

## Dozens killed in fire at Swiss ski resort bar

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firework inside the bar which set fire to the ceiling. He was in Crans-Montana, where he said a number of Italians had gathered seeking information about missing relatives or friends. He declined to say if there were any Italian victims.

Yesterday morning, hours after the explosion, footage from the street outside showed the

area cordoned off, with forensic tents behind white screens set up in front of the bar in Crans-Montana, a fashionable ski centre with an array of boutiques, luxury hotels and restaurants.

"I know someone who might have been among the victims and I can't reach her. I'm very worried," said local resident Karine Spreng. "I'm going to try to

contact other people who know this woman to see if she is still alive."

The daytime scene, with small groups of people, some in tears or carrying flowers, was a stark contrast to the panic and confusion that officials said faced first responders who arrived when the alarm was raised.

"The first responders - the firefighters and police officers - arrived at a scene

of chaos, at a dramatic scene," Stephane Ganzer, head of security for Valais canton, told reporters.

He said some of the victims were from other countries, hundreds of personnel were working on the case and a helpline had been opened for relatives. Officials said the grim task of identifying badly burned bodies would take a considerable time.

## Flaws in bearing pads, design

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a five-member committee led by Abdur Rouf on the same day, and later added four more members to investigate what the committee described as a very "rare and complex technical incident."

The committee observed that the hardness, compression set and neoprene content of the displaced bearing pads did not conform to established standards. Further testing in overseas laboratories is required to confirm this finding, it said.

Buet Mechanical Engineering Department Professor ABM Toufique Hasan, a committee member, said they tested two bearing pads -- one that fell in October last year and another in September the previous year -- at the Buet laboratory and found deviations in at least two parameters.

Abdur Rouf said 12 types of bearing pads are used in the metro rail, and the two tested pads were among them. As the company that

supplied the pads challenged the findings, the committee said they need to be tested by a third party.

The committee noted that the bearing pads were installed at a slight slope (0.8 percent), which may have contributed to their displacement.

It said circular alignments exist at both ends of the Farmgate metro rail station and that no transition curve was used between the straight and circular sections of the viaduct alignment, indicating a possible design flaw. Separate modelling and analysis were not carried out for the curved alignment, it added.

During vibration measurements conducted while trains were running, the committee observed significantly higher vibrations at the piers with displaced bearing pads compared to other piers.

The committee believes that possible design flaws in the curved alignment are generating unintended lateral forces and associated

vibrations, which are linked to the displacement of the bearing pads.

Buet Civil Engineering Department Professor Khan Mahmud, another committee member, said it cannot be concluded that all bearing pads are substandard based on tests of only two out of around 4,000 pads. He said metro rail operations could continue with regular monitoring of the pads.

The committee recommended a thorough review of the viaduct's structural and track design through detailed analysis by an independent third party consultant to definitively determine the cause of the bearing pad displacement.

It also called for a third-party safety audit of the overall metro rail project, and the installation of an effective structural health monitoring system for close supervision. Strong efforts must be undertaken to enhance the capacity of the metro rail authority and ensure technology transfer

from foreign consultants to local experts.

The road adviser said the board of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd would take steps against responsible persons after reviewing the report. He said discussions will be held with Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), the project's financier, regarding the flaws.

## Biman chooses Boeing for 14 aircraft deal

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inducted into the fleet, opportunities will be created to expand operations in both state and commercial sectors, according to sources at the meeting.

After completing required approvals and financial procedures, the final contract will be signed with Boeing, followed by phased delivery of the aircraft, the sources added.

## Pry students get books on first day of yr

FROM PAGE 12  
said the government printed 30 crore textbooks this year with significantly improved paper quality.

However, the situation with secondary textbooks is different.

Prof Riad Choudhury, member (textbook) of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, told The Daily Star that while 88 percent of the 21.43 crore secondary books had been printed, only 75.15 percent had been dispatched by yesterday.

NTCB officials admitted that deliveries for classes 7 and 8 were lagging behind significantly, whereas distribution of books for pre-primary to class 5 was 100 percent completed.

Prof Riad said, "We expect to deliver all the textbooks by January 15."

Data from Narsingdi lay bare a stark inequality. While general secondary schools there received about 64 percent of their required books, English version schools received absolutely none for classes 7 to 8.

In Rajshahi, while the demand for books at the primary level was fully met, secondary schools reported significant shortfalls.

District Education Officer Zayedur Rahman said only 48.81 percent of the secondary requirement reached the district, with

district were similarly hit hard, receiving only 23.70 percent of their required books.

In Narayanganj, acting district education officer Atikur Rahman confirmed that textbooks for classes 7 and 8 had not reached the district at all. As a result, secondary students returned home empty-handed.

Faruk Ahmed, head teacher of Narayanganj Government Girls' High School, said, "No textbooks for classes 7 and 8 have been delivered so far."

In the capital, a teacher at Azimpur Government Girls' High School echoed the concerns, stating that supplies for classes 6 and 9 were inadequate, with absolutely none for classes 7 to 8.

In Rajshahi, while the demand for books at the primary level was fully met, secondary schools received no books.

"Not a single book for classes 6 to 9 has reached our institution," said Maulana Mohammad Billal Hossain of Belashi Fazil Madrasa.

In Noakhali, shortages hit class 9 humanities students. The district secondary education office reported that over half of the required books had

not reached students. Zila Poura Kalyan High School authorities reported that they received no humanities books.

In Tangail, schools received 33.33 lakh copies against a secondary-level demand of 46.14 lakh.

Shamim Al Mamun Jewel, general secretary of the Bangladesh Teachers' Association, said that while the festival was cancelled, ensuring students received books on the first day was a success. He added that complete sets for classes 7 and 8 could not be delivered, but the association hopes to distribute them by the end of January.

This year the textbooks were handed over without the traditional book festival, which was cancelled due to state mourning following the death of BNP chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

[Correspondents from Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Barishal, Gazipur, Narsingdi, Rangamati, Tangail, and Noakhali contributed to this report.]

## Shafiqur earns Tk 3.6 lakh a yr from farming

FROM PAGE 1  
He has 241.77 decimals of land worth Tk 20.25 lakh and a duplex house worth Tk 27 lakh.

Shafiqur, 67, paid Tk 30,000 in taxes last year.

The Jamaat chief, who is running from Dhaka-15, will spend Tk 35 lakh in electioneering. Of this, Tk 10 lakh will come from his savings, and the rest from the party fund.

He still faces one case under the Anti-Terrorism Act and another for "unlawful assembly" -- both filed in 2013 and both stayed by the High Court.

In total, he had at least 34 cases filed against him between 2008 and 2022. Only two of these cases were disposed of before August 5, 2024. He has since been acquitted in 7 cases and exonerated in 16, while eight cases were withdrawn.

At least 15 of his cases were related to "unlawful assembly," breaching "public safety" and rioting. Six other cases were filed under Explosive Substances Act, one under Arms Act and one related to alleged corruption.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

প্রধান সংকেত ও টেলিযোগাযোগ প্রকৌশলী (পূর্ব) এর দর্শক

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, সিআরবি, চট্টগ্রাম

তারিখ: ০১/০১/২০২৬ইং

প্রধান সংকেত ও টেলিযোগাযোগ প্রকৌশলী (পূর্ব), বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, সিআরবি, কর্তৃত National Electronic Government Procurement Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) এ নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র আবেদন করা হচ্ছে।

ক্র. নং	টেক্সার আইডি, নথি নং	ক্ষেত্রের ধরন ও কাজের নাম	দরপত্র পক্ষাত	দরপত্র প্রকাশ মাখলির তারিখ ও শেষ সময়
1	1194511 54.01.1500. 111.05. 336.25	Upgradation of existing Conference Room by a SMART Conference Room with seating capacity of (33+2) 35 (Thirty-Five), including high-resolution LED display unit, video wall(s), interactive presenter video wall, acoustic sound system, and chairperson console with related goods & services facilities at 8th Floor Room No. 930 of Railibhaban, Dhaka.	NCT, OTM	04-Jan-2026 10:00 19-Jan-2026 12:00
2	1192853 54.01.1500.11 1.05.337.25	Design, Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Service Support for a SMART Conference Room with a seating capacity of 60 (59+1) for the Ministry of Railways. The facilities shall include, but not be limited to, video walls, a high-resolution LED display unit, an interactive presenter screen, an acoustic sound system and Chairperson console, along with all related goods and service support. The installation will be at the 9th Floor, Room No. 1024, Rail Bhaban, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, of Railibhaban, Dhaka.	NCT, OTM	04-Jan-2026 10:00 19-Jan-2026 12:00
3	1192871 54.01.1500.11 1.05.338.25	Interfacing of Existing PABX System of Bangladesh Railway with Newly Constructed 10th and 11th Floor Network, including Renovation and Reinstallation of the Existing Telecommunication Network (Telephone, PABX, Wi-Fi, and Broadband Lines) from Ground Floor to 11th Floor of Bangladesh Railway Headquarters Office, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Railibhaban, Dhaka.	NCT, OTM	04-Jan-2026 10:00 19-Jan-2026 12:00

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## Saarc must be revived: Yunus

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Yunus conveyed the same message to all: Saarc must be revived.

The chief adviser said the fact that leaders from across the region came together to pay tribute to Khaleda Zia and showed respect to her memory clearly demonstrated that the spirit of Saarc still exists.

"We must preserve the spirit of Saarc," Yunus said.

Shafiqul also said the visiting foreign dignitaries were impressed by the scale and dignity of the funeral.

The press secretary said the foreign dignitaries also expressed their condolences to BNP

acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain yesterday

described the presence of South Asian leaders at Khaleda Zia's funeral as a "positive gesture".

He also clarified that no bilateral issues were discussed during the brief interactions, calling the exchanges "courtesy meetings".

## SRI LANKA FM MEETS TARIQUE

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath paid a courtesy call on Tarique Rahman on Wednesday night.

The meeting took place

around 8:30pm at the BNP chairperson's office in Dhaka's Gulshan.

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner Dharmapala Weerakkody accompanied the foreign minister during the meeting, BNP Media Cell member Shariful Kabir Khan told The Daily Star.

Sharing a photo of his visit on X at 10:36pm on Wednesday, Herath said, "During the meeting, I conveyed the deepest condolences of the government and the people of Sri Lanka to the bereaved family and to the people of Bangladesh on the passing of the former prime minister."

## INDIAN DEFENCE

2017. He was radicalised and engaged with militants while in jail and has mastered triacetone triperoxide (TATP) bombs, a powerful and highly unstable primary explosive.

## FRESH EXPLOSION AT SITE

Meanwhile, a worker was injured in a fresh explosion at the madrasa on Wednesday while cleaning the site, police said.

The injured labourer, Raju, 30, received primary treatment at a local hospital for leg injuries, South Keraniganj Police Station Officer in Charge Saiful Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Police said the explosion occurred around noon when the madrasa's owner, Parvin Begum, entered the premises with Raju and

## MINISTER SIGNS CONDOLENCE BOOK

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday visited the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and expressed his condolence on the demise of Khaleda Zia, reports The Hindu.

In a post on X at 10:36pm on Wednesday, Herath said, "Went to the High Commission of Bangladesh in New Delhi. Signed the Condolence Book expressing our profound sorrow at the passing of former Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia. Our thoughts are with her family and the people of Bangladesh."

## Fresh blast at site

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The explosion occurred at the madrasa in Hasnabad Housing around 10:25am on December 26, severely damaging the building and nearby structures.

Police recovered a large cache of chemicals, bomb-making materials, and explosives from the site and later filed a case under the Anti-Terrorism Act against seven named and several unidentified suspects.

Though a week has passed, law enforcers have yet to arrest the prime accused -- Sheikh Al Amin, 32, a director of the madrasa.

Police have so far arrested seven people, including Shahin alias Abu Bakar alias Musa alias Diba Sultan, 32.

The case statement said

## Lawyer beaten

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A motorcycle