

Unite against moves to stir instability, derail the vote

Urge journalists, political leaders, professionals; govt inaction during attacks on Star, Prothom Alo 'terrifying'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders from the journalist community, political parties, different professional bodies, and civil society groups yesterday joined voices to demand

The recent violence targeting The Daily Star and Prothom Alo represents more than just a strike against the media; it is part of a systemic attack on the nation's democratic values, education, and cultural identity.

The recent violence targeting The Daily Star and Prothom Alo represents more than just a strike against the media; it is part of a systemic attack on the nation's democratic values, education, and cultural identity.

united resistance against attempts to incite instability in the country and undermine the upcoming national polls.

speakers said yesterday. They questioned the government's failure to restrain those inciting chaos

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Bangladesh missions halt services in Delhi, Agartala

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh missions in New Delhi and Agartala have suspended all consular and visa services amid security concerns.

Meanwhile, a visa application centre, operated by a third party appointed by the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, was forced to close the office by demonstrators.

Different groups in Kolkata also protested in front of the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission against what they described as attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, especially the killing of garment worker Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh last week.

"Due to unavoidable circumstances, all consular & visa services from the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi are temporarily suspended until further notice," according to a notice on the Bangladesh mission's board yesterday.

"Any inconvenience caused is sincerely regretted," it said.

In New Delhi, the suspension of visa and consular services come amid heightened security outside the high commission following a planned protest by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal activists yesterday over the killing of a Hindu youth in Bangladesh, reported Indian newspaper The Telegraph.

Security was tightened in the diplomatic enclave, with police and paramilitary personnel deployed at regular intervals.

On December 18, Dipu, 25, was beaten to death by a mob over allegations of "hurting religious sentiments".

Local media of Agartala, Lokmat Time, reported activists of Sanatani Hindu Sena and the youth wing of Tipra Motha Party, an ally of BJP in Tripura, last week held separate demonstrations in front of

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Star files case against 350-400 over attack at its office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star yesterday filed a case accusing 350-400 people of vandalism, arson, and looting at its Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue office early Friday.

According to the case filed by Mizanur Rahman, head of operations at The Daily Star, on December 19, the attackers, carrying local weapons, sticks, and flammable materials, gathered outside The Daily Star building around 12:25am, chanting provocative slogans against the newspaper.

Prior to this, certain online activists had posted inciting messages on social media and encouraged the mob to carry out the attack.

At approximately 12:35am, the group forcibly broke steel gates and glass doors to enter the premises. Inside, they physically assaulted staff, vandalised office property, looted valuables, and set fire to furniture and documents.

More than 200 computers, laptops, cameras, printers, and other electronic equipment, valued at about Tk 5 crore, were damaged or destroyed.

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Complete Hadi murder trial by 30 days

Demands Inqilab Moncho, calls for 2 advisers' resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Moncho yesterday demanded the immediate resignation of the Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul and CA's Special Assistant on Home Affairs Khuda Baksh Chowdhury, holding them accountable for the murder of the platform's spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi.

The organisation warned that it would launch a movement to topple the interim government if justice is not ensured, and said the officials must disclose the reasons for their failure to provide security before stepping down.

In a press release issued yesterday afternoon, Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber outlined a three-point demand on the investigation and trial of the murder.

The platform called for the judicial process to be completed within a maximum of 30 working days through a Speedy Trial Tribunal.

It also urged the government to involve

Hadi murder case to be tried at speedy tribunal Says law adviser; home adviser calls case top priority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul yesterday said the murder case of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho and a frontline activist of the July uprising, will be tried under the Speedy Trial Tribunal to ensure swift justice.

Meanwhile, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said progress had been made in the investigation and that law enforcers were making all out efforts to arrest the prime accused, Faisal Karim Masud.

In a Facebook post, Asif said the case would be tried under the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, 2002. Under Section 10 of the law, the trial must be completed within a maximum of 90 days after submission of the police report, he added.

Hadi was shot a day after the Election Commission announced on December 12 that the next national election would be held on February 12. He was airlifted to Singapore for advanced treatment, where he died on the night of December 18.

His death sparked widespread outrage and calls for prompt and exemplary punishment of those responsible.

After a meeting on the law and order situation at the Secretariat, the home adviser said the government is giving the case the highest priority and warned that no one involved would be spared.

Jahangir said joint forces comprising police, Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh arrested 10 people, including the prime suspect's wife, his parents and brother-in-law, and the owner of the motorcycle used in the murder. Law enforcers also recovered the

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17 held, 31 IDed over attacks on media houses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have so far arrested 17 people and identified 31 suspects in connection with recent attacks involving vandalism, arson, and looting at the offices of national dailies The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

The arrests were made after analysing video footage of the incidents, and further arrests would follow, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Additional Commissioner SN Nazrul Islam told reporters at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

In what journalists described as an assault on press freedom, mobs launched coordinated attacks on the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo on Thursday night and vandalised the offices, looted valuables, set the buildings ablaze, and trapped journalists and staff of the English daily inside for hours.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the editors of both newspapers have been given gunmen for their protection.

"The security at their residences has also been strengthened," he said while briefing reporters at

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The Editors' Council and the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) organised a human chain demonstration in front of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka yesterday morning, protesting recent coordinated attacks on The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Chhayanaut, and Udichi. The protest was part of a broader call to defend democratic values and press freedom in the wake of escalating mob violence.

PHOTO: STAR

A year of economic repair

The interim government has pulled the economy back from the brink, but investment remains in the doldrums

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

When Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed answered his phone last week, he sounded like a man who had finally been allowed to exhale. The tenor of his voice marked a sharp contrast with the start of 2025. Back then, he was visibly strained, besieged by competing demands and an economy teetering on the edge. He was navigating a minefield of populist pressures, with professional bodies clamouring for pay hikes just as the treasury's coffers came under mounting stress.

As 2025 draws to a close, a balance-sheet assessment suggests that the change in mood is justified. Bangladesh has survived a year of economic triage.

The interim government, tasked with steering the country through a volatile political transition, has managed to stabilise the economy. But as economists say, the ledger remains heavy with liabilities. Stability has come at the cost of growth, investment, and the welfare of the poor.

To understand the sense of relief in the finance ministry, one must recall how the year began. The balance of payments was deeply in deficit, foreign exchange reserves were

Negotiations with IMF, multilateral lenders unlocked \$3b in budget support in June

Consumer prices were above the 10% mark for 9 consecutive months since Oct 2024

GDP growth fell to 3.97% last fiscal year, shows provisional BBS data

Govt's interest payments rose by 17.31% last fiscal year

eroding, inflation was entrenched in double digits, and the banking sector was burdened with bad loans. Any administration would have struggled under such conditions, let alone an interim one.

The government's foremost priority was to keep the International Monetary Fund on board. Without the IMF's seal of approval, vital budget support from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank would have remained out of reach. This required a reset in priorities: rebuilding reserves and plugging revenue shortfalls.

Negotiations in Dhaka and Washington grew tense, at times threatening to collapse. The IMF pushed for market-based exchange rates and strict revenue targets. The demands triggered backlash at home. Officials at the National Board of Revenue went on strike, while business leaders protested value-added tax hikes on essential goods.

It was a familiar standoff between political feasibility and economic necessity. In the end, the deal held.

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Japan's flagship H3 rocket fails to launch satellite

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's flagship H3 rocket failed to launch a geolocation satellite into orbit yesterday due to engine failure, the country's space agency said.

The second-stage engine "terminated prematurely" after the rocket blasted off at 10:51 am (0151 GMT) from the Tanegashima space centre in southern Japan, according to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

It could not release into orbit the sixth satellite to the seven-unit "Michibiki" system, "resulting in a launch failure", the space agency said.

The agency has begun an investigation into what caused the problem, it said.

The Japanese geolocation system is designed to offer improved data for the country, enabling better consumer services such as car navigation systems and smartphone maps, according to JAXA.

However, the space agency announced around 40 minutes after the rocket's launch that its second-stage engine -- which ignites after the first stage of the rocket detaches -- had stopped earlier than expected.



Favourable weather has led to a bumper green chilli harvest in Jamalpur this season. Every day, Farmers from the char areas bring maunds of fresh chillies by horse carts to the wholesale market at Adra Bazar in the district's Sarishabari upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB

Hadi murder case

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motorcycle, two foreign pistols, two magazines, 41 rounds of ammunition and a toy pistol.

When asked about the whereabouts of the killer, Jahangir Alam said, "If we knew where he was, he would have already been arrested." He, however, declined to disclose more details, saying that might hinder the case's progress.

Replying to a query, Jahangir also said 10 people were arrested over the killing of a garment worker in Mymensingh, who was beaten and burned to death.

20 PEOPLE GET GUNMEN

He said gunmen have been provided to around 20 people following security assessments by intelligence agencies. "Those on hit lists or concerned about their safety have already been given gunmen," he said.

When journalists cited a list claiming around 50 members of Gono Odhikar Parishad were at risk, he said DGFI, NSI and Special Branch had jointly identified those facing threats and provided protection accordingly.

He added that while some individuals declined gunmen for personal reasons, intelligence agencies were ensuring alternative security measures based on risk assessments.

Regarding BNP acting chairman

Tarique Rahman's return, Jahangir said the highest level of security arrangements had been taken ahead of his scheduled arrival on December 25.

2,000 CHECKPOINTS FOR DEVIL HUNT

About 2,000 checkpoints have been set up under Operation Devil Hunt Phase II, with searches of private cars and motorcycles continuing alongside arms recovery drives, the home adviser said.

He said the core committee reviewed progress of the operation, election preparations and ongoing drives to recover looted and illegal firearms.

Since the operation began on December 13, a total of 6,598 people were arrested until December 20, he said. During this period, law enforcers recovered 56 firearms, 437 rounds of ammunition, 1,007 cartridges, 62 locally made weapons and other items, including grenades, mortar shells, gunpowder, fireworks and bomb-making materials.

Separately, the home ministry yesterday said joint forces arrested 698 more people and recovered 14 additional illegal firearms on December 21.

Jahangir said police training ahead of the election is under way in three phases, with two-thirds already completed, including instruction on the use of body-worn cameras.

He said adequate preparations have been taken to ensure peaceful observance of Christmas. Public fireworks will not be allowed on Christmas or Thirty First Night, and no programme will be permitted to block roads.

Security has been ensured at every church, with additional measures taken in Gulshan, Banani and other areas of the capital, the home adviser said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police have been instructed to keep traffic movement normal, while patrols and search operations will be intensified, he added.

The meeting also reviewed measures against violence instigators, theft, mugging, extortion, land grabbing and organised crime; progress of investigations into the July killings; actions against provocative cyber propaganda; steps to counter violence against women and children, including rape; monitoring of top criminals released on bail; operations against banned organisations; the border situation; and law and order in Rohingya camps.

A separate discussion focused on preparations for the Jagannath University Central Students' Union election, attended by the vice-chancellor, Dhaka University proctor, election commissioner and other officials.

17 held, 31 IDed over attacks

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According to police, the arrestees include Md Naim, Md Akash, Ahmed Sagar, Abdul Ahad, Nazrul Islam alias Minhaj, Md Jahangir, Sohel Rana, Abdul Barek Sheikh alias Al Amin, Rashedul Islam, Shafiqul Islam, Pranto Shikdar alias Faisal, Ahmed Pranto, Abul Kashem Raju Hossain, and Saidur Rahman.

Fifteen of the arrestees were produced before a Dhaka court yesterday, and the court sent them to jail.

Naim was arrested with Tk 50,000 allegedly looted during the incident. During preliminary interrogation, he admitted to looting Tk 1.23 lakh and using most of it to buy a television and a refrigerator.

Soheb, arrested from the Karwan Bazar railway area, has 13 cases against him at different police stations in Dhaka under narcotics and other laws.

Shafiqul, arrested from the same area, has two previous cases related to arson and crude bomb explosions.

Three other individuals were identified through video footage for allegedly attempting to create disorder near the residence of the Indian Assistant High Commissioner in Chattogram.

At the DMP Media Centre, Nazrul stressed that while protest or anger could be expressed lawfully, entering offices to vandalise, loot and set fires amounted to criminal acts.

Asked about the political identities of those arrested, he said police were

not looking into political affiliations. "Those involved in the attacks are criminals. They broke the law and took it into their own hands. Regardless of their political identity or views, they will be tried under the country's existing laws and judicial system."

Responding to questions about police action during the incidents, Nazrul Islam said between 4,000 and 5,000 people were present at the scenes, and a forceful crackdown with limited manpower could have led to casualties.

"The fact that no human life was lost in such a major incident is what we see as our achievement."

Asked about DMP's ability to prevent mob violence, he said police are capable but cannot control every situation at all times.

Unite against moves to stir instability

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under the guise of "protest for justice", describing the administration's inaction during the attacks as "terrifying". They also demanded swift identification of the perpetrators.

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and the Editors' Council organised the protest meeting titled "Bangladesh Attacked by Mob Violence", hitting out at recent attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, and the targeted harassment of New Age Editor Nurul Kabir.

Speaking at the meeting at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka, Nurul Kabir said that all newspapers in the world have their own editorial policies.

"If someone does not like those policies, setting fire to media outlets is not a democratic action. The attackers tried to destroy them in a medieval way," said Kabir, also president of the Editors' Council.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the attacks were not limited to two newspapers, but struck at the heart of democracy itself.

"It is an attack on my right to think freely, my right to speak. Furthermore, the attack has come upon the July Uprising; the July Uprising was a war to establish the rights of the people of this country.

"I have struggled all my life for a free, sovereign, and democratic Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi I see today -- I never dreamt of this Bangladesh," he added.

Appealing for unity, Fakhrul said,

"My request to you -- not as any political thought, party, or organisation -- it is time for all democratic people to unite. Today, in all sectors, with all your strength, all of you who love Bangladesh must unite; this evil force must be resisted."

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam alleged that a section of the government was involved in the incident. "The whole incident was planned," he said.

Nahid alleged a conspiracy had been hatched to manipulate events in Bangladesh following the death of July Uprising frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi after he was shot in the head in Dhaka.

"This is what we think after seeing what happened. That is why I say it is unfortunate," he said, adding, "It is even more unfortunate that those who carried out this incident used the slogans of the July uprising and the name of Hadi to justify the attacks."

Calling for accountability, he said, "It is very clear who carried out these incidents. They went there, committed the crimes, and we must ensure the government conducts a fair investigation and punishment. Those who shot Hadi in broad daylight, including a parliamentary candidate, must also be held accountable."

Ganosamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said the government must answer for its "mysterious silence". "If justice is not delivered, their failure will be the verdict," he said.

Ehsanul Mahbub Zubayer, assistant secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami, criticised the interim government for failing to ensure security.

The high commissioner assured that these concerns would be raised with the relevant authorities in Bangladesh.

circumstances. We cannot accept this," he said, adding that such incidents must come to a complete stop.

A minute of silence was observed to demand justice for Hadi and punishment of those involved in the attacks and arson on media houses.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said journalists of both

The Daily Star and Prothom Alo were facing death threats.

"On the day of the attack, 26 to 27 staff members were trapped inside the building, and the fire service was not allowed to enter. Their goal was not only to set the building on fire but also to commit murder," he said.

"Set aside fighting for the right to freedom of expression, we are now fighting for the right to live," he added.

Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, held the government responsible for the attacks.

"Freedom of expression has been eroded over the last few months. Anger and aggression have been directed at whoever has attempted to express an opinion. Public anger was weaponised to attack the Daily Star and Prothom Alo offices. Through this, those working in the media have been intimidated," she said.

Itekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said "mob rule" had entered the state structure because those in power viewed the forces behind mob violence as a pillar of their authority.

"The current situation is the responsibility of all citizens, but the main responsibility lies with the government. The government must answer what it is doing to ensure the safety of the people," he said.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the interim government must remember that it is not an elected one.

"A government has the right to rule only as long as it has moral legitimacy. By failing to act, the current government has weakened its moral legitimacy in many ways," he said.

Kader Gani Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, demanded compensation for Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

"An attack on the media is an attack on democracy and the very existence of the state. We have seen this manifested through the targeted actions against Prothom Alo and The Daily Star," he said.

Ayub Bhuiyan, general secretary of the National Press Club, described the attacks as part of a wider cultural crisis, saying the newspapers were not merely commercial entities but institutions carrying the nation's intellectual and cultural history.

In his closing remarks, NOAB President and Samakal Publisher AK Azad said speakers had unanimously stressed the need for unity.

He said the movement would continue until justice is delivered for the attacks on The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Chhayanaut, Udcchi Shilpi Goshthi, and others.

Editors, journalists, politicians, civil society representatives, professionals and business leaders, among others, attended the protest.

They included Prothom Alo Editor

Violence against media unjustifiable Says Rizwana after visiting Star office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday condemned the recent attacks on media houses, saying such incidents are unjustifiable under any circumstances.

Rizwana, who also oversees the Environment, Forest and Climate Change ministry, said the attacks, at a time when the country is striving to return to democratic processes and hold elections, indicate that they were planned.

"The government made it clear from day one that attacks on the media will not be tolerated under any circumstances," she said after visiting The Daily Star building in Dhaka, which was recently vandalised, looted and set on fire.

"If anyone disagrees with the views or reports of a media outlet, a democratic state provides lawful avenues to express dissent. Resorting to violence, arson or endangering the lives of media workers cannot be justified," Rizwana said.

She described the incident as not only a law-and-order issue but also an attack on press freedom, adding that the government would continue efforts to bring all those involved to justice.

The government would also examine whether there were deeper motives behind the attack, she said.

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Complete Hadi murder trial by 30 days

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professional foreign intelligence agencies, such as the FBI or Scotland Yard, to ensure a transparent investigation.

Additionally, the platform demanded the identification, arrest, and trial of what it described as "Awami terrorists" allegedly hiding within civil and military intelligence agencies.

Around the same time the demands were made, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said in a Facebook post that the murder trial would be held under a Speedy Trial Tribunal.

"According to Section 10 of the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, 2002, the trial of this murder case will be completed within a maximum of 90 days after the police report is submitted," he wrote.

Earlier in the day, at around 12:00pm, Inqilab Moncho held an

emergency press conference in front of the National Museum.

"You cannot simply hold an election in a hurry and leave without identifying Osman Hadi's killers. This will not be allowed," Jaber said.

"Justice must be ensured before the election; no election will take place before that."

He again threatened to launch a movement to oust the interim government if justice is not ensured for the murder of Osman Hadi.

Addressing the briefing, Jaber said a 24-hour ultimatum had been issued during Hadi's namaz-e-janaza. "However, the deadline has passed without any visible steps from the home adviser or the concerned authorities regarding the arrest of the accused," he said.

He alleged that the absence of the home adviser or his special assistant at the ministry's briefing amounted

to trivialising the incident. "The home and law advisers, along with others concerned, are neglecting their duties and merely trying to avoid responsibility," Jaber added.

Later in the afternoon, Inqilab Moncho staged a protest procession in the capital, reiterating its demand for the immediate arrest of the killers.

The march began at the Shahbagh intersection around 3:20pm, passed through the TSC area, and ended at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Protesters chanted slogans such as "Slavery or freedom? Freedom, freedom", "Delhi or Dhaka? Dhaka, Dhaka", and "Who are you, who am I? Hadi, Hadi".

At both the press briefing and the protest, Jaber reiterated that Inqilab Moncho activists would not leave the streets until the killers and their alleged patrons are brought to justice.

He also interacted with visa applicants, many of whom were applying for medical visas to travel to India on Saturday evening.

In a media briefing that day, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for Indian external affairs ministry, however, 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.

Before yesterday's development, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain on Sunday told reporters in Dhaka that he got information suggesting that Bangladesh High Commissioner Riaz Hamidullah was threatened with life on Saturday evening.

Local media Shilguri Observer reported yesterday afternoon, hundreds of workers and supporters of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Hindu Jagran Manch gathered in front of the visa office on Sevoke Road and began demonstrating.

The agitated crowd entered the office, ordered the staff to stop working, and demanded the immediate evacuation of the premises. The organisations clearly stated that as long as Hindu blood is shed in Bangladesh, no work related to Bangladesh will be allowed to

continue in India," the newspaper reported.

Leaders threatened to unhoist the national flag of Bangladesh in front of the office.

Choose honest, capable candidates

Yunus urges voters

BSB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged voters to cast their ballots freely and thoughtfully in the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for February 12.

"You are the owner of the country. You will decide who will run this country on your behalf for the next five years. Vote for the candidate of your choice. Choose an honest and capable candidate. Vote thoughtfully," he said.

The chief adviser made the remarks in a video message at the inaugural ceremony of 10 voting vehicles, known as the "Super Caravan", launched to conduct a nationwide campaign on the election and referendum.

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Senior Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat Akhtar Ahmed, and Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam formally inaugurated the voting vehicles at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the afternoon.

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'Govt failing to stop violence against minorities'

Claim community leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of minority organisations yesterday alleged that the government had failed to stop violence, killings and persecution of minority communities.

Addressing a human chain organised by the Minority Unity Front in front of Jatiya Press Club, minority leaders said the lack of proper investigations and justice had created fear and mistrust across the country.

Manindra Kumar Nath, joint coordinator of the Minority Unity Front, said the government did not contact the family of Dipu Chandra Das, who was "beaten and burned to death" in Bhaluka, Mymensingh, on December 18 following allegations of "religious blasphemy".

Referring to the chief adviser, Manindra said he had claimed he would build a humane Bangladesh, which, he alleged, had not happened.

He also alleged that minorities had been facing continued persecution since the government assumed power.

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Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus speaks at the inauguration of 10 voting vehicles, known as the "Super Caravan", launched to conduct a nationwide campaign on the election and referendum. The vehicles will travel across all 64 districts and 300 upazilas. The event was held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

BANGLADESH-MALAYSIA

Syndicates still dominate migration corridor: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Repeated policy reforms and bilateral agreements with Malaysia have failed to break the control of recruitment syndicates, speakers said at a national dialogue yesterday.

As a result, migrant workers continue to face deception, high migration costs, debt bondage and abuse, they added.

The dialogue, titled "Bangladesh-Malaysia Labour Migration Corridor: Why the Syndicate Prevails, and Exploitation in Recruitment Persists!", was organised by the Oibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in the capital.

The event was held under the Strengthened and Informative Migration

Systems project, funded by the Embassy of Switzerland and supported by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh.

In his welcome remarks, OKUP Program Coordinator Md Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim said there must be an honest reflection on why past recruitment models have failed to protect workers.

Helvetas advocacy expert Shamaya Mahbub said exploitation would continue unless structural flaws in the system were addressed.

OKUP Chairperson Shakirul Islam highlighted the long history of the Bangladesh-Malaysia migration corridor and the heavy social and economic costs borne by migrant workers and their families due to non-transparent recruitment processes.

Sharing his experience,

returnee migrant worker Niranjan said, "I migrated to Malaysia through a broker and paid Tk 500,000. At the airport, the broker forced us to declare a much higher amount. After a few months, the employer disappeared. When we protested, we were deported."

"This system destroys workers' lives," he said.

Prothom Alo journalist Mohiuddin Niloy said recruitment syndicates operate on both sides of the corridor.

Marina Sultana of RMMRU questioned why Bangladesh repeatedly yields authority to destination countries instead of managing the migration corridor more assertively.

From the Malaysian side, Adrian Pereira of the North South Initiative said corruption and a lack of

political will remained major obstacles.

"There is no protection for whistle-blowers, and large sums of money are involved. Without strong political commitment, reform is unlikely," he said.

Zia Hassan, policy advisor at the expatriates' welfare ministry, described the corridor as an "organised crime structure".

Migration expert Sheeba Hafiza urged the government to conduct a root-cause analysis rather than relying on short-term fixes.

Another migration expert, Asif Munir, stressed the need for systemic reform, reintegration support for returnee migrants, and stronger joint advocacy by Bangladesh and Malaysia.

Electric three-wheelers must be regulated

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Citing two studies, he said the modal share of rickshaws in Dhaka city was 38.7 percent in 2009, which declined to 30.1 percent in 2023, but remains significant.

The rapid and unregulated expansion has generated multiple concerns, highlighting the urgent need for an organised, regulated and compliant urban transport system, he said.

There is no comprehensive policy in Bangladesh that describes all the aspects of E3Ws.

Most of the vehicles use lead-acid batteries, which have severe health impacts during their informal recycling.

Since the expansion of the vehicles was not controlled in the initial phases, they cannot be banned overnight, as they have become part of the transport system and involve a large number of people, Moazzam said.

Therefore, the vehicles must be strictly regulated and phased out gradually.

"But further expansion of these vehicles must be stopped."

The CPD carried out the study and organised the programme to discuss how E3Ws could be made more sustainable, brought under regulation and integrated into the urban transport system, Moazzam added.

About 60 lakh people are directly involved in the sector, said Khalequzzaman Lipon, convener of the Rickshaw, Battery-Powered Rickshaw-Van, and Easy Bike Sangram Parishad.

They have been demanding a comprehensive guideline to regulate the industry for over a decade, but to no avail.

Instead of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), which is responsible for regulating motor vehicles, the Local Government Division is now preparing a guideline even though it is not within its jurisdiction.

"We want a single guideline led by BRTA," he added.

E3Ws have become

popular for their speed,

relatively less fare and ability

to carry more passengers

than traditional rickshaws,

but they are accident-prone

and contribute to

traffic congestion,

said Asif Uz Zaman Khan,

a professor at the Bangladesh

University of Engineering

and Technology's Urban

and Regional Planning

department.

These vehicles must be

strictly regulated with a

uniform and safe design

and dedicated roads, he

said, adding that the use of

lead-acid batteries in the

rickshaws must be stopped.

The vehicles must be

brought under strict

regulation or else they will

spiral out of control,

said Kabir Ahmed, Bangladesh

Planning Commission's

chief of Physical

Infrastructure Division.

Neelima Akhter, executive director of the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority, emphasised the need to implement existing laws to bring discipline to the sector.

BRTA Director Md

Shahidullah and LGD

Joint Secretary Khondoker

Nazmul Huda Shamim

said their respective

ministries are preparing

separate guidelines for

E3Ws, exposing a lack of

coordination.

Despite living abroad, Tarique was appointed BNP acting chairman in 2016 after his mother Khaleda Zia was imprisoned.

Officials said the EC prepared a voter list with photographs ahead of the December 2008 polls, but Tarique was not enrolled as he was abroad. He has not been included in subsequent voter lists prepared ahead of the 2014, 2018, and 2024 elections.

PREPARATIONS

BNP is preparing a stage in the 300-foot area in Purbachal to hold a reception programme marking the arrival of Tarique, where he is expected to address party leaders, activists, and supporters.

Party sources said the area was chosen with security in mind.

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questioned how such a situation was allowed to occur.

"The nation wants to know from the government why and how this happened."

The signatories also strongly condemned the incidents of December 18, when the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star came under what they termed pre-planned attacks involving looting and arson late at night.

They further referred to the arson attack on the Chhayanaut building and the destruction of Nalanda school on the same night.

Expressing grave concern over a series of mob violence incidents, the statement cited the killing and burning of

Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh's Bhaluka over allegations of blasphemy.

It also mentioned an arson attack in Lakshmiapur, where petrol was allegedly poured into a locked house, killing seven-year-old Ayesha Begum Binoti and injuring other family members.

The recent attacks on longstanding cultural organisations such as Uddichya clearly showed that "none of these are isolated incidents".

The citizens alleged that many of the attacks had been preceded by open calls circulated on social media and questioned why law enforcement agencies remained "silent spectators" despite prior indications.

Recalling the commitments made by the interim government following the July Uprising, particularly pledges to ensure press freedom, freedom of expression and public safety, the signatories said the state has failed to uphold those assurances.

They pointed to repeated attacks in recent months on peaceful citizens, folk artists, baul performances, and individuals and organisations with differing opinions, religious beliefs or cultural identities.

The lack of accountability has deepened public fear and mistrust.

Against this backdrop, the statement questioned how a free, fair, transparent

and participatory election could be held.

The citizens placed six demands before the government, including the immediate arrest and speedy trial of Hadi's killers, fair and impartial investigations into other political killings and the identification and punishment of those responsible for attacks on Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Chhayanaut.

They also demanded strict action against attacks on cultural organisations and artists carried out in the name of "Tawhid Janata", visible measures to curb organised and pre-planned violence, scrutiny of the role of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and a collective commitment

to operate on the following routes: Cox's Bazar-Dhaka-Cox's Bazar, Jamalpur-Mymensingh-Dhaka-Jamalpur, Tangail-Dhaka-Tangail, Bherabazar-Narsingdi Dhaka-Bazar, Narsingdi-Bherabazar, Joydebpur Dhaka Cantonment-Joydebpur (Gazipur), Panchagarh-Dhaka-Panchagarh, Khulna-Dhaka-Khulna, Chatmohar-Dhaka-Khulna, Rajshahi-Dhaka-Rajshahi, and Jashore-Dhaka-Jashore.

BR is expected to earn around Tk 36 lakh from this arrangement. As a condition for travel on the special trains and additional coaches, party leaders and activists have been instructed to comply with the election code of conduct.

KMCH Superintendent Dr Md Akhteruzzaman said Sikder's CT scan has been completed and he is currently out of danger, though another scan will be conducted as a precaution.

The bullet hit the left side near his ear and exited without entering the head. His scalp was injured, but he is now stable and out of danger," the doctor said.

Protesting the incident, NCP Khulna district and metropolitan organiser Sajidul Islam Bappi alleged that Khulna has become a safe haven for criminals and demanded exemplary punishment for the attackers.

"We are investigating who used to visit the house. Since the tenants have fled, efforts are underway to trace them and uncover the motive behind the incident," the DC said.

Law and order will improve ahead of polls

Hope CEC, BNP at meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said the country's law and order situation would gradually improve ahead of the election and referendum scheduled for February 12 next year.

The CEC made the remarks while talking to reporters after inspecting the process of sending postal ballots to overseas voters at the Tejgaon Post Office.

Responding to questions about the law and order situation following the recent killing of Inqilab Monchi spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi, also an aspirant from Dhaka-8, the CEC said there was no reason for fear.

"The law and order situation will improve as polling day draws closer," he said, reiterating that the election and referendum would be held in a "festive" atmosphere.

Meanwhile, a three-member BNP delegation met the CEC at the Election Commission around 3:00pm yesterday.

After the meeting, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said maintaining law and order during the election period

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Frame charges against Anisul and Salman

Prosecution urges ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday sought the framing of charges against former law minister Anisul Huq and Salman F Rahman, former adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in a crimes against humanity case filed over killings during the July uprising.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam made the prayer before ICT-1 after completing the prosecution's hearing on the charges.

According to the formal charge, both Anisul and Salman have been accused under the doctrine of command responsibility. The prosecution alleged that they facilitated and instigated killings during the uprising.

During the hearing, the chief prosecutor read out the charges before the tribunal.

The charges allege that Anisul and Salman held a phone conversation during the uprising in which they said protesters should

Delhi, Dhaka must dial down the heat

Diplomatic tensions lurching towards a crisis

We share our foreign ministry's concern over the recent breach of the diplomatic zone housing the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi. To our surprise, India's external affairs ministry characterised the incident as a trifling affair involving 20 to 25 people protesting the killing of a worker in Mymensingh. To the diplomats inside the Bangladesh mission, who witnessed the slogans and the thinness of the security cordon, the incident appeared not as a minor nuisance but as a considerable lapse in protection.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain has rightly asked how a band of activists from a Hindu extremist organisation managed to penetrate deep into one of New Delhi's most fortified areas without permission, particularly when the building is not located on the outskirts? The protesters issued death threats to the high commissioner who resides there with his family. This incident has added a fresh layer of tension to the already fraught relationship between the two nations.

It bears repeating that for many years, the bond between India and Bangladesh was cemented by New Delhi's unwavering backing of Awami League. With the party now overthrown and its leader issuing incendiary comments from exile in India, that foundation has taken a serious hit, giving way to a void filled with mutual suspicion. Dhaka views New Delhi as a sanctuary for fugitives conspiring against Bangladesh. The interim government recently pointed to the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a leader of the 2024 uprising, by a suspect who reportedly slipped across the border. New Delhi, meanwhile, sees a neighbour sliding into majoritarian chaos. It views the interim government's handling of minority safety with scepticism, dismissing Dhaka's assurances as inadequate.

Last week, this diplomatic estrangement played out through reciprocal summonses. On December 14, the foreign ministry in Dhaka called in the Indian high commissioner to issue a rebuke regarding "anti-Bangladesh activities" allegedly orchestrated by fugitive Awami League figures on Indian soil. Having summarily rejected Dhaka's assertion, India's external affairs ministry waited just three days before summoning the Bangladeshi high commissioner in New Delhi. There, Indian officials registered their own concerns over a "deteriorating security environment" across the border.

Although a report presented by India's parliamentary standing committee on external affairs on December 18 identified the political shift in Bangladesh as New Delhi's "greatest strategic challenge" since 1971—calling for an immediate "recalibration" of ties—the Indian government appears to be heading in the opposite direction.

The economic fallout of this crisis is already tangible. India has drastically restricted shipments through land ports and curbed general visa issuance since August 2024; for its part, Bangladesh has imposed curbs on Indian yarn imports. Such decoupling is painful for businesses and individuals on both sides. Geography dictates that the two countries cooperate on everything from commerce to security. Yet the rhetoric is hardening, and the danger is that it is crowding out pragmatic diplomacy. Bangladesh's demand for an explanation regarding the security breach in Delhi is legitimate, so too are India's concerns about the safety of its missions in Bangladesh.

To prevent this downward spiral, New Delhi must look beyond the prism of its deposed allies. Normalisation requires acknowledging that the political landscape in Dhaka has fundamentally shifted. India needs to do far more than issue statements on minority safety—it must engage constructively with the new power centres.

An alarming breach of citizens' data

Fake e-Apostille websites expose our digital governance's flaws

We are alarmed by the leak of sensitive personal data of at least 1,100 citizens through a fake e-Apostille website, which is a stark reminder of how vulnerable citizens' data remains in the country. Reportedly, national identity cards, passports, marriage certificates, educational records, trade licences, and business contracts—documents that define an individual's legal and personal identity and are required for studying abroad, employment, or business purposes—were left openly accessible on a fraudulent platform posing as a government service.

This fake website closely resembled the government's official e-Apostille portal, which digitally authenticates government issued documents. The official portal is operated under the myGov platform of the ICT Division's Aspire to Innovate (a2i) programme. The fake website used a similar structure and name but ran on a different domain. It not only issued fake e-Apostille certificates but also allowed anyone to access other people's documents without much effort. In other words, without any form of identity verification or additional authorisation, a user could access another person's sensitive documents. This is worrying. Reportedly, many victims of the data breach applied through shops or intermediaries, a common practice given the complexity of the procedure. But whether they applied themselves or via intermediaries is irrelevant. The fact that such a large volume of sensitive data could be uploaded, stored, and accessed on a fraudulent platform points to systemic weaknesses in oversight, public awareness, and digital governance.

Unfortunately, this data leak is not a one-off incident. Previous allegations of data leaks involving platforms such as Surokkha—the government's Covid-19 vaccination management system—and reports of citizens' data being sold on the dark web suggest a persistent pattern of breaches. Leaks of passports, NIDs, and marriage certificates open the door to identity theft, fraud, harassment, and serious personal security risks. Women, in particular, are more vulnerable to the misuse of such information. Alarmingly, at least six fake domains posing as myGov and e-Apostille services have been discovered. These look-alike websites, designed to extract personal data and potentially commit financial fraud, not only endanger citizens but also erode trust in legitimate government platforms.

The government must prioritise and protect citizens' personal information through stronger security standards, independent audits, swift takedown of fake platforms, legal action against those involved, and public awareness campaigns. Without such measures, Bangladesh's push towards digital governance will not succeed.

Unchecked violence casts a shadow on our economy



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KATUN

The recent wave of violence has revealed a deeply worrying trend in public life. Following the announcement of the 2026 national election by the Election Commission of Bangladesh, a young political leader, Sharif Osman Hadi, was shot in broad daylight on December 12 by miscreants. Six days later, he succumbed to the bullet injuries while undergoing treatment in Singapore. The killing of Hadi sends a clear message that speaking differently has become dangerous. This is not confined to politics. Mob attacks on two prominent newspapers and two cultural institutions, and the lynching of a minority citizen in public, are examples of how the country's atmosphere has been marked by violence and fear.

The attacks on *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo* are not just against their infrastructure. They are attacks on the idea that citizens have the right to know, question, and disagree. The free press holds up a mirror to society. When that mirror is smashed, those in power go unchallenged, and falsehoods spread easily. The assault on cultural institutions such as Chhayanaut and Udichi is equally alarming. These spaces keep alive values of tolerance, human dignity, and progressive thinking. Songs, poetry, and art shape our conscience. That is why they are often targeted first. The killing of a garment factory worker, Dipu Chandra Das—after he was beaten and his body was set on fire in Bhaluka, Mymensingh, allegedly by his co-workers and a mob falsely accusing him of hurting religious sentiments—is another example of intolerance when people took the law into their hands.

Together, these incidents portray to the world that intolerance is growing and public protection is weakening. A society that silences its voices, crushes its culture, and fears difference may still function, but it slowly loses its humanity, confidence, and hope for a better future.

These attacks took place while a functioning government was in place in Bangladesh. This realisation has shaken the conscience of peace-loving and

progressive people, as many see these incidents as signs of a deeper crisis of values and erosion of confidence that now affects politics, governance, and the economy of the country.

Particularly, the loss of Sharif Osman Hadi resonates deeply in a society where youth symbolise both hope and possibility. That this tragedy occurred just as the country began preparing



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

for a national election has intensified emotions further. In many countries, electoral processes bring anxiety and confrontation. Pre-election violence is not uncommon in Bangladesh, yet the current situation is distinct. Since the interim government assumed office in August 2024, law and order have appeared increasingly vulnerable to mob violence. An environment has been created where intimidation, vandalism, and public disorder have become disturbingly normalised. The key question is why such violence continues under a government whose primary mandate is to stabilise the country and ensure a credible electoral process. This erosion of authority is deeply troubling, for it suggests the weakening of the government's moral and institutional grip.

The central issue, therefore, is the response to violence. In this regard, the government's performance has been hesitant and insufficient. Statements have been issued, assurances have been made, yet tangible outcomes remain

house rent, education fees, and healthcare expenses consume an ever-larger share of household income. For wage earners and small traders whose incomes have not kept pace with prices, life feels increasingly fragile.

While the interim government deserves due credit for rescuing the economy from its fragile condition left by the former government in 2024, through several decisive measures, there are still deep wounds in the economy. For example, reform measures are ongoing to discipline the banking sector and strengthen the foreign reserves. The external sector has improved, with higher exports, imports, and remittances compared to fiscal year 2024. The foreign exchange reserve has been improving from a situation of constant decline and now stands at \$27.88 billion as of December 18, 2025, compared to \$19.95 billion on December 18, 2024. However, the economy is yet to recover from low growth, high inflation, and subdued investment.

Although average inflation has eased from 11.38 percent in November 2024 to 8.29 percent in November 2025, prices of essential goods remain high relative to income. For many, daily life has not become easier despite official signs of improvement, as wages have not increased. Wage growth remained stagnant at 8.04 percent in November 2025, down from 8.1 percent in November 2024, exerting downward pressure on household purchasing power.

Employment conditions are worrying. Formal job creation has slowed, while informal and short-term work has expanded. Many firms are avoiding permanent hiring, and underemployment is widespread. More than 20 percent of youth aged 15-29 are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), revealing deep labour-market stress. Young people entering the labour market face increasing difficulty finding stable and decent jobs, which contributes to frustration and social tension.

Private investment is weak. Private-sector credit growth fell to a record low of 6.23 percent in October 2025, reflecting persistent investment weakness. Domestic investors are delaying expansion plans, focusing on survival rather than growth amid a high cost of doing business and uncertainty. Foreign direct investment remains modest at less than one percent of gross domestic product, with new and existing investors cautious about investing. This is a major concern, as Bangladesh needs investment to diversify its economy and create higher quality employment.

Although Bangladesh is widely recognised for its economic resilience and development achievements, images of mob violence and uncertainty over governance raise concerns among international partners and investors. In an interconnected world, political stability is inseparable from economic credibility. How Bangladesh navigates this moment will shape perceptions in the months ahead.

The way forward must therefore be grounded in both political responsibility and economic prudence. What is at stake now is public confidence and safety. Citizens want to feel that the state stands firmly on their side, that their safety matters, that laws apply equally, and that no one is beyond accountability. As the nation awaits a democratic transition through an election on February 12, 2026, the immediate priority of the interim government must be to restore law and order to protect citizens.

How to ensure publicly funded software serves the public



Sahadat Hossain is a business consultant and ICT strategist. He can be reached at hisahadan@gmail.com.

SAHADAT HOSSAIN

Bangladesh has taken a bold step in declaring that software developed with public funds will be treated as a national asset. The ICT Division's draft National Source Code Policy 2025, with its tagline "Public Money, Public Code," seeks to embed ownership, transparency, security, and reusability into the country's digital governance. It is a visionary initiative, but one that requires careful scrutiny.

The policy applies to all software systems, applications, Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), and digital services developed or acquired through the national budget, foreign loans, or donor financing under government projects. It is mandatory for ministries, departments, statutory bodies, and autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations. At its core, the policy requires that all source code be deposited in a central repository managed by the Bangladesh Computer Council. No software can be deployed in production until its code is stored there, ensuring traceability, auditability, and security. It also introduces the principle of "Reuse First," obliging agencies to reuse existing solutions before developing new ones and to justify in writing if reuse is not possible. Most significantly, the policy declares that government-

owned source code will be open by default, unless exempted for national security, defence, or privacy reasons. Even exempted systems must be registered and reviewed periodically.

The merits of this approach are clear. Transparency will allow citizens to see how public money is spent and what code is produced. Reusability will save costs and prevent duplication. Security will be strengthened through centralised oversight, vulnerability scanning, and licence compliance.

Innovation will be encouraged as open code fosters collaboration between government, academia, and industry. In many ways, the policy aligns Bangladesh with broader international movements towards open-source and public-code principles. India's open source policy encourages government adoption of open source software, and European Union institutions have open source software strategies and collaborative platforms that promote sharing and reuse of publicly developed code and software.

Nevertheless, risks remain. Many agencies lack skilled developers to follow secure coding guidelines and Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery (CI/CD) pipelines, raising the danger of superficial compliance. Over-

centralisation could create bottlenecks and reduce agility. Exemptions for national security may be overused, thereby undermining transparency and openness. Contractors may resist open licensing, fearing the loss of commercial advantage. And without proper documentation, open code risks becoming "abandonware"—technically open but practically unusable.

Bangladesh has already seen how fragile digital governance can be when national databases are mismanaged. In 2023, a major breach exposed the data of over five crore citizens, shaking public trust in digital systems. That episode serves as a cautionary reminder: openness alone is not enough. Without strong documentation, oversight, and security protocols, even well-intentioned initiatives can falter and compromise national assets.

Bangladesh can learn from global experiences. The European Union emphasises documentation and community support, recognising that open code without documentation is meaningless. South Korea integrates open-source adoption with strict security audits, showing that openness must be paired with cybersecurity rigour. Singapore's GovTech runs a government technology stack where reusable components are shared across ministries, proving the importance of modular design and developer training. In the Global South, countries like Brazil and Kenya have adopted public code principles but struggled with sustainability, as projects often collapse after donor funding ends. Bangladesh must ensure long-term maintenance budgets and

community engagement.

To make the policy effective, Bangladesh must invest in capacity building, training developers and auditors in secure coding and open-source practices. Documentation standards must be mandated, ensuring that code is not just open but usable.

While a central repository is useful, agencies should retain autonomy to manage linked sub-repositories to avoid bottlenecks. Exemptions must be clearly defined and independently overseen. Contractors should be incentivised to contribute to open code through recognition and reuse credits. Sustainability must be ensured through dedicated budgets for maintenance and updates. Finally, Bangladesh should build global partnerships with Japan, Korea, and Singapore to adopt best practices and strengthen regional networks for open government software.

The draft National Source Code Policy 2025 is visionary in recognising that software built with public money is a public asset. It seeks to embed transparency, security, and reusability into the DNA of Bangladesh's digital governance. But vision must be matched with capacity, clarity, and sustainability. Without training, documentation, and oversight, the policy risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative. By learning from international experiences and adapting them to local realities, Bangladesh can turn "Public Money, Public Code" from a slogan into a civic contract. If implemented wisely, it can transform Bangladesh's digital infrastructure into a true national asset, serving not just the government, but the people whose money built it.



This handout photograph taken by the press service of the 24th Mechanized Brigade of Ukrainian Armed Forces on Saturday and released yesterday, shows a Ukrainian military member walking in a heavily damaged residential area of the frontline town of Kostyantynivka, in the Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli strike kills 3 in south Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Lebanese state media reported three people killed in an air strike near Sidon that Israel said had "targeted Hezbollah operatives" yesterday, days ahead of a deadline for Lebanon's army to disarm the group near the border.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said yesterday's strike on a vehicle was carried out by an Israeli drone around 10 kilometres (six miles) from the southern coastal city of Sidon and "killed three people who were inside".

An Israeli military statement said the army "struck several Hezbollah terrorists in the area of Sidon".

Under heavy US pressure and amid fears of expanded Israeli strikes, Lebanon has committed to disarming Hezbollah, starting with the south.

Clashes resume at Thai-Cambodia border

Chinese national hurt by Thai shelling; defence officials to hold truce talks

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Cambodia's defence ministry said the fighting continued yesterday, accusing Thailand of firing artillery shells into Cambodian territory.

One civilian, a Chinese national, was injured, Cambodia's interior ministry added.

Beijing in a statement expressed hope "that both sides will proceed from maintaining peace and stability along the border... and come to a ceasefire as soon as possible."

Thailand's top diplomat said yesterday that Cambodia had agreed to hold border talks this week, after a regional meeting in Malaysia aimed at halting deadly clashes between the Southeast Asian neighbours.

Renewed fighting this month, which shattered a previous truce, has killed at least 23 people in



Thailand and 20 in Cambodia, and displaced more than 900,000 on both sides, officials said.

Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow announced the planned bilateral parley at the end of a meeting with his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), of which Cambodia is also a member.

He told reporters in Kuala Lumpur that "the discussion will be held in the framework of the JBC,

Joint Boundary Committee, which is already existing", and take place tomorrow, which was "proposed by the Cambodian side".

There was no immediate comment from Phnom Penh.

Sihasak cautioned that the upcoming meeting may not immediately produce a truce.

"Our position is a ceasefire does not come with an announcement, but must come from actions," he said.

Yesterday's meeting was convened by Asean chair Malaysia, which in late October hosted a summit where a truce declaration was signed under the auspices of US President Donald Trump.

Sihasak said that the October declaration was rushed. "The United States wanted the declaration signed in time by the visit of President Trump," he said.

A year of economic repair

FROM PAGE 1

Talks concluded in May, unlocking nearly \$3 billion in budget support from the IMF and other multilateral lenders in June. That infusion of liquidity proved decisive.

The impact is now visible in the data. The exchange rate, once a source of daily anxiety, has stabilised, hovering between Tk 120 and Tk 122 to the dollar. Gross foreign exchange reserves are gradually rebuilding, reaching \$32.5 billion.

The external balance has flipped as well. In the first four months of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh recorded a surplus of more than \$1 billion, a sharp turnaround from the \$2.2 billion deficit posted during the same period a year earlier.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Salehuddin offered a firm defence of the administration's record. "I am satisfied because what we have done, we have done transparently," he said. He insisted that

the economy's underlying fundamentals remain sound, even if they are not immediately apparent. "At the micro-level, people from the outside don't realise it -- things are very strong."

Not everyone shares his optimism. Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, described 2025 as a year of "mixed progress."

While he acknowledged significant improvements in stability indicators -- reserves, the balance of payments, and exchange rates -- he argued that activity indicators paint a less encouraging picture.

"In terms of activity, it is slow, or you could say stagnant. There is a drought in investment," he said.

STICKY PRICE OF LIVING

Inflation proved particularly stubborn. While global price pressures eased -- especially across South Asia after the initial shock of the Russia-Ukraine war -- Bangladesh remained an outlier.

Consumer prices began rising sharply in March 2022, breaching the 10 percent mark in October 2024. On a moving average basis, inflation stayed above that threshold

for nine consecutive months. The fever finally broke in July 2025, following a prolonged spell of fiscal and monetary tightening.

By November, inflation had eased to 8.96 percent. Food inflation, which had crossed 14 percent at its peak, has also begun to decline. Still, the cost of living remains a potent political challenge. Salehuddin conceded that non food inflation has proven especially rigid. As he put it dryly, "Landlords do not want to lower rents."

To keep prices in check, the central bank has maintained a tight monetary stance. Borrowing costs remain high, a policy Salehuddin admits is a double-edged sword. "We wanted to lower the policy rate," he said, but the central bank governor urged caution, advising them to "wait a little longer."

This monetary restraint, combined with a vigorous anti-corruption drive, has dampened private sector sentiment. The government has moved aggressively to clean up the banking system and pursue tax evasion, but the crackdown has unsettled businesses.

"When we catch this person or that person, even the good ones get a little scared," Salehuddin explained. Legitimate firms are proceeding cautiously, worried that minor deviations could invite major scrutiny. "They ask themselves, 'What if there is a deviation again?' So they move very carefully."

Zahid believes this climate of fear, compounded by political uncertainty, lies at the heart of the investment drought. "Investment has dried up," he said bluntly. Investors are sitting on the sidelines, concerned that a future elected government could reverse current decisions.

"They think, 'What if the next government declares this null and void?'" Salehuddin said, though he dismissed the likelihood of such reversals.

The slowdown is evident in the growth numbers. Provisional data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics show GDP growth fell to 3.97 percent last fiscal year -- the first time it has dipped below 4 percent since the Covid-19 shock in 2020.

The finance ministry has tempered its expectations, revising the current fiscal year's growth target to 5 percent from 5.5 percent. While officials are banking on resilience in agriculture and industry, Bangladesh's multilateral partners remain cautious. Both the World Bank and the ADB project growth in the 4-5 percent range.

Exports, traditionally the economy's main engine, are also losing steam. Salehuddin maintained that the garment sector is "at least not too bad," but the data tell a weaker story.

After a strong start to the year, exports have "stumped quite a bit" over the past four months, Zahid said. He attributed part of the slowdown to external shocks beyond the government's control, including shifts in global trade policy triggered by renewed Trump-era tariffs.

"Here, as a driver, the government has nothing to do," Zahid said, while praising recent improvements in trade facilitation.

FISCAL SURGERY AND THE MISSING SAFETY NET

Fiscal discipline has been the government's watchword, largely out of necessity. Debt servicing costs have surged, with interest payments rising 17.31 percent last fiscal year. Subsidies ballooned by 49 percent as the government cleared years of accumulated arrears, pushing the total subsidy bill to Tk 108,672 crore.

Despite these pressures, the budget deficit was contained at 3.6 percent of GDP. This was achieved mainly by slashing development spending. Implementation of the Annual Development Programme was weak, with only 66 percent of the revised allocation utilised last year. Performance has worsened further this fiscal year, with just 4.6 percent of the development budget spent in the first three months.

The most ambitious reform has come in revenue administration. After revenue growth languished at just 1.9 percent last year, equivalent to 6.6 percent of GDP, the government initiated a structural overhaul. The NBR is being dismantled and replaced by two separate bodies: a Revenue

Policy Department and a Revenue Management Department.

Early signs are encouraging. Revenue collection jumped 20.3 percent in the first quarter.

Still, the human cost of stabilisation has been high. "From the perspective of the common man's welfare, the situation has not improved," Zahid said. Poverty and inequality have risen -- not created overnight, but accumulated since 2022 and now fully realised.

"The number of poor people has increased."

He pointed, however, to a crucial non-economic offset: liberty. "One of the indicators of welfare is freedom of speech," Zahid argued. "If you are poor and cannot speak or vote, that is unbearable." In that sense, 2025 delivered a "freedom of speech dividend" compared to the stifling atmosphere of 2024.

THE ROAD TO 2026

As the year ends, the outlook is clearing. The announcement of an election schedule, accepted by all major political parties without dissent, may finally unlock pent-up investment. "No one said 'if' or 'but,'" Zahid observed, suggesting that political stability is now within sight.

Salehuddin believes the real economic dividend will come after the transition. "The economy will be even better after the election," he predicted, as certainty returns for both domestic and foreign investors. For now, he takes comfort in the validation of international partners. "They are pleased," he said, even as they caution that challenges remain.

Bangladesh enters 2026 with a cleaner ledger but a stalled engine. The interim government has acted as a stabiliser, launching reforms that Zahid describes as only a beginning.

The overall management is much "better" than the chaos inherited a year earlier, Salehuddin argued, correctly. The task for the next elected government will be to convert these mixed results -- greater stability but weaker activity -- into broad-based growth.

Until then, the finance adviser may sleep a little easier, but the economy remains only half-awake.

Star files case against 350-400

FROM PAGE 1

Additionally, around Tk 35 lakh in cash stored in several lockers was looted.

The assailants set fire to the ground, second, and third floors of the building, severely damaging assets and documents, including important accounting records and tax files related to the National Board of Revenue. Other floors also suffered extensive vandalism and looting.

The attackers deliberately sabotaged the building's fire suppression system, central air conditioning, elevators, and electrical wiring, and attempted to ignite the electrical substation. They also destroyed multiple CCTV cameras and network recorders, hampering evidence collection.

The total estimated loss is around Tk 40 crore, with potential for further revision following assessment.

The blaze threatened nearby buildings, and the attackers obstructed fire service personnel from accessing the site. Law enforcement eventually arrived, and the attackers fled around 4:30am.

The incident endangered the lives of journalists and other staff members.

Thirty staff members were rescued through coordinated efforts by law enforcement and fire services.

Due to the attack, The Daily Star was forced to suspend its print edition on December 19, and its online operations were halted for 17 hours.

Prothom Alo, an office of which was also attacked on Thursday night, filed another case against 350 to 450 people.

In the case filed on Sunday, Major (retd) Sazzadul Kabir, head of security at Prothom Alo, said that property worth around Tk 2.5 crore was looted, while the total damage from vandalism and arson is estimated at Tk 32 crore during the attack on the Prothom Alo office.

According to the case statement, around 11:15pm on December 18, 20 to 30 unidentified people, armed with local weapons, sticks, and flammable materials, gathered in front of the Prothom Alo office

in Karwan Bazar and attempted to launch an attack.

When police intervened, they remained in front of the office, chanting provocative slogans, and then vandalised, looted, and set fire to parts of the building. They also made phone calls to mobilise more assailants.

Prior to the attack, several online activists posted inciting messages on social media and encouraged mob violence against the newspaper.

As a result, an estimated 350 to 450 more people gathered from different parts of Dhaka and joined the illegal assembly outside the Prothom Alo office, coordinating a violent assault.

The attackers broke shutters and glass gates, entered the building, and caused extensive vandalism and arson. They terrorised staff, physically assaulted employees, damaged office furniture and equipment, and looted various items.

They threw furniture, equipment, and documents from the building onto the street and set them on fire. The case alleges that about 150 computers and laptops, other electrical equipment, cash from lockers, and books from Prothom Alo were looted.

The destruction severely disrupted the newspaper's operations. The attackers also sabotaged the building's fire safety system to cause greater damage and prevent emergency response. The fire nearly spread to nearby buildings.

Firefighters were obstructed and threatened, delaying their efforts to control the blaze.

The total estimated loss from the attack -- including looting, vandalism, and arson -- is around Tk 32 crore.

The safety of journalists and staff was gravely endangered, causing widespread fear for their lives.

As a result, publication of Daily Prothom Alo was halted for the first time in its 27 year history, excluding holidays. Its online edition was also suspended for nearly 17 hours.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

জাতান্ত্রিক ও খনিজ সম্পদ বিভাগ

বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন

www.bpc.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-২৮.০৩.০০০০.০০০.০০৮.০৪.০০২৫.১৩৮৫৮ তারিখ ২১/১২/২০২৫

বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর আইন উপদেষ্টা ও প্যানেল

আইনজীবী নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন (বিপিসি) এর পক্ষে উচ্চ আদালত ও নিম্ন আদালতে মামলা পরিচালনা, আইনগত মতামত ও পরামর্শ প্রদান করার জন্য বিপিসি'র আইন উপদেষ্টা ও প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগ ও ব্যবস্থাপনা নির্দেশিকা-২০২৫ অনুযায়ী ০২ (দুই) জন আইন উপদেষ্টা এবং ১০ (দশ) জন প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত নিয়োজ শর্তসাপেক্ষে আগ্রহী আইনজীবীগণের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছেঃ ১। বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন (বিপিসি) এর ওয়েবসাইট (www.bpc.gov.bd) এ প্রকাশিত আবেদন ফরম যথাযথভাবে পূরণপূর্বক বিপিসি'র আইন উপদেষ্টা ও প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগ ও ব্যবস্থাপনা নির্দেশিকা-২০২৫ এর ৬ নম্বর ধারার যোগ্যতা পূরণ সাপেক্ষে আবেদন করতে হবে;

২। আগ্রহী আইনজীবীগণকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে বিপিসি'র আইন উপদেষ্টা ও প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগ ও ব্যবস্থাপনা নির্দেশিকা-২০২৫ এর ৭ নম্বর ধারায় উল্লেখিত প্রয়োজনীয় সনদ ও কাগজাদি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

৩। একজন আইনজীবীকে একইসাথে সংস্থার আইন উপদেষ্টা ও প্যানেল আইনজীবী হিসেবে নিয়োগ প্রদান করা হবে না। একজন আই



LDC exit nears but trade deals stayed in waiting mode in 2025

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

As 2025 winds down, Bangladesh is staring at an approaching deadline with growing concern.

Less than a year remains before the country formally graduates from the least developed country (LDC) club in November 2026. For an economy built on garment exports, this milestone is not just symbolic; it comes with the real risk of losing duty-free access to major markets.

The government has intensified trade talks with key partners to preserve preferential market access, guided by the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) — a policy roadmap designed to soften the graduation shock.

Yet, despite nearly two decades of negotiations, most agreements are still in early stages. Apart from a small number of exceptions, few have reached enforcement, leaving exporters in a state of limbo.

THE REWIND

Over the years, some progress has been made. One notable breakthrough came yesterday as Bangladesh and Japan concluded negotiations on a bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The deal, once signed and ratified, will grant duty-free access to 7,379 Bangladeshi products to Japanese market, including ready-made garments, while Bangladesh will offer zero-duty entry to 1,039 products from the island nation.

The agreement also covers services, with Bangladesh opening 97 sub-sectors and Japan 120, creating scope for investment and technology transfer. The EPA will now move towards formal signing and approval by Japan's parliament, the Diet, before it comes into force.

South Korea is another relative bright spot.

According to Commerce Secretary Mabubur Rahman, talks on a separate EPA with Seoul are close to a conclusion. The authorities hope for a near-term signing.

Apart from Japan and South Korea, Bangladesh is juggling preliminary discussions with a number of partners, including the European Union, the Regional Comprehensive Economic

STATUS OF TRADE DEALS FOR POST-LDC ERA

2025 TAKEAWAYS

Trade talks have intensified, but most remain unfinished. Export-dependent sectors face rising risks as the graduation deadline approaches.

PROGRESS

Japan: Draft EPA finalised, signing in Jan

South Korea: EPA talks almost finished

RCEP: Bangladesh under eligibility review for possible membership



RISKS IF NO DEALS BEFORE GRADUATION

Exports at risk: 73% of shipments rely on LDC duty-free access

Estimated losses: Up to 14% of exports, around \$8b annually

Industry impact: Primary textiles and related \$25b investments

BARRIERS

High tariffs discourage partner countries

Import duties still major revenue source, limiting reforms

Limited trade negotiation capacity

Key policy documents often not available in English for foreign counterparts

watches the developments anxiously.

High interest rates, inconsistent energy supplies, rising production costs and inflation are already squeezing enterprises, making the timing of LDC graduation particularly challenging.

"Trade agreements take time, and we had urged the government to seek a deferment of LDC graduation," said Anwarul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries.

"This is not the right moment for graduation, given the economic pressures businesses are facing," added the business leader.

Garment exporters, who are the backbone of the country's export sector, are especially concerned.

Inamul Haq Khan, senior vice president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said businesses are critical stakeholders whose concerns often go unheard.

Industry leaders have repeatedly called for a six-year deferment of graduation, citing the absence of major trade agreements and limited preparedness on both public and private fronts.

"The country is going to graduate next year, but it is very unfortunate that we have yet to sign any trade agreements to retain the major trade partners," Khan said.

He warned that the loss of duty-free access could put exports under severe

pressure.

"Export incentives have already been reduced, and while government support schemes aim to boost competitiveness, their impact may not be enough to offset the loss of LDC benefits," he added.

Other sectors are also facing the pinch. Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said primary textile manufacturers are already under strain.

"Cheap yarn imports from India have surged, rising 137 percent over the past year, squeezing domestic spinning mills grappling with inadequate gas supply."

He warned that any setback in the garment sector could jeopardise roughly \$25 billion invested in the country's primary textile industry.

Despite the challenges, some policymakers see opportunities.

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of local think tank Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID), described the Japan EPA as a meaningful milestone.

He said that RCEP has requested documentation to assess Bangladesh's eligibility for membership in January, alongside Hong Kong, Chile and Sri Lanka.

If approved, it would give Bangladesh access to the world's largest trade bloc, added Razzaque.

He said negotiations with the EU should secure the GSP Plus facility, preserving access to European markets.

The stakes are high. At present, about 73 percent of Bangladesh's exports rely on LDC-related duty-free access to 38 countries. Studies suggest losing these preferences could slash up to 14 percent of exports, roughly \$8 billion annually.

As the year ends, the status of trade negotiations is clear.

Bangladesh has opened channels, laid out strategies, and crossed a few important milestones. Yet the distance between negotiation and enforcement remains the defining challenge on the country's trade frontier.

BB asks five merging banks to set shareholder equity at zero

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has instructed five shariah-based banks undergoing a merger to declare their shareholder equity at zero, after assessments showed the net asset value of those shares to be negative.

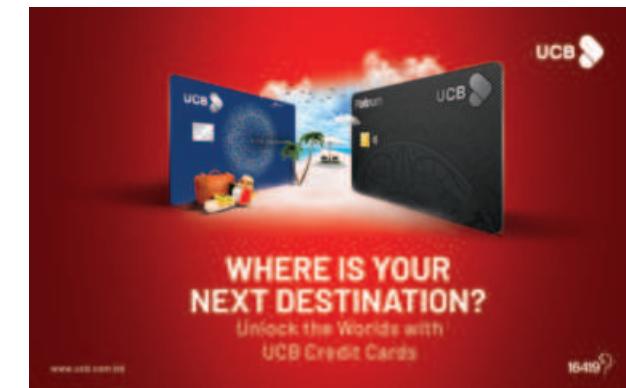
The directive was issued yesterday to First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, Union Bank and EXIM Bank, according to a letter sent by the central bank.

The decision was taken under the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, said Arefi Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson of the Bangladesh Bank.

"An assessment found that the net asset value per share of these banks is negative," he said. "As a result, the shareholders' equity has been written down to zero."

In November this year, Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur announced that shareholders of the five banks would not receive any stake in the merged new bank as their shares carried negative value, ranging from Tk 350 to Tk 420 per share.

"So the central bank is not taking them into



consideration, as they hold zero liability," Mansur said at the time. "No shareholder of the merged banks will get anything."

The write-down has wiped out shareholder investments worth around Tk 4,500 crore in face value — the original value assigned when the shares were issued.

At market value, the loss was around Tk 1,022 crore, as the shares were trading well below their face value.

Following the merger order by the central bank, the Dhaka and Chattogram stock exchanges suspended trading of the five banks' shares last month.

On November 30, the Bangladesh Bank granted the final licence to Sammilito Islami Bank PLC, formed through the merger of the five lenders. It is now the largest state-owned shariah-based bank in the country.

The central bank said the approval was part of a broader banking sector reform programme launched in September 2024 to restore governance, ensure accountability and bring discipline to the financial system.

The authorised capital of Sammilito Islami Bank PLC stands at Tk 40,000 crore, with each share valued at Tk 10, amounting to 4,000 crore shares. The paid-up capital will be Tk 35,000 crore.

Of this, Tk 20,000 crore has already been provided by the government, which will hold Class A shares, according to the finance ministry.

Another Tk 7,500 crore will come from permanent deposits of depositors of the transferring banks and financial institutions, converted into equity and designated as Class B shares.

The remaining Tk 7,500 crore will be sourced from deposits of other institutional depositors, excluding banks, financial institutions and multinational companies. These will be converted and classified as Class C shares.

Court stays SMP curbs on GP for three months

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The High Court (HC) has recently stayed the enforcement of significant market power (SMP) regulations on Grameenphone (GP) for three months.

The order means the country's largest mobile operator will not need prior approval from the regulator to roll out new service campaigns during the period. Its customers switching networks under the mobile number portability facility will also avoid a shorter lock-in requirement.

The stay also restores Grameenphone's inter-operator call charge to Tk 0.10 per minute, up from Tk 0.07 set under the SMP rules.

Earlier this month, an HC bench comprising Justice Foyej Ahmed and Justice Md Monjur Alam issued the order after hearing a writ petition filed by Grameenphone, according to court documents.

Alongside the stay, the bench asked officials from the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and IT and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to explain within four weeks why the SMP restrictions imposed on Grameenphone should not be rendered null and void.

In 2018, the telecom regulator introduced the SMP regulations to prevent monopolistic market practices. It set a 40 percent threshold based on customer base, revenue or spectrum holdings.

A year later, the commission assessed the market and designated Grameenphone as an SMP operator, having exceeded the threshold in both

subscribers and annual revenue.

Under the SMP framework, Grameenphone faced three of the 20 possible regulatory conditions.

These included the requirement of pre approval from the commission for each service campaign. Customers porting into the network were also subject to a shorter lock-in period than those of rival operators.

Grameenphone had challenged the SMP designation in court five years ago without success. The latest writ, which described the designation as "arbitrary and unlawful", resulted in the stay.

Tanveer Mohammad, chief corporate affairs officer of Grameenphone, said the company had sent four letters to the regulator this year seeking a review of the SMP status. Without any response from the BTRC, it filed the writ.

The Honourable High Court Division has stayed the operation of the SMP directives. We trust that all concerned parties will duly comply with the order," he told The Daily Star.

The regulator, however, signalled a legal response. Major General (Retd) Md Emdad ul Bari, chairman of the commission, said it would challenge the HC order.

Despite the SMP restrictions, Grameenphone continues to dominate the telecom market in profit, revenue and subscriber numbers.

As of October 2025, the operator held 45.56 percent of the mobile market, according to BTRC data. Robi Axiata followed with 30.69 percent, Banglalink with 20.17 percent and state-owned Teletalk with 3.58 percent.

Tent, camping gear exports show signs of recovery

SOHEL PARVEZ

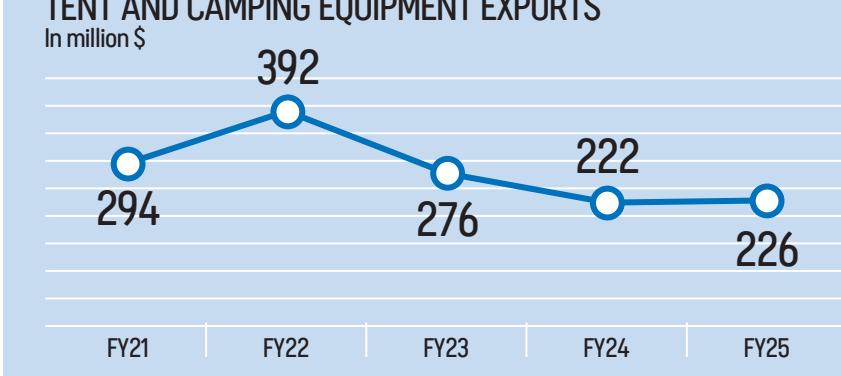
Tents and camping gear exports are showing signs of revival, with global buyers placing fresh orders after selling off pandemic stockpiles.

During the July-November period of the fiscal year (FY) 2025-26, exports of tents and camping items grew 18 percent year-on-year to around \$50 million, compared with the same period in FY25.

The increase comes more than a year after the sector's exports fell sharply by \$170 million to \$222 million in FY24, according to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) data.

The sector reached \$392 million in exports in FY22 but suffered a decline in

TENT AND CAMPING EQUIPMENT EXPORTS



SOURCE: EPB

chose local outdoor activities over overseas travel.

"After Covid ended, a large inventory remained in the market," he said. "Once that was sold off, demand picked up. I think FY26 will perform better than FY25."

Campvalley Global specialises in instant tents and plastic moulds, exporting mainly to the United States.

Lee added that Bangladesh has become an attractive manufacturing base for tent

makers, as major global brands now run production facilities here.

"This is beneficial for buyers," he said, adding that the company is interested in investing in the Mirsarai Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

Bangladesh has more than half a dozen tent and camping equipment manufacturers, mostly located in export processing zones.

Rafat Husain, managing director of HKD Uni-Tech Ltd at Chattogram EPZ, said the main export markets are the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan.

the following two years. Trade recovered slightly in FY25, rising 2 percent to \$226 million.

Hong Woo Lee, chief executive officer of Campvalley Global Ltd at the Karnaphuli Export Processing Zone (EPZ), said the sector had benefited from a Covid-driven surge in camping, when many consumers

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Inflation may fall below 7% by June: govt

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Inflation is expected to fall below 7 percent by June 2026, driven by the Bangladesh Bank's tight monetary policy and the government's austerity measures, the Chief Adviser's Office said yesterday.

Annual average inflation fell below 9 percent in November 2025 for the first time since June 2023, the CA's Office disclosed after a meeting on overall economic progress and budgetary expenditure, chaired by CA Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna.

Point-to-point inflation, which crossed 9 percent in March 2023, dropped below that level in June 2025 and declined further to 8.29 percent in November this year, it added.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur were present at the meeting.

The CA's Office acknowledged that real incomes had declined in recent years due to a wide gap between inflation and wage growth, but said the gap had narrowed significantly in recent months.

In November 2025, point-to-point inflation and wage growth stood at 8.29 percent and 8.04 percent, respectively, compared with 9.02 percent and 7.04 percent in fiscal year 2022-23 (FY23).

"As a result, although real income had declined in previous years due to high inflation, the current fiscal year is gradually witnessing an improvement," it said.

The CA's Office also said that due to proper incentives and management, Boro rice yields were good so far this year, and a favourable Aman harvest is expected. As a result, the government's foodgrain procurement target for the current fiscal year is likely to be achieved.

Gross foreign exchange reserves stood at \$32.57 billion, up from around \$25 billion in August 2024.

"With exchange rates stabilising, remittance inflows increasing and interest rates in the financial sector rising significantly, foreign exchange reserves are expected to grow further," it said.

The office added that improved financial management and measures to prevent money laundering have strengthened the country's external account.

Restrictions on imports have been lifted to support more productive economic activity, it said, noting a rebound in imports.

Capital machinery imports, which had been in decline, have regained momentum in the current fiscal year 2025-26.

BRAC Bank launches SME innovation lab

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank PLC has launched the country's first SME innovation lab, titled "Finnovision", aimed at helping small businesses grow and thrive through the adoption of innovative solutions.

The initiative reinforces the bank's pioneering role in strengthening cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) through innovation, inclusion and sustainability.

Husne Ara Shikha, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, inaugurated the SME innovation lab as the chief guest at a ceremony held at Lakeshore Hotel Gulshan, in Dhaka on Sunday, according to a press release.

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank, and Syed Abdul Momen, additional managing director and head of SME Banking, along with development partners and industry stakeholders, were also present.

Finnovision is a dedicated platform designed to test, refine and scale solutions that address contemporary economic, social and environmental challenges faced by CMSMEs.

Harnessing the untapped potential of grassroots entrepreneurs, the lab focuses on four strategic priorities: closing the gender financing gap, fostering smart and



Husne Ara Shikha, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, inaugurates the SME innovation lab, titled "Finnovision", launched by BRAC Bank PLC, at Lakeshore Hotel Gulshan in Dhaka on Sunday.

sustainable agriculture, accelerating climate-resilient financing, and integrating cottage and microenterprises into the mainstream economy.

The lab follows a structured, impact-oriented approach, beginning with a comprehensive assessment of CMSME challenges, followed by the launch of problem statements and the shortlisting of enterprises for support.

Selected businesses then enter a bootcamp phase, receiving hands-on training to formalise operations, strengthen bookkeeping, develop realistic cash-flow projections and craft growth strategies.

Promising enterprises progress to a technical assistance phase, where tailored mentorship helps refine prototypes, address implementation challenges and prepare solutions for scale-up.

Leveraging the lab's ecosystem, participants gain access to financial product innovation, channels, markets and financing, while piloting and validating scalable solutions.

The initiative underscores BRAC Bank's long-standing commitment to SMEs and aligns with the founding vision of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, who established the bank to serve the country's "missing middle" through inclusive banking.

Through collaboration with local and international partners, including DEG Impulse gGmbH, Finnovision aims to unlock new financing models and innovative propositions for grassroots entrepreneurs.

Bangladesh, Japan finalise draft EPA

Signing expected in January



A key feature of the EPA is that ready-made garments, the main export item of Bangladesh, will enjoy duty-free access to the Japanese market from the first day of implementation.

PHOTO: STAR/FILE

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh and Japan have agreed on the draft of a bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), marking the country's first full-fledged trade deal as it seeks to secure preferential market treatments ahead of its scheduled graduation from the least developed country club next year.

Bangladeshi Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin and Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu endorsed the draft during a phone conversation yesterday. The declaration was later announced in both countries through separate press briefings.

Under the draft agreement, Japan will grant duty-free access to 7,379 Bangladeshi products, including ready-made garments, once the EPA is signed. This will cover about 97 percent of the export basket of Bangladesh.

In return, Bangladesh will provide duty-free access to 1,039 Japanese products, largely in phases over 18 years.

A key feature of the EPA is that ready-made garments, the main export item of Bangladesh,

will enjoy duty-free access to the Japanese market from the first day of implementation. The agreement will also allow Single Stage Transformation provisions for garments, easing rules of origin requirements.

The agreement also covers services. Under the trade in services chapter, Bangladesh has agreed to open 97 sub-sectors to Japan, while the island nation will open 120 sub-sectors to Bangladesh across four modes of supply.

Provisions on human resources, movement of natural persons and investment are also included, which officials expect will support increased Japanese investment and technology transfer.

After yesterday's endorsement, the final text of the EPA will now be sent to the National Parliament of Japan, the Diet, and the advisory council of Bangladesh for approval.

At the press conference at the commerce ministry, Commerce Adviser Bashir Uddin said eight rounds of negotiations had been held before finalising the draft.

He said the agreement is expected to be

signed by the end of next month.

At the programme, Lutfe Siddiqi, special envoy on international affairs to the chief adviser, said successfully concluding negotiations at this stage was a difficult task and expressed hope that the agreement would deliver tangible gains in trade and investment.

Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), said Japanese investment in Bangladesh currently stands at about \$500 million, a small share of Japan's outbound investment.

He said the absence of a formal trade framework had long been cited by Japanese investors and that the EPA could provide a platform to attract greater investment and facilitate future trade agreements.

The Bangladesh-Japan EPA will be the country's first comprehensive trade agreement. So far, Bangladesh has signed only one preferential trade agreement with Bhutan in December 2020, despite negotiating with more than a dozen trading partners.

REHAB fair begins in Dhaka tomorrow

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) Fair 2025 will begin tomorrow at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka and will continue until December 27, featuring 220 stalls.

This year, REHAB has allowed participation from four diamond sponsors, seven gold sponsors, 10 cosponsors, 14 building materials companies, and 12 financial investment institutions, according to a press release.

REHAB President Md Wahiduzzaman said the association has been working as a major partner of the government in infrastructure development. Member institutions have been striving for more than three decades to provide safe housing for present and future generations, he added.

He stressed that housing opportunities must be nondiscriminatory and fair.

Highlighting policy changes, he said the new Detailed Area Plan and Dhaka Metropolitan Building Rules 2025 have removed old complications and inequalities, restoring confidence among real estate traders and stabilising the sector.

He expects attendance at this year's fair to rise due to the three-day holiday, adding that the fair is not just an exhibition but a platform for direct connections between buyers and developers, offering rare opportunities to compare project quality, location, facilities, and investment potential.

Crown Cement declares 21% cash dividend

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Crown Cement PLC has declared a 21 percent cash dividend for the year that ended on June 30, 2025.

The declaration was made at the company's 31st annual general meeting (AGM), held virtually yesterday, according to a press release.

Mohammed Jahangir Alam, chairman of Crown Cement PLC, presided over the meeting.

At the AGM, shareholders approved the financial statements along with the auditors' report and the report of the board of directors. The meeting also approved the election and re-election of directors, the appointment of statutory auditors and corporate governance compliance auditors for the year ending June 30, 2026, and the fixation of their remuneration.

Among others, Md Alamgir Kabir, vice-chairman; Molla Mohammad Majnu, managing director; Md Mizanur Rahman Molla, additional managing director; directors Mohammed Almas Shimul, Solaiman Kabir and Mushsharat Mahajabin; independent directors Rahamat Ullah Mohd Dastagir and Barrister Sarowat Siraj; and Masud Khan, chief adviser to the board, attended the meeting.

M Mozharul Islam, senior general manager and company secretary, conducted the AGM.



Mohammed Jahangir Alam, chairman of Crown Cement PLC, presides over the company's 31st annual general meeting yesterday. The meeting declared a 21 percent cash dividend for 2025.

Prime Bank signs payroll banking deal with Bauwerk

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has signed a payroll banking agreement with Bauwerk Limited, a global provider of technology-led products, systems and services for the construction industry, to offer payroll banking services.

Md Asif Bin Idrish, senior executive vice-president and head of emerging market at Prime Bank PLC, and Julian Andrin Weber, chairman of Bauwerk Limited, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, eligible employees of Bauwerk Limited will enjoy exclusive payroll banking facilities, including salary accounts with competitive rates, dual-currency debit cards with fee waivers and lifestyle benefits, customised loan and credit card facilities, and a wide range of consumer banking products and services on preferential terms.

Employees will also have access to PrimePay,

the bank's omni digital platform, which enables seamless and automated salary disbursement, along with convenient, round-the-clock corporate payment solutions.

Md Enamul Kabir, executive vice-president and regional head of the branch distribution network of Prime Bank; Hasina Fardous, vice-president and head of payroll banking; Mohammed Zubair, vice-president and team head of emerging market; HM Mamun, assistant vice-president and relationship manager of emerging market; and Robiul Alam Iskandar, first assistant vice-president and business development manager of payroll banking, attended the event.

Md Humayun Kabir, head of finance, accounts and company secretary of Bauwerk Limited; Naleen Kaura, general manager; and Md Jishan Rahman, manager of human resources and administration; along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Employees will also have access to PrimePay,

Walton fridge, AC and TV recognised at Best Brand Award 2025

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Walton, a leading electrical and electronics manufacturing conglomerate in Bangladesh, has been honoured with the "Best Brand Award 2025" in three categories – refrigerator, air conditioner and television – at the 17th edition of the award ceremony held at Le Méridien Dhaka on Saturday.

The recognition was conferred based on a nationwide survey, according to a press release.

Md Tanvir Rahman, chief business officer of Walton AC; Tahasinul Haque, chief business officer of Walton Fridge; Md Shahjalal Hossain Limon and Tanvir Anjum, senior executive directors of Walton Hi-Tech; and Zoheb Ahmed, chief market officer, received the awards on behalf of the company.

Expressing gratitude to customers,



Walton senior officials pose for a group photograph with the crest of the "Best Brand Award-2025" at Le Méridien Dhaka on Saturday.

PHOTO: WALTON

distributors, dealers, members and well-wishers, Walton's chief market officer Zoheb Ahmed said the recognition reaffirmed Walton's position as the country's leading refrigerator, air conditioner and television brand.

"Walton is moving forward with

the vision of turning Bangladesh into a manufacturing hub for artificial intelligence (AI) and internet of things (IoT)-based innovative electronic appliances, while placing Walton among the top global electronics brands," he said.

To realise this vision, Walton has been

introducing advanced AI and IoT-based technologies and features in its smart refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions and other appliances. Through exports, the company has already expanded its global footprint to more than 50 countries.

"Upholding this prestigious best brand recognition in the domestic refrigerator, AC and TV segments will further accelerate Walton's progress in the global market," he added.

The awards were determined using the globally recognised "Winning Brands" survey methodology, with participation from consumers across the country.

This year, 45 brands across 45 categories were honoured at the "Best Brand Award 2025", organised by the Bangladesh Brand Forum in partnership with nSearch Ltd.

Iran says missile programme defensive, non-negotiable

AFP, Tehran

Iran insisted yesterday that its missile programme was defensive in nature and designed to dissuade attack, while adding the existence of its arsenal was

not up for debate. Israel had presented Iran's ballistic missiles, along with its nuclear programme, as the two main threats it sought to neutralise during the 12-day war the foes fought in

June. "Iran's missile programme was developed to defend Iran's territory, not for negotiation," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said at a weekly press conference.

Violence against media unjustifiable

FROM PAGE 2

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, accompanied her during the visit.

Fouzul said he had spoken to witnesses and others present at the scene to understand how the incident unfolded. "We need to draw lessons from

this so that such incidents are not repeated in the future," he said.

He said it was unfortunate that the incident occurred following the death of Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent figure in the July uprising and spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho.

Fouzul said Hadi

himself had stressed that disagreements with a media outlet should be addressed by expressing views through counter platforms, not by attacking media houses.

"Those who carried out the attack cannot be considered well-wishers of Osman Hadi. Had they been so, they would have acted in line with his words," he said.

Rights groups condemn attacks

FROM PAGE 12

justified. Period," he wrote in his verified Facebook post on Sunday, condemning the attacks.

Some attacks appeared to have been fuelled by calls to violence circulated by prominent social media users, highlighting enforcement failures by authorities and safety shortcomings by technology companies.

Referring to Bangladesh's obligations under the constitution and international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the organisations said the state must prevent attacks, protect those at risk, investigate crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

Meanwhile, Mushfiqul Fazal Ansary, Bangladeshi's ambassador to Mexico, said attempts to destroy media institutions cannot be justified in any way.

"No such act can be

opposing the creation of Bangladesh," said Bashir Ahmed Kajal, senior vice-president of Sreepur Press Club.

History shows that journalists cannot be destroyed; rather, those who try to silence them are eventually ruined, he added.

The incident of setting fire to the offices is a direct blow to independent journalism, said Shaheen Akand, regional correspondent for Kaler Kantha.

"Despite the temporary disruption, these newspapers have turned around again. Journalism will continue through this dangerous path," he added.

If there is a disagreement with an opinion, it should be refuted through the media and not by destroying it, said Khurshed Alam, chairman of the River and Nature Foundation.

Opposing the creation of

Bangladesh," said Bashir Ahmed Kajal, senior vice-president of Sreepur Press Club.

Another charge alleges that on July 22, 2024, Salman led a group of businesspeople to a meeting with Hasina at Gono Bhaban, where he urged her to continue the crackdown, assuring her that the business community stood by her "even at the cost of their lives".

The prosecution argued that these actions amounted to incitement, assistance and active participation in crimes against humanity.

An additional charge accuses Anisul of overseeing the filing of 286 "false cases" against around 450,000 student protesters, allegedly leading to illegal arrests and custodial torture.

After the prosecution concluded its submissions, defence lawyer Syed Munsurul Hoque

Chowdhury sought two weeks to present arguments on charge framing. Allowing the plea,

Law and order

FROM PAGE 3

was the government's responsibility, while the EC could appoint or transfer officials under certain provisions through which it has jurisdiction over administrative matters.

"We hope and wish that the law and order situation will gradually improve and the election environment remains healthy. We have called on the government in this regard, and the people also want to cast their votes freely and independently in a festive atmosphere," he said.

Salahuddin also said they demanded several changes to the nomination papers.

According to Article 12 of the RPO, a candidate is only required to provide information on criminal cases. However, he said, at present certified copies of bail orders or order sheets were being sought, details of which were difficult to trace for political leaders facing hundreds of "ghost cases".

"The EC assured that it will look into the matter," Salahuddin added.

Frame charges

FROM PAGE 3

Another charge alleges that on July 22, 2024, Salman led a group of businesspeople to a meeting with Hasina at Gono Bhaban, where he urged her to continue the crackdown, assuring her that the business community stood by her "even at the cost of their lives".

Meanwhile, defence counsels began arguments in another case against eight police officers, including former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, over the killing of six people at Chankharpur during the July uprising.

Seeking acquittal, defence counsel for accused Arshad Hossain argued that his client was not present at the scene. The tribunal adjourned proceedings in the case until December 24.

In another development, the tribunal ordered authorities to ensure the safety of a prosecution witness after the prosecution sought protection for him.

The witness, brother of martyr Esmamul, was allegedly attacked by a Chhatra League leader in Chattogram and is currently receiving treatment at a hospital.

Pureit Service Update for Our Esteemed Community

Dear Pureit Family,

We would like to inform you that, our service may experience slight delays up to March 2026 due to unavoidable circumstances. Please be assured that we are working diligently to resolve the situation as early as possible.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your continued trust and understanding.

Thank you for being a valued member of the Pureit family.

pureit

STATUTORY NOTICE

In the Supreme Court of Bangladesh
High Court Division
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)
Company Matter No. 2185 of 2025

In the matter of :

An application under Section 81(2) read with Section 39(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, and in the matter of : **Shakil Shahriar Rahman**, Managing Director of **Joytun Auto Rice & Dal Mills Ltd.**, having its Entity address at Rafique Sarak, Fultala Bazar, Fultala, Khulna.

—PETITIONER

The Register of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1 Kawran Bazar, TCB Bhan (6th Floor), Dhaka. —RESPONDENT
Notice is hereby given that upon an application filed by the Petitioner under Section 81(2) and read with section 39(3) and 396 of the Company Act, 1994, was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner for Condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the company **Joytun Auto Rice & Dal Mills Ltd.** for the Calendar year 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024 Upon Hearing the application on 08-12-2025 the Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the application. Interested person may appear before the Hon'ble Court on or before the date 12-01-2026 fixed for hearing of the matter. Copy of the application may obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.

Md. Hamidul Islam, Advocate
High Court & Appellate Division, Supreme Court of Bangladesh,
Membership No: 6272, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 01711014327

Ref No: BCB/Admin/T&PC/2025/961
TIME EXTENSION

This has reference to the invitation for Enlistment Advertisement published in the National dailies i.e. Daily Ittefaq, Bangladesh Protidin & Daily Star on 11th December 2025 (Ref No: BCB/Admin/T&PC/2025/914).

Please be informed that the last date for purchasing schedule for the enlistment has now been extended till Wednesday 31st December 2025 by 4:00 PM sequentially the last date for submission of the schedule for the enlistment has now been extended till Monday 12th January 2026.

As a result, the invitation for Enlistment can be submitted at the BCB Management Office at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh till the extended deadline of Monday 12th January 2026 and must be submitted in the designated drop box located at the BCB Reception (11th Floor of the Management Office, SBNCS, Mirpur, Dhaka) by 4:00 PM on or before 12th January 2026.

The BCB reserves the right to cancel or make any changes in the terms to the entire process at any stage and to accept or reject any application for enlistment at its sole discretion, without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Sher-E-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216
Tel: +880 2 8031001-4

Invitation for ENLISTMENT

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Date: 23rd December, 2025

JOB VACANCY

Clean water
Decent toilets
Good hygiene

WaterAid

Regional Technical Advisor
Climate Resilient WASH

WaterAid is an international non-profit with one goal to change the world through clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

Scan this QR code or visit apply.workable.com/wateraid to apply by 9 January 2026

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

Professor Dr. Md. Humayun Kahir
Sub Project Manager (SPM), SP 13010

Ref No. HEAT/13010/SPMO/21

e-Tenders are invited on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods under HEAT Sub-Project (PIN : 13010) titled "Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Extreme Heat in Dhaka City: A Framework for Resilience to Heat Stress" for the Department of Geography and Environment, University of Dhaka.

Tender ID No. Package No. Description Online Tender Notice Publication Date Online Tender Closing Date

1192077 DUB/PIN1 3010/G1 Procurement of ICT equipment (Computers, laptops and others), Camera, Photocopy Machine and Lab Equipment 24-Dec-2025 08-Jan-2026

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

Professor Dr. Md. Humayun Kahir
Sub Project Manager (SPM), SP 13010

Govt failing to stop violence

FROM PAGE 3

He therefore requested that information be accepted in line with the core provisions of the RPO, without imposing an additional burden of paperwork.

He also sought

clarification that the term "accused"

should only

apply to cases in which

charges have been formally

framed by a court.

Salahuddin

said

the nomination paper

currently

states that

the chief election agent

or in their absence the

candidate, must open

a bank account for election

expenses.

He requested

that the rules consistently

use the phrase "candidate

or election agent".

Candidates

should be

allowed to open accounts

until the

appointment

of chief election agents

, which

usually

happens

only after election

symbols are allocated,

he said.

He also

requested

that the

rules

be

consistently

used

to

use

the

phrase

"candidate

or election

agent".

He also

sought

clarification

that the term

"accused"

should

only

apply

to

cases

in which

charges

আইএফআইসি র্যাঙ্ক প্রিলান

আইএফআইসি টাওয়ার, ৬৯ পুরানা পল্টন, জিপিও বক্স: ২২২৯, ঢাকা ১০০০ www.ificbank.com.bd

নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্ব সামান্যের অবগতির জন্য আমানো যাইতেছে যে, আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র মালিকানাধীন তফসিল বর্তিত সম্পত্তি বিতরণের লক্ষ্যে নিম্ন বর্তিত শর্ত মোতাবেক উপর্যুক্ত চেতাসাধারণের নিকট হচ্ছে সীলনমোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আব্দান করা যাইতেছে।

নিলামের শর্তাবলী

- ১। উচ্চত দরের শতকরা ২% এর সম্পর্কিত অর্থ আবেদন মানি বিস্তাবে ব্যাংক ড্রেক্ট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রথম কর্তৃপক্ষ, ঢাকা-এর অনুকূল দরপত্রের সহিত জমা দিবে হইবে।
- ২। দরপত্র আগস্টী ১৫ জানুয়ারী, ২০২৪ সকাল ১২:০০ খটিকের মধ্যে সুব্রহ্মণ্য চাঁপাই, (ডেভেল- ১), ১৩ মনি সিই রোড, ১৫/২ (পুরানো), পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা -১০০০, এ রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাবে জমা দিবে হইবে। এইদিন দুপুর ০১:০০ খটিকের সময় দরপত্রসমূহ দরদানাতের সুরক্ষা দ্বারা পরিবর্তন করা হইবে।
- ৩। কোন কর্ম ব্যক্তিকে যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র অর্থ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা ব্যাংক সংরক্ষণ করে।
- ৪। সকল দরপত্র মাতাকে ট্যাপ ডিটক্ট, রেজিস্ট্রেশন বরত, ভূমিকরণ অন্যান্য যাবতীয় ধরণ বহন করিবে হইবে।
- ৫। দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে নিলামে অর্থ প্রদানে ইচ্ছুক বাস্তিগ্রাম বিছানিত তথ্য অবগত হইবার জন্য নিম্ন প্রদত্ত মোবাইল সফরে যোগাযোগ করিবে পারিবেন।

Schedule of the Property-১

All that piece & parcel of land containing by admeasurements measuring more or less 02 Acres 52.00 decimals of land situated at District- Meherpur, Police Station- Meherpur Sadar, J.L. Nos.- 65, 58, Moua-Basantapur, Khatian Numbers C.S - 121, SA-250, 412, RS-62, 286, Dag Numbers- CS & SA- 36, 40, 41, RS- 166, 168, 165 with Boundary Walls, Factory Sheds, Offices & Buildings & structures constructed thereon along with all others rights, interest, easements and benefits attached thereto standing in the name of IFIC Bank PLC, Principal Branch, Dhaka.

যোগাযোগ: ১) সার্কিস এন্ড এস্টেট ডিভিশন, (+৮৮০৯৬৬৭১৬২৫০ এক্সট: ৫২৬)

হচ্ছে অব সার্কিস এন্ড এস্টেট ডিভিশন
আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি

১6255

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AHSANULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
141-142 Love Road, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208.
Phone: 02 8870422 (Ext.-201) Web: www.aust.edu
Ref. No: AUST/UE Office/OTM/Tender-09/2025-26

Tender Invitation

Sealed Tender both for Technical and Financial (two envelope system) are hereby invited from the Manufacturer or their local agent for Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning and Operation & Maintenance of Foolproof Attendance System for Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST), 141 & 142, Love Road, Dhaka-1208. The tender documents will be available for purchase (non-refundable) from the Procurement Office, AUST during office hour 10am to 5pm at a cost of Tk. 5,000.00 (Five thousand) only in Pay Order from any schedule bank of Bangladesh in favour of "AHSANULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY".

The tender will be received in the same office and will be opened the outer envelope containing technical and financial offer and the technical part only on the last date of submission of Tender at 3:00pm in presence of the Bidders or their representative (if any). The tender must be accompanied by a Bank Draft /Pay Order of Tk. 2,50,000.00 (Two lac and fifty thousand) from any schedule bank of Bangladesh in favour of "AHSANULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" along with Technical Offer as bid security money without which the tender shall be outright rejected.

The AUST authority reserves the right to accept any or reject all tenders without assigning the reason what-so-ever and is not bound to award the work to the lowest bidder.

Last date of selling Tender Document: Dec. 28, 2025 (Sunday) up to 3-30pm

Prebid Meeting: Dec. 29, 2025 (Monday) at 2-00pm at AUST VC Seminar Room (Lift-3, Blk-D)

Dead Line of Submission Tender: Jan. 06, 2026 (Tuesday) at 2-30pm and Tenders will be opened at 03-00pm on the same day (Jan. 06, 2026).

INNOVATION:: CREATION:: LEADERSHIP

Dhaka South City Corporation

Office of the Executive Engineer

Zone-06

Dholpur, Dhaka

www.dscc.gov.bd

Ref. No. 46.207.014.24.06.31.2025

Date: 22/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

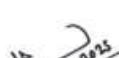
e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	dscc/z-6/-06	Repair of excavated road by different organization under Ward No. 70, 74, 75 in Zone 6 (Group Ka)	1198242	04-01-2026 12:00	04-01-2026 13:00
2	dscc/z-06-p-07	Repair of excavated road by different organization under Ward No. 70, 74, 75 in zone 6 (Group Kha)	1198243	04-01-2026 12:00	04-01-2026 13:00

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).

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৩৪/২০২৫-২৬


22/12/2025

Md. Parvez Rana

Executive Engineer

Zone-06

Dhaka South City Corporation

Email: dscczone06@gmail.com

<p>“গ্যাস জাতীয় সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতীয় দায়িত্ব পালন করান।”</p> 		
<p>বাংলাদেশ গ্যাস ফিল্ডস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানি)</p> <p>Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd. (A Company of Petrobangla)</p>		
<p>International Re-Tender Notice</p>		
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/ Energy & Mineral Resources Division
2	Agency	Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd. (BGFCL), A Company of Petrobangla
3	Procuring entity	Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd. (BGFCL)
4	Procuring entity code
5	Procuring entity district	Brahmanbaria
6	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Ref. No. BGFCL/GOODS(FP)/229(R2) Dated December 22, 2025
7	Invitation for	Procurement of Masoneilan Liquid Level Controller and its spare parts.
8	Procurement method	One stage two envelope tendering (International Competitive Tendering)
9	Budget & source of fund	Own Fund of BGFCL
10	Tender publication date	December 23, 2025
11	Tender selling date & time	<p>a) Tender documents will be available between 09:00 hrs & 15:00 hrs (BST) on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) from December 23, 2025 to January 20, 2026. No extension in closing date for selling of tender documents will be allowed.</p> <p>b) Place: BGFCL's Liaison Office at Petrocentre (14th Floor), 3, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka.</p> <p>c) Price of tender document: Tender documents will be sold on payment of USD 15.00 or BDT 1,800.00 (non-refundable)</p>
12	Tender closing date & time	<p>a) Date & time: January 21, 2026 up to 14:15 hrs (BST).</p> <p>b) Place: BGFCL Head Office, Meeting Room at 2nd floor, Birashar, Brahmanbaria-3400.</p>
13	Tender opening date & time	<p>a) Date & time: January 21, 2026 at 14:30 hrs (BST) in presence of the Tenderer's representatives, if any.</p> <p>b) Place: BGFCL Head Office, Meeting Room at 2nd floor, Birashar, Brahmanbaria-3400.</p>
14	Date, time & place for pre-tender meeting	Not applicable
15	Eligibility of tenderer	<p>Reputed firms, manufacturers and suppliers from all countries except Israel with the following international experience: (a) Tenderer must have overall minimum 05 (five) years experience. (b) If the tenderer is not the manufacturer himself, the tenderer must submit Authorization Letter from the manufacturer or manufacturer's authorized distributor to prove the quoted materials are genuine.</p> <p>(c) Tenderer shall have experience in supplying similar materials to other than the Tenderer's own country.</p> <p>(d) Manufacturer shall have minimum 10 (ten) years experience in manufacturing the offered products.</p> <p>(e) Manufacturer shall have valid ISO 9001, ISO 14001 & OHSAS 18001 certificates as well as tenderer shall have valid ISO 9001 certificate.</p>
16	Description of goods	Masoneilan Liquid Level Controller and its spare parts.
17	Tender security amount	USD 1,500.00 or BDT 1,85,000.00 in the form of Bank Guarantee only
18	Delivery time	280 days from the date of L/C opening
19	Name of official inviting tender	Engr. M. K. Masuk
20	Designation of official inviting	General Manager (Technical Services)
21	Address of official inviting tender	Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd. (BGFCL), Head Office, Birashar, Brahmanbaria-3400, Bangladesh, Telephone No. +8801730 093679, E-mail: prbfgci@gmail.com/dgmfp@bfgcl.org.bd
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.	
	Special information	<p>i) Tenders must remain valid for 120 (one hundred twenty) days from the date of closing of the tender.</p> <p>ii) The tender security must remain valid for 148 (one hundred forty-eight) days from the date of closing of the tender.</p> <p>iii) In case of any unavoidable circumstances such as strike, civil commotion, Govt. declared holiday, etc. tender will be received and opened on the following working day.</p> <p>iv) Tender(s) submitted after the deadline for receiving of tenders will be rejected and returned unopened to the tenderer.</p> <p>v) Tender submitted by e-mail will be rejected. Likewise photocopy of e-mailed tenders will also be rejected.</p> <p>vi) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all tenders or annul the tendering process at any stage without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected tenderers.</p> <p>vii) This tender will be conducted as per the Public Procurement Act 2006 and the Public Procurement Rule 2025.</p> <p>The aforesaid notice is also available at Petrobangla website @ www.petrobangla.org.bd and BGFCL website @ www.bfgcl.gov.bd.</p>
<p>28.10.1213-000-876-09.0044.25.(FP) (7.5"X4 Column)</p> <p></p> <p>Engr. M. K. Masuk</p>		


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

Mamo No:- 5838/E

Date: 21-12-2025.

e-Tender Notice No-03/2025-2026 (OTM)

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

SL NO:	Package no & Brief Description	Tender ID No	Tender Last Selling (Date& Time)	Tender Closing & Opening (Date & Time)
1	Moshur dal/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Purchase of High Quality Small Grain Lentils	1200074	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30
2	Soyabean Oil/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Purchase of standard Quality Soyabean Oil (Edible Oil)	1200182	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30
3	Crushing Wheat/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Crushing Wheat Work	1200194	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30
4	Labour cost/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Labour cost for load and unload goods	1200203	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30
5	Polao Rice/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Purchase of high quality polao rice	1200381	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30
6	Jalani Kath/Firewood/3rd quarter/25-26/SP/Manikgonj Purchase standard quality of	1200394	04-01-2026 16.30	05-01-2026 11.30

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21.12.25
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Superintendent of Police
Manikgonj.
02-996610400 02-996610306
Email: manikgonj@police.gov.bd

জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

সাভার, ঢাকা

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নং-জা/বি/রেজি/প্রশাসন(টিচি)।২০২৫-২০২৬/০২/৫১৩২।

তারিখঃ ২২-১২-২০২৫

জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিম্নে বর্ণিত পদসমূহ প্রেরণের জন্য বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরবাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

বিভাগ	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা
১। বাংলা বিভাগ	সহযোগী অধ্যাপক (হার্যারী)	১টি
	প্রভাষক (হার্যারী)	১টি
২। ইংরেজি বিভাগ	সহকারী অধ্যাপক (হার্যারী)	১টি
	প্রভাষক (হার্যারী)	১টি
৩। আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ	প্রভাষক (হার্যারী)	২টি
৪। ইতিহাস বিভাগ	প্রভাষক (হার্যারী)	২টি
৫। সরকার ও রাজনীতি বিভাগ	প্রভাষক (হার্যারী)	১টি
	প্রভাষক (অস্থারী)	২টি

জাতীয় বেতন ক্ষেত্রে বেতনক্রমঃ সহযোগী অধ্যাপকঃ ৫০,০০০-৭১,২০০/-, সহকারী অধ্যাপকঃ ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/-,

প্রভাষকঃ ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/-

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা:

সহযোগী অধ্যাপকঃ প্রার্থীর এসএসসি/সমমান ও এইচএসসি/সমমান উভয় ক্ষেত্রে সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে বিজ্ঞান শাখায় জিপিএ ৪.২৫ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে), বাংলা ও মানবিক শাখার ক্ষেত্রে জিপিএ ৪.০০ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে। বাংলা বিষয়ে স্নাতক (সমান) ও স্নাতকোত্তর ডিপ্রিসহ উভয় পরীক্ষায় সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম শ্রেণি ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ (৪.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে এবং প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই পিএইচডিডারী হতে হবে। সহকারী অধ্যাপক হিসেবে ন্যূনতম ৪(চার) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা সহ মোট ৭(সাত) বছরের শিক্ষকতার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। আবেদনকারীর ন্যূনতম ১০(দশ)টি প্রকাশনা থাকতে হবে, তন্মধ্যে ৫(পাঁচ)টি প্রকাশনায় First Author হিসেবে থাকতে হবে।

সহকারী অধ্যাপকঃ প্রার্থীর এসএসসি/সমমান ও এইচএসসি/সমমান উভয় ক্ষেত্রে সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে বিজ্ঞান শাখায় জিপিএ ৪.২৫ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে), বাংলা ও মানবিক শাখার ক্ষেত্রে জিপিএ ৪.০০ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে। ইংরেজি বিষয়ে স্নাতক (সমান) ও স্নাতকোত্তর ডিপ্রিসহ উভয় পরীক্ষায় সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম শ্রেণি ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ (৪.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে এবং প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই পিএইচডিডারী হতে হবে। শিক্ষকতা/গবেষণা কর্মে অভিজ্ঞতা ন্যূনতম ০৩(তিনি) বছর থাকতে হবে। আবেদনকারীর ন্যূনতম ০৫(পাঁচ)টি প্রকাশনা থাকতে হবে, তন্মধ্যে ২(দুই)টি প্রকাশনায় First Author হিসেবে থাকতে হবে।

প্রভাষকঃ প্রার্থীর এসএসসি/সমমান ও এইচএসসি/সমমান উভয় ক্ষেত্রে সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম বিভাগ ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে বিজ্ঞান শাখায় জিপিএ ৪.২৫ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে), বাংলা ও মানবিক শাখার ক্ষেত্রে জিপিএ ৪.০০ (৫.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে। বাংলা/ইংরেজি/আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক/ইতিহাস/সরকার ও রাজনীতি বিষয়ের আবেদনকারীদের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিষয়ে স্নাতক (সমান) ও স্নাতকোত্তর ডিপ্রিসহ উভয় পরীক্ষায় সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে ১ম শ্রেণি ও প্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০ (৪.০০ ক্ষেত্রে) থাকতে হবে। প্রকাশনা থাকলে জার্নালের মান উত্তোলিকপূর্বক আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

বিদ্রুঃ সরকার ও রাজনীতি বিভাগে গত ০৮-১-২০১৮ ও ১৮-০৭-২০২২ তারিখে বিজ্ঞাপিত প্রভাষক পদের জন্য যারা আবেদন করেছিলেন তাঁদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। তবে তাঁদের ইতোপূর্বে দাখিলকৃত আবেদনের প্রেক্ষিতে প্রকাশনা ও অভিজ্ঞতা সংশ্লিষ্ট হালনাগাদ প্রমাণপত্র (১০ সেট) জমা দেয়ার জন্য নির্দেশনা প্রদান করা হলো।

প্রার্থীদের স্নাতকোত্তর পরীক্ষার ফল প্রকাশিত না হলে প্রভাষক পদে আবেদন করার জন্য যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবেন না। চাকরির প্রার্থীদেরকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

বিদ্রুঃ জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে প্রভাষক/সহকারী অধ্যাপক/সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদে অস্থায়ীভাবে কর্মরত শিক্ষকগণের স্থায়ীকরণ/নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত স্বতন্ত্র প্রযোজ্য হবে না।

প্রার্থীদের নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন করতে হবে। সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের জন্য ১০(দশ) সেট এবং সহকারী অধ্যাপক ও প্রভাষক পদের জন্য ৭(সাত) সেট আবেদনপত্রের প্রতি সেটের সাথে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র, নথরপত্র, গবেষণামূলক প্রকাশনার কপি ও অভিজ্ঞতার প্রমাণপত্রের সত্যাগ্রহ অনুলিপি জমা দিতে হবে। দরখাস্তের সাথে দুই কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যাগ্রহ ছবি এবং রেজিস্ট্রেশনের অনুকূলে অঞ্চলীয় ব্যাংকের যে কোনো শাখা থেকে ৬০০/- (ছয়শত) টাকা বায়েক ড্রাফট ফেরৎযোগ্য নয়। বেতন নির্ধারণের ক্ষেত্রে জাতীয় বেতন ক্ষেত্রের মৌলিকালী অনুসরণ করা হবে। অঞ্চলীয় প্রাণীগণ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নিয়ন্ত্রাস্করণকারীর অফিস থেকে বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিপুল এবং আবেদন ফরম সংযোগ করতে পারবেন। ওয়েবসাইট www.juniv.edu থেকেও উক্ত ফরম সংযোগ করা যাবে। অসম্পূর্ণ দরবাস্ত সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

আবেদনপত্র জমাদারের শেষ তারিখঃ সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদে আবেদনের শেষ তারিখঃ ১২-০১-২০২৬ এবং

সহকারী অধ্যাপক ও প্রভাষক পদে আবেদনের শেষ তারিখঃ ০৬-০১-২০২৬

স্বাক্ষর/—

রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

Afeida, Ritu Porna headline Rajshahi Stars' title ambition

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Rajshahi Stars FC are set to make an ambitious debut in the BFF Women's Football League, bolstered by the inclusion of national captain Afeida Khandakar and star forward Ritu Porna Chakma, with the top-tier league returning on December 29 after a one-and-a-half-year hiatus and featuring 11 teams.

Alongside Afeida and Ritu, several national senior and age group players – including Sheuli Azim, Munki Akter, Shabeda Akter Ripa, Alpi Akter, Sauravi Akanda Prity, Puja Das, Nadia Akter Juthi and Swarna Rani Mandol – are likely to join the Rajshahi-based side, who are also exploring signings from Nepal and Pakistan.

"Rajshahi Stars, funded by Nabil Group, have almost completed forming a strong squad. We will fight for the league title," the team's manager Musfiqur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that their contracts offer a minimum of Tk 75,000 to a maximum of Tk 5.5 lakh.

He added that the initiative follows Nabil Group's involvement in franchise cricket with Rajshahi Warriors and aims to support the growth of women's football, while also providing opportunities to players from Narayanganj, Rajshahi and other districts.

Under the BFF framework, clubs can sign five players from Pot-1 (13 senior players), five from Pot-2 (18 age-group players) and one goalkeeper from Pot-3 from a 36-player central pool, with the month-long tournament set to ensure competitiveness. The 13-day transfer window closes on December 26, with other teams, including defending champions Nasrin Sports Academy, also finalising squads.

Newcomers Bangladesh Police Women's FC initially planned to form a star-studded lineup featuring Maria Manda, Monika Chakma and Rupuna Chakma, but later revised their plans due to financial constraints.

Meanwhile, Nasrin Sports Academy are expected to form a moderate squad this season, while Bangladesh Army, Ansar and VDP, and BKSP will mainly rely on their own players, with Ansar and VDP likely to include a few national team members.



Dhaka Capitals' Mahidul Islam Ankon inspects his bat as he shares a light moment with teammate Jaker Ali and Dhaka Capitals opener Saif Hassan during a training session at the Cricket Academy in Purbachal yesterday, ahead of their departure for Sylhet for the opening phase of the BPL.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ILT20 clash disrupts BPL's foreign contingents

SPORTS REPORTER

A clash of dates with the ongoing International League T20 (ILT20) has cast a shadow over the availability of overseas players in the opening phase of the 12th Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), set to begin on December 26.

ILT20's league phase matches run until December 28, with playoffs and the final scheduled between December 30 and January 4. Many foreign roped in by BPL sides are currently tied up in this league and if their respective teams qualify for the playoffs, they are likely to miss the Sylhet phase, which will run till January 2.

Dhaka Capitals have assembled a strong overseas contingent featuring England batter Alex Hales, Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahamanullah Gurbaz and Sri Lanka all-rounder Dasun Shanaka. However, all three are currently in action in the ILT20.

Shanaka's participation remains

particularly doubtful for the entire tournament as he was recently appointed as Sri Lanka's T20I captain till the ICC T20 World Cup, and the Lankans have a three-match home T20I series against Pakistan lined up early next month.

Dhaka officials, however, remain hopeful about having Usman Khan, Imad Wasim, Odean Smith and Zubaid Akbari from the start, with all four expected to arrive in Sylhet by December 24.

Rangpur Riders also face uncertainty over Kyle Mayers as the all-rounder's ILT20 side Gulf Giants are fourth on the table with two league matches remaining. If they advance to the playoffs, Rangpur are likely to miss Mayers for at least part of the Sylhet leg, where they play four matches starting December 29.

"If Mayers' team is out of the ILT20, we are hopeful to get him from the beginning. Otherwise, he may miss a few games," a Rangpur official said, adding that the franchise expects their other

foreign players to be available from the outset.

Newcomers Noakhali Express are also waiting on several overseas recruits. Mohammad Nabi and Sadequllah Atal are currently representing Dubai Capitals while Johnson Charles is playing for Sharjah Warriors in the ILT20 and will join after completing their stints. Sri Lankan wicketkeeper-batter Kusal Mendis' availability is in serious doubt after he reportedly suffered an injury and may require surgery.

Sylhet Titans' Moeen Ali and Azmatullah Omarzai, both part of the Gulf Giants in the ILT20, are expected to arrive only after the tournament in the UAE concludes.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed, currently representing Dubai Capitals and Sharjah Warriors respectively, are expected to link up with their BPL franchises after December 24, the last date of their NOCs.

Bangladeshi bowlers making waves while batters overlooked



SPORTS REPORTER

Three Bangladeshi national team players are currently plying their trade across two franchise leagues, with one thing in common – they are all specialist bowlers.

Leg spinner Rishad Hossain is making a solid impression in his debut season in Australia's Big Bash League (BBL) for Hobart Hurricanes, and in the UAE, pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed are plying their trade in the ILT20 for Dubai Capitals and Sharjah Warriors, respectively.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is no longer part of the national team setup, is also playing in the ILT20 for MI Emirates. But with his batting capabilities greatly diminished, the 38-year-old is primarily playing as a bowler for his team.

Bangladeshi players have never really been sought after commodities in franchise cricket. Other than Shakib and Mustafizur, others have hardly attracted interest from franchises in top leagues.

However, the presence of three Bangladeshi players in different leagues at the same time hints at a positive shift in this regard – at least for the bowlers.

Their performances have also been encouraging. Rishad, who

earlier this year played for the Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League, has claimed three wickets in three appearances so far in the BBL at an economy rate of 7.20.

Taskin has bagged six wickets in four matches for the Warriors till Sunday, while Mustafizur is second in the wicket-taker's list with 14 scalps in seven innings.

On Sunday, Mustafizur bagged the player-of-the-match award for figures of 3.34 against Gulf Giants, and on the same day, Shakib also won it after returning 1-14 with the ball and scoring an unbeaten 17 off 25 balls against Desert Vipers in a low-scoring affair.

Even teams in the Indian Premier League (IPL) – the biggest franchise league in the world – had shown interest in Bangladeshi bowlers.

In order to get short-listed in the final auction list in the IPL, players who had registered must be named in the wish list of at least one of the teams. A total of seven Bangladeshi were in the final shortlist of the recent IPL mini-auction, and all of them were specialist bowlers.

Mustafizur was the only one to get a team, however, as he went to the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) after a bidding war for a whopping INR 9.20 crore.

The increased interest for Bangladeshi bowlers in the franchise world and the lack of it for the batters is not just a coincidence but an accurate reflection of the nation's current cricketing state.

In recent times, Bangladesh's batting has looked increasingly volatile, with little to no solidity at any position. Meanwhile, in the bowling end, even though limitations exist, performances have been somewhat consistent.

This tendency did not go unnoticed by franchise sides, who regularly scour through the world of cricket, from top Test-playing nations to the backwaters of the game at the Associates level, from the international arena to unprofessional local cricket, in search of talented players who can give them the edge.

In franchise cricket, national labels mean little as skills triumph over all else, so getting opportunities in top leagues for a player is proof of quality in the shortest format.

For Bangladesh cricket, the surge in franchise opportunities for bowlers serves as recognition for the consistent bowling unit, and for the batters, it's a reminder that the batting lineup needs urgent consolidation to match global standards.

Learning through play: Shaping young minds for a lifetime of learning

By Shahnaz Khan

From their earliest days, children explore and make sense of the world through play. In the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) for early years, play is not a pause from learning – it is the heartbeat of learning. The programme offers opportunities for exploration, creativity and discovery while nurturing the holistic development of every child. The IB emphasises that "Through play, learners develop agency and take ownership of their learning".

Purposful play enables children to express ideas, build relationships and tackle problems in authentic contexts. These experiences strengthen confidence, belonging and emotional well-being – foundations for capable, curious and compassionate learners.

The IB's early years philosophy shows that children learn best when they are free to make choices, try out their ideas and collaborate with their peers. When classrooms support this kind of agency, children build deeper conceptual understanding, stronger thinking skills, greater creativity and a growing sense of emotional resilience.

Play sparks imagination and boosts early cognitive skills

In PYP early years classrooms for children aged three to six, learning spaces are intentionally designed to spark imagination and strengthen cognitive skills. Open-ended materials and carefully curated zones – construction areas, dramatic-play corners, sensory tables and art studios – invite children to choose, explore and experiment. They build, pretend, test ideas and solve problems at their own pace.

Educators guide inquiry by asking questions and encouraging reflection. They help children link their observations with new ideas. This aligns with psychologist Lev Vygotsky's view that imaginative play leads to realistic thinking and supports co-construction of knowledge through social interaction.

By joining children's play with light prompts and supportive conversation, educators help them connect ideas and build understanding. This reflects Vygotsky's view that imaginative play fosters realistic thinking and shared learning through social interaction.

This is evident when children explore seasons through a playful, nature-themed collage. Using recycled and natural loose parts – leaves, twigs, stones, fabric scraps and bottle caps – they build their own scenes, from sunny gardens to autumn forests and rainy-season paths. As they arrange and adapt materials, children demonstrate flexible thinking, practise self-regulation while sharing resources, and strengthen communication by discussing what people do, wear and eat in each season. Their growing confidence shows as they proudly contribute to the evolving nature scene, turning simple art-making into a rich, joyful learning experience.

The educator simply joins the play rather than directing it. Children continue exploring in their own way, and within that flow they naturally begin sorting materials, noticing differences, making predictions, using descriptive language and working together to solve problems.

From play to learning: strengthening early literacy and numeracy

In IB early years classrooms, play is where real learning comes alive. A dramatic-play kitchen, for example, becomes much more than a pretend space – children read menus, write lists, measure ingredients and compare quantities, naturally practising literacy and numeracy while they play. When this play is self-directed, the learning deepens even further. Children take the lead in planning their restaurant, choosing roles, gathering materials and organising their

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
ILT20
MI Emirates vs
Gulf Giants
Live from
8:30 pm

STAR SPORTS 2
Big Bash League
Adelaide Strikers vs
Melbourne Stars
Live from
2:15 pm

Can Arsenal crack Christmas curse?

AFP

Arsenal held off Manchester City to stay top of the Premier League at Christmas courtesy of a Viktor Gyokeres penalty in the 1-0 win at Everton on Sunday.

The Gunners will be top of the tree on Christmas Day for the third time in four years after grinding out a first Premier League away win in four games on Merseyside.

Being in first place at that landmark point of the campaign is usually a sign of future champions, but it has proved to be more of a curse for Arsenal.

In the four previous times they have led at Christmas in the Premier League era, they have not gone on to win the title.

That includes two recent examples as Mikel Arteta's men were reeled in by Manchester City in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Indeed the last five times the leaders at Christmas did not go on to become champions, City have won the title.

"What gives me belief and confidence is the level of performance and the consistency of that," Arteta told AFP.



Morocco forward Ayoub El Kaabi celebrates with Anass Salah-Eddine after scoring with a stunning overhead kick during a 2-0 win in the opening match of the Africa Cup of Nations against Comoros at Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Learning through play:

Shaping young minds for a lifetime of learning



space. In doing so, they practise thinking ahead, solving problems, negotiating with peers and managing resources – all essential early learning skills.

Their conversations grow richer as they explain their ideas and collaborate. Math and language emerge naturally because they are meaningful parts of the play. At the same time, children develop confidence, independence and social – emotional well-being – foundations for capable, curious and compassionate learners.

A child-led play kitchen becomes a small world of inquiry where imagination, communication, thinking and early math blend seamlessly – reflecting the IB belief that young children learn best when they follow their curiosity and take ownership of their learning.

Outdoor learning opportunities such as gardening activities invite children to plant seeds, observe growth and record changes, prompting scientific thinking through questions such as, "Which seed will grow first?", "How does sunlight help the plant?" or "What happens if I water it too much?".

Sensory and hands-on activities further reinforce early literacy skills. Tracing letters in sand, shaping alphabet forms with dough or identifying sounds through tactile resources help strengthen phonics, letter recognition and early writing.

Loose-parts play – using buttons, stones, shells, blocks or recycled materials – nurtures counting, classification, sorting and pattern recognition. These cognitive tasks strengthen neural connections and build essential numeracy foundations.

Purposful play also supports the development of the IB approaches to learning (ATL) skills – a set of skills designed to help students become self-regulated, lifelong learners. Through collaboration, communication and problem-solving, children learn to think critically, manage emotions, work as a team and build resilience.

Play: the foundation for lifelong growth

Play-based learning remains the most authentic form of early education. Children who inquire, explore and experiment through play develop the competencies necessary for both academic success and personal growth. Albert Einstein captured this reality profoundly, "Play is the highest form of research."

By embedding the IB's philosophy of purposeful play and aligning with world-class early childhood pedagogies, the Aga Khan Academy Dhaka's early years PYP classrooms lay the foundation for lifelong learning – shaping confident individuals and compassionate global citizens.

Shahnaz Khan is the Early Years Coordinator at the Aga Khan Academy Dhaka.



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Rights groups condemn attacks on media, culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of international and regional human rights and digital rights organisations yesterday condemned the December 19 attacks on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star and Chhayanaut.

The incidents pose a "grave escalation" against freedom of expression and democratic participation in Bangladesh.

In a joint statement, Access Now, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Human Rights Watch, International Truth and Justice Project, Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka and Tech Global Institute said the violent attacks posed a serious threat to independent journalism, cultural life and civic space.

The signatories also expressed particular alarm over the erosion of the rule of law ahead of the 2026 national election.

They highlighted the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, an aspiring independent candidate from Dhaka-8, and reports that Dipu Chandra Das was beaten to death and burned in Mymensingh following allegations of "derogatory remarks" about religion.

Journalists and staff were trapped inside the burning premises, facing grave risks to their lives.

The temporary suspension of both print and online editions marked an "unprecedented disruption" to Bangladesh's media landscape.

Significantly, the statement criticised the state's failure

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Electric three-wheelers must be regulated

Say speakers at CPD event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the large number of electric three-wheelers (E3Ws) already plying the streets and providing livelihoods for thousands, experts and officials yesterday said the only option is to integrate them into the public transport



system under strict regulations.

They were speaking at a dissemination programme of the study titled "Integrating Electric Three Wheelers into the Urban Transport Network: Challenges and Way Forward", organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue at its Dhanmondi office.

CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem and Programme Associate Khalid Mahmud carried out the study.

Citing media reports, Mahmud, who also presented their study findings, said that 40 to 60 lakh E3Ws are in operation across the country and nearly 90 percent of them are locally made.

SEE PAGE 3 COL 1

NCP labour wing leader shot in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The divisional convener of Sramik Shakti, the labour wing of the National Citizen Party, was shot in Khulna yesterday.

Mohammad Motaleb Sikder, 42, is undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital and is currently out of danger. Doctors confirmed that the bullet did not penetrate his head.

According to police and NCP leaders, Motaleb was shot around 11:30am at a rented house near Al-Aqsa Mosque under Sonadanga Police Station in the city.

Locals said the house was rented in November by a man and a woman, who introduced themselves as husband and wife. They said Sikder regularly visited the house.

Confirming the incident, Sonadanga Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that a bullet grazed Sikder's skull, leaving him injured.

Khulna Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (South) Md Tajul Islam said police found the house locked when they arrived

SEE PAGE 3 COL 8



An investigator works at the scene where Lieutenant General Fani Sarvarov, head of the Russian General Staff's army operational training directorate, was reportedly killed in a car bomb in Moscow, Russia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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