where Ukrainian and European teams have also been gathering since Friday for the negotiations, mediated by US special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

GRAFT CASE

Pak ex-PM Imran calls for protest after yet another verdict

DAWN ONLINE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has asked his supporters to prepare for nationwide protests and said he will challenge his conviction in the Islamabad High Court after he and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were sentenced to 17 years in prison in the Toshakhana-II corruption case on Saturday.

The PTI chief does not have access to his social media handles in jail. "I have sent a message to [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister] Sohail Afridi to prepare for the street movement. The entire nation will have to rise for its rights," he said as per the account of the conversation between the PTI leader and his lawyer posted on X.

He said his sentence in this case did not come as a surprise, but he had asked his legal team to move the high court against the decision. "Like the baseless decisions and sentences of the last three years, the Toshakhana-II decision is also nothing new to me. This decision was given in haste by the judge without any evidence and without fulfilling the legal requirements," he said, adding that his legal team was "not even heard".

The PTI chief said it was inevitable for the Insaaf Lawyers Forum and the legal community to "come to the front foot" for the supremacy of law and the restoration of the Constitution. He said without justice, economic development was not possible.



The Sydney Opera House is illuminated with a candle projection in Sydney, Australia yesterday, as part of a national day of reflection honouring the victims of the Bondi Beach attack.

Office of the Jajira Pourashava				
District: Shariatpur				
Memo No. 46.12.8694.000.002.09.0000.25/246				
e-Tender Notice No. 01/2025-2026 (OTM)				
Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of works	Last selling date & time	Closing and opening date & time
1162989	LGCRRP/Jajira/2025-26/W-05	1. Upgrading of Road by RCC starting from Jajira Naria Main Sorok to Hospital Boundary wall under Jajira Paurashava, (ch 0+000 to +140), Ward No. 03. (Road Length=140m) Paurashava; Jajira, Dist: Shariatpur, 2. Upgrading of uni block Road at Moimul Islam Paka Sorok to VIP Mollah Paka Sorok (ch. 0+000 to 0+283) Ward No. 04.5 (Road Length 283m) Paurashava: Jajira, Dist: Shariatpur, 3. Upgrading of Road by RCC starting from Jajira Naria Main Sorok to Hanif Bapari house under Jajira Paurashava, (ch 0+000 to +330), Ward No. 01. (Road Length=330m) Paurashava: Jajira, Dist: Shariatpur, 4. Upgrading of Road by RCC starting from Jajira Kabiraj Kandi Jora Bridge to Bulet Hakider house under Jajira Paurashava, (ch 0+000 to +400), Ward No. 06. (Road Length=400m) Paurashava: Jajira, Dist: Shariatpur, 5. Upgrading of Road by RCC starting from Jajira Shariatpur Main Sorok to Khalek Bepari house under Jajira Paurashava, (ch 0+000 to +200), Ward No. 03. (Road Length=200m) Paurashava: Jajira, Dist: Shariatpur.	07-Jan-2026 16:00	08-Jan-2026 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal & no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal. Tender shall be valid for a period of 120 days after tender opening. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.



Shahjadul Islam

Assistant Engineer

Jajira Pourashava

District: Shariatpur

E-mail: ae_ps.janjira@lgi.gov.bd

Phone: 01711465277

Outcry for press freedom resounds at home, abroad

FROM PAGE 1

He also said the attacks were part of a broader attempt to silence independent journalism and suppress critical voices.

Referring to previous attacks on cultural institutions such as Chhayanaut and Udichi, Dr Kamal said these incidents were not isolated.

"These are repeated assaults on our history, culture and democratic values," he said, calling for national unity to resist such forces.

Several senior Gono Forum leaders accompanied him during the visit.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, said while criticism of the media is natural in a democracy, violence can never be justified.

"People can criticise the media or build alternative platforms, but burning offices and spreading fear through violence can never be acceptable," he said after visiting The Daily Star office yesterday.

Referring to the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a July frontrunner and spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, Saki said the

murder was part of a wider plan to derail democratic transition.

He added that while people across the country were mourning and protesting the killing, some groups misused public anger to attack media houses.

"We have also seen attacks on cultural organisations. These are deliberate attempts to break the unity created during the July movement," Saki said.

The Supreme Court Reporters Forum (SRF) issued a statement denouncing the assaults and demanding a fair, neutral and speedy investigation.

"The media is the fourth pillar of the state and a key foundation of democracy. Violence, threats or attacks to silence the media are unacceptable," the statement said.

It also strongly condemned the harassment of Nurul Kabir, editor of The New Age and president of the Editors' Council, when he tried to help rescue journalists trapped during the fire at the newspaper offices.

On Thursday night, miscreants first attacked Prothom Alo and later The

Daily Star, vandalising the buildings and setting them on fire.

Several journalists were trapped inside The Daily Star building.

Army, police and BGB members later arrived at the scene, removed the attackers and brought the situation under control.

Fire service personnel doused the blaze and then army troops rescued the trapped journalists.

NATIONWIDE PROTESTS

Journalists across the country staged demonstrations, human chains and rallies demanding justice.

In Gazipur, reporters gathered at the Press Club to protest the attack on the two leading dailies as well as the harassment of Nurul Kabir.

"Instead of paying respect to the coffin of Sharif Osman Hadi, these attackers chose violence. The motive is clear – to create unrest and disrupt the democratic process," said Delwar Hossain, senior staff reporter of Dainik Dinkal.

ATN News staff reporter Mazharul Islam Masum warned that if justice was delayed, journalists would mobilise again.

In Satkhira, journalists declared that arson and vandalism would not silence the press.

They said Prothom Alo and The Daily Star played a courageous role during the July uprising and that attempts to intimidate the media were part of a wider conspiracy to destabilise the country.

The Electronic Media Journalists Association in Sylhet also condemned the attacks.

In a statement, the organisation said, "Despite expectations of a peaceful environment after the election schedule announcement, journalists continue to face violence, intimidation and killings."

INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

Journalists, media professionals, cultural activists, and members of the British Bangladeshi community gathered at the historic Altab Ali Park in East London yesterday to protest the recent attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, as well as the growing threats against journalists.

The demonstration, organised by Bangla-speaking journalists working in London, strongly condemned the

vandalism, arson, looting, and alleged attempts to kill journalists during coordinated attacks on the two media houses in Bangladesh. Protesters described the incidents as unprecedented and unacceptable, calling them a "black day" in the country's media history.

Speakers at the rally said The Daily Star and Prothom Alo have long stood for independent, objective, and responsible journalism – principles that have increasingly made them targets of intimidation and violence. They demanded an immediate and transparent investigation into the attacks and accountability for those responsible.

Meanwhile, the London Bangla Press Club issued a strong statement condemning the attacks.

Expressing deep concern, the Press Club said the arson, vandalism, and assaults constituted a direct attack on press freedom, freedom of expression, and the public's right to information, posing a serious threat to the country's democratic progress.

In a statement, it demanded swift

identification and punishment of those responsible and urged all sides to remain calm.

"Violence and arson do not honour the martyrs. Disagreements must be resolved through debate and logic, not through fire and fear," the statement said.

The Karachi Press Club (KPC) expressed profound concern and strongly condemned the escalating series of violent attacks, vandalism, and arson targeting the offices of major media outlets in Bangladesh.

A independent, and courageous press is the bedrock of any democratic society. Attempts to silence the media through physical violence, legal intimidation, or harassment are direct violations of fundamental human rights, the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and the principles of the rule of law.

In solidarity with our colleagues in Bangladesh, the Karachi Press Club calls upon the relevant authorities to ensure the safety of media persons and to conduct a transparent, impartial investigation into these attacks.

OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Israel's security cabinet okays 19 new settlements

AP, Jerusalem

Israel's security cabinet approved the establishment of 19 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, a move the country's far-right finance minister said yesterday was aimed at preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The decision brings the total number of settlements approved over the past three years to 69, according to a statement from the office of Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

The latest approvals come days after the United Nations said the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank -- all of which are considered illegal under international law -- had reached its highest level since at least 2017.

"The proposal by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Defence Minister Israel Katz to declare and formalise 19 new settlements in Judea and Samaria has been approved by the cabinet," the statement said, without specifying when the decision was taken.

Smotrich is a vocal proponent of settlement expansion and a settler himself. "On the ground, we are blocking the establishment of a Palestinian terror state," he said in the statement.

Jamaat seeks gunman, police protection for its ameer

FROM PAGE 2

its leaders became targets of "Awami terrorists", and that after the "July uprising" those elements chose "killings and attacks", which it said recent incidents prove.

The letter was signed by AFM Abdus Sattar, office secretary of Jamaat.

Referring to the upcoming election, Jamaat said it fears an increase in activities by what it described as "Awami terrorists" to foil the national election.

The party said Shafiqur's political activities have increased as party chief

and that he is travelling across the country to hold wayside gatherings and rallies.

The letter said appointing a gunman for his round-the-clock security and deploying armed police personnel for the security of his residence was "urgent", and requested the home adviser to take steps accordingly.

A copy of the letter was also sent for information and necessary action to the inspector general of police at Police Headquarters, the DMP commissioner, and the additional IGP (Special

Branch).

Confirming the development, Chief of Special Branch and additional inspector general of police Golam Rasul said, "We have received the letter; now we will analyse the security threats and then take steps accordingly."

On December 13, a core committee meeting on law and order decided that a gunman can be assigned to high-profile candidates and that security at residences assessed to be at high risk can be improved.

On December 15, in a major development, the

government issued policy guidelines on granting firearm licences and appointing retainers, persons to carry firearms, to individuals who are politically important and candidates contesting the national election.

Based on scrutiny and threat analysis, these individuals will be provided security or be granted a firearms licence, along with election candidates.

The development comes amid growing concern over candidates' security in the wake of the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, one of the frontliners of last year's

July uprising and an MP aspirant for Dhaka-8, a day after the election schedule was announced.

After fighting for his life for six days, Hadi died on December 18 while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Singapore.

A home ministry source said intelligence agencies have also identified around 200 high-profile individuals, including 157 student coordinators across the country who played an important role during the July uprising, and that the government is planning to provide security for them based on security assessments.

Take firm action against vandalism

FROM PAGE 1

environment is definitely being disrupted."

"However, initial assessments provided to us by all relevant agencies indicate that no mainstream political party has been found involved in these activities," he added.

Sanaullah said some vested quarters exploited the situation while the nation was mourning Hadi's death and carried out these incidents "by overpowering" law enforcement agencies.

"These are our concerns as they are definitely linked to the election environment," he said.

He said any incident after the announcement of election schedule can impact the electoral process.

Saying journalists are

a major stakeholder in ensuring a sound election atmosphere, he asked, "If you do not feel safe, how will you perform your duties?"

Asked whether these events have cast a shadow over the festive mood of the polls, Sanaullah responded: "If I may speak rhetorically, imagine a major festival during which an accident suddenly occurs. Doesn't that disrupt the celebration? Those who seek to disrupt the festive atmosphere will fail. The spirit of the festival will return."

He added, "Overall, the law and order situation is under control."

Acknowledging that Hadi's killing has affected election-related law and order, Sanaullah said, "Sanaullah said, the chiefs assured the EC that all preparations are in place for a fair and smooth election, with forces, magistrates, and district cells coordinated to maintain law and order and prevent criminal activities."

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation
Planning Division
Parjatan Bhaban,
Plot No-E-5-C/1, West Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Administrative Area, Dhak-1207.
Website : www.parjatan.gov.bd

File No.30.32.0000.041.14.112.24 Date: 18-12-2025

REOI Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the following consulting services. Details are given below :

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Procurement Method	Closing Date & Time
1	1193626	Feasibility Study on Construction of a Multi-storied Tourism related Multipurpose Building on BPC's Own land at Mohakhali, Dhaka	FBS (NCT)	01.01.2026 12:30

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

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

18.12.2025
(Md. Ziaul Haque Hawlader)
General Manager (Planning)
Phone: 0241024201

Liberation Ward dep commander AK Khandker laid to eternal rest

FROM PAGE 2

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M. Nazmul Hassan, and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan, and Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk E Azam, Bir Protik, also paid homage to the Liberation War organiser.

A fly-past featuring BAF helicopters was also displayed.

Khandker breathed his last around 10:35am on Saturday aged 95.

Born on January 1, 1930, Khandker was a distinguished figure in national history. He played a pivotal role in the Liberation War as deputy chief of staff.

On December 16, 1971, Khandker was present

during the Pakistani forces' surrender at the Race Course Maidan as the representative of Bangladesh.

He also served as a diplomat, and became the planning minister after being elected to parliament from Pabna-2 constituency in 2009.

MIAMI TALKS

US, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey urge restraint in Gaza

AFP, Miami

The United States was joined Saturday by Qatar, Egypt and Turkey in urging parties in the Gaza ceasefire to uphold their obligations and exercise restraint, the chief US envoy said after talks in Miami.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Road Transport and Highways Division
Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited
Metrorail Bhaban, Uttara Depot, Sonargaon Janapath
Sector-16, Diabari Uttara, Dhaka-1230
www.dmtcl.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.05.0000.022.07.038.25-1536

Date: 21.12.2025

e-Tender Notice: OTM

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of Goods as stated as below:

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and No offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Goods	Tender ID No.	Previous Tender Closing Date and time	Amended Tender Closing Date & Time	Amended Last Tender Date and Time
01	DMTCL/GR-03/2025-26	Supply of MRT Pass for Dhaka Metro Rail under DMTCL. This MRT Pass will be used for entry and exit purposes at the metro station by the passengers.	1171017	22-December-2025; 15:00	30-December-2025; 15:00	29-December-2025; 16:00

(A.K.M. Sarker Md. Md.
Deputy General Manager (Store & Procurement)
Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited

STATUTORY NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 2221 OF 2025
IN THE MATTER OF: An application under section 159 read with sections 171 and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.
AND
IN THE MATTER OF: Standard Bank PLC. Petitioner
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms and Another Respondent
Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 159 read with sections 171 and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division on behalf of the above named Petitioner for condonation of delay of filing Mortgage Deed No. 6434 and IGPDA No. 6435 both dated 20.10.2024 of the B. T. Limited, within 21 days along with filing the Form XVIII with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms. Upon hearing of the application on 11.12.2025, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has been pleased to admit the said application and directed to file an affidavit-in-compliance on or before 14th January, 2025. Any one desirous of opposing the said application, you may appear before the Hon'ble High Court either in person or through Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of nominal fees.

Mohammad Golam Kibria FCS, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
GK CHAMBERS, Mehera Plaza, Suite # 8-B, (Lift # 8)
33, Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 01707-429282

Legal Notice

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

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16201

Provisioning
eased for agri,
SME loans

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has reduced the loan provisioning requirement for short-term agricultural and cottage, micro, and small enterprise (CMSME) loans in a move aimed at encouraging banks to expand credit to priority sectors.

The central bank issued a circular in this regard yesterday, saying that scheduled banks will be allowed to maintain a lower provision of 0.50 percent against all unclassified short-term agricultural loans and CMSME loans until December 31, 2026.

Previously, banks were required to keep provisions of 1 percent for standard loans and 5 percent for Special Mention Accounts (SMA), as per Bangladesh Bank's loan classification and provisioning policy issued in November 2024.

Food ads to be barred from doctor endorsements

SUKANTA HALDER

Food companies will no longer be allowed to use doctors, nutritionists or other health experts to endorse their products, as the authorities have introduced rules to curb misleading health claims and deceptive advertising practices.

The new regulations by the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) were published in a gazette on December 14.

The new rules, titled Safe Food (Advertisement and Claims) Regulations, 2025, will come into force six months after the date of the gazette notification.

The changes are expected to reshape how food products are marketed, especially processed items that often rely on expert endorsements, inflated nutrition claims or comparisons with rival brands.

According to the BFSA, the regulations target widespread practices that mislead consumers, including overstating ingredient content, exaggerating nutritional value and promoting undernourishing foods as healthy choices.

For baby food, many parents believe imported items are of higher quality and prefer foreign brands. The photo was taken from Khulna city yesterday.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Advertisements cannot compare or disparage similar food products to claim superiority, nor exaggerate the origin, quality or nutritional value of a product in ways that mislead consumers.

Imported foods may not be marketed in a manner that suggests they are superior to domestically produced alternatives. Processed or mixed foods must not be presented as natural, and advertisements must not promote excessive consumption.

Any religious claims, including halal certification, must be supported by approval from a recognised religious authority or an accredited certifying body.

Companies are also barred from citing awards unless they relate directly to food safety or product quality.

Advertisements must also avoid content that mocks or demeans individuals based on physical appearance, disability, gender, religion, race or other personal attributes.

The tight rules are likely to raise compliance costs for food makers and advertisers. Many companies have long depended on expert-backed claims to build consumer confidence.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman and chief executive of Pran-RFL Group, one of the largest food conglomerates in Bangladesh, welcomed the new rules.

"As there had been no regulations on food advertising, there was a degree of uncertainty," he told The Daily Star. "Now we know what can and cannot be done."

Consumer rights advocates welcomed the move but urged caution against excessive regulation.

AHM Shafiquzzaman, president of the Consumer Association of Bangladesh, said food safety should be ensured without placing unnecessary barriers on business.

"Maintaining this balance is crucial," he said. "Consumers need protection from misleading claims, but trade facilitation and fair business practices must also be considered."

IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

"We have found that many companies do not include the declared quantities of ingredients on their products as stated on the label," said Anwarul Islam Sarkar, member for enforcement at the BFSA.

"Some are also selling undernourishing foods with false or misleading information. These rules are meant to stop such practices," he added.

Under the regulations, advertisements must not contain false or deceptive claims, nor suggest that a product can reduce the risk of disease or deliver specific health benefits through daily consumption. Claims implying that modifying a single risk factor can prevent illness are also prohibited.

The new rules place wide-ranging limits on promotional practices.

NBR misses Jul-Nov revenue target despite 15% growth

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) recorded a 15 percent year-on-year growth in tax collection during the first five months of the fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26), but still fell short of its target by nearly Tk 24,000 crore.

According to provisional data released yesterday, the revenue authority collected Tk 14,813 crore between July and November, up from Tk 12,894 crore in the same period last year.

All three major revenue streams contributed to the growth. Local-level value added tax (VAT) collection rose by about 22 percent to Tk 58,231 crore from Tk 47,743 crore a year earlier.

Income and travel taxes increased by 17 percent to Tk 47,881 crore, while customs duties from international trade grew by 5.28 percent to Tk 42,864 crore, supported by higher imports after restrictions were eased.

Meanwhile, the government, in a meeting last month, decided to raise the revenue

collection target for the fiscal year by 5 percent to Tk 5,88,000 crore, going against the usual practice, following stronger-than-expected revenue performance in the July-September period, The Daily Star reported on November 21.

The NBR's new target has been increased to Tk 5,03,000 crore.

"This is a highly ambitious target. Usually, the government revises its target downward every year, but this year is an exception," one NBR official said on condition of anonymity.

Senior officials expressed optimism that the gap between actual collection and the target may narrow, noting that the authority has expanded its workforce by adding around 10 new tax zones across the country.

"We have to pursue our goal in the greater interest of the country," a top official said.

The revision comes at a time when Bangladesh is struggling to finance development projects amid a persistently low tax-to-GDP ratio, one of the lowest globally.

Cox's Bazar to be first cashless district: BB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has taken initiatives to develop Cox's Bazar as the country's first cashless district, said BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur on Saturday.

To make Bangladesh cashless, every citizen must have access to smartphones priced between Tk 6,000 and Tk 7,000, he said at an event in Chattogram.

The central bank has set a goal of settling at least 75 percent of retail transactions through digital technologies by 2027.

Chattogram is the country's economic lifeline, hosting the main seaport, export processing zones, heavy industries, energy infrastructure, and a large share of international trade, the governor said.

"Bangladesh must strengthen Chattogram's regional and global connectivity, similar to Singapore, Dubai, and Hong Kong, to fully unlock the region's economic and geopolitical potential," he added.

Bangladesh-Japan EPA declaration today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh and Japan are set to announce a joint declaration on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) today, aiming to boost bilateral trade and investment, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

The announcement will be made at an event at the commerce ministry, where Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi will hold a phone conversation to launch the declaration.

A joint statement detailing the EPA will follow, Rahman added.

Although the EPA was expected to be enforced this month, the agreement may now be signed in January, after the final document gets the approval of Japan's National Parliament, the Diet.

If implemented, this will be Bangladesh's first full-fledged trade agreement with any country. Currently, Bangladesh has only one Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan, signed in December 2020 and effective from July 2022.

Bangladesh is negotiating trade deals with over a dozen countries to secure preferential market access ahead of its graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category to developing country status on November 24 next year.

Studies suggest the country could lose nearly \$8 billion, or 14 percent of exports annually, from the loss of LDC-related trade benefits after graduation if it cannot secure trade deals with major partners.

Bangladesh Lamps PLC.

House # 22, Road # 4, Block # F, Banani, Dhaka- 1213

NOTICE TO THE SHAREHOLDERS/ INVESTORS

[Transfer of Unclaimed Stock Dividend or Bonus Shares for the year 2021-2022 to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund]

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Directive No. BSEC/CMRCC/2021-386/03 dated 14 January 2021 and the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (Capital Market Stabilization Fund) Rules, 2021, stock dividend or Bonus Shares, which remains unpaid or unclaimed or unsettled or undistributed for a period of 3 (three) years from the date of declaration or approval or record date or date of subscription or refund, as the case may be, are required to be transferred by the Company to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund (CMSF).

The concerned Shareholders/Investors are requested to claim the unclaimed stock dividend or Bonus Shares for the year 2021-2022 on or before 21 January 2026 with proper supporting documents at the Share Office of the Company.

Pursuant to the said BSEC Rules, the details of the concerned Shareholders/ Investors whose stock dividends or Bonus Shares are subject to transfer to CMSF have already been published on the Company's website: www.bll.com.bd

The Shareholders/Investors are requested to note that in case of the Company does not receive any valid claim by 21 January 2026, the Company shall, with a view to comply with the requirements of the said BSEC Directive and Rules, initiate the necessary actions to transfer the said stock dividend to the CMSF within the stipulated time.

For Bangladesh Lamps PLC.

Mohammad Ruhan Miah
Company Secretary

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Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.
(A Company of Petrobangla)
(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)

প্রাপ্তি ব্যবহারে সশ্রদ্ধী হোন এবং
সময়মত গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন

Ref. No. 28.16.9100.095.70.001.25.168

Corrigendum Notice

This is to notify all concern that the Invitation for e-GP Local Tender Ref. No. 28.16.9100.095.70.001.25.166; Date: 18 December 2025 published on 19-12-2025 in Dainik Amader Shomoy, Daily Jugabheri & published on 20-12-2025 in The Daily Star for the Procurement of Works is hereby amended as follows:

Sl. No.	e-GP ID & Package No.	Particulars of Invitation for Local Tender	Existing	Amended
01	1199013 & JGTDSL.PL.PW-09	Tender last selling date & time:	30-Dec-2025, 21:00	30-Dec-2025, 17:00

All other terms and conditions of the Tender shall remain unchanged.

General Manager
Planning & ICT Division
Tel: +8802997700612
E-mail: gm_planning.ict@jgtDSL.gov.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Bangladesh Sustainable Recovery, Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (B-STRONG)
LGED HQ, Dhaka-1207
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.: 46.02.0000.573.07.012.25.60 Date: 21/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID	Description	Last Time to Purchase e-tender document
1182747	Transport Hiring for Bangladesh Sustainable Recovery, Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (B-STRONG) under LGED	6 January 2026, 17:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP 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 up to the above-mentioned date & time.

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

(Md. Hasan Ali) 21.12.2025
Project Director
B-STRONG, LGED Part
e-mail: pd.bstrong@lged.gov.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Office of the Superintendent of Police
Gaibandha

Memo No. 3658/E Date: 21/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement works as follows:

Tender ID No.	Package name	Online tender notice publication date and time	Online tender closing date and time	Method of tender
1194364	Repair and renovation of the residential building of the Officer-in-Charge of Sadullapur Police Station under Sadullapur, Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM
1194367	Repair and Construction Work of Saghata Thana Officer-in-Charge Quarter, Saghata, Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM
1194368	Repair and Maintenance of Gobindaganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Residence Building, Gobindaganj Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM
1194369	Repair and Maintenance of Bairagihat Police Investigation Center Main Building Gobindaganj, Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM
1194371	Repair and Maintenance of Gaibandha Police Station Main Building, Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM
1194372	Improvement Work of Polasbari Police Station, Polasbari, Gaibandha	22 December 2025 15:00pm	07 January 2026 12:00pm	OTM

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

The fees for last downloading e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to date & time.

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

(Md. Jashim Uddin) 21.12.25
Md. Jashim Uddin
BP-7806114218
Superintendent of Police, Gaibandha
Mobile: 01320132300
Email: spgaibandha@police.gov.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Public Administration
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
www.mopa.gov.bd

No: 05.00.0000.113.07.056.2025-1262 Date: 21-12-2025

e-Tender Notice No. 2/2025-26

Ministry of Public Administration of Bangladesh invites the Flowing tender in the National e-GP Portal:

Si	Tender Id	Name of Supply	Publishing Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1	1200718	Computer Equipment	22 December 2025 & 10:00	05 January 2026 & 14:00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal should be deposited on-line through any registered Bank.

Further Information and Guidelines are Available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md. Alamgir Kabir) 21.12.25
Md. Alamgir Kabir
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Public Administration
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
Phone: 2226641500

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

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

Memo No. 25.36.3900.164.07.001.24/978 Date: 21-12-2025

E-tender is invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur. It is hereby notified to all concern that the corrigendum (due to error in BOQ) is issued for the following tender:

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-Storey Building with 10-Storey 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

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum is a part and parcel of the tender.

(Md. Rokonuzzaman) 21.12.25
Md. Rokonuzzaman
Executive Engineer
Jamalpur PWD Division
Jamalpur.

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Dhulipur, Dhaka
www.dhakasouthcity.gov.bd

Ref. No. 46.207.000.09.23.18.2025 Date: 21/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	egp/dscc/z-08/25-26/p-05	Improvement of road with drain from Amtola Sanarpur bylane Engg Mostakim's house Engg Wahid's house to Nurmahal and from Virgin Bakery to Ho No. 68/10/1 Dokkhin Tengra under Ward No. 67	1189341	05-Jan-2025 10:30:00	05-Jan-2025 11:00:00
2	egp/dscc/2-08/25-26/p-04	Improvement of Road's lane bylane with drain from Dagair Poshchin Para (Hijoltola) Ho. No. 221 to Ho No. 21/156 under Ward No. 66	1189340	05-Jan-2025 10:30:00	05-Jan-2025 11:00:00
3	cgp/dscc/z-08/25-26/p-06	Improvement of road with drain of Hajinagar Bylane Sarkar Enterprise from Ho: No. 50/6, Ho: No. 76 from Ho: No. 76/2 to Ho: No. 127, Baitur Rahman Mosque from Satta General Store, West Hajinagar Old Five-story Alley from Al Medina to Ho: No. 294/5 under Ward No. 68.	1189338	05-Jan-2025 10:30:00	05-Jan-2025 11:00:00
4	egp/dscc/z-08/25-26/p-03	Improvement of lane bylane with drain from Kholapara Baitul Falah Jame Masjid to Mirpara Main Road and Demra Bazar under Ward No. 69	1189337	05-Jan-2025 10:30:00	05-Jan-2025 11:00:00

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branch.

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

(Md. Maheb Hossain) 21.12.25
Md. Maheb Hossain
Executive Engineer
Zone-08
Dhaka South City Corporation
E-mail: dscxcen08@gmail.com

ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/১২২/২০২৫-২৬

Aussies wrap it up in 11 days

Australia swept to an 82-run win in the third Ashes Test at Adelaide Oval on Sunday to retain the urn with two matches to spare and leave England facing recriminations over another failed campaign.

Chasing a world-record target of 435, England fought on day five but were dismissed for 352. Left-arm quick Mitchell Starc claimed three wickets, while Scott Boland took the final wicket of Josh Tongue before tea after England resumed on 207 for six.

Australia wrapped up the series in just 11 days of play -- the joint second-quickest Ashes series in more than a century. The fastest came in 1921, when Australia beat hosts England in eight days.

England have now gone 18 Tests without a win in Australia, dating back to their last series triumph there in 2010-11.

England's last three trips to Australia yielded one-sided scorelines of 5-0, 4-0 and 4-0 in favour of the hosts, with more of the same on the cards as two more matches of this series remain -- at Melbourne and Sydney.

"The last two months have been a bit of a grind. But it's all worth it for days like this."

Australia captain Pat Cummins

"

"That dream is now over....It hurts, it sucks, but we ain't going to stop."

England captain Ben Stokes



PHOTO: REUTERS

AFC to launch Nations League competition

REUTERS

The Asian Football Confederation said on Sunday it will launch a Nations League contest in a bid to improve competition standards and commercial opportunities for national teams across the continent.

No start date was given by the Kuala Lumpur-based governing body. It said it intends to use existing FIFA international windows to run the competition.

"The AFC Nations League represents an important step forward in our ongoing commitment to support the development of our 47 member associations," AFC general secretary Windsor John said in a statement.

"By introducing a structured competition platform ... we aim to ensure consistent access to high-quality matches while addressing logistical and cost related challenges faced by national teams."

The AFC currently organises the Asian Cup every four years, with the next edition of the 24-team finals due to be played in Saudi Arabia in January 2027.

Europe's governing body, UEFA, launched its own Nations League competition in 2018 to increase the number of meaningful matches played by its members.

'Middle-overs attacking phase' at heart of Akbar's evolving game

Akbar Ali has been waiting in the wings for a national team opportunity since that euphoric moment when he led the U-19 team to World Cup glory in 2020. The wicketkeeper-batter has had time to reflect on his game while many of his batch-mates have already become part of the national team's core. In an interview with The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi, the 24-year-old spoke about his batting template, areas for improvement and the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Following are the excerpts:

DS: What are your thoughts on your development as a skipper?

Akbar Ali (AA): As you grow, your life changes and, in my case, things such as knowledge and maturity are obviously growing with matches. In that way, captaincy too is evolving. I am understanding my game better now. I knew my strengths and weaknesses before, but through these matches, I can feel more clearly what works best for me.



DS: Since the 2020 U-19 World Cup win, many from your batch have joined the national team. Where do you see room for improvement in your own development?

AA: From my point of view, whatever I was supposed to do, I did that and I am continuing to do so. However, I feel that if I could be more consistent, it would be better for me. Over the last few months, my focus has been on how to become more consistent, regardless of where I play next.

DS: Are you trying to implement any specific changes in your batting?

AA: Regardless of the situation, backing my own strengths is very important. I have been trying to do this for the last six or seven months. Previously, due to various influences or match situations, I might not have expressed myself naturally, but now I feel I should express myself and back my strengths regardless of the situation.

DS: Is this about risk-taking?

AA: It is one part of it, but there is more. We are told to take the game deep and that's not a bad thing.

But in trying to take the game deep, for instance, traditionally we're taught to attack in the first 10 overs, play safely between overs 11 and 40 to save wickets, and then attack again in the last 10. I believe we should move away from this mindset. In modern cricket, successful teams like India, England or Australia have a high boundary ratio in the middle overs. Our coaches are also

telling us that this phase is no longer just for rebuilding; it is an attacking phase.

DS: You often bat lower down the order in domestic cricket. Do you feel you should bat higher up in a different template?

AA: As a batsman, I always want to bat higher because it provides the opportunity to face more balls and enjoy the game. However, in our country, we are less inclined to experiment with the batting order. In other countries, players like Rohit Sharma or Jos Buttler started lower down the order but moved up and achieved great success. In Bangladesh, no one wants to take that risk or experiment. It would be better if this changed.

DS: What are your roles and expectations for the BPL?

AA: When I was picked by Rajshahi Warriors, I spoke with [Najmul Hossain] Shanto and the coaches about their expectations and plans. I will try to deliver what they expect from me. We have an exciting team with a good mix of experience and youth, and the atmosphere is very pleasant. Regarding wicketkeeping, Mushfiqur Rahim bhai will likely keep wickets, so I am preparing myself as a fielder.

A tough reality check for Sanjida and Co

SPORTS REPORTER

The sight of the glittering inaugural SAFF Women's Club Championship trophy sparked dreams of lifting it for Sanjida Akhter, but reality soon set in when the Nasrin SC forward led an inexperienced side into the five-team tournament.

India's East Bengal FC were crowned champions on Saturday in Kathmandu, Nepal, while Bangladesh Women's Football League champions Nasrin SC finished bottom of the table with two draws and two defeats, without registering a single win.

"When I first saw the trophy, I felt we could have brought it home had we come with the full-strength squad that won the Bangladesh Women's Football League title," Nasrin SC captain Sanjida told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday. "But the reality was that we went there with a squad full of U-17 and U-20 players."

The 24-year-old winger, who has been out of the national setup, was the only experienced campaigner



in a Nasrin SC side largely made up of age-level players.

While national discards Sabina Khatun, Masura Parvin, and Krishna Rani Sarkar were reluctant to participate, several senior players -- Maria Manda, Monica Chakma, Ritu Porna Chakma, Rupna Chakma, Shamsunnahar Sr, Tohura Khatun, and Sheuli Azim -- were unavailable. All of them had been part of Nasrin SC's

title-winning Bangladesh Women's Football League campaign last year but were barred from joining the team due to the Bangladesh women's national side's preparations for next year's AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia.

"I really felt bad when I saw that the Pakistan club brought around 90 percent of their national players, and I spoke to their captain, who is 32," said Sanjida. "East Bengal

brought seven Ugandan players along with three to four national players, while the clubs from Bhutan and Nepal also featured senior national players."

Sanjida had trained with Nasrin SC for only 10 to 12 days before the tournament, having been sidelined for nearly four months while attending the AFC B licence coaching course.

"Nasrin SC might not have achieved good results, but the young girls did not perform poorly," Sanjida said. "Our team was mostly made up of U-17 players, and I believe they gained valuable experience playing against mature, experienced and quality players."

She added that there were no regrets regarding their performance.

Responding to a query, Sanjida said, "I am 100 percent sure we could have written our name in the SAFF record books had we been able to play alongside our experienced players, because even five senior players can change the fate of any match."

Mbappe equals Ronaldo's record

After matching idol Cristiano Ronaldo's club record for most goals in a calendar year, Kylian Mbappe hit his trademark 'Siuu' celebration in Real Madrid's 2-0 LaLiga win over Sevilla on Saturday. Mbappe scored his 59th goal from the spot, equaling Ronaldo's 2013 tally.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID

Pakistan crush India to clinch U-19 Asia Cup title

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan thrashed India by 191 runs in a one-sided final in Dubai to lift their second ACC Under-19 Asia Cup title on Sunday.

Sameer Minhas smashed 172 off just 113 deliveries with the help of 17 fours and nine sixes to power Pakistan to 347-8 after they were sent to bat first.

Opener Sameer, who was adjudged both player-of-the-final and player-of-the-tournament, batted till the 43rd over, before getting deceived by a slower delivery from Deepesh Devendran and got caught at mid-on with the score on 302-4.



Indian bowlers then pulled back Pakistan in the final phase, conceding just 45 off the last seven overs.

In reply, India came out all guns blazing, but none of the batters could hang around long enough to trouble the Pakistanis and they were eventually all out for 156 in 26.2 overs.

For Pakistan, Ali Raza claimed 4-42 in 6.2 overs.



Conway, Latham's historic feat

New Zealand openers Devon Conway (L) bumps fists with Tom Latham during the third day of the third Test against West Indies at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on Sunday. The two batters entered the record books by smashing their second hundreds of the match to help set West Indies an unlikely victory target of 462 on day four. It was the first time in a Test match that a team's opening batters had each hit centuries in both innings. Latham chalked up 137 and 101 while Conway chalked up 227 and 100.

PHOTO: AFP





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GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



Continue movement for justice for Hadi

His brother urges people at doa mahfil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sharif Omar Bin Hadi, elder brother of Inqilab Monch spokesman Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, has expressed doubts over whether justice will be ensured for his brother's killing and urged the people to continue the movement for justice.

He said if the people truly loved his brother, sought justice for his murder and wanted Shahbagh to be established free from fascism and Indian hegemony, they must carry on the movement.

He made the remarks yesterday at a doa mahfil organised by Jamaat-e Islami at the Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's

SEE PAGE 3 COL 5



Blankets dominate the weekly open market on Salimullah Road in Mohammadpur yesterday as the capital woke to the season's first cold spell.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BNP collects nomination forms for Khaleda, Tarique in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Bogura district BNP leaders yesterday collected nomination papers for Bogura-6 (Sadar) and Bogura-7 (Gabtali and Shajahanpur upazila) constituencies for acting chairman Tarique Rahman and Chairperson Khaleda Zia respectively.

Rezaul Karim Badsha, president of Bogura district unit BNP, collected the nomination form on behalf of Tarique from Tauliqur Rahman, deputy commissioner and returning officer, at his office around 12:30pm.

Khaleda's nomination form was collected from the district election office around 2:00pm.

Haluzzaman Talukdar, adviser to the BNP chairperson and a former member of parliament, along with other BNP leaders, collected the nomination form from Senior District Election Officer Md Fazlul Karim.

Tarique Rahman will participate in the upcoming national election from the Bogura Sadar constituency. It is a matter of great pride for us that he has chosen this seat," Badsha told journalists.

Haluzzaman said, "We will submit her [Khaleda's] nomination paper in due time after discussing with the party and the acting chairman."



'Serious act of int'l piracy'

Caracas condemns as US seizes second oil tanker off Venezuela's coast

REUTERS

The United States has intercepted an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela in international waters, US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem confirmed Saturday, a move that comes just days after US President Donald Trump announced a "blockade" of all sanctioned oil tankers entering and leaving Venezuela.

The Venezuelan government called the tanker interception a "serious act of international piracy."

Venezuela "denounces and rejects the theft and hijacking of a new private vessel transporting oil, as well as the forced disappearance of its crew, committed by military personnel of the United States of America in international waters," the statement said.

Caracas said the actions will be reported to the United Nations Security Council, other multilateral organizations and governments.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Saturday said that an "armed intervention in Venezuela would be a humanitarian catastrophe" in the face of escalating actions from the United States toward regional neighbor Venezuela.

It's the second time in recent weeks

that the United States has gone after a tanker near Venezuela amid a large US military build-up in the region. Noem confirmed the Coast Guard intercepted a tanker that was last docked in Venezuela.

"The United States will continue to pursue the illicit movement of sanctioned oil that is used to fund narco terrorism in the region," she said in a statement posted to social media. "We will find you, and we will stop you."

Three US officials earlier Saturday had told Reuters that the vessel had been intercepted. The Coast Guard and Pentagon referred questions to the White House.

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said the tanker contained sanctioned oil.

"It was a falsely flagged vessel operating as part of the Venezuelan shadow fleet to traffic stolen oil and fund the narco terrorist Maduro regime," she wrote on X.

British maritime risk management company Vanguard said the vessel was believed to be the Panama flagged Centuries, which was intercepted east of Barbados in the Caribbean Sea.

Jeremy Paner, a partner at Washington, DC, law firm Hughes

SEE PAGE 3 COL 6

LAKSHMIPUR ARSON

Slain 7-year-old's father blames rival Says land dispute led to the attack, killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The arson attack on a house in Lakshmpur that killed a seven-year-old girl and left three others injured was carried out over a land-related feud, alleged the victim's family yesterday.

The child's father, Belal Hossain, a businessman and assistant organising secretary of Bhabaniganj BNP under Lakshmpur Sadar upazila, said he has had a longstanding rivalry with Abul Hashem of a neighbouring village.

Belal, who sustained severe burn injuries, is currently receiving treatment at Lakshmpur Sadar Hospital.

"A rivalry between me and Abul Hashem has been going on since 2018. Land worth crores of taka has become a curse for me and my family," Belal said from his hospital bed yesterday, adding that a lawsuit over the ownership of four decimals of land in the Sutargupta Bazar area remains pending.

"Only Abul Hashem could cause such severe harm to me and my family. He is at the top of my list of suspects," he said.

Fighting back tears, Belal said, "My beloved youngest daughter Ayesha turned into charcoal before my eyes. I couldn't save her."

Belal said his house in West Char Mansa village, built with corrugated tin and wood on a concrete base, was set ablaze between 12:30am and 1:00am on Saturday. He alleged that miscreants locked both doors from the outside and poured petrol before

SEE PAGE 3 COL 1

Three drown as vehicles plunge into Dhaleshwari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three people were killed after a truck and four other vehicles fell off a ferry while crossing the Dhaleshwari river in Narayanganj on Saturday night.

Divers of the river police recovered two bodies around 1:30am yesterday, while another person died at a hospital shortly after the incident, said Md Hasinuzzaman, additional superintendent of police (circle A) of Narayanganj.

The victims were Masud Rana, 30, a Singapore expatriate; Md Rafique, 35, a motorcyclist; and Swadhin, 25, a van driver.

According to police, the accident occurred around 9:00pm on Saturday when a truck, a motorcycle, two battery-run auto-rickshaws, and a rickshaw-van plunged into the river after falling from the ferry while it was crossing the river at Baktaboli in Fatullah.

Rafique was rescued shortly after the accident and taken to Narayanganj General Hospital. He later died on the way to a private hospital in the Signboard area, police said.

After about four and a half hours of search, divers recovered the bodies of Masud and Swadhin. Masud's body, stuck in the ferry's propeller, was found severely mutilated, Hasinuzzaman added.

Masud, from the Gopnagar area of Baktaboli union,

SEE PAGE 3 COL 5



Friends and relatives mourn over the body of Ahmad Zyoud during his funeral in Silat al-Harithiya, a village near the northern West Bank city of Jenin, yesterday. Israel's military killed two Palestinians on Saturday evening.

PHOTO: AFP

OSMAN HADI KILLING Police yet to trace prime suspects' locations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers are yet to determine whether the prime suspects in the murder of Sharif Osman Hadi — Faisal Karim Masud and Alamgir Sheikh — have fled the country.

"If we had known his last location, we would not have needed to brief you like this. At this moment, we do not have any specific information about his last whereabouts. Our investigating officers and intelligence agencies are making efforts in various ways," said Khondker Rafiqul Islam, additional inspector general at Police Headquarters.

Police have not yet been able to confirm whether the prime suspect has left the country.

"Often, criminals spread misleading information to conceal their location and this could be one such attempt," he said at a joint press briefing at the home ministry at the Secretariat yesterday.

Keeping both possibilities in mind — whether the suspects are inside the country or abroad — the law enforcement agencies are continuing their search and investigation, he said, adding that efforts to arrest them will continue if they are anywhere within the country.

Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesman of Inqilab Monch and an aspiring independent candidate for Dhaka-8, was shot

SEE PAGE 3 COL 1

Ducsu blocks VC office over renaming dorms

Demands removal of Sheikh family names, action against officials who opposed uprising

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Central Students' Union yesterday blocked the vice chancellor's office in protest, demanding the renaming of five university establishments currently named after members of the Sheikh family.

They are Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, Sultana Kamal Hostel, and two residential buildings for university staffers — Sheikh Russel Tower and Bangabandhu Tower.

According to the protesters, students have reached a consensus to rename Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall as Shaheed Osman Hadi Hall and Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall as Bir Protik Sitara Begum Hall.

However, they noted that when Ducsu earlier proposed renaming Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall as Felani Khatun Hall, the resident students opposed the move.

Around 2:45pm, Ducsu leaders were seen surrounding the VC office and chanting slogans such as "Break down the icons of fascism," "There is no place for fascism on this soil," and "All forms of fascism must be uprooted."

Its Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem said they had two key demands.

"Our first demand is the immediate renaming of all university establishments named after icons of fascism.

"The proposal to rename Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall as Shaheed Osman Hadi Hall came from students, recognising our July comrade who continued his struggle against domination. Similarly, students proposed renaming Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall as Bir Protik Captain

SEE PAGE 3 COL 4

RU students' lock 'AL-affiliated deans' offices

RU CORRESPONDENT

A section of Rajshahi University (RU) students yesterday locked the offices of six deans with alleged Awami League affiliations to force their resignation.

The incident occurred around noon, when students put locks on the chambers of the deans at the Dean's Complex and in several academic buildings across the campus. At the time of filing this report, the offices remain.

In the dean elections held on December 17, 2023, the Progressive Teachers' Society, which is aligned with the Awami League and popularly known as the Yellow Panel, won six of the university's 12 faculties: Law, Science, Business Studies, Social Sciences, Engineering and Geosciences.

According to the schedule, the deans' tenure ended on December 17.

SEE PAGE 3 COL 4