



Election process must stay on track

Political parties say at Star elections dialogue



"The country is suffering because the 'AL question' has not been resolved through a Truth Commission."
Nahid Islam, convener of National Citizen Party



"Sitting in an air-conditioned room at the Planning Commission to make plans will achieve nothing. Plans must rise from the bottom."
Mujahidul Islam Selim, presidium member of Communist Party of Bangladesh



"Many said the BNP is hungry for power. Now it is being proven that delays have created space for incidents that could sabotage the election."
Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of BNP



"We will introduce a tax relief system... Instead of paying 100 percent tax, businesses will pay 50 percent every third year as an incentive."
Hamidur Rahman Azad, assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami



Nahid Islam, convener of NCP; Mujahidul Islam Selim, presidium member of CPB; Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of BNP; and Hamidur Rahman Azad, assistant secretary general of Jamaat at the Star Elections Dialogue held at the Media Bazar, Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of four political parties yesterday pledged to build a society free from corruption, protect the rights and safety of people of all walks of life, and promote good governance and balance of power at the highest levels of the government. They also pledged to ensure full independence of the judiciary and the press and participation of women in the political sphere.

They came up with the pledges at the Star Elections Dialogue, titled "Your Party, Voters' Questions," organised by The Daily Star at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka. The paper's Consulting Editor Kamal Ahmed moderated the event.

Talking about the recent spate of violence rocking the country, BNP



Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said the incidents that occurred over the last few weeks made people worried. "People are again asking whether the election will really happen or not," he said.

Fakhru said the opportunity for an election was created through 15 years of movements, bloodshed, repression and suffering, and finally through a student-led uprising.

"We, the people of Bangladesh, always love elections. But over the last 15 years, a situation was created where people felt they would survive only if they stayed away from elections," he said.

"Whenever we get such a chance, some groups and some incidents destroy it," Fakhru said, adding that his party wants to remove this fear and move towards the election.

"Many said the BNP is hungry for power. Now it is being proven that delays have created space for incidents that could sabotage the election," he said.

Referring to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Vision 2030 announced in 2016, Fakhru said current reform proposals about political restructuring and balance of power between the cabinet, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Illegal firearms, social media abuse a cause of concern

ROs, police tell EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Returning officers and field-level police officials yesterday expressed concerns over major challenges such as illegal arms, social media rumours, indiscriminate bail of listed criminals, and weak border security.

At a meeting with the Election Commission, they sought urgent steps to address these issues ahead of the upcoming polls and July charter referendum. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

'Ensure safety of our missions now'

Dhaka asks Delhi after demos near embassy, missions in India; two countries summon each other's high commissioners

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has asked New Delhi to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and security of Bangladesh's diplomatic missions and facilities across India. The call came in the wake of violent demonstrations near several Bangladesh missions in India.

The government also urged India to carry out a thorough investigation and said such incidents must not recur.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh foreign ministry summoned Pranay Verma, the Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, around 10:00am to convey the message. PHOTO ON PAGE 12 SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

28 arrested so far for attacks on Star and Prothom Alo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven people were sent to jail yesterday over their alleged involvement in the arson, vandalism and looting of the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

They were arrested in separate drives across the capital, police said, adding that nine were shown arrested in the case filed by The Daily Star and two in the one filed by Prothom Alo.

Investigators produced them before a Dhaka court, seeking their detention in jail until the probe is completed, after which the court sent them to jail.

With these, 28 people have so far been arrested in the cases, 17 of whom have been sent to jail. Besides, two individuals were arrested under Section 54 of the Penal Code.

Earlier in the day, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's media wing issued a press release stating that the Detective Branch arrested nine suspects from different parts of Dhaka, while Teigaon police arrested the remaining two. SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

ATTACKS ON MEDIA, CULTURE Impunity at the core of mob violence

Says UN expert; CPJ urges probe, notes pattern of attacks on freedom of expression

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mob attacks on leading media outlets and cultural centres in the country are deeply alarming and must be promptly and effectively investigated, with perpetrators brought to justice without delay, UN expert Irene Khan said yesterday.

In a statement, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion said the attacks reflected the interim government's failure to protect media and artistic freedom, warning of serious consequences for the country's democratic progress.

The unrest followed the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent youth leader of the July 2024 uprising. The 32-year-old was shot by masked gunmen in Dhaka on December 12 and died last Thursday at a hospital in Singapore.

After news of his death spread, protests erupted demanding justice. Several buildings -- including those housing Prothom Alo and The Daily Star -- were vandalised, looted and set on fire. New Age editor Nurul Kabir was harassed, while cultural organisations such as Chhayanaat and Udichi were also attacked. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ATTACKS ON STAR French, German envoys assure full support for press freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

French Ambassador Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet and the German embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, Anja Kersten, have strongly condemned the attack, arson, looting at The Daily Star office, and attempted murder of 28 journalists and staff last Thursday night.

They assured their full support for press freedom while visiting The Daily Star's central office at Farmgate, Dhaka, yesterday afternoon.

During the visit, the envoys stood in front of the vandalised and burnt building and learnt about the situation in detail from The Daily Star Joint Editor Aasha Mehreen Amin, Consulting Editor Kamal Ahmed, and Deputy Editor Arun Devnath.

They enquired about the role of law enforcement agencies in bringing the situation under control and sought updates on the condition of the 28 journalists and staff rescued following the attack.

The diplomats then visited the first floor of the building to assess the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



French Ambassador Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet and German embassy's Chargé d'Affaires Anja Kersten along with The Daily Star Joint Editor Aasha Mehreen Amin and Consulting Editor Kamal Ahmed stand in front of the vandalised and burnt building of The English daily at Farmgate, Dhaka, yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP to share four seats with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam

Rumeen Farhana to contest as
independent from B'baria-2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will share four parliamentary seats under an alliance arrangement, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh President Ubaidullah Farooq will contest from Sylhet-5, while the party's Secretary General Manjurul Islam Afendi will run from Nilphamari-1, he said while speaking at a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office.

The party's Vice-President Junayed Al Habib has been nominated for Brahmanbaria-2, and Joint Secretary General Multi Monir Hossain Kasemi will contest from Narayanganj-4.

In Brahmanbaria-2, Junayed Al Habib is contesting the seat where the BNP did not field any candidate, while BNP leader Rumeen Farhana has announced that she will contest as an independent candidate.

The constituency comprises Sarail, Ashuganj and parts of Bijoynagar upazilas.

Speaking at an event in Sarail recently, Rumeen reiterated her intention to contest the election regardless of party symbol, citing her long-standing political involvement in the area and commitment to local voters.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Election process must stay on track

FROM PAGE 1

legislature, president and prime minister were already included in that vision.

Fakhru said the BNP had already proposed limiting the prime minister's power, and called for reforming the Election Commission and strengthening all constitutional bodies.

Speaking on the economy, he said democratic and economic institutions have been destroyed, creating an oligarchy where a small group looted national wealth with state support.

Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad said his party would prioritise security.

Azad outlined his party's vision for a "new Bangladesh" based on justice and values.

He called corruption the root of national instability and pledged zero tolerance; and said police and bureaucratic corruption was the result of a lack of morality and accountability.

"We want to break the corruption that has held today's Bangladesh back," he told the event.

On education, the Jamaat leader pledged to raise allocation to 6 percent of the GDP, make education tuition-free at all levels, prioritise technical skills, and adopt a curriculum combining moral values with modern technology to curb corruption.

"We want to create opportunities and research facilities, so our youth can contribute to their own nation rather than developing other states."

On the economy, Azad said, "We will introduce a tax relief system... Instead of paying 100 percent tax, businesses will pay 50 percent every third year as an incentive. This recognition will encourage them to pay taxes and feel motivated."

He pledged to expand social safety nets, introduce ration support for farmers and maternity aid, and triple assistance for fishermen during bans from 30kg to 90kg of rice per family per month.

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam said the next national election should be treated as a referendum to realise the goals of the mass uprising. He warned that breaking political commitments again would push the country back into crisis.

"The mass uprising was not only about removing one person or one party. It was about changing the entire state structure and establishing a new democratic system."

He said that the people's aspirations

can be categorised into three areas. "The first is establishing a democratic system, the second is building an economically just society by reducing inequality, and the third is protecting national sovereignty and dignity," he said.

He said economic justice means ensuring basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and civic rights for all citizens.

Nahid alleged that in the past, national interests were often overlooked in many agreements and foreign deals, which weakened sovereignty.

He said the party accepted the July Charter formed through the consensus process, even though some of their demands were ignored.

"We chose to move forward by accepting the reality and treating what has been achieved as a gain," he said, adding that the upcoming election is a public vote on those commitments.

Nahid said Bangladesh's history is marked by broken promises, arguing that those failures drove the country towards fascism. He blamed all past ruling and opposition parties since independence for this.

On governance and corruption, he said, "If institutions like the judiciary, police and bureaucracy cannot function independently with accountability, corruption will not stop."

On law and order, he said that police reforms must be implemented.

He also said media freedom must be ensured along with accountability.

Nahid said protecting civic rights now requires both responsible state action and a new and active civil society.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Presidium Member Mujahidul Islam Selim said MP and ministerial positions become commodities to be bought and sold.

"Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. If the economy is one of looting, the politics will be of looting too," he said.

He argued that to get out of this "cycle of bribery and corruption", the underlying economic structure must be addressed.

On governance, he said plans must rise from the bottom – from the village, union, and thana levels.

He advocated for a statutory provision where 30 to 40 percent of the national budget is automatically allocated to local governments, regardless of the party in power. He termed the move for decentralisation under the Ershad regime "merely a

decentralisation of autocracy".

The CPB leader heavily criticised the influence of money in the electoral process, and urged the Election Commission to take action against candidates who spend crores of taka even before the election schedule is announced.

During a question-answer session, Nahid claimed that the BNP and Jamaat are engaged in a "competition" to secure the vote bank of the ousted Awami League.

"To secure these votes, they are telling them [AL men] that their cases will be withdrawn," he said.

Nahid said that the country is suffering because the question about the Awami League has not been resolved through a Truth Commission.

Fakhru dismissed the allegation of wooing AL voters as "generalisation," saying, "You cannot find such instances in our party. We have fought the fascists the most. We have not reached such a state of bankruptcy that we have to work with fascists."

Jamaat leader Azad also rejected the claim, blaming "yellow journalism" for this impression.

CPB leader Mujahidul said that the "culture of infiltration" is a reality in Bangladesh politics.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher, Mahfuz Anam, in a statement, expressed concern over the recent attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

"These were not just attacks on media houses. These attacks are against democracy and are meant to jeopardise the upcoming election," he said in a written statement read out by The Daily Star Joint Editor Aasha Mehreen Amin.

Mahfuz Anam said The Daily Star believes in democracy and in "an honest, accountable, and transparent government" that protects people's fundamental rights.

He added that Bangladesh now has "another chance to build a new Bangladesh," but the only way forward is through free and fair elections, where political parties must play a responsible role.

Calling for unity, he said political parties, civil society, business leaders, and the media must work together to ensure a credible election.

"No one should do anything that increases even an iota of doubt about the election," he said.

Replying to a question on labour rights, Fakhru said strong trade unions are essential, noting that despite

existing laws, workers lack influence in parliament because unions have lost bargaining power.

Nahid said business dominance in politics is a major obstacle. "If 70 percent of MPs are businesspeople, they will not speak for workers," he said.

He pointed out that working class people were one of the largest casualties of the July Uprising. "Workers must be politically conscious. Rights are not given, they are achieved," he said.

Mujahidul said labour rights are civil rights. "Workers are citizens, and the constitution guarantees equality," he said.

Azad said his party supports institutional reforms to protect workers. "We want to implement international labour standards and stop child labour."

Nahid said they supported a proposal to ensure women candidates in at least 100 parliamentary seats by direct election.

Mujahidul said his party follows a policy of positive discrimination to encourage women's participation.

Fakhru admitted that women face social and political barriers when contesting elections and said major parties must do more to motivate women to come forward.

Azad said his party views women as "human beings". He claimed that women hold over 40 percent of positions in the party's central committees.

He added that the party has proposed increasing reserved seats for women in parliament.

Regarding Rab, Nahid said if Rab is dismantled while the police are inactive, it would create a void, while Mujahidul warned that focusing solely on disbanding a force misses the bigger picture.

Fakhru agreed that Rab should be disbanded but stressed that the police force also requires a complete overhaul. Azad said that ensuring strict accountability is more effective than simply banning institutions.

On minority safety and media freedom, Azad said democracy needs equal rights and security for all citizens.

Mujahidul said attacks on minorities and journalists are part of a wider attack on democracy.

Nahid said fair elections and post-election security are key to restoring trust.

Fakhru said BNP would ensure free and responsible media if elected, while the other leaders stressed that press freedom requires journalists' safety, an end to intimidation, and strong democratic accountability.

Impunity at the core

FROM PAGE 1

"I strongly condemn the targeted killing of an inspiring leader as well as the orchestrated mob violence against independent journalists and artists which followed the announcement of his death," Irene Khan said.

"The weaponisation of public anger against journalists and artists is dangerous at any time, and especially now as the country prepares for elections. It could have a chilling effect on media freedom, minority voices and dissenting views with serious consequences for democracy," she said.

She noted that freedom of expression, particularly media freedom, has come under significant pressure over the past year from both state and non-state actors, online and offline.

"The mob attacks did not emerge in a vacuum but are the consequences of the failure of the interim government to address impunity and uphold media and artistic freedom," the UN expert said.

Since August 5, 2024, hundreds of journalists have been arrested on "politically motivated, dubious charges of murder, terrorism and other serious crimes", with many arbitrarily detained for prolonged periods, the statement said, adding that the interim government has largely continued previous practices, normalising attacks and threats without consequences.

"When hate speech and smear campaigns endanger the safety and reputation of media outlets, editors, journalists, artists and civil society leaders, and no corrective action is taken by the government or social media platforms, then it is only a matter of time before the words translate into violence," Irene Khan said.

"I call on the government to investigate the killing of Hadi and the attacks on media outlets promptly, impartially, transparently and hold perpetrators to account with full due process," she said.

She also urged the government to rapidly put in place effective protection and prevention measures ahead of the elections.

"If the interim government is to live up to its promise to deliver safe and fair elections, it must uphold the rights

to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and ensure that journalists, human rights defenders, civil society leaders, political candidates, women and minorities are able to exercise their fundamental rights without fear of reprisals," said the UN expert.

Meanwhile, the Committee to Protect Journalists yesterday joined six civil society organisations in calling for swift, independent, and transparent investigations into violent attacks on the news outlets, warning of escalating threats to freedom of expression and the press ahead of the 2026 national election.

In a statement, the organisations expressed grave concern over reports that journalists and staff were trapped inside burning newsrooms and that both newspapers were forced to temporarily suspend print and online publication, underscoring the severity of threats facing news media.

It also noted "a documented pattern of attacks on freedom of thought and expression through abuse of the legal system, and intimidation and attacks of bauls, journalists, media workers, and artists throughout this year".

"We strongly condemn the violent attacks on December 18, 2025 on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, two of South Asia's oldest and most reputed media institutions, and the vandalism of Chhayanaut, one of Bangladesh's most respected cultural and educational institutions... We are also deeply alarmed at the credible reports of public beating to death and burning of Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila on the same night," read the statement.

These developments point to a dangerous convergence of online and offline violence, coupled with long-standing patterns of coordinated harassment and state-sanctioned surveillance that have fostered a culture of impunity, it added.

The statement urges Bangladesh's interim government to ensure immediate protection for journalists and cultural institutions, hold perpetrators accountable, and uphold Bangladesh's constitutional and international human rights obligations.

Illegal firearms

FROM PAGE 1

Some officials said they feared various crimes could take place to sabotage the polls and suggested installing CCTV cameras in all polling centres.

Despite the challenges, all officials pledged to deliver a fair and credible election.

At the meeting, they also requested the EC to take necessary steps to recover illegal arms; adopt zero tolerance against the misuse of information technology; and explore whether discussions with the judiciary are possible to stop the bail of listed criminals.

The inspector general of police, metropolitan police commissioners, superintendents of police, and other top administration and police officials were present at the meeting.

The EC held the meeting to brief polls officials and law enforcers on preparations for the February 12 election.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin asked officials to apply the law equally to everyone.

Citing the recent killing of a Hindu man in Mymensingh, he said, "Bangladesh may face many such instances of incitement. Communal harmony must be maintained. Those in the administration and police must give top priority to communal harmony."

The CEC said, "If we fail to discharge our responsibilities properly at this critical moment, we will not be able to answer to future generations."

"Whenever you take bold steps, try to establish the law, and act in accordance with rules and regulations, the Election Commission will stand by you."

IGP Baharul Alam said he hoped police would dedicate full strength

and utmost effort to ensure order and success in the election. "We have complete capability. You [the EC] can place your trust in us on this matter."

He said law enforcers had faced various difficulties since the July uprising for practical reasons. "However, ahead of the upcoming election, we have been able to sufficiently rebuild our capacity."

Mentioning recent road and highway blockades and attempts to create unrest over different demands, Baharul added, "The time has come to put an end to these. If we cannot establish order, it will not be possible to provide full support to the [Election] commission during the polls."

At the meeting, administration and police officials also highlighted problems such as shortages of manpower and vehicles.

To address these, they put forward several recommendations, including monitoring criminals currently out on bail; taking measures to prevent unrestricted use of mobile phones by inmates; keeping watch on the activities of imprisoned criminals; enhancing border security and vigilance; ensuring the security of potential candidates; avoiding the appointment of presiding officers in constituencies where they are employed; and stopping political interference in the discharge of duties.

They also proposed increasing the number of executive magistrates, arranging additional vehicles, ensuring timely allocation of necessary funds, and renovating polling centres in some areas.

Adding that political parties should be involved in referendum campaigns to increase turnout, they said voters should be warned about time management as two votes will be held on the same day.

Ensure safety of our missions now

FROM PAGE 1

Hours later, India summoned Bangladesh High Commissioner Riaz Hamidullah, but it was not immediately known what message was conveyed to him, reports UNB.

This is the second time the two countries have summoned each other's envoys within a couple of weeks. Earlier, Verma was summoned on December 14 and Riaz on December 17. In a statement yesterday, the Bangladesh foreign ministry said that Dhaka expects New Delhi to take appropriate steps immediately, in accordance with its international and diplomatic obligations, to safeguard the security and dignity of diplomatic personnel and establishments.

It expressed grave concern over the incidents outside the perimeter of the Bangladesh high commission and the envoy's residence in New Delhi on December 20, and the acts of vandalism at the Bangladesh Visa Centre in Siliguri by extremist elements on December 22.

"Bangladesh condemns such acts of premeditated violence or intimidation against diplomatic establishments, which not only endanger the safety of diplomatic personnel but also undermine the principles of mutual respect and values of peace and tolerance," said the ministry.

According to a report of Indian

newspaper The Hindu, hundreds of supporters of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal broke barricades and clashed with police near the fortified Bangladesh High Commission yesterday.

They carried saffron flags and shouted slogans, denouncing the killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a garment worker, in Bangladesh.

The high-security area saw a beefed-up police presence in the morning ahead of the protest announced by the Hindu right-wing groups.

Minor scuffles broke out as demonstrators pushed against the police cordon.

The area had been secured with seven layers of barricades and a reinforced presence of police and paramilitary forces.

An officer said a 1,500-strong police force was deployed ahead of the demonstration.

He said police managed to hold the protesters about 800 metres from the high commission.

Buses were parked as obstacles to thwart the protesters' attempt to reach the high commission.

Earlier on Monday, Bangladesh high commission in New Delhi and Bangladesh assistant high commission in Agartala suspended all visa and consular services

until further notice following protests over Dipu's killing.

VHP and other like-minded groups held demonstrations near the Bangladesh Visa Centre in Siliguri and forced officials to halt operations that day. Protests also took place near the Bangladesh mission in Mumbai last week.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain on Sunday said demonstrators reportedly got close to the Bangladesh mission in New Delhi on Saturday night and issued death threats to the Bangladesh high commissioner to India.

Regarding a press note by the Indian external affairs ministry, he said the authorities are taking action over the killing of Dipu, a Bangladeshi citizen.

Meanwhile, the Indian deputy high commission in Chattogram suspended their services.

Bangladesh-India relations have been strained since the ouster of the Awami League regime. Trade and visas have been restricted since then.

Bangladesh repeatedly requested India to extradite Sheikh Hasina who fled there on August 5 last year.

The relations deteriorated further following the shooting and subsequent death of Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi.

FINANCE ADVISER'S PRESS BRIEFING Regarding trade with India amid

Regional media bodies decry attacks on media

Demand fair probe, protection for journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of South Asian media organisations and the Editors Guild of India have condemned the attacks on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star in Dhaka, calling for accountability and the protection of press freedom.

They also denounced the assault on Nurul Kabir, president of the Editors' Council and editor of New Age.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, the South Asia Peace Action Network (SAPAN), the South Asia Media Defenders Network (SAMDEN), SAPAN News, the Rural Media Network Pakistan and others condemned the vandalism and arson targeting the two national dailies.

Endorsed by journalists, editors, authors and concerned citizens across the region, the statement described it as "disturbing" that more than 100 journalists in Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



Activists under the banner of the 'Sylhet Online Press Club' form a human chain in the city's Court Point area yesterday, demanding punishment for the murderers of July frontliner Osman Hadi and those responsible for the arson attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

PHOTO: STAR

Bonik Barta, BIDS honour 3 persons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangla daily Bonik Barta and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) yesterday honoured three individuals for their contributions to Bangladesh.

Syed Manzur Elahi, an eminent entrepreneur, was recognised posthumously with the "Gunijon" award. Elahi was chairman of leading footwear maker Apex Footwear Ltd and twice served as an adviser to the caretaker government.

Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, and Firdausi Qadri, a pioneering scientist whose work in vaccine development earned Bangladesh global recognition, were also honoured at a ceremony at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden.

Salehuddin Ahmed described Manzur Elahi as soft-spoken, sober, and a capable manager. He added that Qadri is "a good human being and a patriot."

Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant to the chief adviser, noted that Amirul Islam Chowdhury had led the investigation into stock market manipulation in 1996.

Sharing his memories of Manzur Elahi, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman said: "We are family friends, and he was soft-spoken and a person of high quality."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Act now against hate, incitement, violence

8 civil society orgs, 46 eminent individuals urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society organisations and prominent individuals yesterday condemned the recent killings and attacks, demanding immediate arrests in the murder of July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi and regular public disclosure of investigation progress.

In a joint statement signed by eight civil society organisations and 46 individuals, they also called for separate, independent investigations into attacks on Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Chhayanaut, Udichi, and other institutions.

They demanded the identification and prosecution of instigators, organisers and financiers, along with clear security

protocols and rapid response mechanisms to prevent future attacks.

The signatories also demanded an independent, time-bound investigation into the killing of RMG worker Dipu Chandra Das, arrest and exemplary punishment of those responsible, special security measures for minority communities, and community-based trust-building initiatives.

They urged the government to take responsibility for the welfare of Dipu's family.

They further called for urgent reform of prevention and protection systems, seeking visible improvements in early warning, risk assessment, rapid deployment and command coordination, and administrative accountability for

failures.

Their demands also included legal action against individuals and networks involved in incitement, hate speech and mass mobilisation of violence, both online and offline, and stronger protection for victims and witnesses.

The statement urged the top leadership of all political parties to publicly and unequivocally reject violence and commit to peace, restraint, minority protection, press freedom, safety of cultural spaces and electoral stability.

The signatories called for organisational disciplinary action against individuals or supporters involved in violence, regardless of party affiliation.

The statement noted that

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Justice must be ensured for Dipu

Says Shahidul Alam as 17-member delegation visits family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Acclaimed photographer and convener of the Citizens' Coalition, Shahidul Alam, yesterday stressed the need to ensure justice for the family of Dipu Chandra Das, who was killed by a mob on the night of December 18.

"We have come here in the hope of justice; we have come to stand by the victims. We are here to let the people of the country, as well as Dipu's family and relatives, know that this must never happen again," Alam told journalists at noon after visiting Dipu's family in Mokamiyaka village under Tarakanda upazila of Mymensingh to express solidarity.

He said, "Our demand to the government and to society is not only justice; we also want to ensure that such incidents will never occur again in Bangladesh. We want to move towards a truly discrimination-free Bangladesh."

Dipu, 27, an employee of Pioneer Knitweaves, was beaten to death by a mob over allegations of

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Star goes live with PeopleDesk HR system



PHOTO: STAR

STAR REPORT

The Daily Star has officially launched phase one of PeopleDesk, a locally developed digital human resource management system developed by AKJ iBOS, marking a significant step in the organisation's digital transformation initiative.

The launch follows an MOU signed earlier last year between The Daily Star and AKJ iBOS for implementing the HR solution. Phase one focuses on core HR data digitisation and foundational

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Hadi murder

FROM PAGE 12

the country were involved and demanded that the government present the killers before the public through an international-standard investigation within the stipulated time, warning of tougher programmes otherwise.

At the end of the rally, participants took the "Shahidi Shopoth". They pledged to remain on the streets and continue the fight until speedy and exemplary justice for Osman Hadi's murder is ensured.

They also expressed their resolve to build a justice-based Bangladesh by resisting what they described as "Delhi's subservience" and hegemony.

The organisers announced that Inqilab Moncho will not hold any programmes on December 25, the day BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman is scheduled to return to the country.

Leaders of the platform said they hope Tarique Rahman will express solidarity with their fight for justice.

However, the platform will carry out wall writing and social media campaigns nationwide on December 24 and 25, and announce continuous programmes from December 26 to press home their demands.

Israel vows

FROM PAGE 12

Katz also vowed to establish outposts in the north of Gaza in place of settlements that had been evacuated during Israel's unilateral disengagement from the territory in 2005.

"When the time comes, God willing, we will establish in northern Gaza, Nahal outposts in place of the communities that were uprooted," Katz said, referring to military-agricultural settlements set up by Israeli soldiers.

"We will do this in the right way and at the appropriate time."

Katz's remarks were slammed by former minister and chief of staff Gadi Eisenkot, who accused the government of "acting against the broad national consensus, during a critical period for Israel's national security."

"While the government votes with one hand in favour of the Trump plan, with the other hand it sells fables about isolated settlement nuclei in the (Gaza) Strip," he wrote on X, referring to the Gaza peace plan brokered by US President Donald Trump.

The next phases of Trump's plan would involve an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the establishment of an interim authority to govern the territory in place of Hamas and the deployment of an international stabilisation force.

Way you speak isn't

FROM PAGE 12

patience. The way you speak is not fit for a court," said Justice Md Shoful Alam Mahmood at one point. He expressed his displeasure, saying, "Will we act according to your dictates? We do not expect this from you."

The confrontation unfolded while the tribunal was hearing a defence plea seeking three months' time to file review petitions against charges framed in a high-profile case of crimes against humanity. The case accuses 17 people, including former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Defence counsel Tabarak Hossain Bhuiyan, representing seven of the accused, said the time was needed to examine a large volume of documents, visit the alleged places of occurrence, and prepare the review petitions.

Tabarak made the appeal just as the three-member tribunal, chaired by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, framed charges against 17 accused, who include Hasina's former defence and security adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and 11 senior army officers who previously served in Rab, over allegations of enforced disappearances and torture at the Rab's Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) Cell during the Awami League regime.

At one point, Justice Shoful opined that the tribunal could consider review petitions if they were filed.

Displeased, Tajul stood up and questioned whether the trial would remain stalled while the defence pursued review petitions, insisting that no order should be passed without hearing the prosecution.

Justice Shoful responded sharply, saying he had merely expressed an opinion, not issued any order. "Unless we pass an order, you cannot speak in this way."

Tajul argued that the law specifically provides three weeks to begin trial proceedings after charges are framed. "During the last 17 years, no defence was given three months' time after charges were framed."

Justice Shoful responded, "But should we take that into consideration?"

Tajul then informed the tribunal of his concerns, saying, "The witnesses in our cases are being stabbed and threatened. And they [the defence] go outside and say that army officers are being tried in this tribunal, but the fact is Rab members are being tried. They are trying to pit the armed forces against the tribunal."

"Every day counts. If witnesses are killed, how will we hold the trial? They are trying to delay the trial," he added.

The tribunal chair said, "We are not dealing with the army; they were officers of Rab."

As defence counsel Tabarak stood up and said they were not causing any delay, Tajul aggressively said, "You sit down. Go and sit down."

Tabarak then said, "He cannot ask me to sit down in such a way; only the tribunal can. There should be decency here. I'm an aged man and expect respect."

The tribunal chair said, "We expect that nothing like this will happen again." Later, state-appointed defence counsel Hassan Imam, representing former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, and former Rab chief Benazir Ahmed also sought time, saying they needed adequate time to prepare after reviewing a huge volume of documents.

Tajul responded, "You are state-appointed defence counsels. Do not drag the trial. You have to assist the court."

After the hearing, the tribunal set January 21 for the prosecution's opening statement and the recording of testimony from the first prosecution witness.

Earlier in the day, ICT-1 formally framed four charges against 17 accused, including Sheikh Hasina, her former defence and security adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, and 11 army officers who served in Rab.

Ten former Rab officers appeared before the tribunal and pleaded not guilty, with one saying he expected justice from the court. According to the prosecution, at least 14 people were illegally detained and tortured at the TFI cell between 2016 and 2024.

Solidarity

FROM PAGE 12

singer Farzana Wahid Shayan, actress Azmeri Haque Badhan, Aanon Siddique, and filmmaker Akram Khan gathered under the banner of Drishsho Madhyam Shilpi Shomaj (Visual Artists Collective), condemning the systematic targeting of cultural spaces and voices.

From there, the artistes moved together to Chhayanaut and joined the protest.

The programme ended with the national anthem, "Amar Shonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Bhalobashi". Speakers at the event also said the significance of Chhayanaut cannot be separated from the story of the nation itself.

Founded in 1961, at a time when the Bangla language and cultural practices were under threat, Chhayanaut became a site of resistance long before independence. At Chhayanaut, Rabindra and Nazrul Sangeet, along with classical Bangla forms, were preserved, practised, and taught defiantly at a time when asserting cultural identity itself was an act of courage, they added.

Abducted trader

FROM PAGE 12

after being abducted at gunpoint. We are currently conducting the inquest. The exact reason for death can be confirmed after an autopsy," said Md Asif Hossain, assistant superintendent of police, Bogura Adamdighi Circle.

"We are working to identify and detain those involved. The microbus driver and another suspect have been detained for interrogation," Asif Hossain added.

The victim's family filed a murder case with Dupchanchia Police Station accusing unnamed individuals yesterday, said police.

ACCTV footage circulated on social media shows a white microbus arriving in front of the Lotto showroom around 9:08pm on Monday. Four individuals, all with their faces covered, exited the vehicle. One of them pointed a firearm at Pintu and dragged him out of the showroom.

The group then forced him into the vehicle and sped off towards Adamdighi via the Bogura-Naogaon regional highway.

5 killed

FROM PAGE 12

of the other four victims could not be confirmed, said Saiful Alam, officer-in-charge of Hatia Police Station.

According to police and local residents, the clash erupted between two groups – one led by Shamsu and the other by Alauddin – over control of khas land on the shoal at Jaglarchar and dominance in the area. Tensions between the groups had been brewing for a long time before they came face to face yesterday morning, triggering the deadly violence.

Four victims died on the spot, the OC said, adding that Alauddin was critically injured and taken to the 250-bed Noakhali General Hospital, where on-duty doctors declared him dead around 2:00pm.

Police also rescued one critically injured person from the scene. "We have heard that others may have been injured, but we could not confirm the information," the OC added.

Confirming the incident, Hatia Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Alauddin told The Daily Star that Jaglar Char, which has emerged in the Meghna River, is government-owned land listed under the khas khatian. The land has not been leased to anyone and will first be recorded in the government's name before any lease applications are considered.

Noakhali Additional Superintendent of Police Abu Taib Md Arif Hossain said four of the deceased belonged to the Shamsu group, while the other was Alauddin. An investigation has been launched, and more details would be known as it progresses.

All set for Tarique's homecoming

FROM PAGE 12

6:00pm today until 6:00pm tomorrow for his arrival, the authorities said.

A stage is being prepared at the 300 Feet area to welcome Tarique.

BNP standing committee members, leaders of political parties that joined the simultaneous movement and prominent figures will be present. Only Tarique will speak from the stage.

To broadcast his speech, around 1,000 microphones are being installed across the airport area, Purbachal, Kanchan Bridge, Abdullapur, Banani, Mohakhali and surrounding locations.

Thousands of billboards and posters have been set up along the 300 Feet road from the airport to Gulshan. BNP has also arranged monitors for live telecast.

Leaders and activists from Dhaka and outside the capital will begin taking positions in the area from today, the party said.

BNP leaders and activists have already held celebratory processions in Dhaka and across the country. Leaders from districts are arriving in Dhaka from today, using buses, cars and launches arranged by the party.

Bangladesh Railway will operate 10 special trains to bring BNP supporters to the capital, earning around Tk 36 lakh in fares.

The trains will run on routes including Cox's Bazar-Dhaka, Jamalpur-Mymensingh-Dhaka, Tangail-Dhaka, Bhairab Bazar-Narsingdi-Dhaka, Joydebpur-Dhaka Cantonment, Panchagarh-Dhaka, Khulna-Dhaka, Chatmohor-Dhaka Cantonment, Rajshahi-Dhaka and Jashore-Dhaka.

Tarique may visit his father's grave on December 26 subject to security conditions and later travel to Bogura to submit his nomination papers for the 13th parliamentary election. He will contest from Bogura-6.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook post yesterday, Tarique's daughter Zaima Rahman said she hopes to contribute to rebuilding Bangladesh and connect directly with people upon her return.

"Seventeen years away from Bangladesh have been transformative, but I never forgot to tend to and cultivate my roots," she wrote, recalling childhood memories with her grandmother Khaleeda.

She said she would be involved in her father's election campaign.

Myanmar nationals caught with 10 drones in Bangkok: police

AFP, Bangkok

Four Myanmar nationals caught in Bangkok yesterday with 10 heavy-lift cargo drones they allegedly planned to smuggle home will be deported to Myanmar, Thai police said.

The use of drones by Myanmar's military and myriad rebel groups fighting against its rule has ballooned during the country's nearly five-year civil war as each side seeks to gain a strategic edge.

Myanmar ranks third globally – behind only Ukraine and Russia – for the number of drone sorties recorded by conflict monitoring group ACLED, according to a report released this year.

Thai Police Major General Prasong Anmance told AFP the four Myanmar nationals were caught after authorities received a tip-off

from a hotel where they stayed in the suburbs of Bangkok.

Prasong said they checked into the hotel on Sunday and received large boxes from a Thai courier on Monday.

"We went and checked and found out it was drones and those four do not have any licence or other documents," the senior officer said.

The unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), manufactured by Chinese firm DJI, are capable of carrying 30 kilograms (66 pounds) of weight, Prasong said.

"They said they had been ordered to bring drones to Myanmar," he told AFP, adding that they intended to bring the bulky devices out of Thailand in pieces and deliver them to their "boss" in Myanmar.

Prasong said police had not identified the alleged ringleader in Myanmar.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

We can't afford silence with so much at stake

Govt must be firm as mobs torch newsrooms

To govern in a crisis is to act decisively. But on Thursday night and early Friday, as mob violence struck the country's two leading newspapers, the interim administration initially chose something else entirely: a terrifying, paralysis-inducing silence. Vandalism and arson attacks on the offices of *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo* were not merely acts of destruction. They were orchestrated assaults on the intellectual infrastructure of Bangladesh. As attackers laid siege to the newsrooms, trapping terrified employees inside while fire service vehicles were forcibly held back, the state machinery stood down. Law enforcement agencies were largely spectators; the administration remained mute. For a government that rose from the ashes of an uprising promising a restoration of democratic values, this abdication of duty is morally repugnant.

The details, as recounted by journalists, civil society leaders and politicians in Dhaka on Monday, are chilling. When *The Daily Star* was attacked, pleas for help dissolved into smoke. As one editor put it, the struggle has morphed from a fight for freedom of expression into a primal fight for the right to live.

This lawlessness is symptomatic of a broader malaise. Since the fall of the previous regime, a dangerous form of "mobocracy" has rushed in to fill the power vacuum. Groups inciting chaos under the banner of "justice"—often co-opting the slogans of the very student movement that brought this government to power—are operating with impunity. They have also targeted cultural institutions such as Chhayanaut, seeking to dismantle our pluralistic identity. When the state fails to contain violence, it invites anarchy. By refusing to restrain these actors, the interim government is signalling that the streets belong to violent groups.

The government's defenders may argue that the transition is messy, or that the police force is still demoralised. Such explanations are not acceptable in the face of a serious crisis. As one economist has observed, an unelected interim government relies entirely on moral legitimacy to rule. That capital is finite—and it has been burned away by indecision.

The dangers of this inaction are existential. If the press is silenced by arson, democracy itself is severely compromised. The executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh has rightly identified this moment as the entry of "mob rule" into the state structure. A government that tacitly relies on—or is afraid to confront—street violence is not merely weak; it is dysfunctional. With a national election less than two months away, the interim government must now assert the rule of law. It must identify and punish the perpetrators, regardless of whose political slogans they chant, and secure the institutions that make a republic function. Above all, it must end its "mysterious silence," as political leaders have described it.

The 2024 uprising was meant to establish rights, not replace authoritative tyranny with the tyranny of the mob. Leaders across business, law, politics and journalism have drawn a line in the sand and are calling for united resistance. If the government continues to watch from the sidelines while the country's institutions burn or hurt, it will have abandoned its duty entirely, leaving lawlessness to define the nation's future.

Israel must let medical supplies enter Gaza

Gazans denied aid, life-saving treatment even under ceasefire

As Israel continues to violate the ceasefire and block urgent humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory, Gaza has been suffering from an acute medicine shortage, which is making it difficult to provide diagnostic and treatment services to its people. According to Gaza's ministry of health, more than 52 percent of essential medicines are now completely out of stock in Gaza, alongside 71 percent of basic medical consumables and nearly 60 percent of laboratory and blood bank supplies. Emergency departments are running dangerously low on intravenous fluids, antibiotics, and painkillers—the bare minimum required to treat the wounded and critically ill. The situation is deeply alarming.

During Israel's more than two-year-long genocidal war, almost all of Gaza's hospitals and healthcare facilities have come under attack, resulting in damage to at least 125 health facilities, including 34 hospitals. Health authorities are now struggling to save lives, as Israel is not allowing the most essential medical supplies to enter the enclave. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities have breached the ceasefire at least 875 times since it came into effect on October 10, according to Gaza's Government Media Office. These violations include ongoing Israeli air and artillery strikes, the illegal destruction of Palestinian homes and other civilian structures, and at least 265 incidents of Israeli troops shooting Palestinian civilians. Since the ceasefire took effect, at least 411 Palestinians have been killed and 1,112 others injured in attacks across Gaza. Clearly, for Palestinians, neither safety nor access to life-saving treatment or aid has materialised under the ceasefire.

Israel's refusal to allow tents, blankets, and other supplies into Gaza is directly threatening Palestinian lives. Winter storms have compounded the crisis, as hundreds of thousands of displaced families face increased risks of illness while hospitals lack the means to respond. Reportedly, since the ceasefire began, only 17,819 aid trucks have been allowed into Gaza, out of the 43,800 that were meant to enter. This translates to an average of only 244 trucks per day, far below the 600 daily deliveries Israel had committed to permit under the ceasefire deal.

Under international law, Israel, as the occupying power, is obligated to ensure Palestinians' access to medical care. Blocking or severely restricting medical supplies while continuing military operations constitute a grave violation of this responsibility. A ceasefire that does not guarantee unhindered humanitarian and medical access is a ceasefire in name only. We, therefore, urge the UN and the international community to take a strong stance against Israel's restrictions on humanitarian aid. They must act decisively to stop ceasefire violations and ensure immediate and sustained flow of medicines and medical supplies into Gaza.

The 'strange fruit' of Bhaluka and a republic in retreat



Zakir Kibria is a writer, policy analyst, and entrepreneur currently based in Kathmandu, Nepal. His email address is zk@krishikaaj.com.

ZAKIR KIBRIA

On the night of December 18, 2025, a young man was beaten to death, tied to a tree, and set ablaze by a mob in Bhaluka, Mymensingh. The victim, Dipu Chandra Das, was a garment worker. The mob's accusation, as relayed by Rapid Action Battalion later, was that he had insulted religious sentiments. The smoke that rose that night was not just from that unceremonious pyre; it was the smoke of our shared social contract slowly burning to ashes.

This image compels a haunting melody to mind: Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit," her elegy for the lynched and hung Black bodies of the American South. Today, this could be easily associated with what happened in Bhaluka, its horror lying not only in the unspeakable cruelty but also in its stark, public visibility. It was a spectacle. Traffic slowed. Phones recorded. This was not a crime hidden in the shadows but a performance staged for a community's eyes, meant to sear a new reality into our collective senses.

The French philosopher Jacques Rancière gives us a lens to see this horror for what it truly is: an aesthetic coup. He argues that politics is fundamentally a battle over the "distribution of the sensible"—the system that determines what is visible and invisible, sayable and unsayable, who has a part in the communal story, and who is rendered a silent ghost. The existing social order, what Rancière calls the "police order," maintains this distribution through implicit rules and conventions. The killing in Bhaluka was a violent, audacious act of redrawing that rulebook. The mob decided, in that moment, what was permissible to see (a burning body as just punishment), what was permissible to say (an accusation of blasphemy as a death sentence), who belonged (the mob), and who could be erased (a minority youth).

This violence did not erupt in a vacuum. It was the bitter, logical endpoint of a pattern we have witnessed and documented with growing dread. Just months ago, on September 5 in Rajbari, another mob exhumed the body of a controversial spiritual leader and set it ablaze on a national highway. That, too, was a public spectacle, a ritual of domination. Before that, the chainsaws came at

down for a centuries-old banyan tree in Madaripur, around whose trunk people of different religions tied threads of hope. It was felled by a mob declaring it a "corruption," an act of cultural ecocide performed for the camera.



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Each of these acts—the burning of a "heretic's" corpse, the assassination of a syncretic tree, the killing of a minority youth—follows the same chilling script. First, an accusation is made declaring a person, a practice, or a place to be outside the bounds of a rigid orthodoxy. Then, the mob gathers, often agitated through the digital echo chambers of social media, where rumour metastasises into righteous fury. Finally, the violent performance: a destruction meant to be seen, filmed, and shared, to instil fear and demonstrate who truly holds power in the public square.

On the very night Dipu Das was killed, a similar script was being enacted in the heart of Dhaka. Hundreds of people audaciously stormed the offices of *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*. They vandalised and set the buildings on fire, trapping journalists inside the English newspaper's building, who were

the streets of Dhaka, that monopoly has been surrendered. The official "police order" has fled the scene, apparently replaced by the mob's violent logic. The state's response—a condemnation on social media—is a masterpiece of impotence. It tries to manage the aftermath, having abandoned the decisive moment. When the guardians of order are reduced to spectators, the very concept of the state collapses. We are left in a state of exception where life is reduced to bare life, vulnerable to violence without recourse.

So, we must ask: who benefits from this unravelling? The immediate perpetrators are but foot soldiers. The true beneficiaries are the forces of division, those who thrive in the epistemic murk where fact and fanaticism blur. A society terrified, fractured, and silent is a society that can be easily managed, its historical memory of syncretism erased, its

through preemptive and decisive action, that it will dismantle mobs, arrest ringleaders, and protect the vulnerable. It means defending our journalists, our artists, our eccentrics, and our minorities not as special interests, but as vital organs of the body politic.

The opposite of this burning is not passive peace. It is the active, courageous defence of a shared world. It is the replanting of the banyan, the mourning of every desecrated grave, the insistence that the name Dipu Chandra Das be remembered not as a target but as a citizen whose death broke our collective heart and must now mend our collective resolve. The mob's fire sought to illuminate its own power. Our task is to harness that light to see clearly the abyss we stand before, and to step back, together, to create a future where the only fruit our trees bear is that of shared shade and shelter.

Why electric buses won't fix Dhaka's transport system



Sajedul Hoq is a development practitioner and the president of Bangladesh Traffic & Transport Forum. He can be reached at sajedulhoq@gmail.com.

SAJEDUL HOQ

In his budget speech for the fiscal year 2025-26, Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed announced a plan to introduce 400 electric buses into Dhaka's public transport network to make the system "sustainable, safer, and environmentally friendly." While the optics of modernising our public transport fleet are appealing, as a transport policy analyst, I must argue that this intervention is fundamentally misplaced. Introducing electric buses into Dhaka's current transport ecosystem is an attempt to solve a software crisis with new hardware.

Before we celebrate the arrival of electric vehicles, we must examine what is already on our roads. Dhaka is a city where unfit buses without tail lights or side mirrors operate freely, and thousands of drivers hold fake licences. These smoke-belching vehicles are not on the road by accident; they are there because of a systemic failure to enforce fitness standards.

The reason lies in the governance breakdown at the heart of our transport sector. The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), the

very agency tasked with regulation, has long been criticised as a den of corruption. If the current regulatory regime cannot stop a diesel bus with faulty brakes and a fake licence from operating, how will it manage the complex maintenance and safety requirements of an electric fleet?

An electric bus project does not address this problem; it merely adds a new variable to a chaotic equation. Without confronting the corruption that allows unfit vehicles to bypass the

law, these expensive new buses will simply join the chaos by design that defines our streets.

Bangladesh's policymakers have a long-standing tendency to prioritise projects with high visibility over those that deliver usability. Buying 400 buses makes for a good headline. The harder, less visible work, such as strengthening enforcement, ensuring accountability, and pursuing structural reform, is

introducing new buses on the same fragmented routes will produce the same tragic outcomes.

Before launching such an expensive, yet isolated and poorly sequenced project, attention must return to the fundamentals. Enforcement capacity comes first. At present, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is responsible for managing traffic but lacks a functional line of accountability or coordination with other relevant agencies, while the BRTA issues licences but has no authority to enforce laws on the ground. A unified approach is essential, one in which agencies do not operate in silos.

Equally important is a clear chain of accountability. A national task force should be empowered to oversee the entire transport ecosystem, ensuring that when the system fails, specific institutions are held responsible.

Finally, corruption must be addressed head-on. As long as fitness certificates can be purchased and syndicates can shape policy, no amount of modern technology will make our roads safer.

Dhaka's transport crisis is not rooted in a lack of vehicles or technology; it is a crisis of order. Introducing electric buses at this stage is akin to applying a fresh coat of paint to a structurally unsound building. We do not yet need more buses with advanced technology. We need the rule of law. Until the governance crisis is resolved, 400 electric buses will amount to little more than a silent addition to a very loud failure.

When mobs decide who can speak, what happens to democracy?



Asif Bin Ali
is doctoral fellow at Georgia State University. He can be reached at abinali2@gsu.edu.

ASIF BIN ALI

The night *The Daily Star* building was set on fire by mobs incited by known right-wing political figures and social media influencers, at least 28 journalists and staff were trapped on the rooftop. One of them wrote on Facebook: "I cannot breathe." Anyone who has worked in a newsroom in Dhaka can imagine the scene—smoke filling the corridors, shouting from below, the sound of glass breaking, and the quiet panic of not knowing whether the stairs are still safe. Now add one very typical Dhaka detail. In many buildings, the rooftop door is often kept locked. If that had been the case that evening, we would probably not be discussing a Facebook status. We would be talking about bodies.

I cannot remember any other moment in our 54 years of independence when, at a time officially described as "peaceful," so many journalists came this close to being burned alive or mortally wounded inside their own office. This was not a protest that went a little too far. The way the fire was set and the way some people tried to block the fire service from reaching the building make it hard to escape one conclusion: someone deliberately wanted the journalists to suffer, or worse.

What makes this episode even more disturbing is that the attackers did not know the people they were trying to burn. They had no personal quarrel with a particular reporter or editor. In many cases, they probably never noticed the bylines of those trapped on the rooftop. Their real target was not individuals; it was two institutions: *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*. For months, parts of our public conversation have described these newspapers and some cultural centres as "anti-national," "foreign agents," or "serving Indian interests." These are serious accusations, yet they are

usually made without evidence. Still, they are repeated on TV talk shows, at rallies, and on Facebook Live videos. Gradually, a picture emerges in which certain media houses are no longer seen as legitimate subjects of criticism, but as enemies.

Sociology offers a useful lens here. When a group is constantly painted as traitorous, some begin to feel that violence against them is acceptable, even if regrettable. In other words, they become "killable" in the public imagination even before a single match is lit. Once that mental line is crossed, setting fire to a newsroom can start to feel like a form of justice.

This pattern is not unique to Bangladesh. In the United States, years of loose talk about "fake news" helped normalise hostility towards journalists. The language came first; actions followed later. Dhaka is now witnessing a similar script, accelerated by social media. After the brutal attack on Osman Hadi, speeches at public meetings spoke of "blood for blood" in reference to alleged India-Awami League connections. Social media posts listed specific addresses: Dhanmondi-32, the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Chhayanaut, *Prothom Alo*, and *The Daily Star*. Anonymous pages, and even well-known political figures, singled them out repeatedly. None of this was hidden. Anyone following events could see that a climate was being created in which attacks on these institutions could be framed as righteous acts.

Scholars of political communication sometimes describe this process as "stochastic violence." Leaders do not issue direct instructions like "Go there at 7pm and burn the building." Instead, they consistently

describe certain people as enemies, use emotional language, and hint that "the people" will one day rise against them. It is then left to someone in the crowd, or to groups with vested interests, to take the final step. That is what happened here. One evening, a mob appeared in front of two newspaper offices and a cultural centre. They were not carrying placards or petitions. They arrived with the confidence that what they

turned against you, there is no guarantee that the state will reach you before the flames do.

Some readers say they do not always agree with the editorial positions of these newspapers and therefore struggle to feel sympathy. That is a dangerous misreading of what is at stake. The same crowd that can be mobilised today against a newsroom can be turned tomorrow against a university, a theatre group, a human rights organisation,

Bangladesh has real disagreements with India, from water sharing to border violence. Citizens have every right to criticise unjust Indian policies and to demand that their government protect national interests. That debate is healthy. The danger begins when "anti-India" becomes a flexible label used to attack anyone who does not support a particular agenda. A newspaper that questions a movement, a cultural centre that invites diverse voices, or an activist who calls for institutional reform can suddenly be branded "pro-India" or an "Indian agent" without evidence. Once labelled this way, they are treated as less deserving of protection. Violence against them starts to resemble a patriotic duty in the eyes of some. This is not nationalism. It is a narrow and fragile identity politics that weakens society and places slogans above constitutional commitments.

So what can be done? The first step is straightforward, even if politically inconvenient. There must be a serious investigation into the attacks on media houses and other institutions and sites targeted recently. The question is not only who lit the fire, but who spent days and weeks preparing the emotional ground for it. That trail can be traced through speeches, posts, and organising networks—if there is genuine political will, that is. The second step concerns parties that claim to stand for democracy. They may disagree with media coverage and feel unfairly treated, but they have a responsibility to tell their supporters clearly that arson and intimidation are not a form of political participation. A party that cannot restrain its own angry followers will struggle to convince anyone that it is ready to govern a diverse and noisy society.

The next election will not magically resolve these problems, but it will signal what kind of Bangladesh we want. If we imagine this country as a pluralist state, guided by the constitution and the rule of law rather than by mobs, we have to organise and vote with that vision in mind. The questions are simple: are we as a nation prepared to live with media and institutions that challenge dominant narratives, or do we quietly long for a landscape where only one story is told?



PHOTO COLLAGE: STAR

were about to do had already been justified through weeks of speeches and social media posts.

There is another question we cannot avoid: where did the state stand in all this? When inflammatory speeches are made in public, when such addresses are openly shared and promoted, and when pages fantasise about burning institutions, it is reasonable to expect intelligence agencies and law enforcement to take notice. It is also reasonable to expect that once an attack begins, rescue services will reach the victims quickly. Instead, journalists trapped inside their own building had to ask for help—help that was delayed anyway—while some in the crowd tried to stop firefighters. The message is chilling: if enough people are

or even a religious institution that does not fit a particular narrative. This was not merely an attack on two media houses; it was a warning to every institution that produces ideas, culture, or independent knowledge. We have already seen how fluidly mobs shift targets. Similar patterns have played out elsewhere in South Asia, where campaigns that begin with slogans and rumours against one group end with attacks on shops, homes, and places of worship. Once the habit of settling disagreements by targeting institutions and individuals takes hold, it rarely stops with the first target.

In Bangladesh, much of this is now wrapped in the language of "India" and "anti-India." Here, a careful distinction is necessary.

'Fire safety enforcement is harder without full-time magistrates'

With the number of fire-prone establishments in the country tripling within a year, questions have emerged about how effectively safety standards are being enforced. In this interview, Fire Service and Civil Defence Director General (DG) Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal talked to *The Daily Star's* Mohammad Jamil Khan and Dipan Nandy about enforcement challenges, the lack of magistracy powers, and the steps being taken to reduce fire risks.

The number of fire-prone establishments has tripled in a year to 7,987. What steps are taken once a site is identified as risky?

After identifying fire-prone establishments, we carry out regular inspections, provide necessary advice, issue notices, and, where required, conduct mobile court drives with the help of magistrates. However, to reduce the number of fire incidents and the extent of damage, everyone must become more aware and respectful of fire safety laws. Each establishment must maintain its fire prevention systems as per the rules, keep trained personnel and adequate equipment for initial firefighting, and practise fire drills regularly. Only then can we expect to see a real reduction in fire disasters.

Visible actions often seem limited with regard to risky buildings. What actions are taken against building owners who do not comply with the notices of the fire department?

Being primarily a service-oriented organisation, the Fire Service and Civil Defence's core mission is to build public awareness to prevent disasters. To that end, we regularly carry out drills, public awareness campaigns, building inspections, surveys, and training programmes. On our official Facebook page, we also publish safety tips, photos, and videos of awareness activities. However, when required, we also conduct mobile court drives with magistrates.

There are other relevant agencies that also take legal action. The main goal is to promote awareness first, but persistent non-compliance does lead to penalties.

To share some of the work we do: from October 1, 2025, until the second week of December, we trained 61,063 people through 1,363 courses, conducted 2,293 fire drills, and held public outreach programmes in 2,119 places. Additionally, we inspected 203 buildings and surveyed another 1,338, providing fire safety advice. During this period, we tackled 1,421 fire incidents, saving property worth Tk 34.35 crore. We also responded to 901 other emergencies, rescuing 717 people alive and recovering 169 bodies.

How many non-compliant building owners faced legal or financial penalties this year? Can you mention specific examples of legal action?

From January to November 2025, we conducted 107 mobile court drives across the country. A total of 211 establishments faced penalties, and fines amounted to Tk 1.99 crore. Three individuals were jailed for different durations. Recently, after the Tongi chemical fire incident, we filed a criminal case against the factory owner.

Although we are mainly a humanitarian service agency, we are increasingly taking regulatory actions to ensure compliance



Brig Gen Muhammad Jahed Kamal

PHOTO: COURTESY

with the support of district administrations.

Following some major fires recently, questions have been raised about fire service preparedness. Where do you face the main challenge: equipment, manpower, or access?

We have sufficient manpower and equipment according to our operational mandate. Our

teams are always ready to respond. We also have modern equipment, including 68 metre turntable ladders. But in many areas, building code violations, overhead power lines, and poor infrastructure prevent their proper use. We also have remote-controlled firefighting vehicles, drones, search vision cameras, and thermal imaging systems. However, their numbers are limited, and we are working to expand our capacity.

Other factors that constrain our capacity to act are often external—narrow roads, water shortages, lack of hydrants, curious crowds, and the absence of firefighting systems in many buildings.

Although traffic police cooperate with us during emergencies and our control room maintains wireless communication with theirs to clear roads for fire vehicles and personnel, the reality of existing urban congestion often makes emergency response very difficult. Effective coordination among all relevant agencies is essential to improve response time.

As we are trying to enhance our capacity, we are also working on amending fire safety laws and regulations. If we had full-time magistrates, enforcement of law in these areas would have been more immediate and effective.

You mentioned the lack of functional fire hydrants. What practical steps have been taken to address this issue, and also to expand magistracy authority for better intervention?

At present, Dhaka's streets have no hydrants, but a memorandum of understanding has been signed with WASA to begin feasibility studies for a hydrant system. Meanwhile, in Chattogram, a few exist, but they were not installed in coordination with the Fire Service and are largely unusable.

With regard to magistracy authority, we earlier sent a proposal requesting magistrates on deputation for the fire service department. Magistrates are currently nominated by the district administration to conduct mobile courts for us alongside their other duties. If we had full-time magistrates on deputation, enforcing the law against irregularities would be much more effective.

Public participation in fire prevention remains minimal. Are there any plans to make regular fire drills mandatory in schools, markets, or residential buildings?

Since October 1, 2025, we have trained over 61,000 individuals across schools, colleges, and industrial institutions. We have proposed including fire safety lessons in the national curriculum; basic safety tips have already been added at the primary level.

Fire drills are mandatory under existing laws, and many institutions already practise them. Consistent training ensures readiness during real emergencies. But without collective awareness and strict adherence to building codes and fire safety laws, reducing accidents will remain very difficult.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Sign after Virgo
6 Script unit
10 Studio sign
11 Some golf clubs
13 Hayek of "Frida"
14 Designer's asset
15 Ram's mate
16 Nittany Lions' sch.
18 Light metal
19 Computer connectors
22 Bashful
23 Odometer unit
24 Rene of "Thor"
27 Valleys
28 Bible twin
29 Shark feature

DOWN
1 Finishes last
2 Deeply impressed
3 Farm machine
4 Crater part
5 Plains people
6 Illuminated

30 Supermarket section
35 Peculiar
36 Recipe unit
37 Indulgent
38 Less cordial
40 Select group
42 Jessica of "Tootsie"
43 Subway patron
44 Old autos
45 Wasn't thrifty

7 Nest egg acct.
8 Facial feature
9 Qualify
12 Hearing and sight, for two
17 Cunning
20 Debate topic
21 Muscat native
24 Shrink in fear
25 Lot buy
26 Fish in a can
27 Nursery supply
29 Winter bug
31 Land units
32 Playground sight
33 Grow toward night
34 Bring to bear
39 Sense of self
41 Sassy talk

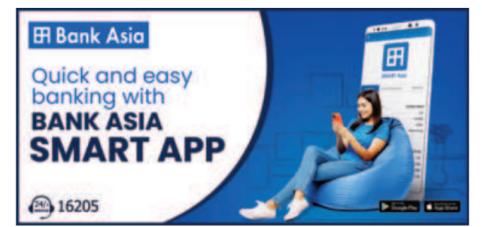
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11									12
13									14
15				16	17				18
19			20					21	
			22					23	
24	25	26				27			
28					29				
30				31			32	33	34
35				36				37	
38			39				40	41	
42							43		
	44						45		

10-2

NOVEMBER 30TH'S ANSWERS

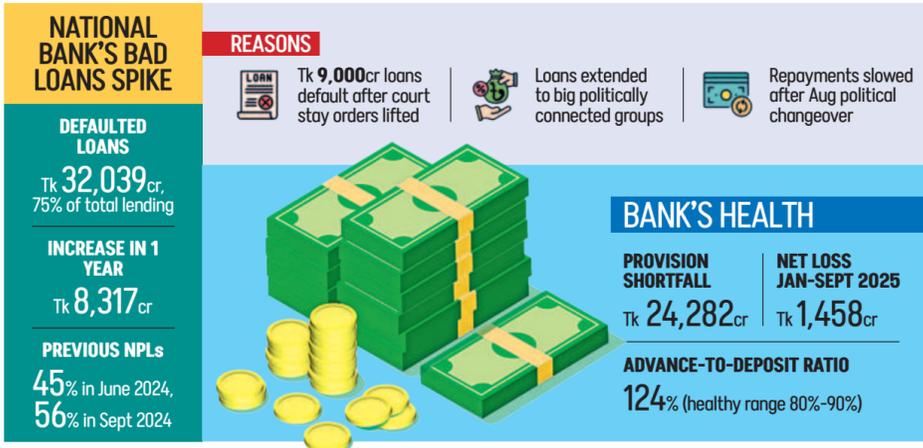
R	A	R	A	S	O	L	D		
R	E	V	E	L	A	R	I	E	S
U	S	I	N	G	L	A	N	C	E
B	E	A	T	E	R	S	T	O	N
E	A	T	B	E	A	K	E	R	S
S	T	E	E	R	S	E	L	S	E
			M	A	T	I	N		
A	C	T	I	O	T	T	A	W	A
B	E	A	R	E	R	S	T	O	S
U	L	M	B	E	A	V	E	R	S
S	E	E	T	O	T	E	A	S	E
E	B	S	E	N	I	N	S	E	T
S	T	A	Y	E	D	E	N		

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.



National Bank's bad loans climb to 75%

Tk 32,039cr in bad debts are now exposed after stay orders on politically connected borrowers are vacated



MD MEHEDI HASAN

Nearly three out of every four taka lent by National Bank has now gone unpaid, according to the central bank, after stay orders that had long protected several large borrowers were lifted in recent months.

As of September this year, defaulted loans at the once-reputed private lender stood at Tk 32,039 crore, accounting for 75.46 percent of its total lending, according to Bangladesh Bank (BB) data.

Meanwhile, senior National Bank officials said the sharp increase did not happen because the bank suddenly made bad lending decisions. Rather, about Tk 9,000 crore in loans that had remained protected under court stay orders were finally classified as defaults once those legal shields were vacated in recent months.

They said many of the loans were extended to influential and politically connected business groups during the previous government. As long as the stay orders were in place, the bank could not treat the loans as non-performing (NPLs), hiding the true scale of the problem.

The officials said that repayments slowed further after the political changeover in August last year, and several large borrowers stopped paying altogether.

Now the exposure of these bad debts has added to the National Bank's long-running financial troubles. The lender has been reporting losses since 2022 and continues to struggle to stabilise its balance sheet.

During the January-September period of this year, the bank posted a net loss of Tk 1,458 crore – up from Tk 1,360 crore in the same period last year, according to the lender's financial statement.

Due to the high volume of bad debts, the bank also faces a provision shortfall of Tk 24,282 crore, meaning it does not have enough funds set aside to cover potential loan losses.

The bank's basic financial

structure is also under pressure. By the end of September this year, its total loans and advances stood at Tk 42,461 crore, while deposits were Tk 34,091 crore.

This means the bank has lent out far more money than it has received from depositors, leaving it vulnerable during periods of stress.

Depositors have responded by pulling back their funds.

In the January-September period of this year, National Bank lost Tk 2,907 crore in deposits, even as new deposits continued to come in. Bank officials said withdrawals remain high, causing liquidity pressure.

To stop the balance sheet bleeding, the Bangladesh Bank provided Tk 8,500 crore to National Bank in liquidity support since the formation of the interim government last year. Despite the fund injection, the commercial lender is still struggling to repay older deposits smoothly.

According to the bank's top

IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

management, new depositors are able to withdraw their funds fully, while older depositors are being paid back gradually.

National Bank's decline accelerated during the period when it was controlled by the Sikder family, marked by loan irregularities, weak governance and fraud allegations, including credit card scams.

In May 2024, the Sikder family apparently lost control of the bank as a new board took over. However, after the fall of the Awami League-led government in August 2024, the bank board was restructured again by the central bank.

The central bank formed a new seven-member board comprising three shareholder-directors and four independent directors. BNP Vice-Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo was one of the three shareholder-directors. Now the businessman is

the chairman of the bank board.

Despite the leadership changes, the scale of bad loans accumulated over the years continues to weigh heavily on the bank. In July, National Bank appointed Adil Chowdhury, an experienced banker, as the managing director.

Chowdhury acknowledged that the lifting of court stay orders pushed up headline NPL figures. He, however, said the bank has begun rescheduling large loans and recovering cash.

"We have already rescheduled Tk 3,500 crore in non-performing loans, and another Tk 10,000 crore is in the pipeline," he told The Daily Star. "Since I joined, we have recovered more than Tk 700 crore in cash."

He said the bank targets bringing down its NPL ratio to 30 percent to 40 percent by the end of this year, though industry insiders say such a turnaround will take time, given the depth of the problem.

For now, the bank has limited its lending activity and is focusing on trade finance, remittances, cards, and small and medium-sized loans.

Data show that large borrowers of National Bank include Maisha Group, Beximco LPG, FMC Group, Bashundhara Group (Bashundhara Infrastructure, Development, Paper & Multi Paper Industry Ltd; Bloom Success International Ltd; Bashundhara Oil & Gas Company Ltd; Radium Composite Textile Mills Ltd; Manha Precast Technology Ltd), Karnaphuli Group (Total Karnaphuli and Desh TV), Opex Group, Broadway & Prokritee, Nassa Group, Saad Musa Group and Western Marine Shipyard Ltd.

Bank officials said the lender has set a recovery target of around Tk 14,000 crore by December.

According to them, loans to several large clients are being rescheduled, Bashundhara has repaid a portion of its dues, and plans are underway to sell a power plant owned by Maisha Group to recover funds.

Revised budget targets record-low deficit

REJAUl KARIM BYRON

The revised budget for the current fiscal year could see the deficit fall to a record low of 3.3 percent of GDP due mainly to ambitious revenue collection targets and cuts in development spending.

The finance ministry presented the plan on Monday at a high-level meeting with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Finance ministry officials said the revised budget is likely to be placed before the Advisory Council meeting this week for approval. The government will publish it once the council approves it.

Usually, the new budget for the next fiscal year and the revised budget for the outgoing year are announced in June.

This time, the interim government is finalising the revised budget earlier because the national election is scheduled for February next year, a finance ministry official said.

The government generally aims

lakh crore, a finance ministry official told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

Revenue authorities usually miss their initial targets, forcing the government to lower them near the end of the fiscal year. Even then, reduced targets are often missed, largely due to sluggish performance by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), which accounts for about 90 percent of state revenue.

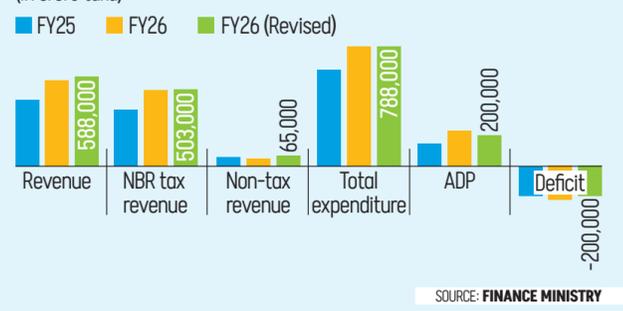
Under the revised plan, non-NBR tax targets have been increased to Tk 20,000 crore from Tk 19,000 crore. Non-tax revenue has been raised to Tk 65,000 crore from Tk 46,000 crore.

The NBR has increased its target to Tk 5.03 lakh crore, up from Tk 5.02 lakh crore.

An NBR official said collections from customs, income tax and value added tax (VAT) rose notably in the first quarter, prompting the revision.

In the first five months of FY26, NBR's revenue grew by 15 percent, compared

BANGLADESH'S BUDGET: KEY DATA (in crore taka)



to keep the budget deficit within 5 percent of GDP. Although after actual implementation, the deficit tends to decrease further.

During the last years of the previous Awami League government, original budget deficits exceeded 6 percent of GDP. As a result, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) set limits on the deficit to maintain fiscal discipline when it began its loan programme in January 2023.

In its first budget, the interim government fixed the deficit target at 3.6 percent for the current fiscal year 2025-26. In the previous fiscal year, the actual deficit also stood at 3.6 percent of GDP, mainly because development spending fell short of the allocation.

Breaking with usual practice, the revised budget now reduces the deficit further. Because revenue collection is projected to grow by around 35 percent, while the annual development programme (ADP) is being cut by 13 percent from the original allocation.

The overall deficit is being reduced by Tk 26,000 crore to Tk 2 lakh crore. Domestic borrowing will rise from Tk 1.25 lakh crore to Tk 1.39 lakh crore, while foreign financing falls from Tk 1.01 lakh crore to Tk 61,000 crore.

Revenue targets have been increased by 5 percent, or Tk 24,000 crore, to Tk 5.88 lakh crore from the original Tk 5.64

with just 1.9 percent growth last year, said the official.

A senior NBR official cited seven factors behind the revised target's achievability.

Chief among them is the mandatory online submission of individual tax returns. The e-return system also allows automated data collection from institutions through API links, enabling different databases to share information directly with the NBR.

Banks, employers, government agencies and utility service providers can transmit taxpayer information straight to the tax authority's server, which officials expect will curb evasion and boost compliance.

The NBR has also launched a medium and long-term revenue strategy. To raise VAT receipts, the enlistment threshold has been cut from Tk 50 lakh to Tk 30 lakh, and the registration threshold from Tk 3 crore to Tk 50 lakh. VAT on many items has been standardised at 15 percent.

Another important reform is the split of the NBR into the Revenue Policy Division and the Revenue Administration Division through an ordinance.

The government has also adopted a Tax Expenditure Policy and Management Framework to rationalise exemptions and strengthen control over tax spending.

External debt falls slightly in Jul-Sept quarter

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's gross external debt fell slightly at the end of July-September quarter as both public and private sector borrowing declined.

By the end of September 2025, the country's external debt stock stood at \$112.12 billion, down from \$113.56 billion at the end of June, according to the latest data from Bangladesh Bank.

However, compared to a year earlier, debt rose by 7 percent, or \$7.75 billion, from \$104.37 billion at the end of September 2024.

"Generally, there are two reasons why external debt declines – higher repayments and reduced borrowing," said Fahmida Khatun, executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"External debt had been rising earlier due to the implementation of numerous mega projects. However,

KEY POINTS

- Higher repayments and lower borrowing drove the quarterly fall
- Suspended mega projects slowed new foreign loans
- Public sector held over four-fifths of total external debt
- Govt bonds fell to \$614.81m, extending a year-long decline
- Private sector debt eased to \$19.58b as short-term borrowing fell



slightly lower than in June. Short-term private sector debt fell to \$9.62 billion, mainly due to a drop in trade credit and buyer's credit, reflecting weaker import demand or tighter external financing.

Bangladesh Bank data also shows that offshore banking units continued to be an important source of external borrowing for the private sector, especially for short-term and trade-related financing.

"Our external debt-to-GDP ratio is still within a manageable range and is not very high," said Mati Ul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank.

"However, external debt is increasing. Since there is no elected government, there are not many development projects, and as a result, the pace of growth in foreign borrowing has slowed," he added.

during the tenure of the interim government, work on many mega projects has been suspended, and the government is not taking up any new projects. This is why external debt is now declining," she added.

The public sector remained the largest borrower, accounting for \$92.54 billion, or more than four-fifths of Bangladesh's total external

debt as of September 2025, data showed.

Within the public sector, general government borrowing reached \$80.48 billion, most of it long-term debt. Government loans alone stood at \$79.87 billion, while government bonds fell to \$614.81 million, continuing a year-long decline, according to Bangladesh Bank.

Borrowing by other government corporations, including state-owned enterprises, was \$12.06 billion, down from \$13.22 billion in June 2025. Short-term liabilities in this category dropped sharply to \$3.21 billion, easing some immediate repayment pressure.

The private sector's external debt stood at \$19.58 billion in September,

Trust Retail Banking

TRUST KOTIPOTI SCHEME

Secure Your Future with Planned Savings

- Tenure: 5 to 20 years
- Minimum amount of deposit BDT 50,000

Trust Bank PLC.

To Know More 16201

Ensure good governance for better business climate: DCCI

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Good governance, strong political will, and timely policies with effective implementation are essential to ensure a business- and investment-conducive environment, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) said yesterday.

The chamber noted that the economy faced several challenges in 2025, including geopolitical tensions, rising tariff rates, the absence of a supportive revenue management system, a contractionary monetary policy, stagnant investment, prolonged inflation, domestic political instability, a declining law-and-order situation, and an ongoing energy crisis.

"Although some positive trends have recently emerged following measures taken by the interim government, there is no alternative to good governance, political will, and timely policies with effective implementation to ensure a business-conducive environment," Taskeen Ahmed, president of DCCI, said at the chamber's 64th annual general meeting held at its Dhaka office.

During the meeting, DCCI members stressed the need for political consensus to support the private sector and highlighted reforms in trade and investment policies, the removal of complications in revenue management, and the introduction of automation.

They also highlighted the importance of developing the logistics sector, providing easier access to low-interest loans with simplified procedures for entrepreneurs, ensuring uninterrupted energy supply to industries, and stabilising the overall law-and-order situation.

A difficult year on the apparel factory floor

Despite headline growth, 2025 tested garment exporters across markets and margins

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Throughout 2025, local garment makers had to spend much of their time recalculating decisions rather than executing long-term plans in their production lines.

The main uncertainty was how much duty their shipments would face in the US, the largest single-country market for Bangladesh. From April, tariff rates shifted punishingly upwards before settling in August at levels higher than before. By the time some stability returned, much of the damage to margins and order planning had already been done.

External volatility coincided with mounting pressures at home.

High bank interest rates squeezed working capital, while inconsistent gas and power supplies disrupted operations. Trade tensions with India continued throughout the year, complicating

TARIFF TURBULENCE

- ◆ US tariffs spiked to 53.5% in Apr, eased to 36.5% in Aug
- ◆ Rushed shipments created high inventories, slower new orders

DOMESTIC HEADWINDS



High bank interest rates



Gas, power shortages disrupt production



Dhaka airport fire destroyed samples, raw materials



Amended labour law adds compliance pressure

EXPORT PERFORMANCE

US: Jan-Aug exports \$5.64b (19.8% growth)

Overall: Jul-Nov exports \$20.02b (0.6% growth)

EU: Jan-Sept exports €15.26b (13.7% growth)

Non-traditional markets: \$5.23b but slowing in H2



THE REWIND

logistics and sourcing.

In October, a fire at Dhaka airport destroyed garment samples, imported accessories and raw materials worth millions of dollars. Lately, tighter labour rules have added to the manufacturers' concerns.

Looming over all of it was the approach of graduation from the least developed country club in 2026, which would strip away preferential market treatments for "Made in Bangladesh" items.

Exporters say 2025 failed to deliver the stability or margins they had hoped for, despite pockets of shipment growth. Expectations of improvement have largely been deferred to 2026, resting more on political timing and buyer behaviour than on any clear easing of structural pressures.

On April 2 this year, the US announced reciprocal tariffs on several countries, including Bangladesh, setting the rate at 37 percent on apparel, on top of the existing 16.5 percent rate. The move lifted the effective tariff to 53.5 percent, raising costs for exporters and buyers at a time when global demand was already fragile.

After negotiations, the tariff was reduced to 20 percent from August 7, bringing the effective rate down to 36.5 percent.

As part of the agreement, Dhaka committed to importing more American goods to narrow the annual bilateral trade deficit of about \$6 billion, tilted towards Bangladesh.

The relief came somewhat late to restore momentum.

Many exporters had already rushed shipments between April and August to avoid higher duties. That front-loading left international retailers with high inventories, which in turn slowed new order placement later in the year, even after US tariffs eased.

In the January-August period, US apparel imports grew 3.32 percent year-on-year to \$53.01 billion.

Exports from the country to the US increased 19.82 percent to \$5.64 billion over the same period, according to the Office of Textiles and Apparel.

Data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), compiled by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), show exports to the US at \$2.59 billion during the July-October period, up 5.14 percent year on year and accounting for nearly one-fifth of total garment shipments.

Overall export earnings tell a flatter story. Total exports rose just 0.62 percent year-on-year to \$20.02 billion during the July-November period.

Garment exports increased 1.67 percent to \$35.28 billion in the January-November period, far below the double-digit growth rates the sector once considered routine.

"For business, 2025 has not been a good year as companies are facing many domestic and external challenges," said Md Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions Ltd.

"The situation could improve next year, as an election is scheduled and buyers are expected to place larger volumes of work orders," he added.

Abdul Hai Sarker, chairman and chief executive of Purbani Group, expressed

similar views.

Inamul Haq Khan, senior vice president of BGMEA, also pointed to electoral timing. "Usually, international retailers and brands hold back some work orders before the general election and place full orders after it," he said.

"This year, Christmas sales in the US were disappointing, as clothing prices rose due to higher tariffs," said Khan.

In 2025, export trends to the European bloc were also mixed.

Garment exports to the European Union rose 13.7 percent year-on-year to €15.26 billion in the January-September period, according to Eurostat, as more recent data is unavailable.

During the July-November period, exports to the EU accounted for nearly half of total garment shipments, although earnings from the bloc edged down slightly compared with the same period a year earlier, according to Mohiuddin Rubel, former BGMEA director and managing director of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange Ltd.

He said that Canada and the United Kingdom recorded steady, if unspectacular, export growth.

Non-traditional markets such as Japan, South Korea and India contributed \$5.23 billion in the January-October period, or about 16 percent of total exports.

Momentum there faded later in the year, with shipments to these destinations declining during the July-November period, underlining the limits of diversification at a time when exporters had hoped newer markets would soften shocks elsewhere, according to former BGMEA director Rubel.

"The slowdown in garment exports to new markets was a surprising shock for Bangladesh, as shipments to these markets had remained high for many years," said BGMEA Senior Vice-President Inamul Haq Khan.

He added that market peers, including India, China, Vietnam and Pakistan, were sending large volumes to these destinations while also facing higher US tariffs.

Bangladesh did not receive the expected volume of shifting orders from China, as Vietnam, Indonesia and Myanmar got a larger share.

Khan said Brazil is emerging as a promising market, although competition from Indonesia is intensifying.

Performance also diverged by product segment. Knitwear exports slipped slightly during the early months of the current fiscal year, while woven garments recorded slight growth. The split points to uneven demand and cost pressures rather than a broad-based recovery.

Meanwhile, gas shortages hurt spinning mills, a problem worsened by cheaper yarn imports from India. The suspension of transshipment facilities through India in April disrupted logistics, while retaliatory trade restrictions at land ports further slowed cross-border movement.

Several large factories that closed after the political changeover in 2024 have attempted to reopen but remain entangled in bureaucratic processes.

As the year draws to a close, the garment sector somewhat stands on uncertain ground. The hope of stronger performance in 2026 depends on calmer politics, steadier trade relations and renewed buyer confidence.

Govt to expand Eastern Refinery with Tk 35,465cr

ASIFUR RAHMAN and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has finally approved the long pending modernisation and expansion project of Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL), the country's only fuel oil refinery, opting to implement it with state financing after shelving an earlier joint venture plan with S Alam Group.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) yesterday approved the project at an estimated cost of Tk 35,465 crore.

Once completed, the project will triple ERL's crude oil refining capacity, allowing the refinery to process up to 4.5 million tonnes of crude oil annually, up from the current capacity of 1.5 million tonnes.

Established in 1968 at Patenga in Chattogram, ERL currently meets only around 20 percent of the country's total demand for petroleum products. Due to limited refining capacity, Bangladesh has to import large volumes of refined fuel such as petrol, diesel and octane, which costs the country a substantial amount of foreign currency. Refining crude oil domestically is significantly more cost-effective.

Energy sector officials expect the modernisation and expansion project to save billions of dollars in foreign exchange over the long term.

Earlier, the ousted Awami League government had decided in February last year to build a second unit of ERL, previously called ERL-2, through a joint venture with S Alam Group. After assuming office, however, the interim government scrapped the joint venture plan and explored

Once completed, the project will triple the company's crude oil refining capacity to 4.5 million tonnes annually

foreign investment options before eventually deciding to implement the project using government funds and ERL's own financing.

"We are not calling this project ERL-2, as the existing refinery will be modernised and expanded under the same project," said Amin Ul Ahsan, chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the parent body of ERL.

He said the government will finance 60 percent of the project, while ERL will bear the remaining 40 percent.

According to the Ecneec meeting proceedings, the project cost stands at Tk 35,465 crore, of which Tk 21,277 crore will come as government loans and Tk 14,187 crore from ERL's own financing. The project will be implemented between December 2025 and November 2030.

Officials said the modernised refinery will produce Euro-5 standard gasoline and diesel, significantly reducing reliance on imported finished petroleum products and conserving foreign exchange.

Although ERL has been in operation for more than five decades, it has not undergone any major expansion since its commissioning in 1968, forcing the country to depend heavily on imported refined fuel.

The approved plan includes detailed engineering, procurement, civil and mechanical construction, and installation of 20 processing units along with 18 utility and off-site units, according to the meeting proceedings.

Ancillary works such as electricity and gas connections, drainage infrastructure, and procurement of necessary IT and office equipment will also be completed under the project, the meeting proceedings read.

In yesterday's meeting, a total of 22 projects worth Tk 46,419 crore were approved. Of the amount, Tk 1,299 crore will be spent on the Ganga-Kapotaksha irrigation project's emergency maintenance, and another Tk 1,273 crore will be used for a water management project of the Surma-Kushiara rivers.

Japan-Bangladesh chamber hails progress in EPA deal

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Japan Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI) yesterday welcomed the finalisation of the economic partnership agreement (EPA) between the two nations.

The JBCCI remains committed to supporting the implementation of the EPA, the trade body said in a statement.

Bangladesh and Japan on Monday finalised the principles of the EPA, which were announced through a joint declaration by the two countries.

The development marks a major step towards the conclusion of a comprehensive economic partnership between the two nations, the statement added.

The EPA aims to deepen trade, investment and services linkages and is expected to play a pivotal role as Bangladesh transitions from its least developed country (LDC) status in 2026.

The agreement in principle reflects alignment on the structure and key provisions of the EPA, with formal signing to follow upon completion of the necessary legal and cabinet-level processes in both countries.

Aquaculture must focus on food safety standards: experts

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The aquaculture sector must tackle major challenges to sustain future growth, focusing on quality improvement, food safety standards and certification, post-harvest handling, processing, and value addition, experts said yesterday.

Pollution, climate change, and unsustainable land use are putting increasing pressure on

aquatic ecosystems, they added at the opening session of the 10th Biennial Fisheries Conference, organised by the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council auditorium in Dhaka.

Bangladesh is a leading fish producer, with total production exceeding 5 million tonnes in the fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 and an annual growth rate of about 8 percent. In FY 2024-25, the country

earned around \$441.58 million from fish and shrimp exports.

Faruk Ul Islam, country representative of WorldFish Bangladesh, said, "Innovation in aquaculture technologies, disease management, genetic improvement, and alternative feeds will be essential, as will the protection of inland open waters and marine ecosystems through effective governance and co-management."



Eastern Bank (EBL) honoured 40 partner organisations at the second edition of the SKYSPHERE: EBL Digital Excellence Awards 2025 at United Convention Centre in Dhaka on December 21. Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL, M Khorsheed Anowar, deputy managing director and head of retail and SME banking, and Ahsan Ullah Chowdhury, head of digital financial services, were present.

PHOTO: EASTERN BANK PLC

EBL Digital Excellence Awards honour partner organisations

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Eastern Bank PLC (EBL) organised the second edition of the SKYSPHERE: EBL Digital Excellence Awards 2025, celebrating partner organisations and merchants whose contributions have significantly advanced the bank's growth and digital transformation journey over the past year.

The award ceremony, held at the United Convention Centre in Dhaka on December 21, recognised excellence across three distinct categories, according to a press release.

Speaking at the event, Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL, said, "Our partners and merchants are central to our journey of growth and digital innovation. The SKYSPHERE: EBL Digital

Excellence Awards 2025 is our way of recognising their contributions, celebrating their successes, and inspiring continued excellence across the digital landscape."

Senior officials of EBL, including M Khorsheed Anowar, deputy managing director and head of retail and SME banking, and Ahsan Ullah Chowdhury, head of digital financial services, also attended the programme.



PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK PLC

Alamgir Hossain, managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, and other officials of the bank attend the inauguration of the Chatkhil branch in Noakhali on December 22.

Citizens Bank opens Chatkhil branch

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Citizens Bank PLC opened a branch in Chatkhil of Noakhali on December 22.

Alamgir Hossain, managing director of the bank, formally inaugurated the branch. Deputy managing directors Md

Mostafizur Rahman and Md Abdul Latif, and other high officials of the bank were present at the event, according to a press release.

Local businessmen across different sectors and professionals were also present on the occasion.

Trust Bank signs deal with OPPO Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Trust Bank PLC and Huguang Electronic Distribution Co Ltd (OPPO Bangladesh) have signed a deed of agreement to facilitate smartphone purchases for the bank's customers.

The signing ceremony was attended by Md Kamal Hossain Sarkar, deputy managing director and head of the Islamic Banking Division of Trust Bank PLC, along with other senior officials from both organisations, according to a press release.

The agreement was signed by Md Mostafa Musharraf, head of the Card Division of Trust Bank PLC, and Wei Yanfang (Yana), head of the department, HR and admin of Huguang Electronic Distribution Co Ltd, on behalf of their respective organisations.

Under the agreement, all credit cardholders of Trust Bank PLC will be able to purchase OPPO smartphones from designated OPPO showrooms and the online platform with a zero percent EMI facility for up to 12 months.



PHOTO: TRUST BANK PLC

Md Mostafa Musharraf, head of the card division of Trust Bank PLC, and Wei Yanfang (Yana), head of HR and admin of Huguang Electronic Distribution Co Ltd, pose for photographs during the agreement signing ceremony in Dhaka recently.

The Daily Star
FOR ALL LATEST NEWS FOLLOW US

 [dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)  [/dailystar_bd](https://www.instagram.com/dailystar_bd)

 [/in/dailystarnews](https://www.linkedin.com/company/dailystarnews)  [/dailystarnews](https://www.twitter.com/dailystarnews)

www.thedailystar.net

Trading Corporation Of Bangladesh.
TCB Bhaban, 1 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.
www.tcb.gov.bd

Notice

Tender preparation including registration in e-GP system

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) is conducting local/international procurement following the government procurement rules to sell essential commodities (edible oil, sugar, lentils, dates, chickpeas, potatoes and onions) among 10 million low-income Smart Family Card holders according to the direction of the Ministry of Commerce. Presently, the procurement process is being conducted through manual system. According to Public Procurement Rules, 2025 all government procurements have to be completed through e-GP system. Therefore, TCB will conduct local and international procurement activities through e-GP system from July 2026. In that context, all local and international business stakeholders/traders/suppliers who are interested to supply goods to TCB are requested to register in e-GP system (www.bppa.gov.bd) and prepare for future tenders (from financial year 2026-2027).

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

No. 05.00.0000.113.07.056.2025-1277 Date: 23-12-2025

e-Tender Notice No. 3/2025-26

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

Sl	Tender Id	Name of supply	Publishing date and time	Closing date and time
1	1202294	Conference System	24 December 2025 & 10.00	07 January 2026 & 14.00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal should be deposited online through any registered bank. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

23.12.25
Md. Alamgir Kabir
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Public Administration
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
Phone: 2226641500

Office of the Natore Pourashava
Natore

Memo No. Nat: Pou/Engr:Div/ADP/2025/2140 Date: 23 /12/2025

e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-2026
Limited Tendering Method(LTM)

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

Sl No	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & opening Date & Time
1	1199719	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-1	a) Maintenance of Tebaria hat shade (Dhan hata) word no 08, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026. b) Construction of HBB road starting from Ullupur north side of Borendro office to Innovative Polytechnic Institute (Ch 0.0 to 107.0m) in word no 01, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026. c) Construction of Garage shade near PTI poura pump house in Kandivita word no-05, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
2	1199791	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-2	a) Maintenance of BC Road Starting from katalbaria Golap house to forest Officer Abdullah House (Ch 0.0 to 220.0m) in word no 01, b) Maintenance of BC Road Starting from Kandivita Rumon Shop to Choudhury mango orchard (Ch 0.0 to 221.0m) in word no 05, Under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
3	1199803	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-3	a) Construction of RCC Drain Starting from Kandivita Md.Moti house to Md. badon house word no-05 (Ch 0.0 to 86.0m), b) Construction of CC road starting from Mollikhati mosque to Existing poura road (Ch 0.0 to 29.0m) in word no 05, c) Maintenance of CC road starting from Mollikhati near Romzan ali house to pair ali house (Ch 0.0 to 100m) in word no 05, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
4	1199906	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-4	a) Construction of Road cum Brick Drain Starting from Mollikhati Kamrul House to North direction existing primary drain word no-05 (Ch 0.0 to 58.0m) b) Maintenance of Uporbaraz Eidga field (15.5m*7.5m) in word no 01, c) Construction of Toilet at Alipur Puro Tika-dan kandro, word no-06, d) Construction of RCC x-drain at Kanikhali north direction of BADC Godown (Ch 0.0 to 5.0m) in word no 04, e) Construction of Brick Drain Starting from Kurmir field near Art Belal house to West direction Mr.Shopon house (Ch 0.0 to 95.0m) in word no 02,		
5	1199912	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-5	a) Construction of brick drain starting from Jolarpar west direction of Hafiz shop to RAB house (Ch 0.0 to 107.5.0m) in word no 04, b) Palisading work at Hazra natore haji jinna ali Madrasa pond (Ch 0.0-30.0m) word no-03, under Natore pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.	07/01/2026 at 3.30pm	08/01/2026 at 12.00pm
6	1199950	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-6	a) Construction of CC Road & Brick Drain Starting from HugelBaria Zabber house to Alauddin House (Ch 0.0 to 66.0m) in word no 09, b) Construction of Road cum Brick Drain Starting from Boro Horispur Dider house to Feroja house word no-03 (Ch 0.0 to 91.0m), Under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
7	1199974	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-7	A) Construction of CC Road Starting from Islampur (a) Md. Rezaul korim house to Safia house (Ch 0.0 to 105.0m) in word no 01, (b) Safia house to Md Satter house (Ch 0.0 to 74.0m) in word no 01, under Natore Pourashava. B) Construction of RCC Road Starting from Utor potuapara (a) Dr. Asutos house to Rothin house House (Ch 0.0 to 26.0m) in word no 02, (b) Maintenance of drain & road in front of Noresh Chondro shill house at Utor potuapara (Ch 0.0 to 47.0m) in word no 04, C) Construction of CC Road Starting from South potuapara Adv. Shamsul house to Nahar house to south direction Milon house (Ch 0.0 to 73.0m) in word no 04, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
8	1199979	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-8	a) Maintenance of BC Road at South Borgacha from Buradarga Zama Mosque to south direction Ismail house (Ch 0.0 to 163.0m) word no-08, b) Maintenance of BC Road Starting from Chockrampur Kohinar Supper Market to Dr. Mosharuf House (Ch 0.0 to 175.0m) in word no 03, Under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		
9	1199980	NAT-ADB/25-26/W-9	A) Construction of RCC Drain Starting from Kandivita Zentu House to Togor House (Ch 0.0 to 80.0m) in word no 05, B) Construction of CC road starting from Chockrampur back side of Potur hotel Mannan house to south direction of Existing road (Ch 0.0 to 21.5m) in word no 03, C) Construction of Brick drain Starting from utor Borgacha west direction of petrol pump to Sultan house (vat office) (Ch 0.0 to 77.0m) in word no 07, D) Construction of Boundary wall at Nichabazar Pouro GEM house (Ch 0.0-17.0m) in word no 04, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2025-2026.		

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not 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 Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (The bill will be paid when fund received)

(Md. Abdul Malek) 23/12/25
Executive Engineer
Natore pourashava,
e-Mail: natorepourashava@gmail.com

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতন প্রতিকার ও প্রতিরোধ সমন্বিত
সেবা জোরদারকরণ এবং কুইক রেসপন্স টিমের কার্যক্রম
মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর

মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ার দরপত্রের স্থগিতকরণ নোটিশ

মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের আওতায় মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন “নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতন প্রতিকার ও প্রতিরোধ সেবা জোরদারকরণ এবং কুইক রেসপন্স টিমের কার্যক্রম” শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের আওতায় আগামী ২৪ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ প্রকল্পের মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ার দরপত্রের উন্মুক্তকরণ কমিটির কার্যক্রম যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের নির্দেশক্রমে অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ স্থগিত করা হল। এ সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রম পরবর্তীতে জানানো হবে।

23/12/2025
রুবিনা গনি
উপ-প্রকল্প পরিচালক
নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতন প্রতিকার ও প্রতিরোধ সেবা
জোরদারকরণ এবং কুইক রেসপন্স টিমের কার্যক্রম প্রকল্প

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project
Workshop Bhaban (Level-3), Agargaon,
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.: 46.02.0000.670.07.027.2025-1566 Date: 23/12/2025.

Addendum-03
Tender Notice No. 6/2025-2026

Corrigendum notice issued in the National e-GP Portal System (<http://eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Name of the Project	Description of Works	Tender Last Selling (Time & Date)		Tender Closing & Opening (Time & Date)	
			As original	As amended	As original	As amended
1	1177169 & Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project	Construction of Primary School cum Flood Shelter with Solar PV Nano Grid, Street Light, Lightening Protection & Connecting Roads, Bridge/Culvert, Furniture and Tree Plantation at Bogra District. (Package No.: LGED/RIVER/BOG/21-22/NW-06)	17.00 hrs 29-Dec-25	17.00 hrs 11-Jan-26	14.00 hrs 30-Dec-25	14.00 hrs 12-Jan-26

Project Director
23.12.2025
Phone: +88-02-55006730
Email: pd.lged.river@gmail.com

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2025, POUH 08, 1432 BS
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) EDGE Project, Department of ICT, Santosh, Tangail-1902

Invitation for Tender

01	Ministry/Division	ICT
02	Agency/Organization	Dept. of Information & Communication Technology, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Santosh, Tangail-1902.
03	Procurement entity name	Co-Ordinator EDGE Project, ICT Department
04	Invitation for	Procurement of Supply of Training KIT
05	Invitation Ref. No.	EDGE-MBSTU/ICT/Proc/OTM(01)/2024-25
06	Date	23.12.2025
KEY INFORMATION		
07	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
08	Budget and source of fund	Revenue Budget
09	Tender name	Procurement of Supply of Training KIT for EDGE Project, ICT Department Office, MBSTU
		Date Time
10	Tender publication date	23.12.2025
11	Tender collection date	23.12.2025
12	Tender pre-bid meeting	N/A
13	Tender last selling date	06.01.2026
14	Tender closing date & time	07.01.2026 02:00pm
15	Opening date and time	07.01.2026 02:30pm
16	Name & address of the office selling tender document	EDGE Project Office, ICT Department, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Santosh, Tangail,
	Receiving tender document	do
	Opening tender document	do
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
17	Eligibility of tenderer	1) Tenderer will have legal, financial, professional capability to deliver and install the tendered items (as per PPR-2025) and have 03 (Three) years' experience in the relevant field. ii) The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Goods of at least One (1) contract successfully completed within last 03 (five) years, with a value of at least Tk. 30(Thirty) lakh.
18	Brief description of related services	As per schedule
19	Brief description of related services	As per schedule
20	Price of tender document (Tk.)	1,000.00
21	Tender security amount (Tk.)	1,00,000.00
22	Name of official inviting tender	Co-Ordinator, EDGE Project, ICT Department, MBSTU
23	Designation of official inviting tender	Co-Ordinator
24	Address of official inviting tender	EDGE Project Office, ICT Department, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Santosh, Tangail.
25	Contact details of official inviting	Phone No. 01817429260
26	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	

Co-Ordinator EDGE Project, Dept. of ICT, MBSTU



A number of the arrested in connection with the attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DMP

28 arrested

FROM PAGE 1
The arrestees were identified as Mainul Islam, 22; Zulfikar Ali Sourav, 22; Almas Ali, 32; Jubayer Hossain, 21; Ainul Haque Kashemi, 30; Abdur Rahman Palash, 30; Jannatul Naim, 21; Qari Muazbin Abdur Rahman, 34; Faisal Ahmed, 24; Yeasin, 39; and Mohammad Hashem, 24. Yeasin and Hashem were arrested in the Prothom Alo case.

In the forwarding report submitted before the court, the investigating officer said the process of identifying all the culprits is ongoing, adding, "It is necessary to keep the accused in jail custody until completion of the investigation and verification of their stated addresses."

He also said he would later seek remand for their interrogation to recover looted money and other valuables.

Following the investigating

officer's plea, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Jamshed Alam sent the 11 to jail in two separate orders - nine in The Daily Star's case and two in Prothom Alo's.

The court also set January 27 for submitting the probe reports in the cases.

Asked, Deputy Commissioner of DMP (media) Talebur Rahman said the political affiliations of the arrestees are yet to be ascertained, adding that police are currently verifying their backgrounds. "Investigators are also probing who incited the attacks."

According to the Detective Branch, the arrests followed scrutiny and review of CCTV footage from the night of the coordinated attacks (late December 18).

Police said the arrests came after separate drives at multiple locations based on information collected from various local sources and reliable intelligence.

US needs Greenland 'for national security'

Says Trump
AFP, Copenhagen
President Donald Trump on Monday reiterated that the United States needed Greenland for "national security" after his appointment of a special envoy to the Danish Arctic island triggered a new spat with Copenhagen.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has repeatedly said the United States "needs" the resource-rich autonomous territory for security reasons and has refused to rule out using force to secure it.

Trump on Sunday appointed Louisiana governor Jeff Landry as special envoy to Greenland, prompting anger from Denmark, which summoned the US ambassador.

BNP to share

FROM PAGE 2
"I have been working for the BNP in this constituency since 2015. My father was also elected from this seat. I have a deep connection with the people here. That is why I will contest the election as an independent candidate," she said.

Meanwhile, at yesterday's press briefing, Fakhru said if any BNP leader contests in these four seats, either as an independent or in any other manner, organisational action will be taken against them.

Although Jamiat Ulema-Islam has secured four seats under the alliance's seat-sharing arrangement, its candidates will contest the election using the party's own electoral symbol, the Date Tree (Khejur Gach). Jamiat had joined a simultaneous movement with the BNP during the fascist regime.

Fakhru also alleged that Bangladesh's law and order

situation has deteriorated due to the failure of the interim government, claiming that a vested quarter is conspiring to obstruct the country's democratic transition.

"We expected that the government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus would at least show its capability during these few months and run the country efficiently," he said.

"Bangladesh is now going through a transition period. A brutal fascist rule destroyed our values, democratic institutions and the economy," Fakhru said.

After emerging from that fascist rule, he said, the nation is now moving towards an election, with the expectation that an elected government and an elected parliament will guide the country and the people in the right direction.

Justice must be ensured for Dipu

FROM PAGE 3
"hurting religious sentiments." Later, his body was hung from a tree and set on fire.

"As ordinary citizens and human rights activists, we are deeply shocked and outraged by such injustice against a citizen of our country. Such a brutal killing is unacceptable," Alam said.

"Dipu, the sole breadwinner for his family, is survived by his wife and a young child. We cannot fill the void left by his death, but we can say that they are not alone. Many people stand beside them and are ready to protest," he said.

Referring to recent incidents, Alam said the killing of Shaheed Osman Hadi, attacks on newspaper offices and cultural organisations, and the killing of a worker send a dangerous signal, adding that those who incited such acts must also be brought to justice.

The 17-member delegation included Nagorik Udyog chief executive Zakir Hossain, Nari Mukti Kendra president Seema Dutta, writer and former Constitutional Reform Commission member Firoz Ahmed, human rights activists Dipayan Khisa and Shipon Kumar Rabidas, and representatives of BLAST, ALRD and Manobadhikar Sanskritik Foundation.

Regional media bodies decry

FROM PAGE 3
said the incidents were an attempt to silence independent media.

The assault on Nurul Kabir and the mob attacks on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, in particular, mark a serious and deadly escalation in the ongoing cycle of violence against and intimidation of the media in Bangladesh, it said.

The Guild said it was "gravely concerned" by reports of death threats against journalists circulating on social media and urged the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government to take immediate steps to ensure journalists' physical safety and to act swiftly against those responsible.

"These attacks constitute a clear violation of media freedom in South Asia and are an attempt to silence independent media voices and constrain civic discourse," the statement said.

Separately, strongly condemning the attacks, the Editors Guild of India

French, German

FROM PAGE 2
damage firsthand and observe the situation.

At that time, they emphasised the continuation of independent journalism without interruption and accountability following the attacks.

A mob attacked and vandalised The Daily Star office in Dhaka on Thursday night, setting fire to parts of the nine-storey building and

trapping more than two dozen journalists and staff inside for more than four hours.

Fire was set on the first and second floors, causing flames and thick smoke to spread rapidly through the building.

The journalists and office staff took shelter on the rooftop as the fire spread. They were rescued nearly four hours later by members of the army and the fire service.

Bonik Barta, BIDS

FROM PAGE 3
On the recent arson attacks at Prothom Alo and The Daily Star offices, Rahman said: "We need to respect freedom of expression and tolerance. Manzur was ideal in that regard. He always welcomed the voices of others."

Hossain Zillur Rahman, former adviser to the caretaker government and executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre; AK Enamul Haque, director general of BIDS; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor and publisher of Bonik Barta; and Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), also spoke.

Star goes live

FROM PAGE 3
people management processes.

The go-live event was attended by senior officials from The Daily Star, including Mizanur Rahman FCA, head of operations & CFO; Jahurul Islam, assistant general manager-accounts & finance; Md Mahmudul Hasan Khan, head of HR & admin; Md Tanvir Ahamed Narkan, head of IT; Md Nomanuzzaman,

manager-finance & accounts; Md Istiak Ahmed Bappy, assistant manager-administration; and Fahad Hossain, senior executive-human resources. AKJ iBOS representatives included Md Al-Amin, CMO and CRO; Md Ikbal Hoshen, CTO; Md Nazmul Haque Sabuj, AGM, business development; ARSM Nuray Alam Parash, product manager for PeopleDesk; and Shahinur Shamim, business analyst.

Act now against hate

FROM PAGE 3
"repeatedly, these incidents expose a disturbing erosion of our collective humanity, compounded by the absence of any notable, effective action by the state - an omission that further heightens our anxiety."

"These incidents place citizen security, a free press, cultural spaces, minority protection and democratic stability at risk ahead of the forthcoming election. Without effective prevention and protection by the state, neither public life remains safe nor elections credible," it said.

Regarding Osman Hadi's killing, the statement said the premeditated murder of "one of the most visible faces of the July uprising" exposed a profound crisis in everyday life.

It said Hadi believed diversity of opinion in the media is natural and stood firmly for freedom of expression and a free press. Despite his stance against media attacks, continued assaults on independent media following his death represent a grave insult to his values, for which responsibility lies with the state as well as an indifferent or complicit public.

The signatories strongly condemned what they described as premeditated and organised vandalism, looting and arson at the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, saying the most alarming aspect was the absence of credible assurances or effective preventive measures from the government despite repeated requests.

They said the attack on Chhayanaut and the subsequent arson at Udichi could not be seen as isolated incidents, but as part of a dangerous trend of shrinking space for free thought, media, culture and civic life. Failure by the state to act proactively,

they warned, effectively encourages perpetrators.

On the killing of Dipu Chandra Das, the statement said all allegations must be addressed through the rule of law, rejecting mob violence, incitement and so-called "public trials".

The signatories warned that certain groups are exploiting violence and incitement to deepen political instability and damage the electoral environment, raising concerns about whether state institutions are prepared and willing to safeguard public life, press freedom, cultural spaces, minority security and electoral democracy.

The statement concluded that unless the state, political parties, social organisations and the media take effective and visible action now, public trust, social stability and the country's democratic journey will face a deeper crisis, responsibility for which cannot be avoided.

The statement was signed by CSO Alliance, Naripokkho, ActionAid Bangladesh, Bangladesh Research Analysis and Information Network, Dushtha Shasthya Kendra, DSK Foundation, Eco-Social Development Organization and Human Development Centre.

Individual signatories included Sara Hossain and Asif Saleh, co-conveners of the CSO Alliance; Rasheda K Chowdhury, former caretaker government adviser; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; rights activist Sultana Kamal; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB; Sumaiya Islam, executive director of Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra; actors Rafiq Rashid Mithila and Azmeri Haque Badhon; and Dhaka University professor Geeti Ara Nasreen, among others.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Roads & Highways Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Road Division, Manikganj.
www.rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.5600.444.07.010.25-4299 Dated: 23/12/2025

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted. e-Tender is invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Manikganj for the procurement of following work(s).

Tender Notice & ID No.	Name of work	Last selling, closing date & time
04/e-GP/PMP/EE/2025-2026 (ID:1199751)	Construction of 49.50m Long P.C Girder (Boali-2) Bridge at 2nd Km (Ch.1+498m) of Utholi - Aricha National Highway (N-503) under Manikganj Road Division during the year 2025-2026	18-Jan-2026 17:00 & 19-Jan-2026 12:30

(Md. Shahriar Alam)
Executive Engineer RHD
Phone: 02-996610377
eeman@rhd.gov.bd

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
www.bpd.gov.bd

সূত্র নং: ২৭.১১.০০০০.৩০৪.০৫.০২৪.২৫.১৮৭২ তারিখ: ২২/১২/২৫

ঠিকানা পরিবর্তন সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড এর সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল ঠিকাদার, সরবরাহকারী, দরদাতা, পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠান, বিভিন্ন সরকারি ও বেসরকারি দপ্তর এবং বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সম্পত্তি ও যানবাহন পরিদপ্তর, বাবিউবো, ঢাকা এর স্মারক নং: ২৭.১১.০০০০.২১৪.২১.০০১.২৫.১২৪৩, তারিখ: ১৮/১১/২০২৫ মোতাবেক দাপ্তরিক কাজের স্বার্থে ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড এর কার্যালয় স্থানান্তর করা হয়েছে। এ মর্মে গত ০৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫খ্রিঃ থেকে ক্রয় পরিদপ্তরের সকল দাপ্তরিক কার্যক্রম, পত্র যোগাযোগ, দরপত্র ক্রয় ও দাখিল এবং অন্যান্য কার্যাদি নিম্নোক্ত নতুন ঠিকানায় পরিচালিত হবে। নিম্নে ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর, বিউবোর পুরাতন ও নতুন ঠিকানা উপস্থাপন করা হলো:

পুরাতন ঠিকানা	নতুন ঠিকানা
গোপালা ভবন (১০ম তলা) মতিঝিল ঢাকা-১০০০। ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড (বাবিউবো)	বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (১৩ তলা) ১ আব্দুল গণি রোড ঢাকা-১০০০। ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড (বাবিউবো)

অতএব, বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ডসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে উপরোক্ত নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগ করার জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ নান্নু মিয়া
পরিচালক, ক্রয় পরিদপ্তর
বাবিউবো, ঢাকা
মোবাইল নং: ০১৮১৯২২৩৪০১
ই-মেইল: dir.purchase@bpd.gov.bd

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৪৬৪(৪)/২৩/১২/২৫

বন ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট
বন আদালত, বাগেরহাট

তারিখ: ২৩/১২/২৫

আসামী হাজির হইবার আদেশ

যেহেতু নিম্ন তফসীল বর্ণিত আসামীর/আসামীদের বিরুদ্ধে মোফতারী পরোয়ানা পেজি রয়েছে এবং যেহেতু ক্রিমিনাল প্রসিডিওর কোড ১৮৯৮ এর ৮-৭ ও ৮-৮ ধারার বিধান মোতাবেক তাহার/তাহাদের বিরুদ্ধে কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হইয়াছে বা আত্মসমর্পণ করিয়াছেন ও তাহার/তাহাদের মোফতার হওয়ার আশঙ্কা সন্দেহ নাই।

সেহেতু উক্ত কোডের ৩০৩ বি (১) ধারার বিধান মতে তাহার/তাহাদের নামের বিপরীতে উল্লেখিত মানদণ্ড বিচারের জন্য এই আদেশ জারী হইবার ১০ (দশ) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে সংশ্লিষ্ট আদালতে হাজির হইবার নির্দেশ দেওয়া হলো। অন্যথায় তাহার/তাহাদের অনুপস্থিতিতে বিচারকার্য সম্পন্ন করা হইবে।

ক্রম নং	পদাতক আসামীর নাম ও ঠিকানা	বার্ তারিখ	মানদণ্ড নম্বর ও ধারা
১	মোঃ বশু হাঃ আত্ম (৪২) পিতা- ইসমাইল হাঃ স্বা-দক্ষিণ চন্দ্রনামা খানা-পাথরঘাট, জেলা-বরগুনা।	০৪/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ	সি (বন) নং-০৯/২০ শরণযোচনা P.O.R নং-৬৮/শখ অব ২০১৯-২০। ১৯২৭ সনের বন আইনের ২৬(১) (খ) ও ২৬ (১ক) ও (চ) ধারা।
২	মোঃ বোজন গোমস্তা আমুঃ (২৫) পিতা-মোঃ হাকিম গোমস্তা স্বা-দক্ষিণ জলপাইগাঁড় খানা-পাথরঘাট, জেলা-বরগুনা।	০৪/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ	সি (বন) নং-১৮/২১ শরণযোচনা P.O.R নং-৬৭/শখ অব ২০২০-২০। ১৯২৭ সনের বন আইনের ২৬(১) (খ) ও ২৬ (১ক) ও (চ) ধারা।

স্বাঃ
বন ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট
বন আদালত, বাগেরহাট

Employment Opportunity

Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (KAFCO) is an international joint venture and a leading manufacturer of Ammonia and Urea fertilizers in Bangladesh. The plant is located in Rangadia, Anowara, Chattogram, with its corporate office in Dhaka. KAFCO is inviting applications from qualified candidates for the following positions at the Plant Site Office in Chattogram.

1. Maintenance Engineer (Electrical) Vacant Position: 01

Requirements:

- Education-B.Sc. in Electrical & Electronic Engineering from a reputed Public University.
- Minimum CGPA 3.0 out of 4.0 in B.Sc. level.

2. Process Engineer Vacant Position: 04

Requirements:

- Education-B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering from a reputed Public University.
- Minimum CGPA 3.0 out of 4.0 in B.Sc. level.

Additional Requirements for all posts:

- For all posts, the maximum age is 32 years as of December 31, 2025. Age will be determined based on the SSC pass certificate. An affidavit is not acceptable as proof of age.
- Sound health is required for the industrial environment. The job offer is subject to medical examination by the Company's Medical Officer.
- Able to work under pressure, self-motivated, and aligned with company goals. Willing to work in rotating shifts.
- Job Location - KAFCO Plant, Rangadia, Anowara, Chattogram.
- Employed candidates must get approval from the appropriate authority before applying. All employed candidates should also submit the original no-objection clearance issued by their employer at the time of the viva examination.
- No TA/DA will be provided for taking part in the written examination.
- Original copies of all certificates must be presented at the time of the viva examination and one set of attested photocopies must be submitted.
- Additionally, a photocopy of the national identity card (NID) must be submitted.
- KAFCO authorities reserve the right to reduce or increase the number of positions listed in the recruitment advertisement, change the title of the position, alter the examination schedule, and suspend or cancel the recruitment process at any stage without providing a reason.
- The KAFCO authority's decision regarding recruitment will be final.
- Candidates will be disqualified at any stage of the recruitment process for submitting fake or forged documents or statements.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for the viva.

Application Procedure:

- The name of the post should be clearly written on the envelope and on the CV.
- Candidates should send their CV, attested copies of all academic certificates and mark sheets, experience certificates, a copy of their NID, and a recent passport-sized photograph (these are mandatory documents) to the HR Department at KAFCO, IDB Bhaban (13th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207, by January 20, 2026.

5 Pakistani cops killed in 'gun, bomb' attack

REUTERS, Peshawar

Five Pakistani police personnel were killed yesterday when their van was ambushed in a bombing and shooting attack in the country's northwest, provincial police said, as Pakistan struggles with a resurgence of militant violence.

Provincial police said the vehicle was first targeted with improvised explosives before the attackers opened fire, killing four officers and the driver.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack.

The attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Karak district, a region relatively unscathed by militant attacks, comes as relations between Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan have collapsed after a surge in violence.



Israeli forces take part in a raid in Qalandya, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz has said the military would never fully withdraw from the Gaza Strip for security reasons and that a civilian-military army unit would be established in the Palestinian enclave.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian air strikes cut power across Ukraine

Three people, including a child, killed; five others hurt; Poland scrambles jets near border

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia hammered Ukraine with missiles and drones in a new air attack yesterday, authorities said, killing at least three people including a child and triggering emergency power cuts across the country as Ukrainians gear up to celebrate Christmas.

Moscow's latest combined strike hit energy facilities in western regions the hardest, said Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, and came days after another round of US-led peace talks to end the nearly four-year-old war.

Yesterday's attack killed two people including a four-year-old in the central Zhytomyr region and one person outside the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, where local officials said at least five were also wounded.

"This Russian strike sends an extremely clear signal about Russia's priorities," President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on X, adding that it involved more than 30 missiles and 650 drones across at least 13 regions.

"An attack ahead of Christmas, when people simply want to be with their families, at home, and safe."

Ukraine's grid operator said most regions were experiencing emergency power outages as a result of the attack.

Critical and energy infrastructure was damaged in the northern Chernihiv, western Lviv and southern Odesa regions, local authorities said.

Poland, a Nato member bordering western Ukraine, said Polish and allied aircraft were deployed to protect Polish



airspace after Russian strikes targeted areas of western Ukraine near the border.

Moscow has stepped up strikes on Ukrainian energy and logistics to boost pressure on Kyiv as it seeks to soften the terms of a US-backed deal that could involve painful concessions.

Weekend peace talks in Miami brought together US officials with Ukrainian and European delegations, alongside separate contacts with Russian representatives, as Washington tested the scope for a settlement.

Russia, which is also pressing a battlefield offensive against outnumbered Ukrainian troops, has demanded that Ukraine cede its eastern Donbas region and significantly restrict its military capabilities before it stops fighting.

"Putin still cannot accept that he must stop killing," Zelensky wrote on X.

VENUE ROW Thailand-Cambodia border talks in doubt

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand yesterday rejected a request by Cambodia to hold bilateral talks in a neutral country, leaving a planned meeting to negotiate an end to deadly border clashes in doubt.

The nations' long-standing border conflict reignited this month, shattering an earlier truce, killing more than 40 people and displacing over 900,000 on both sides, officials said.

The clashing neighbours on Monday agreed to negotiate truce terms this week, but Cambodia asked Thailand to hold the talks in a neutral venue, Malaysia's capital.

Thailand's defence ministry, however, said yesterday that the bilateral border committee meeting would go ahead in Thailand's Chanthaburi province from today as planned.

"We guarantee Chanthaburi is safe. This province is the original plan for hosting the GBC (General Border Committee) even before the fighting started," Thai defence ministry spokesperson Surasant Kongsiri told reporters.

Surasant said officials from the border committee would meet from today to Saturday, adding that whether the meeting happened or not depended on Cambodia.

PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST Greta Thunberg arrested in London

AFP, London

London police yesterday arrested Swedish activist Greta Thunberg at a demonstration in support of pro-Palestinian hunger strikers, Palestinian activist groups said.

Thunberg's arrest makes her the highest profile person to be detained by police since the government banned the Palestine Action group under anti-terror laws.

"Greta Thunberg was arrested under the Terrorism Act at the Prisoners for Palestine lock-on protest," Prisoners for Palestine said in a statement.

Thunberg was holding a sign reading "I support the Palestine Action prisoners. I oppose genocide", it added. The 22-year-old was among hundreds of people who boarded a flotilla in October that tried to break through the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

City of London Police said officers had arrested three people on suspicion of criminal damage at a building in London's financial quarter.

It said the arrests came after "hammers and red paint were used to damage a building".

"A man and a woman had been arrested on suspicion of criminal damage. They glued themselves nearby and specialist officers are working to release them, and bring them into police custody," a statement said.

"A little while later, a 22-year-old woman also attended the scene. She has been arrested for displaying an item (in this case a placard) in support of a proscribed organisation (in this case Palestine Action) contrary to Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000," it added.

POST-COUP MYANMAR Junta using 'brutal violence' to force people to vote: UN

AFP, Geneva

The UN said yesterday Myanmar's junta was using violence and intimidation to force people to vote in upcoming military-controlled elections, while armed opposition groups were using similar tactics to keep people away.

"The military authorities in Myanmar must stop using brutal violence to compel people to vote and stop arresting people for expressing any dissenting views," United Nations rights chief Volker Turk said in a statement.

Myanmar's junta is set to preside over voting starting Sunday, touting heavily restricted polls as a return to democracy five years after it ousted the last elected government, triggering civil war.

But former civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains jailed and her hugely popular party dissolved after soldiers ended the nation's decade-long democratic experiment in February 2021.

International monitors have dismissed the phased month-long vote as a rebranding of martial rule.

Turk warned yesterday that civilians were being threatened by both the military authorities and armed opposition groups over their participation in the polls.

China implies US hypocrisy over nuke disarmament

REUTERS, Beijing



China yesterday urged the United States to fulfil its nuclear disarmament responsibilities after a draft Pentagon report said China was likely to have loaded more than 100 intercontinental ballistic missiles in sites near the Mongolian border and showed no desire for arms control talks.

"As a super nuclear power with the largest nuclear arsenal, the most urgent task for the US is to earnestly fulfil the special and priority responsibility for nuclear disarmament," Lin Jian, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, said at a regular press conference in Beijing. The US should "substantially reduce its nuclear arsenal to create conditions for other nuclear-weapon states to join the nuclear disarmament process," Lin added.

In a draft report seen by Reuters, the Pentagon said China had probably installed more than 100 solid-fuelled DF-31 ICBMs in the three silo fields close to Mongolia. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a Chicago-based non-profit, has said China is expanding and modernising its weapons stockpile faster than any other nuclear-armed power.

"We continue to see no appetite from Beijing for pursuing such measures or more comprehensive arms control discussions," the report said.

চলাছ ...

রিহ্যাব ফেয়ার ২০২৫

২৪-২৭ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৫
প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০ টা থেকে রাত ৯ টা পর্যন্ত
স্বানং বাংলাদেশ চীন মৈত্রী সম্মেলন কেন্দ্র, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা

প্রতিদিন লটারীতে আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার

টিকেট এর সাথে রিফ্রেশমেন্ট ফ্রি

DIAMOND SPONSORS

GOLD SPONSORS

CO-SPONSORS

REHAB

REAL ESTATE & HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF BANGLADESH

www.rehabfair2025.com

স্বাবর সম্পত্তির বায়না বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এত ঘারা সর্ব সাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিম্ন তফসিল বর্ণিত জু-সম্পত্তি বন্দর স্ট্রল ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড ও শেলটেক (প্রাঃ) লিমিটেড এর সহিত বিক্রয়ের জন্য ইতোমধ্যে বায়না দলিল সম্পাদিত হইয়াছে। এমতাবস্থায় তফসিল বর্ণিত জু-সম্পত্তিতে যদি কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের কোন প্রকার স্বত্ব/স্বার্থ জড়িত থাকে তবে অতিসরুর উক্ত স্বত্ব/স্বার্থের সমর্থনে দলিলাদি সহ নিম্ন টিকানায় যোগাযোগের অনুরোধ করা হইল।

সম্পত্তির তফসিল

জেলা- ঢাকা, থানা-রামপুরা, সাব রেজিস্ট্রি অফিস-খিলগাঁও, জে.এল নং ৪ সি.এস-২৮৯, এস.এ-১২১, আর.এস-৪০ ও ঢাকা সিটি জরিপ-৩,মৌজা-"মেরানিয়া"

খতিয়ান নং			দাগ নং			নামজারী খতিয়ান ও জোত নং	জমির পরিমাণ (শতাংশ)
সি.এস	এস.এ	আর.এস	সি.এস ও এস.এ	আর.এস	মহানগর জরিপ		
১১৮	১৮৫	৩১৬	২৪	৪	৯	৪	২০.০০
২০৬	৩২৬	৩৮	২৬৬৭	৫	১০	৩	২৩.৮৮
১০৬	১৬৭	১২	২৬৬৭	৬	১১	৩	০০.৫৪
-	-	১	২৪	১০	১৫	৪	১৫.০০
৪৫	৫৫	২৪৪	২৪	১৪	১৯	৪	১৫.০০
১৩৯	২১৭	১৬১	২৪	১৫	২০	৪	০৬.৫৮
মোট জমির পরিমাণ							৮১.০০

যাহা ইষ্টার্ন হাউজিং লিমিটেড কোম্পানীর জরুরুল ইসলাম সিটি (বন্দুশী নিউ টাউন) এর অধিনস্থ 'বন্দুশী' হাউজিং প্রকল্পের সে-আউট প্র্যানের প্রস্তাবিত প্লট নং- এস-১২, মেইন রোড ও এডিনিউ-৪, রুক নং-৭। প্রস্তাবিত ঢাকা সিটি শপিং ফল।

যোগাযোগ

মনোভোগ চন্দ্র রায়, মহা ব্যবস্থাপক, আইন

শেলটেক (প্রাঃ) লিমিটেড

শেলটেক টাওয়ার ৬০, শেখ রাসেল স্ট্রার (নতুন), ৫৫ লেক সার্কিস, কলাবাগান (পুরাতন), পশ্চিম পাছপা, ঢাকা-১২০৫।
মোবাইল - ০১৭১৩০৯১৭৫১। ই-মেইল - law@sheltech-bd.com

BPL: The testing ground for World Cup hopefuls

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) places heavy expectations on players from the franchises' side, creating a competitive grind that sharpens Bangladesh's national team toolbox, particularly those in the pipeline. From that perspective, the BPL offers a major platform to showcase performance in franchise cricket, but this time it presents a unique opportunity for players aiming to break into the Bangladesh T20I squad ahead of the World Cup in February.

That opportunity, however, also brings added pressure. Bangladesh T20I skipper Litton Das recently stated that the "team has been ready since the Asia Cup" following the Tigers' final bilateral series against Ireland before the global event. Litton further indicated that the window of opportunity is limited, suggesting that only extraordinary performances in the 12th edition of the BPL would "open doors" for players not involved in the most recent T20I series.

For Bangladesh, the biggest concern remains the batting department. While players such as Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon and Saif Hassan have shown improvement at international level, the BPL could just as easily work



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

against their World Cup prospects if runs are not forthcoming.

Jaker Ali, Nurul Hasan and Shamim Hossain were each tried during the Ireland T20I series, but none provided a clear solution to Bangladesh's middle-order issues. Mahidul Islam Ankon, included to assess "backup options", did not even get a game.

Even Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto is looking at the BPL as a route back into the T20I setup. With possibly just one middle-order slot available,

the tournament represents a major opportunity for Ankon and others to stake a claim for World Cup selection.

Ankon's Noakhali Express held their final training session in Dhaka yesterday before departing for Sylhet on Wednesday for the first phase of the BPL, and the batter remained optimistic about his chances.

"I feel if I can play good cricket, that chance will come," Ankon said.

Ankon typically bats at number seven or eight in franchise cricket, roles that are

currently of importance to the national team.

"Those of us in the middle or lower middle order may see our positions change at any time. So we are not trying to settle into a specific role. Instead, we are discussing possible batting positions and individual plans," he added, referring to discussions with Noakhali coach Khaled Mahmud.

Ankon was among the standout performers in the previous edition of the BPL, scoring 316 runs for Khulna Tigers at an average of just over 35 and a strike rate exceeding 170. Players such as Towhid Hridoy and Shanto had previously used the BPL as a launchpad into the national side. Aware of the dangers of carrying excess pressure, Ankon also mentioned he does not want to "think too far ahead".

Competing for a place in the playing XI alongside players such as Jaker, and against international stars set to feature in the BPL, could shape future selections. Like Ankon, several players will hope their performances in this edition resemble a final push for World Cup inclusion. After failing to make a significant impact in tournaments such as the Rising Stars Asia Cup, the BPL offers players like Ankon and Shanto a final chance to press their case.

"Our primary task is to manage BPL 12 effectively on the field. Regarding security, we are following the instructions and guidance of the relevant law enforcement agencies. We will act accordingly based on the situation and are keeping a close watch on everything."



BCB President Aminul Islam Bulbul told reporters yesterday while addressing security concerns over the upcoming BPL 12, which is scheduled to begin on December 26 in Sylhet.

FEDERATION CUP Kings, Mohammedan produce stalemate

SPORTS REPORTER

Reigning champions Bashundhara Kings survived a stoppage-time scare to play out a goalless draw against rivals Mohammedan in a high stakes Federation Cup Group B encounter at the Shaheed Dharendraanath Datta Stadium in Cumilla on Tuesday.

The result saw 11-time Federation Cup champions Mohammedan maintain second place in the five-team group with five points from three matches, level with leaders Fortis FC. Four-time champions Kings, meanwhile, remained fourth with two points after registering their second consecutive draw in the competition.

Still reeling from a 2-0 defeat to Bangladesh Police FC in the Bangladesh Football League last Saturday, Kings struggled to penetrate a resolute Mohammedan backline, whom they had beaten twice earlier this season in the Challenge Cup final and the professional league. Kings' attack lacked sharpness throughout the match and Faysal Ahmed Fahim's series of crosses went in vain.

The opening half was evenly contested, with both teams battling for control in midfield. Kings briefly thought they had taken the lead when Rakib Hossain found the net from a Fahim square pass, but the goal was ruled out for offside. Mohammedan appealed for a penalty when Ghanaian forward Samson Boateng's header struck the hand of defender Saad Uddin inside the area, but referee Nasir Uddin waved play on.

Kings applied pressure in the final 10 minutes and came close on several occasions, but Mohammedan goalkeeper Sujon Hossain produced a series of fine saves to preserve a clean sheet.

Mohammedan nearly snatched victory in stoppage time when Samuel Boateng hesitated inside the six-yard box, allowing Kings captain Topu Barman to clear the danger and ensure the champions escaped with a point.



SALAH'S LATE STRIKE RESCUES EGYPT

Mohamed Salah struck a stoppage-time winner as Egypt came from behind to beat Zimbabwe 2-1 in their opening Group B match of the Africa Cup of Nations finals in Morocco on Monday. Zimbabwe took a surprise lead through Prince Dube, Omar Marmoush equalised, before Salah sealed victory late.

PHOTO: X

The pauseless winter grind

STAR SPORTS DESK

There are plenty of moments in an English Premier League footballer's life that might inspire envy, but playing through the holiday season is unlikely to be one of them.

Life in the Premier League is unrelenting at the best of times. The standards are unforgiving, the pace relentless and the scrutiny constant. Yet it reaches another level in December when fixtures come thick and fast, squeezed tightly around Christmas and New Year, just as much of European football shuts down.

For supporters, this is often the highlight of the season – a festive feast of football that fills cozy afternoons on the couch. But while fans sit back with hot chocolate and Christmas treats, spare a thought for the players grinding through matches in biting cold because unlike most of Europe, England offers no proper winter break.

A winter break is designed as a mid-season pause for rest and recovery, something embraced by LaLiga, the Bundesliga, Ligue 1, and Serie A. The Premier League, however, has long resisted the idea. Tradition plays a huge role, with



Boxing Day and New Year fixtures deeply ingrained and financially vital for clubs and broadcasters. Add to that the burden of domestic cups – the FA Cup and League Cup – and an already congested calendar, and a full shutdown becomes difficult.

The league did experiment with split winter breaks in 2019-20, 2021-22 and 2023-24, but these were half measures at best. There was no complete pause, with matches spread across two weekends and FA Cup

replays intruding into the supposed rest period. Covid disrupted plans in 2020-21, the winter World Cup ruled out a break in 2022-23, and the expanded European calendar has now killed the idea altogether for 2024-25.

This season, Ligue 1 will pause for 17 days, from December 15 to January 1. The Bundesliga will also enjoy a 17-day break, returning on January 9, while LaLiga will have a shorter 10-day hiatus. The Premier League and Serie A, meanwhile, will plough on. By the time the Bundesliga resumes, Premier League teams will have played four matches.

The toll is not lost on those who have lived it. Bayern Munich manager and former Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany recently reflected on his time in England: "In total, I had no winter break, no vacation for 13 years. I once had six days off in an entire year. For physical and mental health, I now feel how valuable this is."

Yet for all the strain it places on players, the festive schedule remains a cornerstone of English football. And as ever, while it is gruelling for those on the pitch, it promises another blockbuster holiday season for fans.

A LOOK BACK AT 2025

A year when women's sports surged

STAR SPORTS DESK

BANGLADESH'S PROMISE AMID GLOBAL MOMENTUM

While women's sport surged globally in 2025, Bangladesh also found moments that pointed toward a more promising future. Despite limited preparation, Nigar Sultana Joty and her teammates showed resilience and growth in a year that tested both resources and resolve.

The Joty-led Tigresses could not better their record of winning more than a solitary match at an ODI World Cup, but their performances at the 2025 edition, jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka from September to November, offered signs of steady progress. Bangladesh began their campaign with a thumping victory over Pakistan and went on to push South Africa, England and Sri Lanka into narrow wins.

The match against Sri Lanka proved particularly agonising. Chasing 203, Bangladesh fell just seven runs short after losing their final five wickets in the space of six deliveries for a single run, a late collapse that turned what could have been a landmark victory into a painful near miss. Still, the Tigresses earned credit for competing fiercely against higher-ranked sides despite a patched-up preparation phase that saw them play age-level boys' teams due to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's inability to arrange international warm-up matches.

Away from cricket, Bangladesh's women

footballers carved out a historic year of their own. Despite a fallout between some senior players and the coach, the team achieved a first-ever qualification for the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup. Victories over hosts Myanmar, Bahrain and Turkmenistan saw Bangladesh top their qualification group, including emphatic 7-0 wins



against Bahrain and Turkmenistan and a memorable 2-1 win over higher-ranked Myanmar.

That commanding run propelled Bangladesh from 128th to 104th in the FIFA Women's World Rankings, making them the biggest climbers in early August and underlining a breakthrough year for the women's game at home.

INDIA'S LONG-AWAITED MOMENT ON THE WORLD STAGE

At the global level, cricket delivered one of the year's defining moments as India

lifted their maiden Women's Cricket World Cup. The triumph sparked nationwide celebrations, with the streets of Mumbai turning into a carnival as fireworks lit up the sky, horns blared, and crowds danced late into the night.

Across the country, fans gathered around television screens in tea stalls



and living rooms, marking what felt like a cultural milestone. The victory also saw the brand value of India's top women cricketers soar, reflecting how success on the field translated into wider recognition and visibility.

FOOTBALL BREAKS BARRIERS ACROSS EUROPE

Women's football continued its upward trajectory in 2025, highlighted by a European Championship in Switzerland that reached new peaks. Ticket sales eclipsed those of the 2022 tournament

even before the final matches were played, signalling growing demand and interest.

Hosts Switzerland captured attention with a dream run to their first-ever quarterfinal, igniting enthusiasm in a country better known for producing elite skiers and tennis players. After their exit against Spain, coach Pia Sundhage captured



the broader impact of the moment, saying: "We lost the game, but I think we gained a lot. When people shouted my name, I feel they were shouting for women's football."

Off the pitch, Arsenal shattered the women's transfer record by signing Canadian forward Olivia Smith from Liverpool for one million pounds, making her the first female footballer to cross the seven-figure barrier.

RECORD CROWDS REDEFINE WHAT IS POSSIBLE

Attendance records fell dramatically in

2025, most notably at the Women's Rugby World Cup in England. More than 440,000 tickets were sold – three times the number from the 2021 edition – culminating in a final at Twickenham watched by 81,885 fans, the largest crowd ever for a women's rugby match.

More than half of the spectators were female, with 50 percent attending their first women's rugby match. The tournament also generated a peak UK television audience of 5.8 million.

WNBA AND NEW LEAGUES CARRY THE MOMENTUM FORWARD

The WNBA closed the year with further signs of expansion and influence. The league grew to 13 teams with plans to reach 15 teams in 2026 and 18 by 2030.

A'ja Wilson delivered a dominant season, becoming the first four-time WNBA MVP while also winning her third defensive player of the year award, Finals MVP and leading the Las Vegas Aces to their third title in four seasons. Her season was capped by a Time Magazine cover and a Nike campaign that underscored her impact.

Beyond the WNBA, 2025 saw the launch of several new leagues, including the Unrivaled 3x3 women's basketball league, the Women's Professional Baseball League, League One Volleyball and Canada's Northern Super League. Together, they reflected a year in which women's sport not only reached new heights, but expanded its footprint, visibility and future potential.



All set for Tarique's homecoming

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman is set to return to Bangladesh tomorrow with his wife and daughter after 17 years in exile.

The family will depart from London's Heathrow Airport at 6:15pm Bangladesh time on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight. They are expected to arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka around noon tomorrow via Sylhet.



After landing, he will be received by BNP Standing Committee members. He will then proceed by road to a reception programme at the 300 Feet area in Purbachal. Party leaders and activists will line both sides of the road to greet him.

Following his speech from the stage, Tarique will travel by road to Evercare Hospital to visit his ailing mother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia, who has been undergoing treatment there for over a month.

After meeting his mother, he will go to Firoza in Gulshan, where he will stay.

The BNP has taken extensive preparations for Tarique's homecoming.

The party expects around 50 lakh people to gather in Dhaka on the day, according to Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of BNP. Supporters will stand along both sides of the road from the airport to the 300 Feet area to welcome him.

Security is being seen as a major challenge, particularly in managing the crowd around Tarique's motorcade. A BNP team held a meeting last night with senior officials of various law enforcement agencies to discuss security arrangements.

The overall responsibility for Tarique's security from the airport to Gulshan has been assigned to AKM Shamsul Islam. Under his leadership, multiple teams, including the chairperson's security force, will be deployed. Members of Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal and Swetchhasebak Dal will also assist in maintaining discipline.

Meanwhile, entry to the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area will remain restricted to passengers from

SEE PAGE 3 COL 5



A large crowd gathered at Chhayanaout in Dhanmondi yesterday for 'Gaane Gaane Sanghati Samabesh', a show of musical solidarity in response to recent attacks on cultural spaces and growing concerns over freedom of expression. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ATTACK ON CULTURE Solidarity through music at Chhayanaout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When the gates of Chhayanaout opened yesterday afternoon, there was no usual chirping of children or the familiar strains of music drifting through its premises. Instead, a quiet resolve filled the space as a large crowd gathered for a peaceful cultural protest titled "Gaane Gaane Sanghati Samabesh", organised in response to recent attacks on cultural institutions and growing concerns over freedom of expression.

What unfolded was not a routine programme, but a collective assertion that culture, memory, and artistic expression would not be silenced by fear or violence.

Artists of Chhayanaout, along with those gathered for the peaceful protest, raised their voices together to sing "O Amar Desher Mati", "Gramer Nawjowan Hindu Musolman", and "Amar Mukti Aloy Aloy".

Earlier in the day, near Abahani Club Field, cultural figures including

SEE PAGE 3 COL 3

'Way you speak isn't fit for a court' ICT judge rebukes Tajul; tribunal frames charges against Hasina, 16 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A judge of International Crimes Tribunal-1 rebuked Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam for his courtroom conduct, saying the manner in which he addressed the tribunal was inappropriate. "You have to have

SEE PAGE 3 COL 2

'Hadi murder being used to foil polls' Alleges brother of slain July frontliner at Shahbagh rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sharif Omar Hadi, brother of slain Inqilab Moncho spokesperson and July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi, yesterday alleged that a vested quarter within the government orchestrated the killing to derail the upcoming national election.



Addressing the government at a "Shahidi Shophoth" (Martyr's Oath) programme organised by Inqilab Moncho in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh, Omar Hadi said, "It is you who had Osman Hadi killed, and now you are trying to foil the election by using this as an issue."

He said his brother wanted the national election to be held by February and urged the authorities not to disrupt the election environment.

"Ensure a speedy trial of the killers so the election environment is not harmed. The government has failed to show us any visible progress. If justice for Osman Hadi is not delivered, you too will be compelled to flee Bangladesh one day," he said.

Omar Hadi further claimed that his brother was killed because he did not bow to any agency or "foreign masters".

Speaking at the rally, Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber reiterated the 30-working day ultimatum given to the government to identify and arrest the killers, first announced in a press statement on Monday.

Jaber alleged that "a deep conspiracy" is underway to destroy the achievements of the July uprising and Bangladesh's sovereignty through the killing.

He claimed that international intelligence agencies and "fascist associates" operating inside

SEE PAGE 3 COL 1



Security personnel scuffle with Vishva Hindu Parishad activists and others as they try to stop a protest march to the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi yesterday. The march was organised to condemn the killing of a garment worker in Mymensingh's Bhaluka. PHOTO: AFP

5 killed in clash over Hatia char

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least five people were shot dead, and another was injured in a clash between two groups over the occupation of shoal land in Hatia upazila of Noakhali yesterday.

The clash occurred around 10:00am at Jaglarchar village. One of the deceased was identified as Alauddin, 35, of Char Amaullah village in the same upazila. The identities

SEE PAGE 3 COL 4

Israel vows to remain in Gaza

Defence Minister Katz pledges northern outposts in the Palestinian territory

AFP, Jerusalem

Defence Minister Israel Katz yesterday vowed Israel will remain in Gaza and pledged to establish outposts in the north of the Palestinian territory, according to a video of a speech published by Israeli media.

His remarks, reported across Israeli media, come as a fragile US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas holds in Gaza.

Mediators are pressing for the

implementation of the next phases of the truce, which would involve an Israeli withdrawal from the territory.

Speaking at an event in the Israeli settlement of Beit El in the occupied West Bank, Katz said: "We are deep inside Gaza, and we will never leave Gaza -- there will be no such thing."

"We are there to protect, to prevent what happened (from happening again)," he added, according to a video published by Israeli news site Ynet.

SEE PAGE 3 COL 1

Abducted trader found dead in Bogura Two detained, murder case filed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police recovered the body of a businessman from a microbus in Adamdighi of Bogura early yesterday, hours after he was abducted at gunpoint from the district's Dupchanchia upazila on Monday night.

The deceased -- Pintu Akanda, 35, owner of the Lotto showroom in Dupchanchia -- was from Lohagacha village in Raninagar upazila, Naogaon.

"We primarily suspect that Pintu was strangled

SEE PAGE 3 COL 4

Today is the 52nd Death Anniversary of **Begum Firdaus Rizvi**

We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember her in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of her soul



ILLUSTRATION: E. RAZA RONNY

Mobile Wallets Power Bangladesh's NEW FINANCIAL PULSE

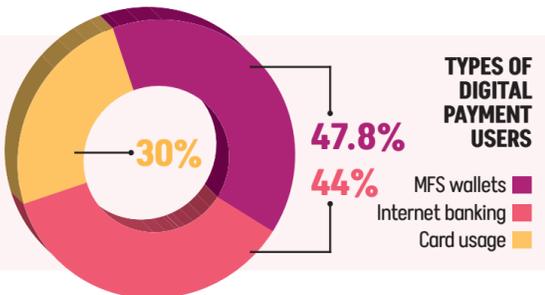
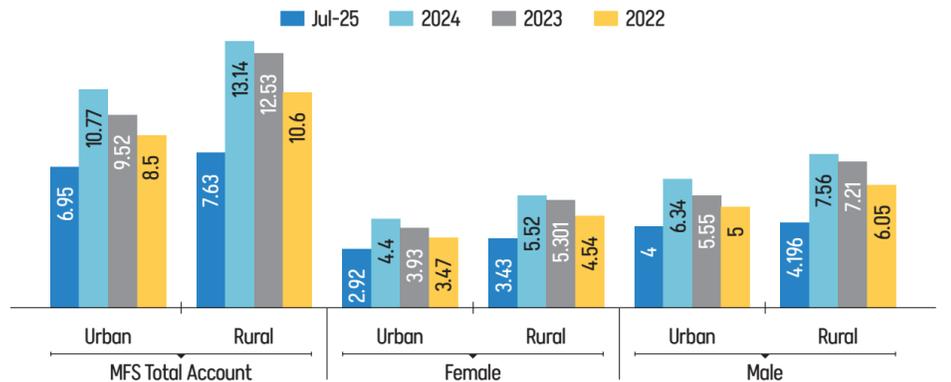
In 2024, transactions via Mobile Financial Services (MFS) reached **17.37** lakh crore taka

Bangladesh spends around Tk **200** billion annually for cash management according to the Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur

The maintenance cost of the printed money is nearly **0.5%** of the country's GDP

84.9% of workers are in informal jobs, with little digital literacy and bank access.

MFS ACCOUNTS BY AREA AND GENDER OVER THE YEARS



TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Mobile financial services (MFS) have become Bangladesh's fast lane to financial inclusion and economic mobility. According to the central bank report in 2024, MFS customer transactions hit Tk 17.37 lakh crore — a 28.42% jump from 2023 — while registered accounts topped 23.86 crore, showing how wallets moved from convenience to necessity. From DPS and salary disbursements to

instant microloans and merchant QR payments, mobile platforms are stitching daily commerce into phone screens and tills across towns. This boom brings clear benefits like faster remittances, cheaper payments and income paths for agents and small traders, but also fresh frictions. Fragmented fee structures, uneven interoperability between providers and variable consumer protection leave gaps that could slow uptake or erode trust if left unaddressed. Millions of newly active users, including women and rural customers long kept out of traditional banking can now save, borrow, sell with a few taps, expanding livelihoods and creating financial trails that policymakers and firms can build on.

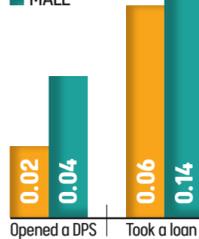
The challenge is to convert rapid adoption into durable benefits: better pricing, clearer protections and products designed for low-income users. Get that right and Bangladesh's cashless moment won't be a flash — it will be a new economic lifeline.

bkash's Savings and Loan services

Number of people (in crores)

SOURCE: BKASH

■ FEMALE ■ MALE



Registered MFS Account Transactions

Amount (lakh crore taka)



SOURCE: BANGLADESH BANK



TAREQ REFAT ULLAH KHAN
Managing Director & CEO
BRAC Bank PLC.

“Partnership between banks and MFS is evolving from basic transfers to a full digital financial marketplace. The future lies in embedded finance, supply chain finance, and open banking - all integrated into a secure, regulated ecosystem. Our ambition is to combine the bank's trust, product strength, and regulatory discipline with the reach and convenience of MFS platforms - making advanced financial services accessible to every Bangladeshi.”

Building a financial highway for all

With the rise of digital finance, BRAC Bank is creating a seamless 'financial highway' for everyone. Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, MD & CEO of BRAC Bank, shares how this integration makes money management easier for everyone—offering instant transfers, digital savings, and secure payments for daily needs.

The Daily Star (TDS): How is your bank bridging the gap between Core Banking Solutions (CBS) and MFS wallets to ensure a seamless flow of funds for the average user?

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan (TRUK): At BRAC Bank, we connect every account, every wallet, and every transaction into one continuous digital highway. Our focus is on ensuring that customers experience their bank account and MFS wallet as part of a single, seamless financial ecosystem. Customers can:

- Transfer money instantly between bank accounts and wallets.
- Top up their wallet directly from their bank account.
- Pay utility bills and other services using their bank account.

TDS: How is your bank partnering with MFS platforms to assess creditworthiness and disburse nano-loans to individuals?

TRUK: We have not yet launched such a partnership for nano-loans with MFS. However, this initiative sits at the heart of financial inclusion, and we are actively exploring it. This would allow banks to offer pre-approved, collateral-free nano-

or micro-loans directly through an MFS app. This is the future of "Bank-on-MFS."

TDS: Could you elaborate on any Deposit Pension Schemes (DPS) or savings products your bank has integrated with MFS apps?

TRUK: We have introduced Digital DPS and Digital Savings accounts accessible directly from partner MFS apps. Customers can open these accounts within minutes and schedule small, periodic auto-deductions from their wallet. Rural customers are embracing goal-based savings, while urban customers value the automation.

TDS: Is your bank developing merchant solutions or QR-based payment gateways?

TRUK: Our Bangla QR and Merchant Payment Gateway solutions are designed with micro-entrepreneurs in mind. A tea stall owner, a grocery shop operator, or a freelancer can display a single BRAC Bank QR code to accept payments from any major MFS app or bank account. Funds settle directly into the merchant's bank account in near real-time.

TDS: What technological advancements or security protocols are ensuring safe API integration with MFS providers?

TRUK: Security is never negotiable. Our integrations are built on robust systems designed to protect customer data at every level. We ensure foolproof security through Advanced API security, tokenisation, 24/7 SOC monitoring, and by complete regulatory compliance.

THE DIGITAL WALLET

Revolution in Bangladesh

ABRAR HAMIM

It has been more than a decade since services like Rocket, bKash and Nagad started their journeys in Bangladesh to introduce digital and cashless transactions, easing the lives of normal people in the process. With time, almost the whole nation has adopted these services to pay bills, send money back to loved ones at home or even save money in a digital platform. But, it is common knowledge that people from different age groups have different views about technological advancements.

A CROSS-GENERATIONAL SHIFT

Yet, it would seem like people, no matter how old or young, who use these services have a similar and positive perspective about these digital platforms. "I have been using bKash since the end of 2017", says Enayet Moula, a private service holder. "I was a bit sceptical at first, but through the years, I cannot believe how easy my life got with bKash. To add an example, a few days back, my son went to buy a pair of shoes alone, but he did not have money. He chose the shoes he

case appeals strongly to older professionals and retirees who prioritize long-term security.

Conversely, the younger generation is increasingly leveraging the instant loan facilities. For students and young professionals living on tight budgets, the ability to secure collateral-free "nano-loans" for emergencies is highly appealing. Amrin notes the utility of this feature among her peers: "A friend of mine was recently short on cash for his semester registration fee just a day before the deadline. He took a small digital loan via the app and paid it back the next week. No paperwork, no hassle—just an instant solution." While older users view the platforms as a digital bank branch for savings, the youth view them as a financial safety net for immediate liquidity.

NAVIGATING FRAUD

But every garden has its weeds, as there have also been some negative experiences among the users, too. Many people were subjected to deception by some miscreants, using different ploys to convince consumers to tell them their PINs and consequently steal money from their accounts. "It happened back in 2019", started Rakibul Hasan, a businessman, "I was at home when someone called and said that they were from bKash Customer Care and that my number was blocked from bKash for some reason. I panicked because a significant amount of money was in my bKash account. They instructed me to send them a code that was sent to my phone just then, and using some tricks, they also extracted my PIN from me. They took away almost 30,000

As trust in these platforms grows, users are moving beyond simple transfers to utilising financial products like digital savings and nano-loans, though usage patterns differ by age. For the older demographic, the convenience of digital savings schemes (DPS) has been a game-changer.



wanted to buy and then called me to pay for them through bKash. Life has become so simple with these services."

Consumers seem to be very happy with these services because of their convenience and security. Irrespective of the age gap, everyone seems to be of one mind when it comes to the features given by these systems. Orhan Noor, a college student, says, "I created my bKash account as soon as I got my NID in July. I use it for all my needs, and when I run out of money, I can easily call my father and request him to send me some." When asked if totally converting to a digital currency system is necessary, he says, "Of course it is. Having a digital wallet is more suitable and safer, considering the environment we live in. I definitely hope that in the near future I do not have to carry any physical currency at all." Kader Molla, a senior surgeon, has a more hopeful tone: "I believe that in the future, everyone and everything will shift to digital transactions. You would even need to pay for rides on local buses with digital money. Physical currencies would become obsolete during such a period". Other people, when asked the same, seemed to reply along the same lines he did.

BEYOND PAYMENTS

As trust in these platforms grows, users are moving beyond simple transfers to utilising financial products like digital savings and nano-loans, though usage patterns differ by age. For the older demographic, the convenience of digital savings schemes (DPS) has been a game-changer. "I used to dread standing in long queues at the bank just to deposit my monthly savings installment," admits Roushan Ara. "Now, I have automated the process through the app. It is linked directly to the bank but I can manage it from my home." This sense of stability

taka from my account, and I felt devastated."

THE ROAD AHEAD

To foster and nurture the potential sector of MFS, the platforms should take initiatives to ensure financial literacy, as many people are yet to effectively use these services to manage their finances and consequently miss out on their huge potential. These platforms should also strengthen infrastructure and security so that people do not have to fall victim to such ploys as were previously made by those fraudsters. They would also need to diversify services and solidify the loan and investment services further to ensure a cashless future. Most consumers provide positive feedback and seem to look forward to future benefits that they might be able to provide.



Get Access to Easy Micro-Loan (e-Rin) through Dhaka Bank Go Plus App

GET IT ON Google Play
Download on the App Store

Loan at minimum 9% Interest Rate

3 or 6 months loan tenor

Dhaka Bank's Digital Banking Services

Mobile App for Convenient Banking

Instant Account Opening App

Digital Device Financing App

Instant DPS for bKash Wallet Holder

Payment & Collection Solution for Corporate

Online Tuition Fees Payment

Web Portal for Banking Services

Internet Banking for All

Powered by Industry Standard Certifications

EXCELLENCE IN BANKING



A K M SHAHNAWAJ
Managing Director
(Current Charge)
Dhaka Bank PLC.

“The next phase for collaborations between banks and MFS moves beyond basic payments to include micro-insurance, investments, and cross-border remittances. The aim is to create a single mobile interface where users can seamlessly save, invest, and transact globally.”

Seamless access, secure transaction

In Bangladesh's rapidly evolving financial landscape, Dhaka Bank is embracing innovation by deeply integrating with Mobile Financial Service (MFS) platforms. A.K.M. Shah Nawaj, Managing Director (Current Charge) of Dhaka Bank, discusses the bank's forward-thinking strategies.

TDS: How is your bank partnering with MFS platforms to assess creditworthiness and disburse nano-loans to individuals who lack a traditional credit history?
A.K.M. Shah Nawaj: Dhaka Bank facilitates nano-lending for customers lacking conventional credit histories by offering fully digital loans, like its e-Rin product, and utilising digital platforms, including MFS channels for both the distribution and repayment of loans. The bank assesses creditworthiness by analysing alternative data derived from users' digital behaviour. This approach enables Dhaka Bank to assess risk and provide small loans to underserved clients within a few hours.

TDS: Could you elaborate on any Deposit Pension Schemes (DPS) or savings products your bank has integrated with MFS apps? How has the response been from rural vs. urban demographics?

AKMS: Dhaka Bank has integrated Deposit Pension Schemes (DPS) and flexible savings products directly into MFS apps such as bKash, allowing customers to open and maintain DPS accounts digitally with small monthly deposits, full e-KYC, and automatic instalment deduction from their wallet.

The response has been strong nationwide, with more than 5 million DPS accounts opened via bKash across partner banks. Adoption is skewed towards rural areas, with around 80% of users coming from outside major metropolitan areas, while urban users also participate actively.

TDS: What specific technological advancements or security protocols has your bank implemented to safeguard the API integration with MFS providers and protect customer data?

AKMS: At Dhaka Bank, we ensure secure and compliant API integration with our MFS partners through advanced security technologies and strong IT governance. We leverage an API Gateway with end-to-end encryption, strong authentication, API security controls, and real-time SOC monitoring to safeguard customer data. We strictly follow the Bangladesh Bank ICT Security Guidelines and data protection standards. Additionally, Dhaka Bank maintains ISO 27001, ISO 27032, and PCI-DSS certifications.

TDS: How is your bank facilitating real-time remittance distribution through MFS channels to ensure funds reach rural beneficiaries instantly?

AKMS: Our bank enables real-time distribution of remittances through MFS channels by linking our remittance management system with mobile wallet platforms. This allows immediate crediting of funds to beneficiaries' MFS accounts as soon as the transaction is affirmed.



Surviving the digital pickpockets of Bangladesh

ADRIN SARWAR

We live in a beautiful time. Want Biryani? Tap. Electricity bill at 2 AM? Tap. Sending money to Chittagong? Just tap and hold. MFS apps like bKash and Nagad have turned our phones into magic wands.

But just like any crowded place, where there is a wallet, there is a pickpocket. The only difference is, this one isn't standing behind you; he is sitting miles away with a notebook, a phone, and an Oscar-winning script.

Here are common digital pickpocket scenarios you need to watch out for.

THE EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL. It's Friday afternoon. You've just had a hearty lunch and are ready for a nap. A message pops up in your phone. It looks like a bKash

notification: "Cash In Tk 10,200.00 from 017XXXXXXX. Successful." You stare at it confusedly wondering who sent me 10,000 in broad daylight?"

Before you can check your app, the phone rings. A man on the other side is sobbing. "Hello? Bhaiya? Assalamualaikum. Bhaiya, I am finished! I am a poor rickshawala. My mother is in the ICU. I went to the shop to send money for her medicine, but the shopkeeper accidentally sent it to you! Please, Bhaiya, send it back. My mother will die!" And your brain stops thinking. You don't want to be the reason someone's mother suffers. You feel guilty for money that isn't even yours. You quickly send 10,000 Taka back to him. A few moments later, you check your balance. Wait, why is it lower than before?

That was just a fake text from

a personal number. You didn't return money; you gave away your own. Too late, you remember your friend's warning about this exact trick. If only you had stayed cool and checked the app first, you wouldn't be left with just regret.

THE "HEAD OFFICE" CALL. It's Monday morning, the busiest time of the week. You are stressed sitting in traffic. You get a call from a random number. "Good Morning, Sir. bKash theke Tanvir bolchi. We have noticed suspicious activity on your account. Did you just try to withdraw 50,000 Taka from Barisal?" You freeze. "No! I'm in Dhaka!" "Okay, Sir. It seems your account has been hacked. We have paused the transaction, but we need to verify your ownership RIGHT NOW to block the hacker."

SEE PAGE J4



Women, Wallets, and Quiet Power

How MFS Changed Financial Control at Home

In the past, managing household finances often meant transparency. Cash exchanged hands, followed by questions and justifications. In many Bangladeshi homes, especially within joint families, money represented more than just currency; it was a means of negotiation and sometimes a source of tension.

Mobile Financial Services (MFS) have quietly transformed this dynamic. This change wasn't heralded by grand slogans or empowerment campaigns; it emerged from practical needs that resonated deeply with everyday lives. Allowances can now be sent without fanfare, and small amounts can be saved without drawing attention. Women can cover unexpected

expenses without needing to disrupt family plans or compromise their dignity.

A mobile wallet provides something rare: control without confrontation. Money can be received, saved, and used discreetly, allowing women to handle their finances without broadcasting every transaction to the household. For many, this subtle shift is more empowering than any flashy campaign.

The impact of MFS may not be dramatic, but it's significant. A garment worker in Gazipur illustrates this perfectly; she receives her wages digitally, keeps part of it untouched on her phone, and sends money home when needed. "Before, everything went to the same place," she explains. "Now I

decide first." These acts of financial management are not rebellions; they are preparations for life's uncertainties.

Living in joint families introduces another layer of complexity. Shared finances can lead to scrutiny, but mobile wallets enable women to manage personal expenses privately while still contributing to the household. This balance reduces friction and allows trust to thrive.

With over 200 million registered MFS accounts in Bangladesh, the narrative around women and money is gradually shifting from visibility to empowerment, one transaction at a time. The quiet power of MFS is unobtrusive yet profoundly transformative, fostering agency in everyday financial decisions.

ডাউনলোড করুন
আস্থা অ্যাপ

Bank Smart

আস্থা'র ব্যাংকিং সহজেই রাতদিন

ফান্ড ট্রান্সফার

ওয়ালেট ট্রান্সফার

মোবাইল রিচার্জ

এফডিআর/ডিবিএস

সেবা

Astha Lifestyle
লাইফস্টাইল

পেমেন্টস

TRUST IS THE REAL CURRENCY

Why People Trust an App More Than Cash



Notifications and transaction histories have become the new proof of payment.

Cash feels solid. You can hold it, count it, and tuck it away. Yet for millions of Bangladeshis, a small screen has quietly become more trustworthy than a hand-to-hand exchange. This trust didn't spring from technology alone; it's built on habit, repetition, and visibility.

A SOUND THAT REASSURES

The most powerful feature of mobile financial services isn't speed; it's confirmation. A vibration, a message, a timestamped notification, all these alerts signal

that a transaction is complete. This assurance does what cash cannot: it proves that something happened, and when it happened. Over time, these confirmations build confidence, one transaction at a time.

MEMORY THAT DOES NOT FORGET

Cash has no memory. Once it changes hands, the story fades away. Mobile wallets, on the other hand, keep a record. Transaction histories allow users to scroll back,

verify amounts, settle disputes, and confirm whether money was sent or received. In households and small businesses, that digital trail often becomes the final word. For many users, this record isn't just handy; it's calming.

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Trust deepens when problems can be resolved. Options for transaction reversals, complaint numbers, and customer care lines matter more than flashy features. Knowing that a mistake can be reported, traced, and corrected makes digital money feel safer than cash lost to miscounting or misunderstanding. This is where formal systems quietly outperform informal ones.

THE FEAR OF SILENCE

However, panic sets in when networks go down. Transactions freeze. Notifications stop. Screens refuse to load. The absence of confirmation creates immediate anxiety, even if money isn't actually lost. This highlights how deeply users have come to rely on digital reassurance.

MORE THAN JUST MONEY

Ultimately, trust in MFS isn't about apps replacing people; it's about systems replacing uncertainty. Habit builds familiarity, and visibility builds confidence. Together, they transform invisible money into something people can believe in. As one regular user put it, "If there's a message, I relax."

In a world where cash feels tangible yet uncertain, the digital realm offers a new kind of security that resonates deeply with everyday users. Trust, after all, is the real currency.

Surviving the digital pickpockets of Bangladesh

FROM PAGE J3

If we don't do it in 2 minutes, the money will leave your account permanently."

He continues, "I have sent a 6-digit verification code to your mobile. Please check your SMS and tell me the code quickly." In your panic to save your money, you give him the code. He assures you now your fund is safe.

Then you try to log in several times, but it's not working. Now it occurred to you that it wasn't a verification code. That was the OTP (One Time Password) to reset your PIN. He hung up, changed your PIN, and drained your account while you were still holding the phone, wondering why the line went dead. If only you remembered the messages, advertorials from bkash: "bkash will never ask for your PIN or OTP."

The "LUCKY Winner" trap

You are cooking the meal for the day.

You are rushing to turn it off because it's time to pick up the kids from school. Your phone rings. The person on the other side sounds super excited. "Madam! Assalamualaikum! Do your children study at XYZ School? Congratulations! The Government has selected them for a fully funded scholarship!" You pause. He knows the school's name perfectly. It must be real. "Madam, the fund is expiring in 30 seconds! I sent a code to your phone. Give me that quickly! Also, take your bkash PIN. Add 2025 to it. Now multiply the total by 2026. Tell me the final answer immediately!"

Your brain is scrambling. You do the math, read out the big number, and give the OTP he asked for earlier. "Thank you! Hang up now so the system can process the money!" You hang up. You check your App to see the stipend. And you are met with "Login Failed."

YOUR SAFETY GUIDE

You are not alone—panic clouds our judgment, and scammers exploit that. While MFS providers constantly upgrade security, fraudsters are always finding new tricks. Always report any suspicious call to the customer service centre immediately. Service providers have their response team working on such cases. To stay safe, just follow these rules.

Trust the app, not the SMS:

If someone says they sent you money, open your App and refresh the balance. If the balance didn't go up, the money isn't there. Real money doesn't hide.

The "Pin-Code" silence:

If anyone—literally anyone, even if they say they are from the Prime Minister's office—asks for a Code or OTP sent to your phone, hang up. Real employees are forbidden from asking for this.

Head office doesn't use personal SIMs:

bkash calls from 16247. Nagad calls from 16167. If "Head Office" is calling you from a standard number, it's not Head Office. It's likely a guy sitting in a field trying to steal your money.

Stay smart, stay suspicious, and keep your hard-earned money safe!

Gearing Bangladesh for a cashless tomorrow

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Imagine falling in love with a gadget or expensive jewellery at a shop, and instead of digging into your pocket, you simply scan a QR code or tap a few buttons on your phone. Yes, you guessed it right. bkash is turning that moment into a tiny delight and a habit. With Bank to bkash and Card to bkash transfers available around the clock, funds move from banks or cards into their mobile application instantly when you need them. A nationwide network of over 350,000 agents brings essential financial services to villages and small towns, and almost 1 million merchant QR points have turned tiny shops into digital shopfronts. As a result, millions of Bangladeshis now rely on it for everyday payments, mobile recharges, utility bill settlements, remittances, savings, loans, and more.

LOANS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

bkash is more than a payment tool. It is an on-demand credit engine supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, and households. In partnership with City Bank, it enables instant collateral-free loans through the bkash app. Over Tk 50 billion has been disbursed to nearly 2 million customers across more than 12 million transactions, with about 25 per cent of borrowers being women, indicating reach among underserved groups. Quick approvals help shop owners restock and families manage unexpected expenses, stabilising cash flows. Digital scoring and usage histories allow informal entrepreneurs without traditional bank records to access credit and build financial profiles for better services.

SAVINGS MADE SIMPLE

Saving is no longer limited to piggybanks. bkash's DPS lets users save weekly or monthly starting from only 250 taka per week, making disciplined saving realistic for low-income households. The platform partners with Mutual Trust Bank, Dhaka Bank, BRAC Bank, City Bank and IDLC Finance to let users move, hold and cash out savings easily through agent points without any change. More than 5 million DPS accounts have been opened, and about 30 percent are by women, reflecting rising financial participation among female savers. Friendly reminders, clear progress displays and agent coaching encourage long-term saving, helping families plan for school, festivals and medical expenses without relying on costly informal credit.

CASHLESS FOR EVERYONE

Inclusion is central to bkash's mission. Feature phone users can access services via USSD (*247#)

without internet, while smartphone users have a full app with Bangla language support and voice prompts. Trained agents act as local financial guides in marginalised areas. 64 MFIs, serving millions, accept loan repayments and deposits through bkash, reducing travel time and costs for rural borrowers. Community outreach and literacy drives build trust among senior citizens and new users, helping rural and urban customers join the cashless economy. To drive cashless behaviour, bkash integrates key financial products into one app, enabling personal finance management for millions.

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY AND PROTECTING USERS

Digital payments reduce theft risk and cut the high costs of printing, transporting, and securing cash, easing pressure on the national economy. Merchants digitise sales, consumers pay utility bills and education fees through apps, and businesses receive funds faster, enabling reinvestment, hiring, and expansion. Digital transaction records improve transparency, reduce leakage in public disbursements, and help small sellers, including local e-commerce merchants and startups, reach wider markets at lower transaction costs.

Reduced cash handling also means fewer trips, less paper use, and lower transport emissions. At the same time, security measures such as PINs, eKYC, one-time passwords (OTP), device biometrics, and round-the-clock monitoring protect users, while fraud detection teams and responsive support limit scams and losses, building trust across urban and rural customers alike.

EVERYDAY SCENES, NATIONAL CHANGE

The revolution appears in small scenes: a mother paying tuition from home, a man in Dubai sending remittance within minutes to cover his parents' treatment, an artisan turning social interest into a paid order overnight. By combining payments, savings, loans, remittances, and a wide agent network, bkash has woven financial services into daily life and nudged Bangladesh toward inclusive prosperity. QR payments, small DPS accounts, and Bank to bkash transfers turn routine actions into financial security, support local businesses, and strengthen household stability. Each transaction contributes to a cashless future that is more secure and accessible. Every account, deposit, and digital sale expands inclusion, creates income, and reinforces communities across cities and villages, showing how everyday choices can shape a national economy.



With its intuitive design and personalized interface, the bkash app makes financial services accessible and user-friendly for people of all ages.

CASHLESS FOR EVERYONE: INCLUSION AT THE HEART OF bkash's MISSION

FEATURE PHONE USERS

Access services even without internet.

SMARTPHONE USERS

Enjoy a full app experience with Bangla language support and voice prompts.

RURAL BORROWERS

URBAN CUSTOMERS

64 MFIs & MILLIONS OF CLIENTS

accept loan repayments & deposits through bkash

FASTER ADOPTION & BUILT TRUST

among senior citizens and new users through Community Outreach & Literacy Drives

SAVING TRAVEL TIME & REDUCING OPERATIONAL COSTS

HELPING RURAL & URBAN CUSTOMERS ALIKE JOIN THE CASHLESS ECONOMY