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NOMINATION PAPERS

2,582 submitted as clock runs out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 2,582 candidates submitted nomination papers for the upcoming parliamentary polls by the end of the deadline yesterday, as the final count settled without reports of any major breaches of the electoral code of conduct.

Across the country, the day carried a curious calm, festive in spirit, yet softened by the grey winter sky and the sting of cold.

Outside the offices of the 69 returning officers overseeing the 300 constituencies, supporters gathered in numbers, yet candidates largely maintained discipline, queuing in orderly lines to complete the formalities.

Among the high-profile contenders filing nominations on the final day were BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, acting chairman Tarique Rahman, and Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur



444 filed
nominations for
41 seats in Dhaka
region

Scrutiny from Dec
30-Jan 4

Withdrawal
deadline Jan 20

Rahman and National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam also submitted papers from their respective constituencies.

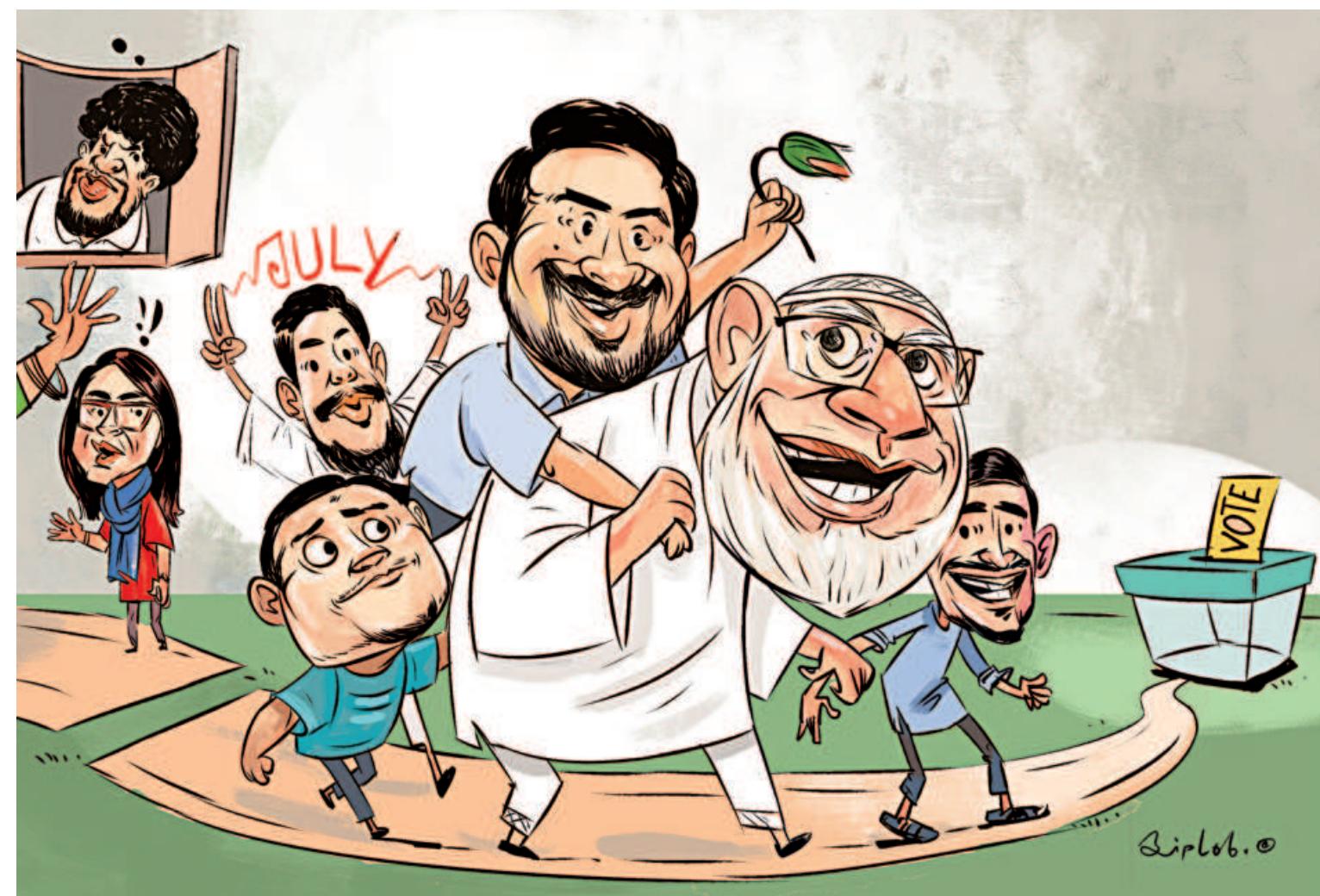
From the other end of the political spectrum, GM Quader, chairman of the Jatiya Party, a key ally of the deposed Awami League, filed his nomination as well.

Not all AL allies chose to take part. The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal faction led by Hasanul Haq Inu and the Workers Party of Bangladesh led by Rashed Khan Menon announced a boycott, branding the election "unconstitutional and one-sided".

Both Inu and Menon, former ministers in the Awami League-led government, face accusations of crimes against humanity over killings during the regime's violent response to the uprising.

Several parties that were part of the July uprising had earlier staged protests demanding that the Jatiya Party and other

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Khaleda's health shows no signs of improvement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has shown no improvement in her physical condition, doctors said last night.

The 80-year-old former prime minister has been receiving treatment at Evercare Hospital for the past 36 days.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday sought prayers for his mother from party leaders and activists when he went to the Nayapaltan office in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, Tarique's wife, Zubaida Rahman, their daughter, Zaima Rahman, his sister-in-law Sharmila Rahman, and Sharmila's daughter, Zahia Rahman, went to the hospital to check on her condition.

Khaleda's elder sister Selina Islam and her younger brother Shamim Iskander also visited the hospital on the day.

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, BNP Health Affairs Secretary Dr Rafiqul Islam said, "Madam's health condition is the same as before. We are a bit worried about hospital-acquired infection. Doctors are trying their best to control it. The board of doctors is giving necessary advice so that other systems remain stable."

On Saturday night, Khaleda's personal

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

BNP leaves 14 seats for allies

Turns in nominations for 286 constituencies; changes 17 picks

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is set to contest the upcoming polls in 286 of the 300 constituencies, leaving 14 seats for alliance partners and political leaders who stood with the party during the anti-fascist movement.

According to BNP leaders, five political leaders who recently joined the party, having resigned from or dissolved their respective parties, will contest the polls with BNP's



BNP has also issued dual nomination letters in seven constituencies, allowing two candidates per seat as a backup measure under a broader election strategy to manage potential legal, organisational or political uncertainties at the later stages of the electoral process.

electoral symbol, the Sheaf of Paddy, while alliance partners will run in the remaining nine of the 14 seats using their own party symbols under seat-sharing arrangements.

BNP has also issued dual nomination letters in seven constituencies, allowing two candidates per seat as a backup measure under a broader election strategy to manage potential legal, organisational or political uncertainties at the later stages of the electoral process, they added.

With the nomination submission deadline passed yesterday, the party is expected to publish a list of both its own candidates and alliance nominees soon, they added.

In two phases, on November 3 and December 4, BNP unveiled its nominees for 272 constituencies. The latest tally has been finalised following extended negotiations with alliance partners and internal discussions,

any single alliance partner.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna will contest from Bogura-2; Junaid Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, from Brahmanbaria-6; Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque from Dhaka-12; Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleeb Rahman Partho from Bhola-1; and Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haq Nur from Patuakhali-3. All will contest using their respective party symbols.

However, in Manna's seat, the BNP has nominated its own candidate in case the Election Commission bars him from contesting on legal grounds.

According to BNP leaders, after careful deliberation, the party has left these seats to alliance partners with a realistic chance of winning and will not field its own candidates there.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

NCP submits nomination forms for 47 To seek 40 seats from Jamaat, allies; former adviser Asif joins NCP

SHAMIMA RITA

The National Citizen Party submitted nomination papers for 47 candidates yesterday even though its seat-sharing arrangement with Jamaat-e-Islami covers 30 seats.

The party is now seeking to negotiate for up to 40 seats with the alliance, according to several party insiders.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, NCP Convener Nahid Islam said, "We have submitted 47 nominations. Our seat-sharing agreement has not been finalised yet, so we submitted a slightly higher number. Some may be rejected due to errors or inconsistencies. Within the next few days, discussions will finalise how many seats NCP will ultimately contest under the alliance."

Sources say around 30 party leaders have already received the "green signal" from the alliance regarding final candidacy approval.

Nahid is looking to contest from Dhaka-II and has submitted his nomination form to the Dhaka Divisional

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

NCP's gamble, Jamaat's gain?

Analysts express differing views on alliance

MAMUNUR RASHID

The National Citizen Party's decision to join the Jamaat-led electoral alliance has touched off sharp debate in Bangladesh's political circles. While some warn it could erode the NCP's youthful promise and cast doubt on its future, others see it as a breakthrough for Jamaat-e-Islami.

Political analyst Altaf Parvez describes Jamaat's success in bringing the NCP into its electoral fold as the Islamist party's biggest political feat to date.

The NCP, formed by student leaders of the 2024 mass uprising that toppled the Awami League regime, entered into a seat-sharing pact with Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies on Sunday.

According to analyst and writer Mohiuddin Ahmad, the NCP practises "state power-centric politics" and will naturally align wherever it is suitable. He, however, said that such arrangements may not last beyond the election.

Salahuddin Muhammad Babar, editor of the daily Naya Digaanta and also a political analyst, argues that the Jamaat-NCP "politics of understanding" could open up a new horizon of possibilities in Bangladesh, moving beyond the country's past experience of alliance politics.

However, many who had expected the NCP to strive for a new political order in the post-uprising Bangladesh have voiced disappointment over its seat-sharing pact. Some fear the party could lose relevance before it even has the chance to fully establish itself in the political arena.

After its launch, the NCP had pledged to introduce a "new political arrangement" and had repeatedly expressed optimism about contesting all 300 seats and forming the government.

However, its eventual decision to pursue an electoral understanding with Jamaat and other religion-based parties has raised questions among analysts about the party's political future.

Thirty central NCP leaders also objected to the move, while several leaders and activists resigned, withdrew from the election race, or both, saying the party was "not on the right track".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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Many candidates submitted nomination papers for the February polls yesterday before the end of the deadline. Among them were BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, top left; Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, bottom left; NCP Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah, top right; and BSD's Manisha Chakraborty, bottom right. Many candidates brought a large number of supporters in breach of the law, leading to unwanted situations at some places, centre, as seen in Chattogram.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP leaves 14 seats for allies

FROM PAGE 1
As part of its electoral strategy and efforts to foster unity, BNP has also absorbed several senior leaders of smaller parties, who are not registered with the EC.

Among them, Bangladesh LDP Chairman Shahadat Hossain Selim is contesting from Lakshmpur-1, while Bangladeshi National Party Chairman Syed Ehsanul Huda will contest from Kishoreganj-5. Both joined BNP after dissolving their respective parties. The BNP had earlier nominated its own candidate for Kishoreganj-5.

In addition, Redwan Ahmed, former general secretary of Bangladeshi Nationalist Party, will contest from Cumilla-7; Rashed Khan, former general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad, from Jhenaidah-4; and Bobby Hajaj, former chairman of the National Democratic Movement, from Dhaka-13, all using the BNP symbol. Each resigned from or

dissolved their previous party to join BNP.

CHANGES IN CANDIDATES

According to party insiders, BNP has changed candidates in 17 constituencies initially announced, citing political calculations, internal conflicts, and complications arising from seat sharing with allies.

While some changes, which the party insists were made on popularity and grassroots support, eased tensions, some created more dissatisfaction. A significant number of leaders denied nominations plan to contest independently, creating a major organisational challenge.

Party leaders said acting chairman Tarique Rahman, if needed, may summon the leaders concerned to resolve disputes.

In Brahmanbaria-4, former MP Mushfiqur Rahman was initially nominated but replaced due to age and illness, with Kabir Ahmed

Bhuiyan finalised as the candidate. In Chattogram-6, Gias Kader Chowdhury had submitted papers, but Golam Akbar Khondkar, adviser to the BNP chairperson, was later nominated. In Narayanganj-5, Abul Kalam, a three-time MP and former metropolitan BNP president, replaced businessman Masuduzzaman.

In Chattogram-12, the party faces internal tensions over Enamul Haque who was expelled for allegedly helping move luxury cars of S Alam Group.

In Jhenaidah-2, Saiful Islam Firoz, central senior joint general secretary of Jatiabadi Swecchasebok Dal, announced an independent bid following the inclusion of Rashed Khan.

BNP sources said leaders denied nominations are preparing to contest as independents in at least 50 constituencies, including Kushtia-4, Jamalpur-2 and Dinajpur-2.

the NCP as the party's spokesperson. He, however, will not contest in the upcoming national elections. Nahid made the announcement at the press conference.

Patwary resigned from his position as chief coordinator and president of the election management committee, handing over the responsibilities to Asif. Asif has also been included in key political councils and policy-making bodies of the party.

Nahid mentioned, "The election management committee will be reorganised, and those who are not contesting in the elections themselves will focus on the party's electoral success."

At the briefing, the newly appointed spokesperson, Asif, said, "I will focus entirely on the election process to ensure the victory of the party candidates. I will also make every effort to fulfil the dreams of the martyrs and injured comrades of the 2024 mass uprising. I will work to ensure that the election is conducted in a fair, impartial, and democratic manner."

The party's decision to enter an

alliance with Jamaat continues to stir internal turmoil, with Azad Khan Bhashani, the grandson of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, leaving the party.

"Inspired by the people-centric, anti-imperialist, anti-hegemonic, and anti-discrimination political vision of the oppressed people's leader Maulana Bhashani, I first became involved with the National Citizen Committee and later with the NCP," he posted on his social media handle.

"However, it is with deep regret that I must say that, in real experience, I have felt a clear lack of historic responsibility, compassion for the masses, and depth of sacrifice required to build a new Bangladesh. The expected success in establishing a new political order and a distinct political identity has not been evident," he continued.

Over the past week, at least 10 senior and mid-level leaders have either quit party posts or withdrawn from the polls race, reflecting the growing dissent over the alliance with Jamaat.

its 84-year history across these three countries, this is the first time Jamaat has achieved such a major moral success. It has effectively brought an entire force that led a mass uprising under its fold.

"As a result, it can now demonstrate to the world that despite being a Sharai-based party, its appeal has spread to the liberal middle class."

The analyst added, "Secondly, politics in Bangladesh will continue even after the February 12 election. Even if Jamaat loses, having the NCP with it will make it easier to build opposition politics under Jamaat leadership. In effect, it has eliminated the space for any other opposition force. In politics, moral and cultural aspects matter greatly, and the NCP's young leaders come from a middle-class cultural background."

Mohiuddin Ahmad, however, views the NCP's move into the Jamaat bloc as a natural pre-election development, noting that such alignments have occurred before every election in Bangladesh's history.

"I don't see the NCP's alignment with Jamaat as something exceptional. This is how power politics works. The NCP was born only recently. None of its leaders witnessed 1971, so they have no emotional attachment to it. They practise state power-centric politics and will go wherever it suits them."

He added, "We know they also bargained with BNP and weren't satisfied with the outcome. They may feel they are in a better position bargaining with Jamaat, and that is why they have chosen this path. Moreover, the NCP is not a crystallised political party. The 2024 anti-discrimination student movement involved people outside the ruling parties as well."

Explaining why the NCP aligned with Jamaat instead of the BNP or contesting independently, Parvez observed, "There was an opportunistic tendency among the party's frontliners such as the desire to remain influential, stay close to the administration, hold positions and titles, and remain in the public eye. These populist traits made leaning towards Jamaat almost inevitable."

Explaining why this is a major success for Jamaat, he said, "In South Asia and around the world, Jamaat's image is that of a Sharia-based party. Jamaat-e-Islami exists in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In

establishment, but not all of them joined the NCP when it was formed."

Mohiuddin also said that just as the Awami League had a tendency to "appropriate" the glory of the collective effort that led to independence in 1971, the NCP too shows a similar tendency to appropriate the glory of the 2024 mass uprising.

He added that the NCP is unlikely to wield significant influence as a political party in post-election politics. "We've already become accustomed to such politics in this country."

Salehuddin Muhammad Babar, however, said there is a clear difference between past "alliance politics" and the current Jamaat-NCP "politics of understanding".

"In alliance politics, there is a commitment. When the alliance comes to power, partners have to be given positions and rehabilitated. We have seen how Inu, Rashed Khan Menon and others were given ministerial posts and privileges during the Awami League's tenure."

"The BNP, which previously formed alliances, is also now moving towards a strategy of understanding with like-minded parties. I think Jamaat is following the same model this time."

Describing the current politics of understanding as a new phenomenon, he said, "If different points are raised separately or in isolation in every corner, they do not yield fruitful results. But if these come under a common understanding, and if all parties can participate in a parliamentary election and enter parliament, then real politics will move into parliament. This will ensure the participation of smaller parties as well."

Explaining why this is a major success for Jamaat, he said, "In South Asia and around the world, Jamaat's image is that of a Sharia-based party. Jamaat-e-Islami exists in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In

2,582 submitted as clock runs out

FROM PAGE 1

Amawi League allies be barred from the polls. The Awami League cannot contest since its activities are banned and registration suspended, the government had said.

Election Commission sources said that by 5:00pm on Sunday, 3,144 individuals had collected nomination papers. EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said yesterday afternoon that the final tally would be confirmed once data compilation was complete.

Later at night, EC Public Relations Officer Ruhul Amin Mollik confirmed the figure at 2,582. They include 444 candidates for 41 parliamentary seats in Dhaka region; 142 for 15 seats in Faridpur; 194 for 23 seats in Chattogram; 363 for 35 seats in Cumilla; 260 for 39 seats in Rajshahi; 276 for 36 seats in Khulna; 166 for 21 seats in Barishal; 311 for 38 seats in Mymensingh; 146 for 19 seats in Sylhet; and 278 candidates for 33 constituencies in Rangpur region.

The total number is lower than those in the last two elections. In the January 7, 2024 polls, 2,741 aspirants submitted nomination papers despite a boycott by the BNP and other opposition parties.

That election largely featured Awami League nominees facing so-called rebel candidates -- an arrangement critics derided as a contest of "dummy candidates".

In 2018, when the BNP and others joined the race, 3,056 nomination papers were filed, though the election was widely criticised over allegations of ballot stuffing on the night before voting. The figure stood at 1,107 in the one-sided 2014 election, 2,460 in 2008, 2,563 in 2001, 3,093 in 1996, and 3,855 in 1991.

The Election Commission announced the schedule for the 13th parliamentary election on December 11, setting February 12 as polling day.

A referendum on July charter reforms related to the constitution will be held alongside the general election.

Though national polls are constitutionally due every five years, this election comes just two years after the January 2024 vote. The Sheikh Hasina government was ousted in the July uprising, and parliament was dissolved the day after she fled on August 5.

According to the schedule, returning officers will scrutinise nomination papers from December

30 to January 4. Appeals can be filed between January 5 and 9, to be disposed of from January 10 to 18. The final date for withdrawal of candidature is January 20, with the final list to be published the next day.

Symbols will be allocated on January 22, formally launching the campaign, which will continue until 7:30am on February 10.

Our correspondents across the country reported a steady rush of candidates to returning officers' offices from morning. The returning officers include the divisional commissioners of Dhaka and Chattogram, regional election officers of Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna, and the deputy commissioners of all 64 districts.

Khaleda Zia's nomination papers for Feni-1 and Bogura-7 were submitted through representatives, as she is undergoing treatment at a Dhaka hospital. Her nomination for Dinajpur-3 was filed on Sunday. Under electoral law, a candidate may contest a maximum of three constituencies.

After submitting the papers in Bogura, Helaluzzaman Talukdar Lulu, adviser to the BNP chairperson, said Khaleda was unwell and communicating largely through gestures. He added that she provided her thumbprint on the nomination papers instead of a signature.

Tarique Rahman, contesting public office for the first time, submitted nominations through representatives for Dhaka-17 and Bogura-6.

Abdus Salam, another adviser to the BNP chairperson, said the public had warmly welcomed Tarique upon his return on December 25 after 17 years in exile.

After submitting his nomination for Thakurgaon-1, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul said people wanted their voting rights restored and urged constituents to support the BNP's sheaf of paddy symbol.

Representatives of Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur submitted his nomination for Dhaka-15 at the Electoral Training Institute.

After submitting the papers, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair called for collective efforts to ensure a level playing field. The Election Commission still had "more work to do" to improve the electoral environment, he added.

Sources at the returning officer's

office said NCP leader Nahid's representatives submitted his nomination for Dhaka-11 at the Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office.

In Chattogram, a brief scuffle broke out around 12:30pm between police and supporters of BNP nominee Sayeed Al Norman during the submission of nomination papers for Chattogram-10.

Police and witnesses said 100 to 150 supporters attempted to enter the office premises, breaching the code of conduct. Police intervened, after which Sayeed entered with only a few people, and the main gate was temporarily locked.

Asked about the incident, Sayeed said, "Such love and emotion from people are part of Chattogram's tradition. While this is an achievement, it is also embarrassing."

Similar scenes of heavy supporter presence were reported in Pabna and Sirajganj. Pabna Deputy Commissioner and Returning Officer Shahed Mostafa said candidates were alerted and complied with the rules inside the office.

In Sirajganj, BNP candidate M Akbar Ali submitted his nomination for Sirajganj-4 at the Ullapara Upazila Nirbahi Office, where several hundred supporters gathered outside. UNO ATM Arif said rules were followed within the office.

In Barishal, nominations for all six constituencies were submitted amid enthusiasm and festivity, a scene echoed in many districts.

In Cumilla, NCP Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah submitted his nomination under the Jamaat-NCP alliance for Cumilla-4, pledging a stand against corruption and justice for all.

In Rangpur, Jamaat nominee ATM Azam Khan withdrew his nomination for Rangpur-4 in support of NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen, citing the seat sharing agreement finalised on Sunday.

Meanwhile, reiterating their boycott, the Inu-led JSD faction and the Menon-led Workers Party said the interim government lacked neutrality.

The JSD alleged the authorities were pushing an "unconstitutional referendum" and a "one-sided parliamentary election", while the Workers Party cited a deteriorating law and order situation, political pressure, and the absence of a level playing field.

Talukder and comprising specialists from Bangladesh, the UK, the US, China, and Australia, is overseeing her treatment.

Earlier this month, there was an initiative to take her abroad for treatment, but it could not proceed due to her poor physical condition.

Khaleda's health shows no signs of improvement

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physician, AZM Zahid said she was going through a critical phase.

The BNP chief has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis. She has a permanent pacemaker and has previously undergone stent

implants in her heart.

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

The medical board, led by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin

Afghan farmers taking heavy hit from opium poppy ban: UN

AFP, Kabul

Farmers in northern Afghanistan have yet to make up for lost income since the Taliban government banned poppy production for opium three years ago, the United Nations said yesterday.

The ban has slashed poppy production overall to just 10,200 hectares (25,200 acres) this year, "one of the lowest levels ever recorded" in Afghanistan, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said.

However, it also resulted in a shift

from traditional growing areas in the south to northern provinces further from the control of the Taliban authorities.

In Badakhshan on the border with Tajikistan, surveyed in the agency's most recent report, poppy production has jumped since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

In that province and in nearby Kunduz and Balkh, "on average, 85 percent of families... reported either no replacement or only partial replacement of their poppy income" after abandoning production, the

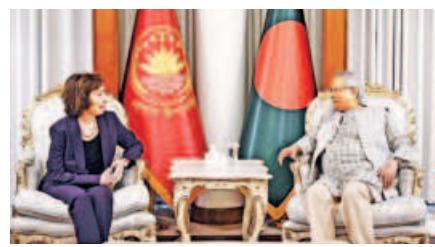
report found.

Many farmers are instead growing wheat and other cereals, but in 2023 "the average per hectare income from wheat was just \$770, whereas opium poppy yielded around \$10,000 per hectare".

"This income loss goes far beyond households, weakening rural purchasing power, reducing local economic activity, and increasing communities' overall vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity," said Oliver Stolpe, the UNODC's regional representative.

DHAKA

Yunus vows free, fair and peaceful polls



US Chargé d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson pays a farewell call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

PHOTO: PID

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has reaffirmed his government's commitment to holding "free, fair and peaceful" elections, saying full preparations are underway to ensure the success of both the parliamentary elections and the referendum.

"We are fully prepared," Prof Yunus said, adding that any attempts to disrupt peace ahead of the elections would be dealt with firmly.

He made the remarks when Chargé d'Affaires of the United States to Bangladesh, Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson, paid a farewell call on him yesterday at the state guest house Jamuna.

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First-ever JnU student union polls today

RAKIB MADBER

The first-ever Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUCSU) election is all set to take place today, amid heightened security and growing voter enthusiasm on campus.

A total of 157 candidates are contesting the 21 posts of the central students' union, while 33 candidates are vying for 13 hall union posts.

Voting is taking place at 39 polling centres with 178 polling booths.

According to the university election commission, a total of 16,649 students are registered to vote in the election. Of them, 8,479 are women, and 8,170 are men.

With female students making up more than half of the electorate, they are expected to play a decisive role in determining the outcome.

16,649 students are registered to vote in the election. Of them, 8,479 are women. With female students making up more than half of the electorate, they are expected to play a decisive role in determining the outcome.



Although male students have traditionally been more visible in campus politics, female voters have become increasingly prominent in this election, said students and candidates.

Issues such as accommodation shortages, safety in halls and on campus, hygienic food, transportation facilities and the prevention of sexual harassment are expected to strongly influence women voters' choices, students and analysts said.

Several female students told The Daily Star that they are prioritising realistic and implementable commitments over organisational or ideological affiliations.

Adiba Naomi, a student of Mass Communication and Journalism, said, "Security and accommodation are the most urgent issues for us. We will vote for the panel that appears capable of addressing these problems in practice."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Workers Party, JASAD opt out of Feb polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JASAD) and the Workers Party of Bangladesh, two partners of the 14-party alliance of the now activities-banned Awami League, yesterday announced that they will not take part in the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election and the referendum.

The decision was taken as participation of all political parties has not been ensured, the two parties said in separate statements issued yesterday.

Both parties were part of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance from 2008 until August 2024, before the government was toppled from power.

JASAD President Hasanul Haq Inu and Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon were ministers in the previous government.

In a statement signed by JASAD office secretary Sazzad Hossain, the party said the February election

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'Extortionists', traders clash at Karwan Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A chase and counter-chase took place between traders and a group of alleged extortionists at Karwan Bazar yesterday, raising tensions in the area.

According to traders and witnesses, the attackers, armed with sticks, swooped on traders who were holding a human chain programme protesting alleged extortion around 11:00am in front of the kitchen market, leaving several traders and market employees injured.

The traders alleged that Abdur Rahman, an expelled member secretary of the Tejgaon unit of Juba Dal, along with some local BNP men, carried out the attack. Rahman denied both the allegations of extortion and involvement in the violence.

According to traders, following the August 5 changeover, leaders and activists of the Awami League who were on the kitchen market committee fled, leading to the formation of a subcommittee, with Rahman placed in charge.

"There was no extortion for a couple of months, but Rahman later began collecting money from traders, claiming he was providing security," they said.

They further alleged that Rahman set up makeshift shops on the footpath in front of the market and collected money from those operating there, and charged traders for keeping goods in open areas.

"Over time, he turned into an extortionist," they alleged.

Traders said repeated attempts to stop the practice

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Inqilab Moncho continued its blockade at Shahbagh for the fourth consecutive day yesterday, pressing for the trial of those accused in the killing of July frontliner and Moncho spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi. The blockade began on Friday, with protesters occupying the busy intersection overnight despite a cold wave. Since then, the programme has been held daily from 2:00pm, drawing participants from diverse backgrounds.

PHOTO: STAR

Country saw 412 dengue deaths, over 1 lakh cases this year

Experts urge early action to prevent similar situation in 2026

HELEMUL ALAM

Although dengue cases have declined significantly due to the current cold weather, the country has already recorded 412 deaths and 1,02,673 cases as of December 29 this year.

To prevent a similar situation next year, entomologists and medical professionals emphasised that preventive measures to control Aedes mosquitoes must begin in January.

They stressed the need to fully adopt an Integrated Mosquito Management System, establish a dedicated mosquito-control authority, and implement coordinated programmes.

Entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said dengue prevention requires target specific control from the very beginning.

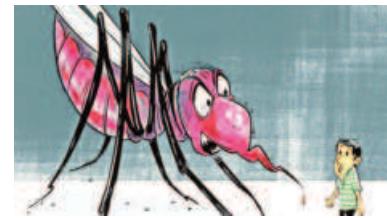
"Aedes mosquitoes must be targeted specifically, not all mosquitoes," he said, adding that Aedes breed in particular locations in Dhaka and selected areas nationwide.

He emphasised that regular surveillance should come first, followed by targeted control measures based on surveillance data.

Bashar said the failure to treat

dengue as a separate programme -- not only this year but in previous years -- has undermined control efforts.

He also noted weaknesses in the local government administrative



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Begin Aedes mosquito control from January
- Set up dedicated mosquito-control authority
- Adopt integrated management system
- Ensure coordinated dengue prevention strategy
- Improve early case detection, timely reporting

structure this year and expressed hope that an elected government would strengthen it effectively in the coming year.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman of National University

said the main failure lies in the absence of a responsible authority for mosquito control.

"There must be a consistent surveillance system followed by a continuous control mechanism," he said, noting that under Integrated Vector Management, source reduction, insecticide use and public participation are discussed but not implemented consistently.

"Also, we cannot have one dengue prevention system in Dhaka North, another in Dhaka South, and a different one in Chattogram. There must be one top authority issuing unified instructions nationwide," he said.

Saifur also said effective insecticides are currently unavailable, while fogging practices are outdated and often applied unnecessarily.

"Urban authorities must decide scientifically which insecticide to use, where fogging is needed and when. Fogging should not be routine," he said.

Late case reporting is another critical issue, he said.

"If cases are detected early and information is shared promptly, early control measures can prevent explosive outbreaks and epidemics," he explained.

"We always act after widespread transmission begins. This must

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

35,000 BGB members to be deployed for polls Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said around 35,000 Border Guard Bangladesh members will be deployed during the upcoming national election.

He said this while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the BGB Day programme at Pilkhana.

Jahangir said the home ministry has taken "all kinds of preparations" for the election and that BGB is also taking all necessary steps in this regard.

About Meghalaya Police's claim that it had not arrested anyone in the killing of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, Jahangir said an overnight statement addressed the matter and urged reporters to read it.

Regarding the Keraniganj madrasa blast, the home adviser said the person behind the act was on the run, while an accomplice had been arrested. The suspect's wife was also taken into custody.

BGB Day 2025 was observed at Pilkhana headquarters, where Jahangir conferred medals on 72 members for meritorious service. This year, 12 members received the Border Guard Bangladesh Medal (BGBM), 24 received the President's Border Guard Medal (PBGM), 12 received the BGBM Service, and 24 received the PBGM Service.

BRACU launches semiconductor research centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre of Research Excellence in Semiconductor Technology (CREST) was inaugurated at BRAC University yesterday, marking a significant step towards becoming a "nation of innovation" and a credible participant in the global semiconductor ecosystem.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the broader Silicon River Ecosystem, Bangladesh's national framework designed to integrate Biotech, Electronics, AI and Robotics (BEAR), at BRAC University in Merul Badda in the capital.

Welcoming the initiative, BRAC University Vice Chancellor Prof Syed Ferhat Anwar emphasised the university's commitment to advancing frontier research, nurturing innovation-driven talent and supporting national priorities in science and technology.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Make the Pilkhana probe report public Demand dismissed BDR members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BDR Kalyan Parishad, an association of dismissed members of the then Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh), yesterday expressed frustration over the delay in making public the inquiry commission's report on the 2009 Pilkhana carnage.

Although a month has passed since the submission of the report, the organisation said it has yet to be released.

They demanded immediate publication of the full report, trial of the real culprits and reinstatement of dismissed "innocent" BDR members with compensation.

The demands were made at a press conference at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the capital yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A group of people armed with sticks attacked a human chain organised by traders at Karwan Bazar in the capital yesterday morning, as they were protesting alleged extortion in the market area. According to the traders, the programme began around 11:00am in front of the kitchen market to protest what they said was the resumption of extortion over the past couple of months. About half an hour into the protest, the attackers swooped on the demonstrators, triggering a chase and counter-chase, witnesses said.

PHOTO: STAR

DHAKA-MYMENSINGH Derailment halts rail link for 15 hours, sabotage suspected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Rail communication on the Dhaka-Mymensingh route was suspended for around 15 hours after the Dhaka-bound Agniveena Express derailed in Gafargaon, Mymensingh, early yesterday due to a cut in the railway line.

Police and railway officials said the train derailed around 5:00am following an act of sabotage.

Gafargaon Police Station Officer-in-Charge AFM Atiqur Rahman said miscreants had cut about 15 feet of the railway track, forcing authorities to suspend all train services on the route.

Seepur Railway Station Officer Shamima confirmed that the line was cut in the Gafargaon area.

Station Master Mohammad Shamim said train services were halted from around 5:00am but no passenger trains were stranded at Seepur station. Rail services on the route were restored around 8:00pm after repair work, he added.



The teachers concerned collect newly printed secondary-level textbooks from the Upazila Education Office in Godagari, Rajshahi for distribution to their respective schools, ahead of the January 1 nationwide textbook distribution for class I-IX students. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Make

FROM PAGE 3

In a written statement, Sayeed Ahmed Khan, spokesperson of the organisation, said the inquiry commission submitted its report to the chief adviser on November 30.

He referred to recent media statements by commission head Major General (retd) ALM Fazlur Rahman, who claimed the carnage was a "pre-planned killing" orchestrated by then prime minister Sheikh Hasina with the direct backing of India, which had long been portrayed as a "BDR mutiny".

Md Faizul Alam, president of the organisation, said, "They added Section 2(a) in the commission's gazette, which legitimised the controversial trial. We objected to it."

"Even after 11 months of investigation and submission of the report, we still do not know what is in it. We demand immediate publication of the full report," he added.

Speakers at the briefing alleged that although no violent incidents took place in units outside Pilkhana on February 25 and 26, 2009, and jawans there followed army officers' commands, thousands were dismissed and imprisoned through special courts on charges of staging a "sepoy mutiny".

The BDR Kalyan Parishad placed a three-point demand: publication of the full investigation report; reinstatement of 18,519 members dismissed from Pilkhana and units across the country with compensation; release of innocent members currently in jail; and bringing the real culprits identified by the commission to justice.

Earlier, families of the officers killed in the 2009 carnage also urged the authorities to make the full report public and demanded immediate prosecution of those named in it.

'Extortionists', traders clash

FROM PAGE 3

and remove him from the committee failed, prompting growing frustration and the announcement of the human chain programme. Traders from other markets in Karwan Bazar also joined the protest.

After the attack, traders regrouped with sticks and chased the attackers away before bringing out a procession, chanting slogans against extortion. Additional police and army personnel later arrived and restored order.

Contacted, Rahman said he is a businessman in the market with dealerships of at least six companies. "I collect service charges to run the market. That is not extortion," he said.

"They want to remove me

from my elected position without an election. As I opposed their move, they are trying to brand me an extortionist," he said, blaming leaders of the previous Awami League-era committee and some new trader leaders seeking to abolish the committee forcefully.

He, however, admitted, without naming anyone, that some people extort traders in Karwan Bazar.

Dhaka North City

unit BNP joint convener Anwaruzzaman Anwar acknowledged the dispute over the committee and called for action against those responsible following a proper investigation.

Yunus vows free, fair and peaceful

FROM PAGE 3

During the meeting, they discussed the upcoming February parliamentary elections and referendum, as well as trade, civil aviation, labour reforms initiated by the interim government, and overall bilateral relations between the two countries.

Jacobson, who is returning home after an eventful year in Bangladesh, appreciated the leadership

of the chief adviser over the past 17 months and reiterated the support of the US government for the February elections, said the Chief Adviser's press wing yesterday.

They also discussed funding for Rohingya humanitarian assistance.

The chief adviser thanked the US for its continued support for the Rohingyas.

He also thanked the

US chargé d'affaires for her "critical work" during her year-long tenure and for being a "friend to Bangladesh", and extended an invitation to her to visit in future.

National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman and SDGs Affairs Principal Coordinator and Senior Secretary Lamiya Morshed were also present at the meeting.

First-ever JnU student union

FROM PAGE 3

Jannatul Maua Lisa, a student of Anthropology, said, "A single vote could shape the future of Jagannath University, and we want to entrust the university's future to those who can safeguard this responsibility," she said.

"We will vote for those who have worked in the past and are willing to work to resolve the long-standing issues faced by the university," she added.

Four panels are contesting the JnU central union election – the JCD-backed Oikkobodhho Nirbhik Jobian, the Chhakra Shakti-backed Oikkobodhho Jobian, the

Socialist Students' Front-backed Maulana Bhashani Brigade, and the Islami Chhakra Shibir-supported Odommo Jobian Oikko panel.

In the hall union elections, three panels are competing – the Socialist Students' Front-backed Rokuya Parishad, the Shibir-supported Odommo Jobian Oikko, and the Chhakra Dal-backed Oporajitar Ogorojatra panel.

Ahead of the election, CCTV cameras have been installed at every centre, and the entire vote-counting process will be broadcast live, according to the JnU Election Commission.

To maintain law and

order, extensive security measures have been put in place, with members of the army, police, Rab, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), and Ansar deployed both inside and outside the campus.

Volunteers from BNCC, Rover Scouts and the Ranger Unit are also assisting in maintaining discipline.

JnU Proctor Prof Dr Tazammol Hoque said all necessary preparations had been taken to ensure a peaceful and fair election.

"Law enforcement agencies are on duty to maintain order. We hope to deliver a smooth, participatory and credible election," he said.

NATIONAL CREDIT AND COMMERCE BANK PLC.

COMMON SERVICES DIVISION
Head Office: NCC Bank Bhaban, 13/1-2, Toyenbee Circular Road
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Phone: 223390053
PABX: 223381901-4, 223383981-2, Ext- 117

NOTICE OF INVITING QUOTATION

Sealed quotations are hereby invited by National Credit and Commerce Bank PLC. (the Bank) from reputed Companies/local Agents/Suppliers/Authorized Distributors/Service Providers for the below mentioned requirements under the terms and conditions mentioned detail in the Request for Quotation (RFQ) documents.

Items Description	Price of the tender document	Sale start date	Sale end date	Date and time for Tender Submission
Item 1: RFQ for renewing & implementing of Endpoint Security Solution - Extended Detection and Response (XDR) for Workstations of NCC Bank PLC.	Tk. 2,000/- (Taka Two Thousand) only (for each item) in the form of Payment Order (non-refundable) favoring National Credit and Commerce Bank PLC. by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh	December 30, 2025	January 07, 2026	January 08, 2026 Time: on/before 11:00 AM
Item 2: RFQ for supplying, installing, commissioning & implementing of Server Security Solution (Trend Micro Deep Security) of NCC bank PLC.		January 01, 2026	January 13, 2026	January 14, 2026 Time: on/before 11:00 AM
Item 3: RFQ for supplying, installing, commissioning & implementing of On-Line UPS Batteries (for Data Center-replacing batteries) of NCC bank PLC		January 01, 2026	January 19, 2026	January 20, 2026 Time: on/before 11:00 AM

The schedule containing detailed Terms & Conditions may be collected from the Common Services Division, Level-5, NCC Bank PLC. Head Office, Dhaka and submit the same under sealed envelope to the Tender Box placed at Common Services Division (CSD). Manipulation or any kind of unusual approach or failure to submit offer within the stipulated time frame will be treated as "Disqualified" for the bidding. The Bank authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposal without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Vice President &
Head of Common Services Division



Workers Party

FROM PAGE 3

is unconstitutional and is

being organised in a one-

sided manner.

It also claimed that the

interim government is not

neutral.

Meanwhile, the Workers

Party said it decided not to

take part in the election as

the EC did not take any steps

to ensure participation of all

political parties.

In its statement, the party

claimed it is being isolated

through political pressure.

50 homes gutted in Rohingya camp fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least 50 homes were gutted in a fire at Leda Rohingya refugee camp (Camp 24) in Hnila union of Teknaf upazila, Cox's Bazar on Sunday night.

The fire broke out around 10:00pm, and four firefighting units brought it under control around 1:00am, officials said.

Mohammad Alam, chairman of the Leda camp, said around 70,000 Rohingyas live in the camp.



The shelters, made of bamboo and tarpaulin, are built close to one another, allowing the fire to spread rapidly.

He said the blaze was initially suspected to have originated from a cooking stove.

Syed Md Morshed Hossain, deputy assistant director of Cox's Bazar fire service, said there were no reports of casualties.

Muhammad Kausar Sikder, commander of Teknaf-16 Armed Police Battalion, said the cause of the fire is being investigated.

Khanjada Shahriar Bin Mannan, camp in-charge of the Leda camp under the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner's office, said a full assessment of the damage had not yet been completed.

BRACU launches semiconductor

FROM PAGE 3

Attending as the chief guest, Md Anwar Hossain, secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, underscored the country's commitment to research-led technological advancement and innovation-driven economic transformation.

MA Jabbar, president

of the Bangladesh Semiconductor Industry Association (BSIA) and managing director of Neural Semiconductor Ltd, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the importance of indigenous capability building, industry-academia collaboration and export-oriented semiconductor growth.

"We could have involved school students, mobilised the public on designated days, and motivated people to participate – but none of this happened due to a lack of leadership and motivation," Saifur said.

"We failed to think nationally. Fragmented efforts in a few areas cannot provide protection," he added.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said widespread sero-surveillance is needed to identify dominant dengue serotypes, noting that serotype 2 is linked to more severe illness.

Delayed hospital admission remains a major cause of death, he said, urging immediate admission for high-risk groups such as pregnant women, obese individuals, and those with multiple comorbidities.

Nazmul highlighted a severe shortage of nurses, citing dengue wards with 100 patients staffed by only two or three nurses.

Nurses are crucial for early detection of deterioration. Specialised training is essential," he said, referring to Sri Lanka as an example.

He also stressed the need for better logistics, including adequate fluids beyond normal saline and access to bedside ultrasound, haematoctrit machines and CBC analysers in health facilities.

Nazmul added that doctors need further training, noting that some private hospitals fail to follow protocols, resulting in higher mortality despite better facilities.

Public health expert Mohammad Mushtuq Hussain said early detection and decentralised care are key to reducing deaths.

Young scientists who are below 45 (forty five) years of age on 31 December 2025 having

Ph.D./D.Sc./FCPS/FRCS/MRCVS/MD/MS/MPhil or equivalent degree in science streams and are of exceptional talent and promise, and have contributed to science and technology in recognized field, are eligible for election as Associate Fellows (AF) of BAS.

Application/nomination for the above Associate Fellows, with CV mentioning academic and professional record must reach the Secretary of the Academy by 31 January 2026 at the latest.

Nomination of young scientist for election as Associate Fellows (AF) can also be made by the Fellows of the Academy before the deadline.

Kindly note that applications in Physical Sciences, Chemical Sciences, and Engineering Sciences are not required, as these fields have already been filled.

Prof. Dr. Yearul Kabir
Secretary

Office of the HEAT Sub Project

Project Name: Alor Dhara PIN-13600
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
North South University, Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229

Date: 30 December 2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of the following package from HEAT-funded subproject (Project Identification Number: 13600):

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	1200475	Procurement of Computers and Accessories (Laptop) for ASPM, members, researchers, and Accountant	21-Jan-2026 13:50	21-Jan-2026 14:50

INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 30, 2025

POUSH 15, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

UKRAINE-RUSSIA TERRITORY ROW

Trump-Zelensky talks yield no progress on peace

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia and Ukraine yesterday remained far apart on territorial issues that are blocking a peace deal, despite progress on security guarantees for Kyiv at talks between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky.

Trump said after his talks with the Ukrainian president on Sunday afternoon that they were "getting a lot closer, maybe very close" to an agreement to end Russia's war in Ukraine but that "thorny issues" were still there.

Zelensky said two main issues outlined in a 20-point peace proposal remained to be resolved - control of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station, which is in Russian hands, and the fate of the Donbas area of eastern Ukraine.

Underlining how far apart Kyiv and Moscow are on territory, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Ukraine must withdraw its troops from the small part of Donbas that it still controls, and that Kyiv would lose more land if it did not agree to a deal.

"We are talking about the withdrawal of the regime's armed forces from the Donbas," Peskov said. He said a call was planned soon between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, but did not say when.

Shortly before Zelensky and his delegation arrived at Trump's Florida residence on Sunday, Trump and Putin spoke in a call described as "productive" by the US president and "friendly" by Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov.

GUNFIGHT

Three Turkish cops, six IS militants killed

REUTERS, Yalova

Three Turkish police officers and six Islamic State militants were killed in a gunfight in northwest Turkey yesterday, the interior minister said, a week after more than 100 suspected IS militants were detained for planning Christmas and New Year attacks.



Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said eight police and another security force member were wounded in a raid on a property in the town of Yalova, on the Sea of Marmara coast south of Istanbul. More than 100 addresses were raided nationwide early yesterday.

Turkey has stepped up operations against suspected IS militants this year, as the group returns to prominence globally.

The US carried out a strike against the militants in northwest Nigeria last week, while two gunmen who attacked a Hanukkah event at Sydney's Bondi Beach this month appeared to be inspired by IS, Australian police said.

On December 19, the US military launched large-scale strikes against dozens of IS targets in Syria in retaliation for an attack on American personnel.

Police raided the house in Yalova on the suspicion that militants were hiding there overnight.



Young displaced Palestinians leave a tent erected on waterlogged ground in the Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday, as the region endures cold winter conditions.

PHOTO: AFP

Over 10,000 displaced in 3 days in Sudan
Says UN migration agency

AFP, Port Sudan

Violence in western and southern Sudan displaced more than 10,000 people within a three-day period this week, according to figures released by the United Nations' migration agency on Sunday.

Since April 2023, Sudan's regular army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have waged what the UN has called a "war of atrocities", killing tens of thousands of people and uprooting more than 11 million. Between December 25 and 26, attacks on the villages of Umm Baru and Kerno displaced more than 7,000 people, according to the IOM.

After its takeover of the North Darfur capital of El-Fasher in October, RSF has pushed westward in recent days, through enclaves inhabited by the Zagawa group and controlled by a militia group.

China stages record drills around Taiwan

Aims to highlight Beijing's ability to cut off Taipei from West; Taiwan condemns 'military intimidation', mobilises troops

REUTERS, Taipei

China launched its most extensive war games around Taiwan yesterday to showcase Beijing's ability to cut off the island from outside support in a conflict, testing Taipei's resolve to defend itself and its arsenal of US-made weapons.

The Eastern Theatre Command said it had deployed troops, warships, fighter jets and artillery for its "Justice Mission 2025" exercises to encircle the democratically governed island, conduct live fire and simulated strikes on land and sea targets, and drills to blockade Taiwan's main ports.

The live-firing exercises will continue today across a record

seven zones designated by China's Maritime Safety Administration, making the drills the largest to date by total coverage and in areas closer to Taiwan than previous exercises. The military had initially said artillery firing would be confined to five zones.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said there was also an extra zone for a two-hour drill yesterday morning, which took place without a Chinese announcement in the eastern waters of the island.

The Transport Ministry said more than 100,000 passengers on scheduled international flights will be affected by today's drills, while around 80 domestic flights are set to be cancelled.



Helicopters on an amphibious assault ship take part in military drills in waters southeast of Taiwan, in this image from a video released by the Eastern Theatre Command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli presence in Somaliland will be a 'target': Houthis

AFP, Sanaa

The leader of Yemen's Houthi rebels warned that any Israeli presence in Somaliland would be considered a "military target", according to a statement published Sunday, in the latest condemnation of Israel's move to recognise the breakaway region.

"We consider any Israeli presence in Somaliland a military target for our armed forces, as it constitutes aggression against Somalia and Yemen, and a threat to the security of the region," said the group's chief Abdulmalik al-Houthi. Israel on Friday announced that it was officially recognising Somaliland, a first for the self-proclaimed republic that in 1991 declared it had unilaterally separated from Somalia.

The Houthi chief warned that the move carried grave consequences, saying recognition was "a hostile stance targeting Somalia and its African surroundings, as well as Yemen, the Red Sea, and the countries along both shores of the Red Sea".

MYANMAR POLLS

Pro-military USDP claims huge win in first phase

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's dominant pro-military party claimed an overwhelming victory in the first phase of the country's junta-run elections, a senior party official told AFP, after democracy watchdogs warned the poll would entrench military rule.

The armed forces snatched power in a 2021 coup, but on Sunday opened voting in a phased month-long poll they pledge will return power to the people.

"We won 82 lower house seats in townships which have finished counting, out of the total of 102," a senior official of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) told AFP.

The party won all eight townships in the capital Naypyidaw, they added, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to officially disclose the results.

"My view on the election is clear: I don't trust it at all," Yangon resident Min Khant said yesterday.



Cambodia broke truce with 250 drone flights

Says Thailand army

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's army yesterday accused Cambodia of violating a newly signed ceasefire agreement, reached after weeks of deadly border clashes, by flying more than 250 drones over its territory.

Thailand and Cambodia agreed to the "immediate" ceasefire on Saturday, pledging to end renewed border clashes that killed dozens of people and displaced more than a million this month.

But the fresh allegation from Bangkok and its threat to reconsider releasing Cambodian soldiers held by Thailand left a sustained truce in doubt -- even as the two nations' foreign ministers wrapped up two days of talks hosted by China aimed at rebuilding trust and improving relations.

The Thai army said yesterday "more than 250 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were detected flying from the Cambodian side, intruding into Thailand's sovereign territory" on Sunday night, according to a statement. "Such actions constitute provocation and a violation of measures aimed at reducing tensions, which are inconsistent with the Joint Statement agreed" during a bilateral border committee meeting on Saturday, it added.



Bangladesh Power Development Board

Office of the Senior System Analyst

Dhaka Computer Center

Wapda Building (4th fl.), Motijheel, Dhaka

Phone No. 47113484

Ref No. 27.11.0000.716.77.25.354

Date: 29/12/2025

Invitation for e-Tenders

e-Tender are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of following work.

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Ref. No.	Name of works	Tender publication date	Tender closing date
1.	Tender ID: 1202956 Ref. No. 27.11.0000.716.77.25.353 Dt.: 29.12.2025	BPDB's website and email system hosting with necessary security features, auto data backup system and scanning incoming and outgoing mail with dedicated server for 2 (Two) years.	29.12.2025	14.01.2026 Time: 12:00

বিস্ময়/জন-৪৮১(২)/২৯/১২/১৫

Signed
Mriganka Mohan Paul
Senior System Analyst
Dhaka Computer Center
BPDB, Dhaka

Planning and Development Division Khulna University, Khulna

Tender No : KU/PD-189/2017-

Date : 28/12/2025

e-Tender Notice No. 11/2025-2026

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of the Work	Online Tender Closing and Opening date
1203784	KU/PD-436/2025	Procurement of Ultra Sound Machine and Related Necessary Equipment for Medical Centre of Khulna University	Date : 11-01-2026 Time: 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branches upto banking hours on e-GP system. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Signed
28/12/2025
(Prof. Dr. Kazi Saiful Islam)
Director (In-charge)
Planning & Development Division

GD-2796

star BUSINESS



RMG exporters to shoulder EU tariffs in post duty-free era

Study warns of pressure on profits

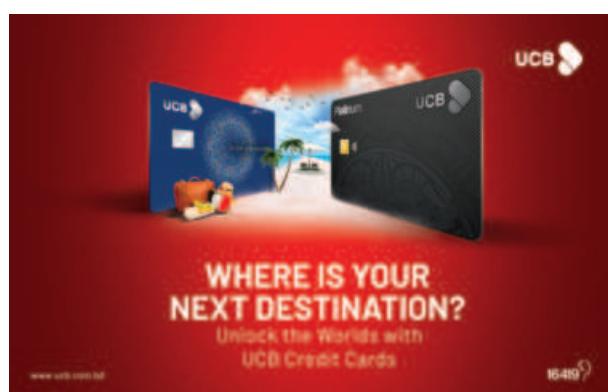
STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladeshi apparel exporters are likely to absorb much of the future European Union (EU) tariffs by cutting their own prices once duty-free access ends, according to a new study that warns of pressure on profits and long-term competitiveness.

If the EU imposes a 10 percent tariff on Bangladeshi garments after the end of trade preferences, exporters will need to cut their pre-tariff export prices by about 4 percent to remain competitive, according to the study on tariff and exchange rate pass-through in apparel exports to the EU. Tariff pass-through refers to the extent to which exporters transfer new tariffs to buyers in their selling price.

This means that nearly 40 percent of the tariff cost would be absorbed by exporters themselves, rather than being fully passed on to European buyers or consumers.

The study, presented at an event in Dhaka organised by the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) in collaboration with the International Growth Centre (IGC) yesterday, examines how exporters are likely to respond to higher tariffs and exchange rate movements after Bangladesh graduates from least developed country (LDC) status in 2026.



Duty-free and quota-free access to the EU under the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme is set to end in 2029, following a transition period.

Once preferences expire, apparel exports, more than 90 percent of which consist of low-value garments, could face Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariffs of about 12 percent.

Using a counterfactual pricing model based on comparator exporting countries, the researchers find that tariff pass-through is likely to be incomplete in such a scenario.

Instead of transferring higher tariffs to buyers, exporters are expected to lower their own prices to protect market share in the EU, a strategy that may help sustain export volumes in the short term but would significantly compress profit margins.

The study cautions that prolonged price absorption could weaken firms' capacity to invest, upgrade technology and move into higher-value segments.

The research also suggests that exchange rate depreciation will provide only partial relief after preference erosion.

"About half of changes in the exchange rate are passed through to export prices, suggesting that currency depreciation alone cannot neutralise the impact of higher tariffs," said Md Deen Islam, research director of the RAPID, while presenting the keynote paper.

This is particularly relevant as Bangladesh has moved toward a more market-based exchange rate regime since mid-2024, increasing volatility for exporters.

Dhaka Int'l Trade Fair begins on Jan 1

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) will begin on January 1, 2026, bringing together local and international exhibitors.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus will inaugurate the 30th edition of the fair, which is being co-organised by the commerce ministry and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal.

Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman shared the information at a press conference held at the venue yesterday.

According to the fair's layout plan, a total of 324 pavilions, stalls and restaurants of different categories have been allocated with full transparency to domestic producer-exporter organisations, general business establishments and foreign companies, Rahman said.

A wide range of local products will be showcased at the fair, including textiles, machinery, carpets, cosmetics and beauty aids, electrical and electronic items, furniture, jute and jute products, household goods, and leather and artificial leather products, including footwear, he said.

The use of polythene bags and single-use plastics has been banned at this year's fair, Rahman said. As an alternative, environmentally friendly shopping bags will be supplied at subsidised prices through the Ministry of Textiles and Jute, he added.

Besides Bangladesh, 11 companies from six countries -- India, Turkey, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia -- are participating in this year's fair. Last year, 343 companies took part.

Visitors will need to buy tickets priced at Tk 50 to enter the fair.

In order to ease transportation to the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal, around 200 buses will operate during the fair. In addition, ride-sharing services will offer special discounted fares for visitors.

Telecom giants leave a heavier carbon footprint in Bangladesh

Disclosures show Bangladesh delivers strong revenue for Grameenphone and Robi, alongside higher carbon emissions

AHSAN HABIB

Global telecom giants are generating more carbon emissions in Bangladesh than in most of their developed markets, company disclosures show, a pattern environmental activists say exposes weaknesses in international climate agreements.

In 2024, Norwegian telecom group Telenor, the parent company of leading local operator Grameenphone, recorded its highest greenhouse gas emissions in Bangladesh among all its global operations, according to Telenor's annual report.

The same year, Robi Axiata, another leading telecom provider in Bangladesh, reported the second-highest emissions among the operating units of its Malaysian parent company, Axiata Group Berhad.

Both Telenor and Robi Axiata attribute their higher emissions in Bangladesh to a more carbon-intensive energy mix than in other countries where they operate.

Environmental activists argue that the Paris Agreement placed stronger emissions cutting expectations on developed nations, while developing countries were not subject to the same obligations.

"So many multinational companies are taking those opportunities," M Zakir Hossain Khan, chief executive of climate action think tank Change Initiative, told The Daily Star.

In 2024, Telenor Group's total greenhouse gas emissions in Bangladesh reached 280,000 tonnes, compared with 210,000 tonnes in Pakistan.

Emissions in Norway, where the company is headquartered, were 160,000 tonnes. Emissions in Finland were 150,000 tonnes. In Sweden and Denmark, it was less than 90,000 tonnes each last year, according to Telenor data.

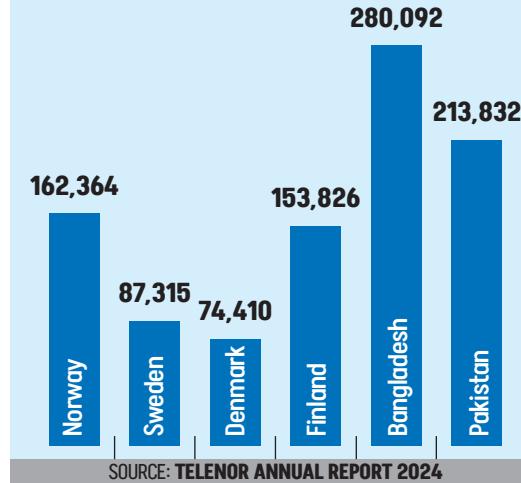
Global Carbon Budget data show that Bangladesh's total carbon emissions were 1.08 billion tonnes in 2024, suggesting that Grameenphone alone accounted for roughly 0.26 percent of the national total. In the same year, Robi Axiata, the Bangladeshi arm of Axiata Group Berhad, contributed 19.7 percent of the group's total emissions.

Robi's scope 1 and 2 emissions, covering direct operations and purchased energy, amounted to 234,000 tonnes, while scope 3 emissions, including

Telenor's GHG emissions in 2024

Scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3

In tonne of CO2 equivalent

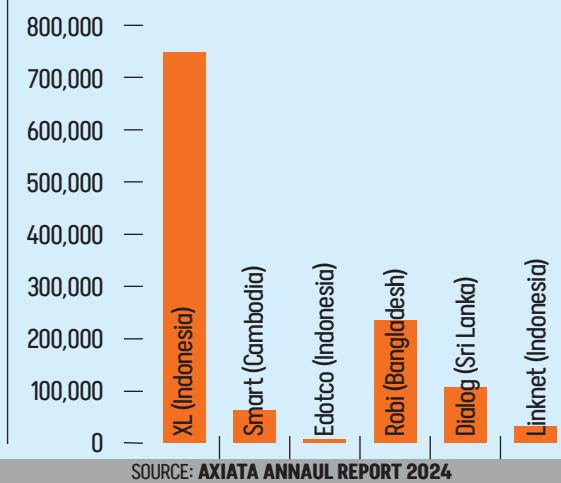


SOURCE: TELENOR ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Axiata's total emissions in 2024

Scope 1 and scope 2

In tonne of CO2 equivalent



SOURCE: AXIATA ANNUAL REPORT 2024

the supply chain, are expected to be considerably higher. A comparison of annual reports shows that Robi generated more carbon dioxide relative to turnover than Grameenphone.

It also shows that emissions by the multinationals in developed markets remain far lower than in countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Grameenphone reported that its scope 1 emissions, totalling 13,715 tonnes of carbon dioxide, came mainly from diesel used in backup generators. Scope 2 emissions from purchased grid electricity reached 169,570 tonnes.

Telenor has been operating in Bangladesh under the Grameenphone brand since 1996, holding 55.8 percent of shares. Bangladesh is also Telenor's second largest revenue source, generating 14,995 million Norwegian krone in 2024, compared with 25,054 million krone in Norway.

In a written response, Grameenphone told The Daily Star that high emissions in Bangladesh are due

to reliance on a carbon intensive national grid and the widespread use of diesel generators to ensure uninterrupted service.

Grameenphone said that in Nordic countries, Telenor benefits from renewable electricity and well-established green power procurement mechanisms.

Bangladesh has recently approved a policy framework allowing private companies access to renewable energy through corporate power purchase agreements, but key guidelines and operational procedures are not yet fully in place, it said.

Meanwhile, Robi Axiata said its high greenhouse gas emissions reflect the country's energy and infrastructure challenges. Diesel generators are widely used to back up an unreliable grid, while network expansion into rural areas and rising data consumption increase energy demand.

The company said emissions are closely linked to its technical footprint, including the number of sites, coverage area, and hours of generator operation, which do not directly correlate with revenue. To reduce its carbon footprint, Robi said it is upgrading network equipment, optimising cooling systems, and implementing sleep mode features.

Change Initiative chief executive Khan said multinationals focus on reducing carbon in developed countries while continuing to profit in developing nations without taking full responsibility for emissions.

He suggested the government introduce carbon taxes on companies and explore international carbon markets to mobilise funding for environmental projects.



2025 brings calm to external balance sheet, not to businesses

MD MEHEDI HASAN

In 2025, some macroeconomic indicators improved, but the mood on the ground did not.

On the external front, the year opened on a stronger note. The country ends the year with record remittance inflows, a steadier foreign exchange market and rising dollar stocks. Together, they brought a welcome sense of relief to the country's external sector.

Stopping large scale loan scams in the banking sector and easing the dollar shortage were among the interim government's major successes, said Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman shared the information at a press conference held at the venue yesterday.

According to the fair's layout plan, a total of 324 pavilions, stalls and restaurants of different categories have been allocated with full transparency to domestic producer-exporter organisations, general business establishments and foreign companies, Rahman said.

A wide range of local products will be showcased at the fair, including textiles, machinery, carpets, cosmetics and beauty aids, electrical and electronic items, furniture, jute and jute products, household goods, and leather and artificial leather products, including footwear, he said.

The use of polythene bags and single-use plastics has been banned at this year's fair, Rahman said. As an alternative, environmentally friendly shopping bags will be supplied at subsidised prices through the Ministry of Textiles and Jute, he added.

Besides Bangladesh, 11 companies from six countries -- India, Turkey, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia -- are participating in this year's fair. Last year, 343 companies took part.

Visitors will need to buy tickets priced at Tk 50 to enter the fair.

In order to ease transportation to the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal, around 200 buses will operate during the fair. In addition, ride-sharing services will offer special discounted fares for visitors.

THE REWIND

There was also some bad news. While headline numbers showed improvement, the trade and business environment remained largely gloomy throughout the year.

Political uncertainty, weak law and order and high interest rates continued to weigh heavily on investor and business confidence.

According to the BKMEA leader, deteriorating law and order stood out as one of the major failures of the interim government, which was formed in August last year after the mass uprising toppled the Awami League regime.

REMITTANCES LEAD THE TURNAROUND

Following the uprising, remittance inflows started to rebound, with money sent home by expatriates emerging as the most decisive stabilising force of 2025.

Many attributed the surge to a renewed sense of patriotism among Bangladeshis abroad. A sharp decline

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

MACRO OUTLOOK

Record \$30.04b remittances in FY25 March saw the monthly high of \$3.29b Reserves: \$32.79b (gross), \$28.11b (BPM6) External debt: \$112.12b in Sept, down from \$113.56b in June Balance of payments: \$1.08b surplus in Jul-Oct

BUSINESS GLOOMS

Political uncertainty, election timing slowed investment

Inflation, high interest rates pushed up business overheads

TRADE SLOWDOWN

LC settlements for capital machinery fell to \$627m in Jul-Oct

LC settlements for intermediate goods fell to \$1.25b in Jul-Oct

Private sector credit growth hit a decade-low of 6.23%

in illegal money transfer channels such as hundi and hawala also played an important role.

Bangladeshis living overseas sent home a record \$30.04 billion in the fiscal year 2024-25, the highest amount ever received in a single fiscal year. The figure marked a 25.50 percent increase from \$23.74 billion in FY24, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

Monthly inflows reached a historic high in March, when remittance receipts climbed to \$3.29 billion. The surge improved liquidity in the banking system and eased pressure on the foreign exchange market.

FOREX STABILITY, RESERVE REBUILDING

Although the central bank introduced a market-based exchange rate regime in May, the foreign exchange market remained largely stable throughout the year.

Strong remittance inflows, slower import payments and steady export earnings supported the shift, which was required to meet conditions tied to an ongoing \$4.7 billion loan

programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Many had feared the taka would weaken further and that volatility would intensify under the new system. Those concerns did not materialise.

For most of the year, the exchange rate of the US dollar hovered around Tk 122, with the Bangladesh Bank intervening when the rate moved sharply above or below that level.

In the year, the central bank shifted from selling dollars to purchasing them from the interbank market to stabilise the exchange rate and rebuild reserves. Dollar purchases crossed \$3 billion in the ongoing fiscal year.

Between FY21 and FY25, the Bangladesh Bank sold more than \$25 billion from reserves to cover imports of fuel, fertiliser and food. Since the beginning of the current fiscal year, it has focused on rebuilding reserves as dollar inflows improved.

As of December 24, gross foreign exchange reserves stood at \$32.79 billion, while reserves calculated under the IMF's BPM6 method amounted to \$28.11 billion.

The slowdown was reflected in trade data. During the July-October period of the current fiscal year, letter of credit settlements for capital machinery fell 10 percent year-on-year to \$627 million.

Settlements for intermediate goods declined 19 percent to \$1.25 billion. The slowdown was reflected in trade data. During the July-October period of the current fiscal year, letter of credit settlements for capital machinery fell 10 percent year-on-year to \$627 million.

Foreign loan commitments soar 133% in Jul-Nov

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Foreign loan commitments to Bangladesh surged by 133 percent in the first five months of the current fiscal year, with most funding coming from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European partners, and several other countries and organisations.

From July to November, total foreign loan and grant commitments reached \$1.22 billion, up from \$523 million during the same period last fiscal year. The financial account also moved into surplus.

STILL BUSINESSES UNDER STRAIN

Despite relief on the external front, trade and business activity remained weak throughout 2025.

Political changeover in August last year and uncertainty surrounding the election timeline damped investor confidence.

Many businesses postponed expansion plans and fresh investments amid unclear policy signals.

2025 telecom reset: Policy rewritten, but fault lines remain

MAHMUDUL HASAN

As 2025 draws to a close, Bangladesh's telecommunications sector stands at a pivotal juncture, reshaped by a wave of policy interventions that have altered how connectivity is regulated, owned and governed.

Over the year, the government rolled out sweeping reforms to telecom licensing, amended decades-old surveillance laws, fast-tracked the entry of satellite internet through Starlink and revived plans to block unauthorised handsets through the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR).

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for telecom and ICT, who led much of the reform drive, has argued that under the previous regime the sector had descended into what he described as "anarchy".

According to him, thousands of licences were issued on political considerations, while intermediaries extracted large sums without adding meaningful value.

THE REWIND

Industry leaders and policy experts broadly agree that reform was overdue. But many warn that several provisions risk undermining competition, discouraging investment and entrenching the dominance of large multinational players.

Telecom expert Abu Nazam M Tanveer Hossain said the changes were being pursued without a coherent long-term roadmap. "There should first be a national telecom policy with a 10-year vision, followed by revisions of the act and then the licensing guidelines, rules and regulations."

NEW LICENSING ARCHITECTURE, OLD FEARS

The centrepiece of the year's reform agenda was the new Telecommunication Licensing Policy, approved in September.

The policy dismantles a patchwork of over 20 licence categories and replaces it with four core licence types: access networks, national infrastructure, international connectivity and non-terrestrial networks. Telecom-enabled services will require registration rather than licensing.

Mobile, internet and satellite service and submarine cable operators, are to be brought under this framework. Existing licences – such as for international internet gateway, interconnection exchange, national internet exchange and internet gateway – will be allowed to

AT A GLANCE

Reform-driven reset marked by consolidation, tighter oversight and new technologies, tempered by investor unease and implementation delays

SURVEILLANCE LAW CHANGES

Internet shutdowns barred

Quasi-judicial council comprising executive branch formed

STARLINK ENTRY

Commercial launch in May : Focus on corporate, remote and backup connectivity

TELECOM POLICY 2025

LICENSING OVERHAUL

Over 20 licence categories consolidated into four core licences

Most IIG, ICX, NIX and IGW licences set to end by 2027

BTRC regains authority over most licences

OWNERSHIP RULE SHIFT

Foreign equity capped at 85% for mobile operators

NEIR

Handset blocking deferred until March next year

Grey market still dominates over half of handset sales



expire naturally, with most set to lapse by 2027.

"We have already drafted guidelines accordingly, and these guidelines are awaiting government approval," said Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission Chairman Maj Gen (retd) Md Emdad ul Bari.

Yet the policy has triggered unease within the industry, particularly over ownership rules. It caps foreign equity in mobile operators at 85 percent, effectively requiring at least 15 percent local ownership.

Among private mobile operators, only Grameenphone already meets this threshold. Malaysia-based Axiata holds 82.12 percent of Robi, India's Bharti Airtel 28.18 percent, while Banglalink is fully foreign-owned by Dubai-based VEON.

Shahid Alam, Robi's chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer, warned that mandating a 15 percent local share offload "may concern investors who have already invested billions with long-term plans."

Taimur Rahman, Banglalink's chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer, welcomed provisions for active network and spectrum sharing, but warned ownership mandates could discourage foreign investment.

Critics, meanwhile, also point to another asymmetry: multinational companies with up to 65 percent foreign direct investment can obtain cross-layer licences, while similar opportunities remain constrained for local firms.

Sumon Ahmed Sabir, deputy managing director of Fiber@Home, said this could marginalise domestic entrepreneurs and entrench market dominance.

Policy expert Tanveer Hossain added

that weak cross-ownership limits could distort competition.

SURVEILLANCE LAW REFORM

Another major development came with the approval of the Bangladesh Telecommunication (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025. It bars state-led internet shutdowns and introduces limited transparency and accountability measures in lawful interception.

Under the amended framework, interception requests will be overseen by a three-member quasi-judicial council composed entirely of executive officials, with the minister of law, justice and parliamentary affairs as chair. It must document all decisions, allow appeals and file complaints over unlawful interception.

Unauthorised interception or misuse of data will carry penalties of up to five years' imprisonment, a fine of Tk 1 crore, or both. Budgetary sanctions of up to Tk 99 crore may be recommended against offending agencies.

Tanveer Hossain said although safeguards that were absent in the 2010 law have been introduced in the ordinance, the council's composition may not ensure independent assessment.

The National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre will be abolished and replaced by a Centre for Information Support under the home ministry. Lawful interception will be limited to national security, law and order, emergencies, judicial or investigative needs, and cross-border matters.

Crucially, the amendment restores some balance between the ministry and the regulator. The ministry will approve only nationally significant licences, while the BTRC regains authority over others.

Even so, BTRC Chairman Bari has cautioned that certain accountability provisions may still encroach on regulatory independence.

THE NEIR STALEMATE

Few telecom initiatives have generated as much controversy as the launch of NEIR. Revived again in 2025, NEIR was announced amid strong resistance from small handset traders, prompting authorities to retreat from immediate enforcement.

Although the system is designed to block unauthorised mobile phones, enforcement has been deferred until late March next year in the face of continued protests. The BTRC has extended the deadline for registering unauthorised devices until year end, and no handsets will be disconnected before enforcement begins.

The system aims to curb illegal handset imports in a market where grey-channel phones account for an estimated 50 to 60 percent of sales.

STARLINK CHANGES EQUATION

The arrival of Starlink added a new dimension to Bangladesh's connectivity landscape. The satellite internet provider received fast-track approvals through a three-month accelerated process.

Starlink obtained its operating licence on April 29, began test operations on May 8, and officially launched on May 20. Residential packages were priced at Tk 6,000 and Tk 4,200. Gateways were established in Gazipur, Rajshahi and Jashore, supported by local data centres and fibre partners.

Commercial momentum increased after Robi Axiata PLC and Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited signed reseller agreements worth \$2.5 million.

Plastic industry resilient amid challenges

Trade body says; int'l fair to begin on Jan 28

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Despite economic challenges, Bangladesh's plastic industry remains resilient and continues to grow steadily, said Shamim Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

He made the statement at a media briefing yesterday at the association's office in Paltan, marking the 20th anniversary of the International Plastic Fair (IPF).

Ahmed said the plastic industry has changed significantly over the years. "Once limited to household items, the sector now serves as a vital backward linkage for more than 60 industries, including pharmaceuticals, agriculture and engineering," he said.

Recalling the history of the IPF, Ahmed said the first fair was held in 1989 and inaugurated by then-president HM Ershad. After a long gap, the exhibition was relaunched in 2002 and has since grown into one of South Asia's leading platforms for the plastic industry.

The 18th edition of the IPF will be held from January 28 to 31, 2026, at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB). Ahmed said the event is expected to attract strong foreign participation and showcase advanced machinery.

Despite a difficult business environment in 2025, the plastic sector has continued to expand, he said. More than 4,000 plastic-related enterprises are now operating in the country, mostly in the business-to-business segment.

He added that new memberships of the association indicate rising investment, particularly in agricultural plastics, packaging and engineering grade materials.

Ahmed said direct exports from the plastic industry are nearing \$300 million, while indirect exports, mainly through garment accessories and packaging, add an estimated \$1.2 billion.

He urged policymakers to include indirect exports in national data. "If indirect exports are recognised, the industry's export figure would be closer to \$2 billion," he said.

He also called for government support to ease land acquisition, especially for the long-delayed Plastic Industrial City under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation.

According to him, current land prices there remain beyond the reach of small entrepreneurs.

On environmental issues, Ahmed said plastic pollution mainly comes from post-consumer waste rather than manufacturing. He pointed to Japan's waste management system as an example Bangladesh could follow.

Responding to questions on diversification, he said the industry now has 29 active sub-sectors, including toys, optics and agricultural products such as greenhouse films and biofloc tanks.

As the IPF 2026 approaches, Ahmed highlighted the fair's role in promoting innovation and collaboration in the sector. "Exhibitions like the IPF are more than trade shows—they are tools for transformation," he said.

Bank Asia celebrates 17th anniversary of Islamic banking

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia PLC has celebrated the 17th anniversary of its Islamic banking services.

To mark the occasion, the bank organised a discussion meeting at Bank Asia Tower in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Shahid Rahmani, former chairman of the bank's shariah supervisory committee; Shah Mohammad Wali Ullah, former member secretary; and Mohammad Mofazzal Hussain Khan and Muhammad Ismail Hussain, faqih members, attended the programme.

Bank Asia has been operating its Islamic banking services since December 24, 2008.

Placing utmost importance on shariah compliance, Bank Asia Islamic Banking offers comprehensive services, including



Shahid Rahmani, former chairman of Bank Asia's shariah supervisory committee, and Shah Mohammad Wali Ullah, former member secretary, attend the 17th anniversary of the bank's Islamic banking services at Bank Asia Tower in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BANK ASIA

deposit mobilisation and investment facilities, to meet the diverse needs of customers across all segments, the release added.

Areful Arefeen, deputy managing director of the bank, along with other deputy managing directors, heads of departments and divisions, and other officials, were also present.

Pubali Bank holds managers' conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank PLC recently held its "5th Managers' Conference 2025" for managers of the Dhaka Central Region, aiming to motivate them to expand the bank's business through improved service delivery.

Mohammad Ali, managing director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

During the conference, strategies and action plans were formulated to achieve the targets set for 2025.



Mohammad Ali, managing director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's "5th Managers' Conference 2025" for the Dhaka Central Region in the capital recently.

PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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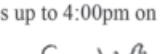
Date: 28.12.2025

e-Tender Notice

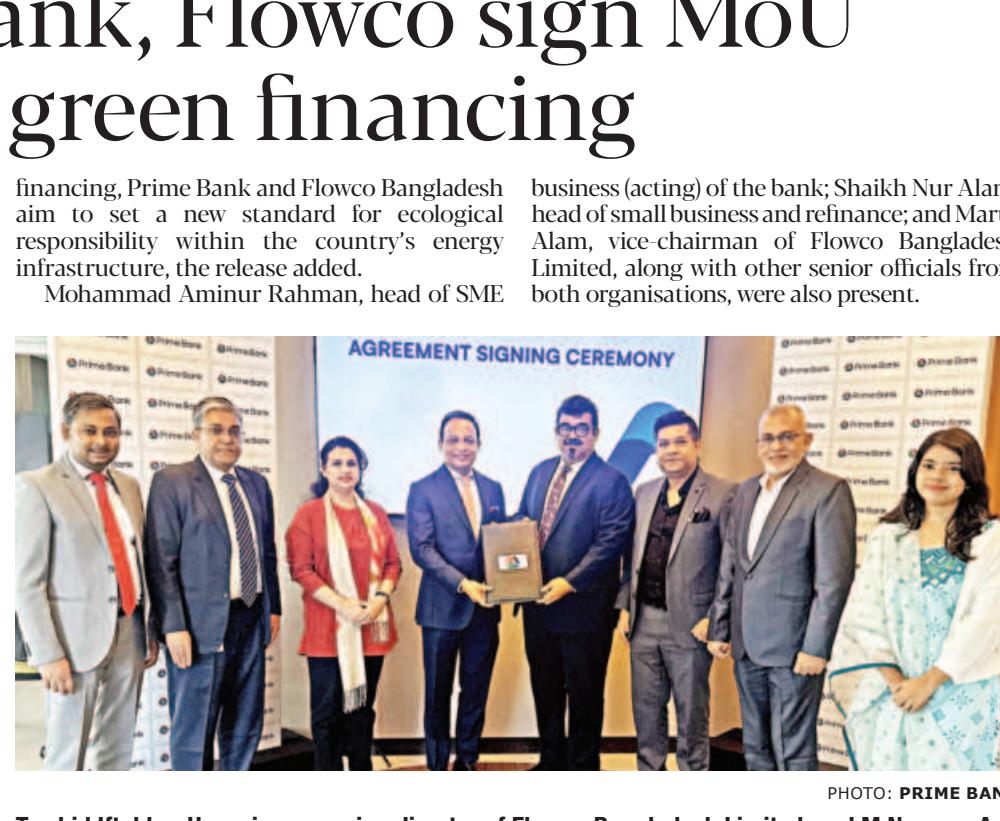
e-Tenders are invited in National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Noakhali for the Procurement of following works:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of works	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)	Tender opening (date & time)
1	1202754	NRD/e-GP/36/OTM/2025-2026	Repair of Railing and Painting work and Protective work with Concrete Slope Protection at (i) Sonapur (Mannan Nagar)-Char Jabber-Steamer Ghat Road (Z-1424) at 3rd (P) Km (Keramatnagar) (ii) Sonapur Bazar-Banglabazar-Subarnachar Upazilla Head Quarter Road (Z-1451) at 2nd km (P) Income Chowdhury Pole Bridge (iii) Maizdeeb-Rajgonj-Chayani-Bashurhat-Chandragonj Road (R-143) at 12th Km (P) Bhabani Jibonpur Bridge (iv) Lakshimpur-Char Alexander-Sonapur Road (Z-1405) at 56th Km (P) Kamal Pole Bridge and (iv) under Noakhali Road Division during the year 2025-2026.	12/01/2026 up to 4:00pm	13/01/2026 12:15pm	13/01/2026 12:15pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any Member of Scheduled Banks branches up to 4:00pm on 12-01-2026.



Md. Farid Uddin
ID No. 602218
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division Noakhali



Towhid Iftakher Hussain, managing director of Flowco Bangladesh Limited, and M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the memorandum of understanding at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Flowco Bangladesh Limited to introduce dedicated green financing facilities for petrol pump owners across Bangladesh.

M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, and Towhid Iftakher Hussain, managing director of Flowco Bangladesh Limited, signed the MoU at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the MoU, Prime Bank will provide tailored green financing solutions to eligible petrol station owners, enabling them to adopt advanced fuel tank cleaning, sludge removal and vapour emission reduction technologies without the burden of heavy upfront capital investment.

The initiative supports Bangladesh's national sustainability goals and environmental compliance requirements, promoting a transition towards cleaner energy practices in the downstream fuel retail sector.

By bridging the gap between high-end environmental technology and accessible

Is it the usual politics of convenience?

NCP's alliance with Jamaat leaves many disenchanted

The National Citizen Party's (NCP) decision to enter an electoral alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami has triggered a crisis within its own ranks and among those who once placed great hope in it. While a major segment of the party has rallied behind the move, a number of important members and supporters have voiced disappointment and disillusionment through public resignations and social media statements. For a party that emerged from the July 2024 uprising promising to break with politics as usual, this alliance represents a moment of reckoning.

The resignations of Tasnim Jara and Tajnuva Jabeen have been particularly striking. Both are prominent figures, and their departures alongside criticism from other leaders—especially women—deal a blow to the NCP's carefully cultivated image as a democratic and inclusive force committed to resisting discrimination. More resignations are expected to follow. Born from a student-led movement that helped unseat an authoritarian government, the NCP claimed moral authority rooted in sacrifice, courage, and a pledge to redefine political culture. The alliance, spearheaded by convener Nahid Islam and other senior leaders, has inevitably raised questions about whether that ideological commitment has been traded for parliamentary seats.

Nahid Islam has sought to downplay these concerns, insisting that the pact with Jamaat is "strictly electoral" and has nothing to do with ideology. He maintains that the party's reform, justice, and anti-hegemony agenda remains intact. He has also pointed to the security risks faced by NCP leaders and activists, particularly after the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, arguing that an alliance with Jamaat could offer protection for grassroots workers. While it is true that electoral politics in Bangladesh can be brutal and new parties face both structural and security challenges, are these risks sufficient to justify alienating key members and supporters?

The party's justification, moreover, does little to address the deeper unease. The NCP did not ask to be judged by narrow electoral logic alone. It positioned itself as a moral alternative to the entrenched culture of convenience and compromise. The abrupt shift, from contesting countrywide to capping nominations at around 30 seats, has reinforced the perception that key decisions were taken without consultation or transparency. Jabeen has alleged that the arrangement was pre-planned and that aspiring candidates were sidelined. Undoubtedly, women leaders—who have been constantly harassed and threatened online by right-wing groups—appear to have been disproportionately excluded from this consequential decision.

The party's move has left many questioning what, if anything, fundamentally distinguishes the NCP from the very political culture it once condemned. With many central committee members loudly opposing the alliance, and influential figures such as Mahfuz Alam expressing disengagement, the NCP's future as a credible party of change looks uncertain. Instead of chasing seats at the cost of its credibility, it could have chosen patience, accepting electoral defeat if necessary while preserving its ideological integrity. That restraint, rather than this alliance of convenience, might have demonstrated that it truly is a party of real change.

Must textbook delays recur every year?

This continuation exposes systemic failures, weak accountability

It is disheartening that thousands of secondary-level students will be attending classes in the new academic year without a complete set of textbooks. According to a report in this daily, more than 40 percent of the 21.43 crore textbooks for secondary-level students are yet to be delivered to schools. While primary-level students are expected to receive all their books on time, those in Classes 7 and 8 are facing the worst of the crisis, with many likely to get only a few of the 12 textbooks they need at the start of the year. In contrast, classes 6 and 9 are relatively better off. This exposes an uneven and poorly managed printing and distribution process.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) officials have pointed out several reasons for the delays, including cancellation of tenders for printing textbooks for Classes 6, 7, and 8 at a late stage, followed by retendering, delayed approvals from the ministry and procurement bodies, and slow contract finalisation. These setbacks were further compounded by inadequate manpower at the NCTB, the absence of a full-time chairman for months, and weak coordination with printing presses. Not anticipating these challenges, even after repeated failures in previous years, raises serious questions about institutional preparedness.

Printers have also pointed to systemic problems. Reportedly, most of the printing work was assigned to a small number of presses—nearly 80 percent of the total workload has been concentrated among a small group of around 20 printing presses—making it difficult to finish on time. Moreover, poor monitoring led to quality problems, and many substandard books had to be discarded after inspection, causing further delays. These failures show weak oversight and a lack of accountability at different stages of the process.

For the students, the impact of these failures will be severe. Starting the academic year without essential textbooks will disrupt their teaching plans, hamper learning continuity, and place unnecessary stress on both students and teachers. Regrettably, students are being told by the authorities to rely on PDF versions of textbooks, even though digital access remains uneven. The entire situation is frustrating.

Textbook delays have become a recurring problem in the country, with some schools in previous years receiving books months after classes began. This pattern must end. The authorities need to ensure timely tender finalisation, balanced allocation of printing work, stricter monitoring, and clear accountability for delays. Providing every student with a full set of textbooks on the first day of the academic year should be a basic obligation of the authorities. Students must not pay the price for administrative failures.

Why seaport reforms must begin at the customs house



M Naz Asadullah
is a development economist, the head of ICT White Paper Committee, and a member of the Telecom White Paper Committee, under the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology.

M NIAZ ASADULLAH

The ongoing debate over seaport reforms in Bangladesh is largely centred on the long-term leasing of terminals to foreign operators to modernise port infrastructure. However, high-tech docks and foreign management can only do so much if the "brain" of the operation, the customs clearance process, remains bottlenecked by partial digitalisation.

During the period of 2009-2024, the Digital Bangladesh campaign successfully introduced bespoke software and automated platforms to nearly every government office. But nowhere was early digitalisation as critical as at Customs House, Chattogram (CCH), the country's premier tax collection gateway.

CCH, which supports the Chittagong Port, accounts for 70.80 percent of total customs revenue and serves nearly 700 shipping agents, 1,000 freight forwarders, and 4,000 clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents. On average, CCH processes 7,000 to 8,000 bills of entry (BEs) for exports and imports daily. In the first five months of the current fiscal year, CCH collected Tk 31,602 crore in revenue. In FY 2024-2025, its collection was Tk 75,432 crore, which is eight times the amount it collected in FY 2003-2004.

Since its introduction in 1993, CCH upgraded the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA)—an integrated customs management system for international trade—several times. Currently, it is using ASYCUDA World, which was intended to reduce the time, cost, and physical visits required to process thousands of BEs manually. However, there are debates among business communities about the system's data accuracy and reliability, and it is often alleged that it leads to significant clearance delays.

The initial payoff of automation and subsequent upgrades were clear: in the 2012-13 fiscal year, CCH attained 90 percent of its revenue target, and by 2016-17, it hit 100 percent. Yet, by 2022-23, this figure dropped back to 82 percent. The current fiscal year's revenue collection for the first five months was 13 percent below the target. End-to-end automation remains elusive. While the core system is digital, several critical checkpoints remain manual. Currently, only 39 percent of submitted BEs (documents

filed by importers for tax/duties/legal compliance/clearance assessment) are processed on the same day, while 19 percent take more than four days. Alarmingly, only five percent of imports are processed before arrival, often due to a lack of coordination with port authorities regarding the auction of unclaimed containers.

While ASYCUDA is designed to scrutinise only up to 10 percent of BEs through risk-based inspection, allowing the remaining 90 percent to receive clearance based on documentary checks, this is rarely the case in practice. Inspections of weight and nature of goods remain

the process.

According to representatives of the Chittagong Customs Agents Association, the server struggles to take the load when thousands of agents log into the ASYCUDA modules simultaneously. Moreover, the lack of interoperability—where an importer shares bank documents with a C&F agent who then manually enters the data into ASYCUDA World—creates a "broken link" in the digital chain. This backlog wrongly places the blame on CCH officials, though the root cause often lies in "broken cross-project connectivity."

In addition, the internet connection at CCH is frequently disrupted, despite being provided by the state-owned Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), the country's largest Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network (NTTN) entity. BTCL management is often slow to respond to queries, and because CCH lacks access to Network Management System (NMS) data, monitoring rests

by key strategic fiscal entities like CCH. This legacy of the Digital Bangladesh campaign—where software and hardware issues in public offices are left unaddressed—has paradoxically slowed down service delivery and day-to-day operations, creating new hidden costs for taxpayers.

However, some issues stem from the ASYCUDA software itself, including technical glitches during system upgrades that stall customs clearance and leave import/export items idle at the port. This strains the relationship between customs officials and trade agents, damaging the credibility of CCH. C&F agents have noted that software complexity occasionally "scrambles" critical data—such as product types and weights—from the BEs.

The reality is that CCH is between a rock and a hard place. The Anti-Corruption Commission frequently examines allegations of revenue evasion via forged documents but often limits investigations mostly to CCH officers, while the business community accuses CCH of harassment through arbitrary duties and inaccurate valuations. Both of these undermine the morale of CCH officials. Correct and timely examination of the customs database is the only way to minimise both corruption and trade losses.

There is, however, room for optimism. Recent steps toward disciplining officials, changes in top leadership at CCH, a functional National Single Window platform, the Bond Management Automation project, and the introduction of E-Auctions, E-Tenders, and E-Payments are beginning to pay dividends. CCH's revenue achievement target is improving. To consolidate these gains, the NBR must invest in strengthening the governance of CCH, including the ability to implement regular software upgrades without system shutdowns, rather than phasing out the ASYCUDA system altogether.

Furthermore, NBR should introduce a TCV measurement tool for all port authorities to identify inefficiencies from a citizen-centred perspective. Also, lobbying for lucrative CCH postings must be stamped out to stabilise the CCH's core administrative workforce.

Lastly, the number of sanctioned posts needs to increase alongside actual appointments to cope with rising demands for timely and proper examination of the custom consignments and the BEs.

Let's not forget that as Bangladesh eyes a trillion-dollar economy by 2030, modernised seaports are only half the equation. We need a fully automated customs authority backed by a responsive governance system that ensures technology facilitates trade rather than obstructing it.



A fully automated customs authority backed by a responsive governance system is needed to support the trillion-dollar economy Bangladesh expects to become.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

manual, as do many certification processes. Furthermore, ASYCUDA lacks interoperability. Customs officials are still compelled to rely on physical paperwork because various certifying entities do not work within an integrated system.

These so-called non-tariff barriers are compounded by the "Time, Cost, and Visit" (TCV) burden associated with outside agencies. Obtaining a simple No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) or Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BOSTI) can take over a week. Frequent changes in import/export policies by the commerce ministry and adjustments to the Tariff's First Schedule by the finance ministry create further challenges in

solely with the National Board of Revenue's central IT office in Dhaka.

To partly circumvent this "BTCL conundrum," CCH relies on a private ISP for its primary ASYCUDA services. While this private vendor is functional and responsive, it highlights a hidden vulnerability: the lifeblood of our national trade is indirectly dependent on a private vendor and the country's NTTN duopoly (Fibre@Home and Summit hold NTTN licence, operating a network spanning around 50,000 kilometres and 40,000 km of optical fibre). The main reason for the vulnerability is the erratic service of state-run primary source—BTCL.

This strategic interdependence calls for an immediate intervention. Beyond BTCL's questionable balance sheet, the actual damage is the TCV loss incurred

The slow death of Test cricket



Dr. Mushfiqur Rahman
is a retired telecommunication specialist
based in Melbourne, Australia.

MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN

In the blink of an eye, the Boxing Day Test was over. For the second time this summer, an Ashes Test concluded in barely two days, with England sealing a four-wicket win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on December 27, 2025. For many of us, this felt almost unreal.

The Boxing Day Test has long been one of cricket's great traditions. It is always played at the MCG, beginning on December 26, and features Australia against a visiting team, most often England. Over the decades, it has become far more than a sporting fixture. It is part of the rhythm of the Australian summer.

The Ashes themselves represent one of the oldest and most storied rivalries in world sport. There were times when these contests produced epic struggles that entered cricketing folklore. Don Bradman dominated attacks with a mastery rarely matched before or since. In response, England devised the infamous Bodyline tactics under the leadership of Douglas Jardine. Even without protective helmets, Bradman endured and prevailed. His name became immortal, while that of Jardine faded into history.

Test aficionados will never forget

the historic match between Australia and the West Indies, which ended in a tie, with both teams finishing on the same total. Played at Brisbane in 1960, it remains one of the rarest results in the game's long history. Frank Worrell captained the match for the

series against Pakistan in 1957-58 and the subsequent tour of Pakistan, the team was captained by Gerry Alexander, a white Jamaican. Worrell's omission had little to do with form or merit and much to do with the racial hierarchies that still governed West Indian cricket. Leadership was reserved for those deemed socially and racially acceptable. When Worrell was finally appointed captain for the Australian tour, it marked not merely a sporting decision but a moral turning point. It signalled the beginning of the end of colonial deference and the emergence of a more confident Caribbean identity.

There were other great eras as

controversially, to apartheid-era South Africa. That episode reshaped the global game in lasting ways. For much of its history, Test cricket was an exclusive club. Australia, England, the West Indies, India, Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa formed its core, with South Africa later excluded and then readmitted. Over time, new nations such as Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh joined the ranks, with varying degrees of success.

And now we arrive at the present moment. What has become of Test cricket? Matches that were designed to last five days are finishing in two. A friend of mine bought tickets for the fourth and fifth days of the Boxing Day Test, only to find the match over before those days arrived. Once, drawn Tests after five days of attrition were common. Today, they are increasingly rare.

The rise of limited-overs cricket, and more recently the T20 format, has transformed the game. Batsmen attack from the outset. Run rates soar, but wickets fall just as quickly. The patience, rhythm, and long-form strategy that defined Test cricket are steadily eroding. And now we arrive at the present moment. What has become of Test cricket? Matches that were designed to last five days are finishing in two. A friend of mine bought tickets for the fourth and fifth days of the Boxing Day Test, only to find the match over before those days arrived. Once, drawn Tests after five days of attrition were common. Today, they are increasingly rare.

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For those of us who grew up in what now feels like a golden age of Test cricket, who memorised statistics and followed every tour with devotion, this change brings a sense of quiet loss. It feels like the closing of a chapter.

Perhaps this is simply the nature of time. Games evolve, just as generations do. And perhaps the fading of the five-day Test mirrors something deeper, the gradual realisation that an era we once inhabited so fully is passing into memory.

Such is life.

ENDING DISCRETIONARY OVERSIGHT

Why Bangladesh needs rule-based trade monitoring

Tashzid Reza
works in a trade finance company operating as a liaison office in Bangladesh.

TASHZID REZA

The controversy surrounding under-invoicing surfaced as a flagship achievement of the Bangladesh Bank leadership during the previous regime. At that time, the central bank proudly declared that it had uncovered large-scale import mispricing, taking credit for identifying irregularities that were said to be draining foreign exchange from the economy. The narrative was simple: under-invoicing and over-invoicing were distorting the external account, encouraging capital flight, and weakening the local currency. The solution, it was claimed, lay in aggressive monitoring and strict interrogation of import declarations. That narrative, however, had broader economic implications that were not fully considered.

By mid-2022, the taka faced one of its most serious crises in decades. A confluence of global commodity shocks, supply chain disruptions, declining reserves, and domestic economic imbalances led to a sharp depreciation. In response, a wide range of administrative measures was introduced. Some were necessary, but many were reactive and lacked strategic coherence. Import monitoring became unusually intensive. Banks were required to submit detailed import information for transactions of \$3 million or more, at least 24 hours before initiating imports. The central bank formed internal teams to scrutinise these submissions, examining declared prices against its own reference scales. Banks and importers were often summoned to justify deviations. What was presented as regulatory oversight gradually became, in many eyes, an intimidating process.

As per industry insiders, officials of the central bank tasked with identifying mispricing often took a confrontational approach. Commercial bank officials were repeatedly asked to explain price differentials for thousands of items, even though international prices regularly fluctuate due to shipment conditions, contract terms, trade credit arrangements, insurance costs, and quality differences. The importers, too, felt they were being treated as suspects rather than stakeholders in trade facilitation. In an environment where businesses were already struggling with uncertain exchange rates and shortages of foreign currency, the added burden only compounded difficulties for importers.

The stated goal was noble: to detect and

curb misinvoicing. In theory, misinvoicing is a reality in many developing economies. It can distort national statistics, leak foreign exchange, and provide avenues for illicit financial flows. Yet the question remains: how effectively can a central bank detect misinvoicing using manual tools and human judgment alone? Modern practice suggests that a rule-based, data-driven, and technology-enabled approach is essential. Bangladesh, however, was attempting to detect complex trade mispricing through methods that are inherently subjective and prone to inconsistencies.

After the regime change, businesses expected a shift away from the earlier confrontational style. The new governor held meetings with major commodity importers. They pointed out that the old system of price

review. Theoretically, yes. Many global institutions use sophisticated tools such as trade pricing databases, automated red-flag systems, machine learning models, and cross-border information exchange. But the operative word is "sophisticated." Without proper digital infrastructure, experienced analysts, and well-implemented trade data interfaces, price verification risks becoming arbitrary. It may capture unusual cases, but more often it produces false alarms, leading to unnecessary harassment.

A central bank's core role is to maintain monetary and financial stability. It is not designed to be an investigative agency policing every invoice that enters the country. When it attempts to take on tasks without proper institutional tools, the result is inefficiency and erosion of trust—both in the banking

without human fatigue.

Third, rule-based systems enhance credibility. Investors and global institutions view predictable regulatory environments favourably. When decisions appear personal, unpredictable, or discretionary, confidence erodes. This affects investment flows, trade credit, and the overall business climate. Fourth, rule-based oversight supports economic efficiency. When businesses spend excessive time responding to regulatory queries, operational costs increase. Imports are delayed. Supply chains slow down. In critical sectors such as food, energy, and industrial inputs, even a short delay can translate into shortages or price spikes in the domestic market.

There is also an important governance dimension. Harassment—perceived or real—undermines institutional image. It creates a

Second, a digital trade data platform is essential. All banks should be connected to a central trade monitoring hub where import declarations, letters of credit (LCs), shipping documents, and customs declarations are automatically compared. Any irregularities can be flagged digitally, allowing regulators to focus only on high-risk cases.

Third, a post-transaction risk-based audit framework should replace pre-transaction interrogation. This aligns with global best practice. Instead of stopping transactions before they occur, the central bank can review a sample of completed transactions using a scoring model. Only those that show strong red flags should trigger detailed inquiries. This would eliminate the need for importers to justify prices for every single deal.

Fourth, the central bank's investigative role should be clearly delimited. Customs authorities, tax agencies, and financial intelligence units already have mandates for detecting illicit activities. Overlapping responsibilities create confusion and compliance fatigue. The central bank should confine its oversight to areas directly related to foreign exchange regulations and banking operations.

Finally, accountability mechanisms must be strengthened. If businesses face undue harassment, there should be an appeal process. Independent review committees can examine disputes, ensuring fairness and transparency. A regulator must itself be subject to rules. Institutions, not individuals, should govern.

The current governor's willingness to engage with importers is a positive signal. Dialogue is essential, but reforms must reflect structural changes rather than policy statements alone. Bangladesh's external sector is gradually stabilising after the 2022 shock. Foreign exchange liquidity has improved. Import payment backlog have normalised. This is the right moment to modernise regulatory processes and eliminate outdated practices. A central bank should inspire confidence, not fear. Businesses should feel protected, not threatened.

The ghost of the past regulatory regime should not overshadow present progress. Legacy practices survive when they are not formally replaced. That is why Bangladesh must adopt a forward-looking regulatory philosophy: rule-based, technology-enabled, and supportive of trade competitiveness.

A country aspiring to become a trillion dollar economy cannot afford to operate with manual, subjective, or personality-driven oversight. It needs strong institutions delivering predictable outcomes. Oversight must be firm but fair. For Bangladesh to build a resilient external sector, regulatory modernisation is not optional—it is imperative.



How effectively can a central bank detect misinvoicing using manual tools and human judgment alone?

FILE PHOTO: STAR

verification was still very much alive, with teams continuing to call banks and importers for explanations, as per the media. They argued that such regulatory behaviour was not only impractical but also unfair. Global commodity markets move daily, sometimes hourly. Freight charges change by season. Supplier terms differ across countries. Without access to high-quality global price databases, real-time analytics, and properly trained investigators, none of these variances can be accurately interpreted. The governor reportedly assured importers that the process would be simplified. Yet businesses claim the same informal interrogations continue. This suggests that institutional culture, once established, does not change automatically—it must be replaced with a rules-based framework that restricts individual discretion.

The broader question is whether misinvoicing can realistically be detected by a central bank through ex-ante document

system and in the wider regulatory framework. No major economy conducts invoice level policing as a routine practice. Instead, they rely on risk-based compliance systems, automated data triangulation, and post-transaction audit trails. Bangladesh must move in the same direction.

The case for a rule-based approach is strong. First, it eliminates discretion. When rules are clearly defined and automated systems flag anomalies based strictly on data, the scope for subjective interpretation diminishes. Businesses get clarity. Banks realise the limits of their obligations. Regulators reduce the risk of bias or allegations of undue pressure. Second, rules minimise operational burden. Millions of import documents enter the system every year. No central bank team, however large, can manually examine each one. A system that automatically compares declared values with global indices and identifies deviations beyond a predefined margin can process information

fear-driven culture of compliance instead of a trust-based one. Regulators should encourage voluntary compliance rather than create a climate where businesses feel compelled to defend themselves against accusations not backed by evidence. Central bank officials cannot rely on "gut feeling" to accuse an importer of mispricing. They must rely on structured data, documented analysis, and internationally recognised methodologies.

To transition towards such a system, Bangladesh needs several reforms. First, the introduction of a global price reference database linked to customs, port authorities, banks, and the central bank. Systems such as UN Comtrade, the International Trade Centre's Market Price Information, and global commodity index feeds can be integrated with domestic trade records. This would allow automated comparison of declared values with worldwide benchmarks adjusted for freight, insurance, quality, and market volatility.

Smoke signals about Bangladesh's future



Mamun Rashid,
an economic analyst at
Financial Excellence Ltd and former
managing partner of PwC Bangladesh.

MAMUN RASHID

Smoke climbed the stairwells of two news media buildings in Dhaka, and people who spend their lives telling other people's stories ended up living one themselves. Staff were trapped. Phones kept ringing. Outside, a crowd decided intimidation was politics, and fire was speech.

Earlier on that day, in Bhaluka, a garment worker was falsely accused of offending religious sentiment. A mob beat him to death and burned his body. Afterwards, there were arguments about the details—who started the rumour, who filmed, who watched, but that did not change the fact that a human life was erased by a crowd acting as judge and executioner.

The simplest description of what is happening in Bangladesh is this: many people are beginning to believe a crowd can do what the state will not. That belief reshapes everyday life. A parent tells their child to stay quiet on the bus. A teacher edits their words in class. A young woman thinks twice before posting online. Fear seeps into markets, schools, offices, and homes.

Bangladesh has never been a quiet society. We argue, laugh, and live with contradiction. The social fabric holds because of the expectation that disputes would return to rules. That expectation feels weaker now. When rules seem absent, people search for substitutes. The cheapest substitute is vengeance.

So why the rise in intolerance, mob violence, and radicalism?

Economic stress is one accelerant.



The Daily Star building, hours after the vandalism and arson carried out by a crowd in the early hours of December 19.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Many families feel squeezed. Many young people feel stuck. Stable jobs, fair chances, and predictable futures feel harder to secure than they used to. Frustration without outlets becomes combustible, and it starts searching for someone to blame.

But economics alone does not create mobs. Mobs require permission. Permission comes from impunity, from the belief nothing serious will happen to perpetrators, or worse, that violence is a public service. When people see others get away with brutality, the next crowd forms faster. Fear spreads and consequences fade.

Permission also comes from

heading into an election season. In stable times, elections are about persuasion. In fragile moments, they become about intimidation. Some groups test boundaries. Opportunists wrap ambition in religion or nationalism. Threatening a newspaper, a cultural event, or a minority neighbourhood becomes a shortcut to power.

The danger is not only the violence. It is what it does to the public square. When spaces that hold disagreement are attacked, disagreement does not disappear. It migrates into darker places. People stop debating and start whispering. The bold become reckless. The

cautious become silent.

And then comes the question that keeps boardrooms awake: what happens to investment?

Investors do not demand perfection. They demand predictability: contracts that mean something, disputes resolved without muscle, employees who can move safely, and decisions that do not accidentally become political statements. When street violence rises, costs rise too. Security spending increases. Supply chains turn brittle. Entrepreneurs delay expansion because uncertainty cannot be priced. Markets react early, not at the peak, but at the smell of

smoke.

What is the way back, then?

Bangladesh does not need a new identity. It needs enforcement of the one it already claims: a society where difference is normal and law is the referee.

That begins with consequences: visible prosecutions for mob violence, regardless of the victim. Faster, credible justice delivered by the proper state agencies; otherwise, delayed justice will continue to create space for vigilantism. Protection for journalists and cultural spaces, because a society cannot correct itself if its mirrors are smashed, voices strangled. Political

leadership that speaks clearly against intimidation, because silence is heard as permission.

There is also a moral choice for ordinary citizens. A country turns when bystanders stop being bystanders, when community leaders refuse to bless cruelty, when we decide dignity is non-negotiable.

Bangladesh has survived storms, floods, and political earthquakes. We know how to rebuild. The question now is whether we will rebuild what matters most: trust in each other, and trust in the rule that no crowd gets to decide who belongs.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Public Administration

Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

www.mopa.gov.bd

No: 05.00.0000.113.07.061.2025-1298

Date : 29-12-2025

e-Tender Notice No. 4/2025-26

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

Si	Tender Id	Name of Supply	Publishing Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1	1204439	Office Furniture	30 December 2025 & 10.00	13 January 2026 & 14.00

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

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

29.12.25

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

Jara beats the clock to join

FROM PAGE 12
challenge of contesting the polls independently, collecting the support of her constituency with just a day and a half left before the nomination submission deadline.

According to Election Commission sources, to run as an independent candidate in Bangladesh, the key requirement is submitting signatures of supporters from at least one percent of the total voters in the constituency. However, this condition is waived for any previously elected member of parliament.

After submitting her nomination form, Jara in a statement said, "Collecting the names, signatures, and other required information of nearly five

thousand voters in just one and a half days was an almost impossible task. We had to start entirely from zero, without any party, organisation, or support network. But the people responded extraordinarily.

"From 7:00am until midnight, even in the biting cold, they stood by us. They signed themselves, brought along their entire families, and formed small teams to collect 10, 20, or even 40 signatures from their relatives and neighbours. It truly feels like I was able to submit my nomination as a genuine candidate of the people."

There are around 469,300 registered voters in Dhaka-9, where Jara aims to contest. She began collecting signatures in Khilgaon on Sunday and

gathered nearly 3,000 signatures on the very first day, her campaigners said.

On the second day, all verification channels had been blocked due to a server outage at the EC. "As a result, completing and verifying 4,500 signatures and submitting the nomination form within the day had become extremely difficult," Khaled Saifullah, her husband and NCP joint convener, told The Daily Star.

Jara had also alleged to the media that none of the five official channels for obtaining voter numbers -- SMS, online services, phone calls, QR code, and the Election Commission's mobile application -- were functional.

Intense protests

A turbulent year

FROM PAGE 12
government. It seemed its only task was to make transfers and postings, and even that was not done properly," he told The Daily Star.

Official data shows that around 1,700 officers were elevated to the ranks of deputy secretary, joint secretary, and additional secretary between August last year and October this year -- an unprecedented number of promotions in such a short period.

"If they could play such roles, then there is no reason why the UNOs cannot do so," said a senior official, seeking anonymity.

Several senior officials said many of the problems in the field administration

stemmed from a leadership vacuum at the centre. The ministry remained without a secretary for 21 days after Mokhles Ur Rahman was removed from the post.

As part of a reshuffle in the field administration ahead of the national election, the government appointed new DCs in more than 50 districts in three phases.

However, several DCs were withdrawn less than a month after assuming their new roles. For instance, the DCs of Madaripur and Chapainawabganj were removed only 19 days after taking charge on October 27.

Such indecision sparked fear among the newly appointed field administrators, who remain unsure how long they will be able to hold their current posts.

Around the same time, the ministry assigned postings to 230 Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) in two phases through a lottery. However, it did not disclose where the lottery was held or who attended, raising doubts among junior officers.

Many officials said the decision to use lottery as a method for determining postings was not judicious, as it raised questions about the leadership of top officials in the ministry.

Meanwhile, many

experienced UNOs were withdrawn from the field due to their roles in the one-sided 2024 election.

This raised questions within the administration; senior officials who are now part of the government were involved in conducting controversial elections in 1986 and 1988 when they were junior officers. The same officials later played significant roles in holding the historic 1991 election.

The Secretariat saw strikes, sit-ins, and processions throughout June. Though cadre officers did not directly join the demonstrations, they supported them, said officials.

Intense protests eventually forced the government to retreat and make a second amendment to the Act within two months.

Analysts argue the episode underscores flaws in policy formulation.

Firoz Mia, a public administration expert, said the government gained nothing from the unnecessary amendment to the Service Act; rather, it was weakened by the protests.

"The interim government has largely been unable to effectively manage public administration. As a result, many of its positive initiatives in other sectors failed to gain the recognition they deserved," he told The Daily Star.

A total of 25,651 patients with ARI received treatment at hospitals between November 1 and December 29, and 32 of them died, while 60,750 patients with diarrhoea have been hospitalised since November 1, of them four died, the data shows.

In cases of breathing problems, patients should be taken to the hospital, he said.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) of DGHS, said they have already instructed hospitals to take necessary measures to cope with the growing number of patients with cold-related illnesses.

He added that the hospital authorities have been asked to ensure an adequate supply of nebulisers, provide additional blankets for child patients, and repair any broken glass in hospital wards.

"If needed, a separate ward for children will be arranged."

Jamaat to prioritise youth

FROM PAGE 12
Jamaat said the exercise was aimed at crafting a people-friendly, realistic and accountable manifesto by ensuring direct citizen participation.

Mia Golam Porwar, secretary general of Jamaat, said conventional politics leaves little room for public involvement in manifesto making. "The main goal of the 'Janat-i-Ishtehar' initiative is to change that trend and involve the public not only as voters, but also as co-authors of the manifesto," he said.

Citizens submitted opinions, problems and policy suggestions at both national and local levels in written, audio and video formats.

Porwar said the digital platform helped the party reach a wider audience and systematically sort and evaluate feedback.

Based on this process, Jamaat now plans to introduce a digital promise tracker that will allow citizens to monitor progress in fulfilling election pledges.

pledging a business environment free from extortion and fear.

To combat corruption, Jamaat plans to identify its roots at both individual and institutional levels and implement "effective and comprehensive measures".

"We will also unearth major corruption incidents if voted to power. The Anti-Corruption Commission will be totally independent so that it can work effectively," Zubair said.

The manifesto will outline the party's political philosophy, stating that Jamaat will not engage in "politics of hatred and destruction".

"Our politics will be based on equal dignity and rights, irrespective of religion and caste. There will be no majority or minority in the country. We all are Bangladeshis," Zubair said.

On women's rights, he said the party will pledge to ensure women's freedom without interference. "Women will enjoy every right as a citizen of this country," he added.

Despite strong

Recognise Hadi as cultural icon

FROM PAGE 12
permits for Indian nationals living in Bangladesh, filing a case against India in an international court if it refuses to repatriate convicted criminals, and identifying what the platform described as "collaborators of fascists" within civil and military intelligence agencies.

The protesters occupied

the busy intersection overnight on the first day. Since then, the programme has been held daily from 2:00pm, drawing participants from diverse professions and political backgrounds.

Addressing a rally at Shahbagh yesterday, Jaber said, "If any of our brothers is killed again and the government claims the

killers have fled abroad, we will be compelled to take up arms to protect the sovereignty of our country and fight for Insaaf [fairness] ..."

Earlier in the day, Jaber said his platform will not field any candidate in Dhaka-8 unless someone with a similar calibre and qualifications to Hadi emerges.

Jamaat, and NCP, to stand by the people in demanding justice for Hadi's murder. "If you are not vocal about justice, the people will compel you to be vocal in the next election," he warned.

Hadi, who was shot in the head in the capital's Paltan area on December 12, died at a hospital in Singapore on December 18.

Afghan Taliban

FROM PAGE 12
at the invitation of a think tank, Osmani Centre for Peace and Security Studies.

Earlier, on September 17, a delegation led by Mamunul travelled to Afghanistan at the invitation of the Taliban government.

Other members of the delegation included Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh Ameer Abdul Hamid, also known as the pir of Madhupur, along with Abdul Awal, Abdul Haque,

Habibullah Mahmud Kasemi, Monir Hossain Kasemi and Mahbubur Rahman.

The delegation held meetings with the Afghan chief justice, several ministers, senior religious scholars and high-ranking Taliban officials, according to sources familiar with the visit.

Speaking to Prothom Alo newspaper upon their return, they said they appreciated what they described as a "rule-based society" in Afghanistan.

opposition from government employees on the ordinance on the amendment to the Act was gazetted on May 25. Secretariat employees launched protests against the provision allowing dismissal of public employees on the grounds of "disobedience" within eight days of serving a notice.

The Secretariat saw strikes, sit-ins, and processions throughout June. Though cadre officers did not directly

join the demonstrations, they supported them, said officials.

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He added that the hospital authorities have been asked to ensure an adequate supply of nebulisers, provide additional blankets for child patients, and repair any broken glass in hospital wards.

"If needed, a separate ward for children will be arranged."

Actively contribute

FROM PAGE 12

During his address, Tarique asked his supporters to disperse to ease traffic movement in the Naya Paltan area.

"As there is no programme here today, we should try to move away from the road and ensure smooth movement. When we organise a programme, I will speak to you then," he said, while seeking prayers for his ailing mother, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Tarique arrived at the party office at around 4:06pm, but it took him a while to enter the office premises due to the large crowd gathered along the route.

Security was tightened in and around the party

office ahead of the visit. The headquarters' main gate was closed from 12:35pm, with entry restricted to a limited number of senior party leaders.

Senior party leaders, including Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, received him at the main gate of the headquarters.

He sat for about three hours in the separate chamber set up for him and held discussions with party leaders and office staff, according to Rizvi.

He left around 7:30pm for Evercare Hospital in capital's Bashundhara to see his mother.

Earlier on Sunday, Tarique visited the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office and stayed there for nearly nine hours.

Cold brings misery

Star yesterday.

When asked what guardians should do amid the surge in cold-related diseases, Prof Mahbubul said antibiotics should not be used for diarrhoea or the common cold.

For patients with a common cold, guardians can use nasal drops to keep the nose clear and certain types of antihistamine medicines, he added.

In cases of breathing problems, patients should be taken to the hospital, he said.

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"If needed, a separate ward for children will be arranged."

POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212

Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd

Memo No: 27.21.0000.101.07.433.25.6120

Date: December 29, 2025

NOTICE OF 2ND TIME EXTENSION

Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 132/33 kV AIS Substation at Paikgacha and 132/33 kV AIS Substation at Mathbaria including associated 132kV bay extension at Sathkhira 132/33kV grid substation & at Bhandaria 132/33kV grid substation on turnkey basis (Package-3)

(OCB NO. POWERGRID/ADB/PTSIREP/Package-3)

Ref.: IFB No. 27.21.0000.101.07.433.25.4979, dated October 27, 2025

1st Time Extension Notice Memo No. 27.21.0000.101.07.433.25.5709, dated: December 04, 2025

The deadline for submission of bids for the above Works has been extended from January 05, 2026, 11:00 AM Bangladesh Standard Time (BST) to January 15, 2026, 11:00 AM BST.

All other terms and conditions of the above Bidding Document shall remain unaltered.

(Md. Jahangir Azad)

Company Secretary

Invitation Reference No.	Tender ID	Package No. & description	Tender/ proposal document last selling date & time	Tender/ proposal closing & opening date & time
42.01.4100 .622.01.07.09.25-1629	1202698	Package No. Jash/OEB-19/25-26 Survey works for prepared design and estimate of Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore under Operational expenditure Budget during the FY year 2025-26.	12-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	13-Jan-2025 12:00 hrs
42.01.4100 .622.01.07.09.25-1653	1204531	Package No-Jash/OEB-29/25-26 Re-excavation of Gopinathpur Khal from km 0.000 to km 1.500 = 1.500 km at Chowgacha Upazilla in Operational & Expenditure budget under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore during the year 2025-26.	12-Jan-2025 17:00 hrs	13-Jan-2025 12:00 hrs

This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline and hard copies will be accepted.

29.12.2025

Polash Kumar Banerjee</p

GOALS GALORE as WFL kicks off

Bangladesh Army players celebrate one of two goals from Tanima Biswas during a 2-0 win against Bangladesh Police in the opening match of the Women's Football League at the Birsreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. It was a surprising result, given debutants Police had formed a strong squad with a few national team players. The second match of the day, played under floodlights, saw BKSP thrash defending champions Nasrin Sports Academy 8-0. There are three matches today in the 11-team league, which is offering a prize money of Tk 20.5 lakh.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Chill in the air and on the scorecards

SPORTS REPORTER

The country has been experiencing a spell of cold weather over the past few days, and it appears to be leaving its mark on the Sylhet phase of the ongoing 12th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Although last year's BPL was marred by player payment and integrity concerns, it still produced plenty of high-scoring matches. This time, however, with just three matchdays completed, run-scoring appears to have somewhat dipped. Low totals were seen on the second matchday and again in yesterday afternoon's game between Rangpur Riders and Chattogram Royals.

"About the lack of runs, there was no sun coming out today if you look at the weather conditions. So it's difficult to score big runs," Chattogram mentor Habibul Bashar pointed to the weather as a major factor.

"Deliveries were not keeping low; rather, it was seaming and swinging due to the conditions. The wicket is fine and with some sun, expect it to fare better in the coming days, although unfortunately, tomorrow [today] will possibly be a foggy day as well," he added.

There were still glimpses of the surface's trueness. When Chattogram opener Mohammad Naim hit Rangpur pacer Nahid Rana straight down the ground for six, it underlined that the pitch was not misbehaving. But Mustafizur

In foggy conditions at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, excitement was scarce during a low-scoring contest yesterday, but Mustafizur Rahman and Litton Das gave Rangpur Riders something to smile about with impactful performances in their opening BPL game this season.

PHOTO: RANGPUR RIDERS

Rahman soon dismissed Naim with a cutter after a 20 ball 39, and the rest of the Chattogram batting struggled against the testing lengths of Faheem Ashraf, who extracted seam and swing to claim a five-wicket haul.

Chattogram were bundled out for 102, and Rangpur cruised to a seven-wicket win following a solid opening stand between Litton Das and Dawid Malan.

The contrast with the opening day of the tournament was striking. Before temperatures dipped, Sylhet International Cricket Stadium witnessed two high-

scoring games, the opener between Rajshahi Warriors and Sylhet Titans being the standout.

Parvez Hossain Emon adapted well to his new number-four role with a brisk fifty, guiding Sylhet to 190 for five. Rajshahi captain Najmul Hossain Shanto then became the tournament's first centurion and, with support from Mushfiqur Rahim's fifty, led his side to a convincing win.

The evening match on the same day also saw Chattogram post 174 for six before Noakhali collapsed to 109 in the

chase.

On the very next day, however, Rajshahi could manage only 132 for eight against Dhaka Capitals on that same surface. Although Shanto and Mushfiqur both got starts, it was evident that the afternoon conditions were tougher. While dew had helped batters generate pace in the previous evening match, the ball held up more in the surface earlier in the day.

A BCB official, speaking on condition of anonymity, felt that the tight scheduling of games was also contributing to the low-scoring trend.

December 28 was a rest day, but across the three matchdays, Noakhali Express and Rajshahi played every day, while Chattogram and Sylhet featured twice each.

"In other franchise leagues, you don't get to play two matches in a row even at home, and here you are playing on the same wicket," the official said. "You have only 18 to 20 hours between matches, and players have to recover quickly, whether from a loss or a poor performance. That is difficult."

While it is still early in the tournament, the combination of cold conditions and closely scheduled fixtures is clearly adding to the challenge. It now remains to be seen whether improved weather -- the one variable that can realistically change -- will help bring big scores back to the BPL.



A year when hockey carried the flag

ANISUR RAHMAN

In a country where cricket and football command almost every headline, 2025 became the rare year when hockey forced its way into the national conversation. At a time when lesser-known disciplines usually struggle for space, Bangladesh hockey managed to capture attention through performance, organisation and belief -- offering a powerful reminder of the untapped potential that still exists beyond the big two.

The year began under the shadow of turbulence that continued since the July uprising last year, which disrupted almost every sports federation. By the latter half of 2025, however, around 42 national federations were gradually replaced by ad-hoc committees, reviving activities across the board. Preparations were aligned with three major events -- the Youth Asian Games in Bahrain, the Islamic Solidarity Games in Turkey and the South Asian Games in Pakistan next year.

More than 500 athletes from 23 disciplines were enrolled into structured training programmes, many under foreign coaches, and medals followed at the Youth Asian Games and Islamic Solidarity Games. Yet no achievement resonated like what hockey delivered.

WHEN HOCKEY ROSE HIGH

Bangladesh had already broken new ground in 2024 by qualifying for the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup for the first time. What followed in 2025 was a performance by the under-21 team that reignited belief in a sport long starved of structure.

Under Dutch coach Siegfried Aikman, the juniors produced a spirited World Cup debut in India, finishing 17th among 24 teams and winning the newly introduced Challenger Trophy -- the best finish among the bottom eight. They fought bravely against former champions Australia and two-time runners-up France and ended the tournament ahead of Austria, Korea, China, Egypt and Canada.

Drag flicker Amirul Islam was the face of that success, ending the tournament as the top scorer with 17 goals, outshining players from established hockey nations. Teammates such as Rakibul Hasan, Din Islam, Mahmud Hassan, Obaidul Joy, Hozifa Hossain, and Mehrab Hossain embodied the unity that surprised even seasoned observers.

The impact went beyond the pitch. Two Bangladeshi umpires -- Salim Lucky and Shahbaz Ali -- also made history by officiating at a World Cup for the first time. Between them, they were involved in 28 matches, handling roles as field, video and reserve umpires. Lucky spoke of learning

modern officiating techniques, earning encouraging feedback from the FIH and the pride of hearing "Salim Lucky from Bangladesh" announced before matches.

Yet the euphoria carried a warning. Aikman urged authorities to act swiftly, saying the momentum would vanish without



sponsors and government backing within weeks. Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) general secretary Lt Col (Rtd) Riazul Hasan admitted finances remain the sport's biggest obstacle, acknowledging that retaining a foreign coach, keeping the squad together and restarting domestic leagues will be difficult without meaningful support.

For a nation whose last major hockey wade dates back to the 1985 Asia Cup, the Junior World Cup campaign did not just bring a trophy -- it brought attention, belief,

and a rare sense that revival is possible.

ARROWS HITTING NEW TARGETS
Archery followed hockey in delivering both performance and organisational breakthroughs. Despite the departure of established names such as Ruman Sana,



Abdul Hakim Rubel and Diya Siddique to the United States, a new generation stepped up.

Abdur Rahman Alif won gold in the men's recurve individual at Asia Cup Stage 2, while Bonna Akter and Himu Bachhar earned silver in the compound mixed team event. Kulsum Akter Mone added bronze in the women's compound individual category at the Asian Archery Championships.

The biggest moment, however, came off the field when former federation general

secretary Kazi Rajib Uddin Ahmed Chapol was elected president of World Archery Asia in Dhaka. By defeating Thomas Han 29-9, Chapol became the first Bangladeshi to lead the continental body, a four-year mandate that places the country at the heart of the sport's regional development.

GLIMPSES OF PROMISE ELSEWHERE

Elsewhere, women's kabaddi claimed historic bronze medals at the Asian Championship and the World Cup in Dhaka, while youth teams got medals at the Asian Youth Games. Tennis produced a landmark when Zarif Abrar became the first Bangladeshi to win an ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J-30 singles title. Chess, gymnastics, badminton and table tennis also added international medals and milestones, while Bangladesh hosted events in archery, kabaddi, volleyball and chess.

The medal tally may not have been overwhelming, but 2025 made one thing clear: when athletes from so-called secondary sports are given training, exposure, and even limited resources, they respond.

As 2026 approaches, the responsibility now lies with the authorities to ensure that this long-awaited momentum in Bangladesh's lesser-known disciplines does not fade back into obscurity.



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Recognise Hadi as cultural icon Inqilab Moncho demands, gives govt 24 days to finish trial

DU CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Moncho called for an online campaign today to seek recognition of Sharif Osman Bin Hadi as the country's cultural icon, briefly pausing its consecutive four-day Shahbagh blockade amid the cold wave.

Platform Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber, announcing the online programme titled "Saluting Our Cultural Hero", urged protesters and the media to share content related to Hadi on their social media and digital platforms.

He added that the blockade at Shahbagh would resume tomorrow and continue until the killers of Hadi, who was the platform's spokesperson, are brought to justice.

Since Friday, the platform has been demonstrating at Shahbagh and on Sunday pressed the government with its four-point demand. These include a 24-day ultimatum to complete trial proceedings against Hadi's killers, suspending work



SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Afghan Taliban official visits country

STAR REPORT

An Afghan Taliban official has visited Bangladesh and met Islamist leaders seeking to increase their political influence ahead of elections due in February. Islamist leaders in Dhaka said yesterday.

Abu Sayem Khaled, president of the Bangladesh-Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce, told AFP that the visit by Noor Ahmad Noor, director general at Kabul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also aimed to expand trade ties.

Mamunul Haque, leader of the Islamist Khelafat-e-Majlis party, told AFP that Noor also visited his madrassa during a week-long stay in Bangladesh.

"It was a courtesy call, as we run one of the largest madrassas in the country," Haque said. "He visited some other madrassas as well."

The government has not commented on the visit. A foreign ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Noor's trip was "personal".

According to officials of ministry of foreign affairs, Noor visited the country

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman waves to the crowd of supporters, not in frame, who gathered to welcome him to the party's central office in the capital's Nayapaltan yesterday after more than one and a half decades.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7

Actively contribute to nation rebuilding

Tarique urges supporters on his return to party headquarters after 17 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday returned to the party's central office in Naya Paltan after 17 years and called on party leaders and activists to contribute to rebuilding the country by carrying out their responsibilities with sincerity and commitment.

Speaking briefly from the second floor balcony of the party headquarters before a large gathering of supporters, Tarique stressed the need for collective effort, saying even small actions could help restore the country.

"Let everyone contribute from whatever position they hold and let us try to rebuild our country. Let us make every possible effort within our capacity."

He also urged people to take responsibility in everyday life, saying that if anyone sees litter or a piece of paper lying on the street, they should pick it up if necessary. Such small steps could help people come together to rebuild the country gradually.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7

A turbulent year for public admin

Leadership vacuum, wave of promotions fuelled instability

BAHARAM KHAN

The public administration remained under strain for most of the year, grappling with a leadership vacuum and relentless pressure from officials for coveted transfers and promotions.

Following the Awami League government's ouster in August last year, the Secretariat fell into disarray, with professional groups lobbying and raising various demands.

While the turmoil gradually subsided, the interim government spent much of the year under mounting pressure, eventually approving a wave of promotions and transfers to appease officials.

Experts said the absence of a fully empowered adviser for the public administration ministry deepened the crisis. With no clear authority at the top, bureaucratic knots tightened and decision-making slowed, leaving the government grappling with consequences it may not yet fully comprehend.

The disorder in the first few months of the interim government was not unusual. But no

► 1,700 officers promoted to ranks of deputy secy, jt secy, and adl secy between August 2024 and October 2025

► 842 retired cadre officials given retrospective promotions

► Confusion, doubts arose over postings of DCs in last quarter of 2025

► Public admin ministry remained without a secretary for 21 days

one expected the public administration to remain so disorganised throughout the year, said former secretary and writer Abdul Awal Mazumder.

"The ministry's activities did not reflect that it was working under a reform-focused

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Jara beats the clock to join race as independent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a little over 30 hours, Tasnim Jara, former senior joint member secretary of the NCP, finished collecting the 4,693 signatures needed to submit the election nomination form as an independent candidate.

According to her campaigners, she hit her goal around 4:00pm yesterday and was able to submit her form just before the deadline.

Jara resigned from the National Citizen Party on Saturday and took on the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Jamaat to prioritise youth, education in its manifesto

Pledges action against extortion, corruption; promises 'women's freedom'

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jamaat-e-Islami is close to finalising its election manifesto, placing the youth at the centre of its vision and pledging sweeping reforms in education, governance and business for a society free from corruption and extortion.

The manifesto is expected to be formally unveiled at a press conference in mid-January, said Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, assistant secretary general and head of the party's publicity wing.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Zubair said the document will be released in three versions. The first will be a concise three-to-four page bullet-point edition for general readers.

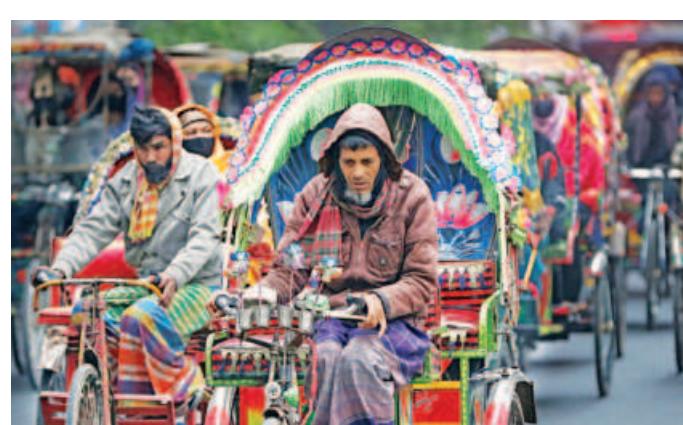
There will be a detailed 200-250 page version for journalists and civil society members; and an extensive 1,500 page document outlining implementation plans.

Ahead of finalisation, the party collected public opinions through a website and mobile app under a nationwide initiative titled "Janatar Ishtehar" (People's Manifesto) from December 18 to 24.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Exhausted by the freezing cold, a scrap collector stops beneath a flyover, sets down her bags, and curls up under a blanket. The photo was taken in the capital's Moghbazar area last night. *Inset:* Rickshaw drivers, most of whom rely on their daily earnings, are out on the street with no choice but to work through the winter chill. The photo was taken around noon yesterday near Dhaka University's Curzon Hall. Dense fog shrouded Dhaka for much of yesterday, keeping the sun out of sight well into midday. The biting cold continues to weigh heaviest on the homeless and people from low-income backgrounds in the city.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN, FIROZ AHMED

Cold brings misery for little ones

Hospitals struggle amid surge of child patients

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Radhika Das, a five-month-old girl from Brahmanbaria's Bancharpurupur upazila, caught a cold on Friday.

Her parents took her to the local upazila health complex the following day, where doctors referred her to the Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute in Dhaka as her condition deteriorated.

"We took her to the hospital after she developed breathing problems," her father Krishna Chandra Das told The Daily Star at the hospital's emergency department around 8:00pm on Sunday.

"My child has heart-related

At that time, seven to eight other patients, mostly from outside Dhaka, were also seen there. Some were asked to take their patients to other hospitals as no beds were available, while parents were waiting in the hope of getting a bed.

Inside the hospital, it was overcrowded, with some patients lying on the floor.

Six-month-old Md Akbar from South Keraniganj was admitted to the hospital on Saturday with severe cold-related complications. He was put on oxygen as he also had other health issues.

"My child has heart-related

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7



আতশবাজী পোড়ানো প্রাণহানির কারণ হতে পারে
নববর্ষ উপলক্ষে আতশবাজী পোড়ানো থেকে বিরত ধারুন
শব্দমূল (নিয়ন্ত্রণ) বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ মেনে চলুন

দেশজুড়ে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও পরিবেশ দূষণ বিষয়ক সচেতনতামূলক প্রচারাভিযান প্রকল্প

পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়



THE NEXT 25 YEARS

Where Bangladesh's Motorcycle Industry Is Headed

FARHAN MUSIQUE

The numbers tell a sobering story of Bangladesh's motorcycle industry. After reaching 640,000 units in 2022, sales fell to 384,000 in 2024, a six-year low. Inflation eroded purchasing power, the taka weakened sharply, and political upheaval worsened an already fragile market. Yet manufacturers had invested Tk 6,000 crore in production capacity, betting on growth that has yet to materialise.

Industry leaders still speak of reaching one million units by 2027, but that sounds less like forecasting and more like optimism. Strip away the marketing language, and three threads emerge: the electric question, safety technology and our export ambitions.

ELECTRIC TWO-WHEELERS: HYPE VS REALITY

The electric motorcycle story in Bangladesh is unfolding unevenly. Optimists point to a fourfold rise in EV bike imports, from 2,446 units in 2022-23 to 10,053 units in 2024-25. Realists note that of

Bangladesh's 6.5 million registered vehicles, only 261 are officially listed as electric two-wheelers. Pragmatists add that thousands more operate unregistered, in the familiar grey zone.

This is not the exponential curve of true disruption.

SEE PAGE S2



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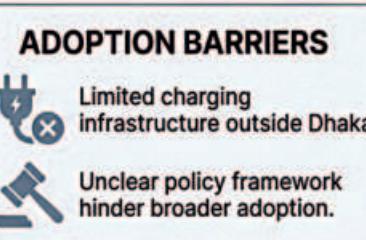
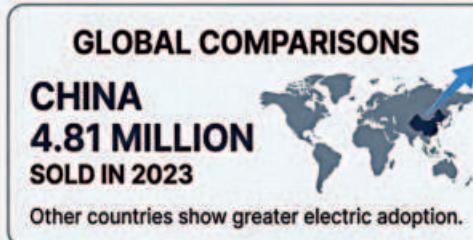
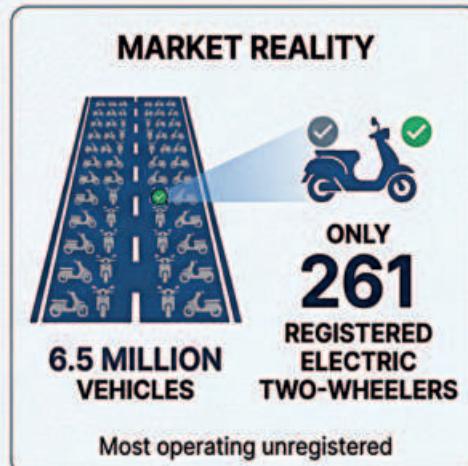
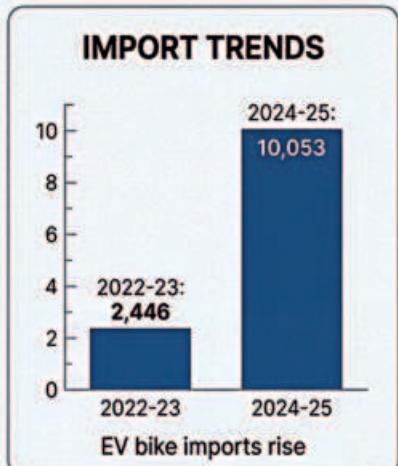
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The Next 25 Years Where Bangladesh's Motorcycle Industry Is Headed

ELECTRIC TWO-WHEELERS: HYPE VS REALITY



FROM PAGE S1

Globally, the contrast is stark. China sold 4.81 million electric motorcycles in 2023, reaching 28% market penetration. India's electric two-wheeler sales surged under government subsidies. Indonesia targets a 25% market share by 2030, while Vietnam's EV sales jumped 98% in early 2025.

Bangladesh's own pledge under the Paris Agreement targets 30% electric vehicle adoption by 2030, implying roughly two million electric two-wheeler within five years. At the current pace, that target will be missed by a wide margin.

The constraints are structural. Charging infrastructure is limited outside Dhaka, and the policy

framework remains economically unconvincing for ordinary buyers. Duty cuts and incentives are repeatedly promised "from the next fiscal year." Chinese imports dominate, mostly fully assembled, while local manufacturing remains limited.

What is happening is narrower. Young urban professionals, particularly women, are adopting electric bikes for short commutes. Parents value controlled speeds. Running costs matter: charging a REVOO A01 for 75 km costs Tk 9.07, compared to several hundred taka for petrol. These are pockets of adoption, not a market shift.

The electric future will arrive, but slowly. Walton's Takyon, Komaki's

Dhaka outlets, and offerings from Runner, Green Tiger and Akiij signal intent. Yet without major advances in battery technology, wider charging networks and stable electricity pricing, electric two-wheeler will remain a premium urban option. By 2030, an 8-12% market share appears more realistic than official targets; by 2050, 40-50% is possible if regional trends hold.

EXPORT POTENTIAL: FACING THE HARD MATH

In 2019, industry leaders predicted Bangladesh would export motorcycles to India's northeast, Nepal and Africa. Runner Automobiles began small-scale exports. Honda shipped 14 XBlade 160 motorcycles to Guatemala in 2024,

generating headlines but little volume.

The economics are unforgiving. Manufacturing costs in Bangladesh run about 10% higher than in India, Thailand or Vietnam, even before duties. Import duties on components remain high, while duty drawback procedures can take over five years, tying up large amounts of working capital. Without duty-free imports against guarantees, Bangladeshi manufacturers struggle to compete globally.

Production capacity reached 800,000-1,000,000 units annually by 2024, while domestic demand fell to around 380,000 units. Excess capacity sits idle because export markets can source motorcycles from India or China for 20-30% less.

Meaningful exports require three things Bangladesh lacks: streamlined duty drawback systems, a developed component base (over 700 parts are imported per bike, with only chains, seats, stands and batteries made locally), and brand recognition abroad.

Could Bangladesh become a motorcycle export hub by 2050? Theoretically, yes. Vietnam managed it, aided by infrastructure, industrial

50,000-100,000 units annually by 2035-2040, serving price-sensitive niche markets.

FINANCING, INSURANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Motorcycles in Bangladesh cost Tk 80,000 to Tk 5 lacs, equivalent to 4-25 months of average income. Most purchases require financing, yet dedicated motorcycle loans remain limited.

City Bank's "City Bike Loan," launched in 2024, offers up to 80% financing, while Utara Bank provides smaller loans. Penetration remains low. Banks classify two-wheeler loans as high-risk, requiring stable employment and income levels that exclude gig workers, small traders and ride-hailing drivers. Informal financing fills the gap, often at interest rates of 15-25%.

Insurance adoption is similarly weak. Although mandatory under the Road Transport Act 2018, enforcement is minimal. Most riders carry only basic third-party coverage, if any. Comprehensive insurance is rare, claims processing is cumbersome, and cashless repair networks are limited outside Dhaka.

Digital tools could ease these constraints. Alternative credit scoring, microfinance integration, mandatory insurance verification, and cashless repair networks are all feasible. Bangladesh has 120 million mobile financial service users and near-universal mobile penetration.

What's missing is institutional reform. Bangladesh Bank, IDRA and BRTA have yet to align regulation with digital capability. These are not technological barriers but governance ones.

Bangladesh has the market size and manufacturing base to sustain its motorcycle industry through 2050. But the next 25 years are more likely to be defined by gradual adjustment than dramatic disruption.

Two Wheels, One Reality

Rethinking Motorcycle Safety in Bangladesh

Motorcyclists in Bangladesh have an image problem and not entirely an undeserved one. To many road users, bikers are the chaotic element: squeezing through impossible gaps, riding the wrong way, jumping signals, and trusting reflexes more than rules. But beneath the stereotypes lies a harder truth. Motorcycles have become a necessity long before safety systems caught up.

Cost is the first barrier. A proper, certified helmet can cost more than a month's fuel for many riders. Jackets, gloves, boots? For most, those are "lifestyle choices", not essentials. As a result, a small group who see riding as a passion, not just transport. Everyone else rides exposed, vulnerable, and hoping today won't be the unlucky day.

The biggest causes of motorcycle accidents in Bangladesh are depressingly consistent: speeding on poor road surfaces, sudden lane changes without indicators, buses and trucks turning without warning, and riders misjudging gaps in dense traffic.

gaps in dense traffic. Add broken roads, poor lighting, and minimal lane discipline, and you get a system where survival often depends on instinct rather than infrastructure.

Then there's the aftermath. Unlike many countries, an accident

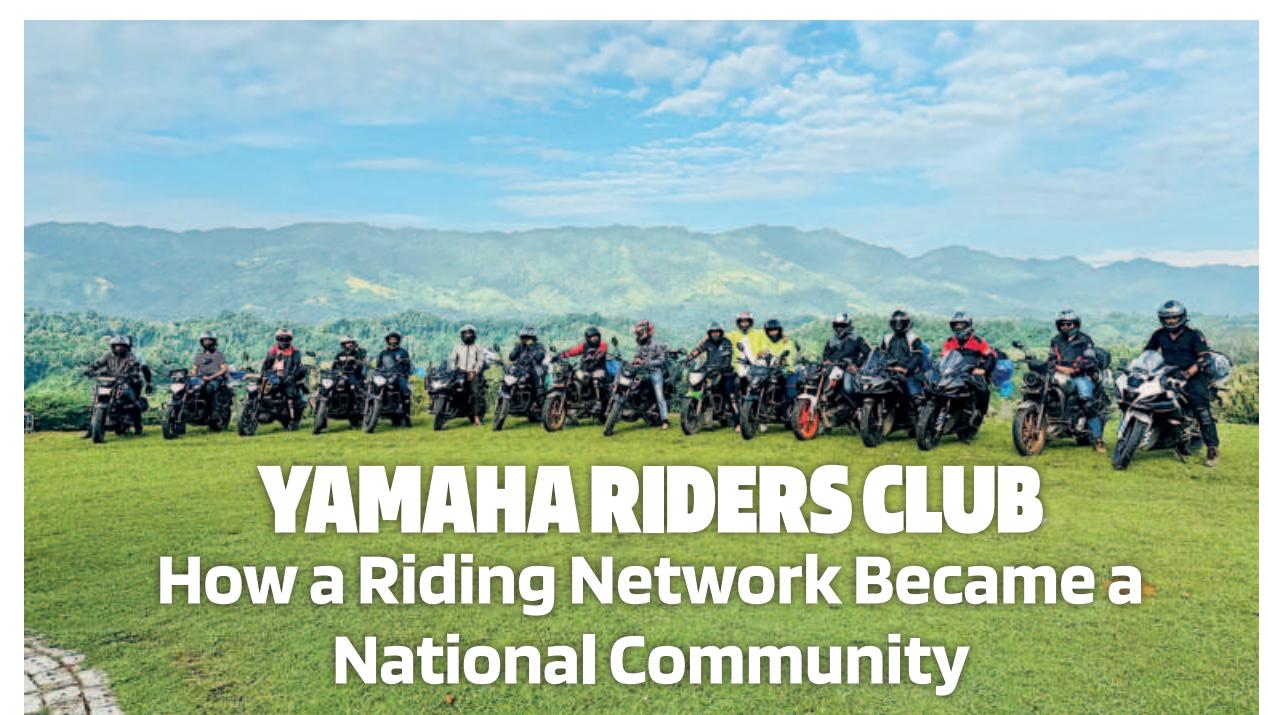
without facts. Riders, especially younger ones, can find themselves verbally or physically attacked even when they're not at fault. A rider involved in a minor collision near Farmgate recalled, "The accident wasn't serious. What scared me was how fast people decided it was my fault."

This is where something as simple as a helmet-mounted camera or dash cam becomes more than a gadget, it becomes protection. Video evidence can defuse mob anger, establish fault, and offer legal clarity when emotions run high. This is the biggest step toward self-preservation.

Ultimately, motorcycle safety in Bangladesh won't improve through enforcement alone. It needs affordability of certified gear, better rider education, realistic urban road design, and a cultural shift that treats bikers as road users, not intruders.

Until then, riding smart, gearing up where possible, and keeping proof on record may be the most practical safety system riders have.

here isn't just a medical emergency, it can instantly become a social one. Crowds gather, tempers flare, blame is assigned within seconds, often



YAMAHA RIDERS CLUB

How a Riding Network Became a National Community

FARHAN MUSFIQUE

Early on weekend mornings, long lines of motorcycles move in quiet formation across Bangladesh. Riders in matching blue jerseys communicate through hand signals and ride with unusual discipline. These are members of the Yamaha Riders Club (YRC), one of Bangladesh's largest organised biking networks. What started as a platform to connect owners has expanded into a movement blending riding culture with social responsibility and civic engagement.

FROM OWNERSHIP TO BELONGING

YRC was established to provide a structured community and long-term engagement for riders. Membership grew as owners joined for organised tours and the sense of brotherhood the club provided. Today, YRC connects over 25,000 registered riders through a coordinated regional network. "Once you experience that level of organisation and brotherhood, riding alone never feels the same again," says Iqbal Mahmud, YRC Dhaka Coordinator.

THE CULTURE OF THE RIDE

Group rides follow strict protocols: pre-ride briefings, maintained formations, and controlled

speeds. These measures reduce risk and build trust. National and international tours reinforce disciplined habits, transforming recreational outings into learning experiences that reshape how riders view their responsibilities to others on the road. Ahmed Nafiz Ifthakhar, a YRC Narshingdi warrior, said, "Yamaha Riders Club is the largest officially registered biking club in Bangladesh, built on four core pillars:



fun, excitement, social responsibility, and community building. Operating under the umbrella of ACI Motors and Yamaha, the club consistently upholds a strong sense of responsibility, actively promoting road safety and engaging in social initiatives whenever the people of Bangladesh need it."

PROMOTING ROAD SAFETY AND AWARENESS

Road safety is a central focus. Each year, members mark UN Global Road Safety Week by painting

road markings and distributing educational materials. By positioning itself as a stakeholder in safety, YRC works to normalise disciplined riding practices in a culture often criticised for recklessness.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL COMMITMENT

Members have planted over 30,000 trees across Bangladesh through coordinated drives. The club also



marks national days through large-scale human formations of national symbols. These events reinforce a collective identity that connects riding with pride in country and culture.

A COMMUNITY THAT REFLECTS CHANGE

As riders become more experienced, they seek long-term engagement beyond initial ownership. YRC provides that continuity. Its structure and shared values have allowed the community to scale effectively, demonstrating how a shared love for riding can evolve into a platform for meaningful impact.





How Bangladesh Became a Motorcycle Nation



As of January 2024, Bangladesh had over 43 lakh registered motorcycle riders, according to BRTA data.

RAHBAR AL HAQ

Twenty-five years ago, the idea that Bangladesh would become one of South Asia's most active motorcycle markets would have sounded optimistic. Motorcycles were expensive imports, ownership was limited, and two wheels were more aspiration than infrastructure. Today, motorcycles are everywhere—built locally, sold in large numbers, and embedded in the country's economy and daily life. What was once a niche has become a full-fledged industry.

The scale of this transformation is clear in the numbers. According to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, there were 43 lakh registered motorcycle riders as of January 2024. An October 2019 report by The Daily Star noted that around 1,600 motorcycles were being sold every day, nearly double the 900 daily units recorded in 2016. Annual sales climbed from roughly 270,000 units in 2016 to 387,000 in 2017, before reaching about 480,000 in 2018. That growth has continued. A July 2025 Daily Star report stated that local motorcycle companies recorded

Under this framework, import duties on completely knocked down (CKD) motorcycle units were reduced by 25 percentage points to 20 percent. The objective was clear: reduce reliance on finished imports and encourage local manufacturing.

Manufacturers responded quickly. A market once dominated by imported Japanese bikes opened up to large-scale local assembly and production. Seven companies now operate full manufacturing plants in Bangladesh: Japanese brands Honda, Suzuki, and Yamaha; Indian manufacturers Bajaj, TVS, and Hero; and local pioneer Runner Automobiles. Industry estimates cited by The Daily Star suggest that about 99 percent of motorcycles currently on Bangladeshi roads are now assembled or manufactured locally.

As production expanded, consumer preferences began to change. The dominance of basic 100cc commuter bikes is gradually giving way to higher-capacity machines. Motorcycles in the 125cc to 160cc range and above are seeing stronger demand, despite higher prices typically ranging from Tk 2.2 lakh to Tk 4.5 lakh. Subrata Ranjan Das, executive director of ACI Motors, noted that "the mindset of the customers is changing and they are moving to high-end motorcycles." Road conditions also play a role. Outside Dhaka, rougher roads often make larger capacity bikes more practical than smaller commuters. At the lower end of the market, models priced between Tk 1.2 lakh and Tk 2 lakh have seen slower sales, reflecting ongoing financial pressure on low- and middle-income buyers.

The social impact of this growth is visible on a daily basis. Motorcycles have become central to the gig economy, supporting ride-sharing and delivery

services across cities. According to a 2018 study by the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), the ride-sharing industry in Bangladesh is worth an estimated 22 billion taka (\$260 million) and accounts for about 23% of the transport sector in the country. Another notable shift is the gradual rise in female ridership. Subrata Ranjan Das estimates there are now around 30,000 female motorcycle users nationwide. Yamaha has established 10 training centres across the country and has trained more than 2,000 women so far. In an interview with The Daily Star, Sadia Afrin, a textile engineer and administrator of the Yamaha Riders Club Girls, said, "It seems like more and more people are accepting of women who ride bikes."

Bangladesh is also moving beyond assembly toward deeper manufacturing and exports. Hero entered the market in 2015 through a joint venture with the Nitol-Niloy Group and upgraded its facility to a full manufacturing plant in 2018. The factory now produces 125,000 motorcycles annually and manufactures 22 key components locally, including chassis, rims, and drive chains. Honda followed with its own investment in November 2018, and its subsidiary Bangladesh Honda Private Ltd has already begun exporting. The company shipped its X-Blade model to Guatemala, first by air and later by sea, with plans to expand into South America, Central America, and Africa.

With nearly 45 lakh registered motorcycles on the road and a growing local parts ecosystem, Bangladesh has completed a major transition. It is no longer only a consumer of imported two-wheelers, but a manufacturing hub with ambitions beyond its borders.



MATIUR RAHMAN,

President of the Bangladesh Motorcycle Assemblers and Manufacturers Association, Chairman and Managing Director of the Uttara Group of Companies

“Policy that enabled local assembly transformed our market; Uttara Motors invested decisively, expanding production, guaranteeing service and delivering affordable commuters as well as aspirational performance models for Bangladesh’s riders today.”

MOBILITY made more accessible

Matiur Rahman, President of the Bangladesh Motorcycle Assemblers and Manufacturers Association, Chairman and Managing Director of the Uttara Group of Companies, spearheaded Uttara Motors, which was founded in 1972 and is now a pioneer in local assembly, expanding production capacity, distribution and diversified industrial investments across Bangladesh.

The Daily Star (TDS): From your perspective, what single shift most changed Bangladesh's motorcycle market over the past 25 years? How have riders' expectations changed?

Matiur Rahman (MR): The decisive change was the policy that enabled local assembly and light engineering, which expanded choice and brought down costs through local sourcing. Uttara Motors seized that opportunity, investing in assembly capacity and local partnerships to broaden model availability and keep ownership affordable. Riders split into pragmatic commuters who demand economy, durability and low operating cost—typically 100–125cc—and urban, aspirational buyers who want style and higher displacement in 150–165cc ranges. We supply both: efficient commuter models and aspirational performance variants that reflect evolving tastes.

TDS: Why are scooters gaining visibility in cities, and who are the primary buyers?

MR: Scooters have grown because they are automatic, easy to ride, ideal for short urban trips and simple to park. Women and younger urban commuters are the primary buyers. We are also looking into compact, feature-rich scooters that prioritise convenience, low maintenance and an attractive ownership proposition.

TDS: What must change in Bangladesh's industry for the transition to electric two-wheelers? How is Uttara Motors planning to move into this segment?

MR: Bangladesh needs widespread charging infrastructure, lower duties, battery recycling and a supportive assembly policy. Uttara Motors is proactively engaging policymakers, preparing our facilities and designing scooter and light-EV architectures so we can introduce electric models swiftly once the ecosystem and incentives mature.

TDS: What are your plans product-wise now that the engine cc limit has gone up?

MR: We are expanding upward in our lineup—more 150–165 cc models are available, and higher-cc offerings, including 250 cc class motorcycles, are planned. We continue to support high-volume commuter models while selectively introducing aspirational performance bikes to meet market demand. Our ongoing investments in factory capacity, warranty programmes and service networks ensure customers receive reliable after-sales support.

The interview was conducted by Tagabun Tahrim Titun



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SAFETY, EMISSIONS and the Cost of Staying Cheap



FARHAN MUSFIQUE

Globally, motorcycle regulation has moved decisively in one direction: safer machines and cleaner engines. Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) became mandatory in the EU for motorcycles over 125cc in November 2016. Since then, cornering ABS, traction control, and Motorcycle Stability Control (MSC) have proliferated across mid-range segments. The global motorcycle ABS market, valued at \$2.14 billion in 2024, is projected to reach \$11.38 billion by 2033, growing at a 20.2% compound annual rate.

India followed a similar path. From April 1, 2019, all new motorcycles above 125cc were required to be equipped with ABS, while bikes up to 125cc had to offer at least a Combined Braking System (CBS). The objective was simple: reduce skidding, loss of control, and fatal crashes during sudden braking. Bangladesh remains largely untouched by this shift.

In the premium segment with motorcycles priced above Tk 3 lacs, ABS and basic traction control are increasingly common as manufacturers like Honda, Yamaha, and Suzuki introduce global models. But the mass market tells a different story. Nearly

Nearly 80% of motorcycles sold in Bangladesh have no electronic safety systems.

80% of motorcycle sales occur between Tk 80,000 and Tk 2.5 lacs, and in this price band, electronic safety systems are virtually absent.

The reason is economic, not technical. Adding ABS raises manufacturing costs by Tk 25,000–50,000 per unit, translating into a 15–25% price increase on entry-level motorcycles where margins are thin and buyers are highly price-sensitive. In a market where a 2% price difference can shift brand preference, safety features quickly become optional extras few can afford.

Regulatory pressure elsewhere continues to mount. The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board has recommended mandatory ABS and traction control. European regulations keep tightening. Bangladesh, by contrast, has no such requirements, no timeline for adoption, and little public debate beyond helmet laws that remain weakly enforced.

The consequences are visible on the roads. In 2024, reports from The Daily Star and Dhaka



Times show that around 366 out of every 1,000 road accidents involved motorcycles, resulting in approximately 2,570 deaths.

A similar regulatory gap exists on emissions. Europe implemented Euro 5 standards for motorcycles in January 2020, sharply limiting carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides. Euro 5+ followed in 2024, introducing durability requirements such as 35,000 km of real-world testing for high-speed motorcycles. India leapfrogged from Bharat Stage IV to Bharat Stage VI in 2020, aligning with European norms. China, Japan, and Southeast Asia have followed suit. Bangladesh is yet to follow.

Domestic environmental standards remain minimal, enforcement sporadic, and there is no public timeline for adopting even Euro 4, let alone Euro 5. Most motorcycles sold locally are manufactured or assembled using Chinese, Indian, or Japanese components, meaning they often inherit cleaner engine technologies by default. But this informal compliance has limits.

The problem becomes unavoidable when exports enter the conversation. Without certified compliance to Euro 5 or equivalent standards, Bangladeshi motorcycles cannot

access regulated markets. The EU, the US, India, and ASEAN countries all enforce minimum emissions thresholds. Maintaining low domestic standards may keep prices down today, but it effectively closes the door on export competitiveness.

The government has shown little appetite for regulations that could raise consumer costs. Transport accounts for roughly 15% of Bangladesh's carbon emissions, with motorcycles forming a significant share. Yet without sustained international pressure or domestic political will, meaningful change is unlikely before 2030. More realistically, gradual adoption of Euro 4-equivalent standards may emerge by 2035–2040 as global suppliers phase out non-compliant components.

The uncomfortable truth is this: Bangladesh's motorcycle market is cheap because it avoids standards. That choice carries hidden costs, in lives lost, emissions unchecked, and export opportunities foregone. Safety and sustainability will eventually arrive, but not through ambition or announcements. They will come only when global economics make non-compliance impossible.



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