

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE VICTIMS 75% from Jamaat, 68% of still missing are from BNP

Says commission of enquiry in final report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seventy-five percent of the victims of enforced disappearance were members of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, while 68 percent of those who never returned belonged to the BNP and its allied organisations, according to the final report of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

Submitted yesterday to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, the report lays bare the political character of enforced disappearances during the Awami League's 15-year rule, revealing how different opposition groups suffered distinct forms of repression.

The commission received 1,913 complaints related to disappearances. After verification, 1,569 were recognised as cases of enforced disappearance, including 287 classified as "missing and dead". A total of

"Given the centralised style of decision-making during this period, and the degree of coordination required across agencies, it is difficult to conceive that such a system could have functioned for over a decade without the awareness of Sheikh Hasina and those immediately around her."

The report read

1,282 victims later resurfaced after varying periods in illegal detention.

Yet, the commission estimates between 4,000 and 6,000 disappearances may have occurred between 2009 and 2024. It cited underreporting, fear of reprisals, and victims leaving the country as the reasons behind the reported figure being low.

"Together, opposition-aligned organisations account for approximately 96.7 percent of all victims with known political identity. Ruling party affiliates appear only marginally.

"This pattern indicates that disappearances and related abuses were not politically neutral, but disproportionately affected individuals associated with opposition politics," the report said.

The commission further noted that such a system could not have endured for over a decade without political sanction at the very top.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Business leaders call on BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday evening.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh won't travel to India for T20 WC

BCB requests ICC to relocate matches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday confirmed that it will not send the national team to India for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, considering the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India.

In a press statement issued following an emergency meeting of the BCB Board of Directors yesterday afternoon, the BCB also requested the game's governing body, International Cricket Council (ICC), to consider



relocating Bangladesh's matches outside India.

The 10th edition of the T20 World Cup, jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka, is set to begin on February 7, with Bangladesh scheduled to play their four group stage matches in India.

The board's decision comes within a day of Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman being released by Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on the instructions of the Board of Control for

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Venezuela VP to pay 'big price'

Trump warns Rodriguez if she doesn't
'do what's right'; 40 Venezuelans
killed in Saturday's strikes

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday threatened that Venezuela's interim leader Delcy Rodriguez will pay a "very big price" if she doesn't cooperate with the United States, after US forces seized and jailed her former boss Nicolas Maduro.

"If she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro," Trump told The Atlantic in a brief telephone interview.

At least 40 people, including civilians and soldiers, were killed during the US military operation, according to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A total of 273 people, including 10 members of a human trafficking syndicate, were detained by the Bangladesh Navy while attempting to travel illegally to Malaysia on a wooden boat on Saturday night. The detainees were intercepted in the Bay of Bengal near St Martin's Island. Story on page 4.

PHOTO: COURTESY

ROs cancel 723 nominations after scrutiny

BNP, Jamaat, CPB aspirants among those disqualified

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Returning officers have cancelled 723 nominations out of 2,568 submitted across the country, the Election Commission (EC) said yesterday.

EC Public Relations Officer Ruhul Amin Mollik disclosed the figures in the evening, noting that the nomination papers submitted on behalf of recently deceased BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia from three constituencies were excluded from the count.

Officials said most of the cancelled nominations belonged to independent candidates, primarily due to discrepancies in voter signatures. Independent aspirants must submit signatures from at least one percent of voters in their constituencies to qualify. Other grounds for cancellation included errors in affidavits, concealment of information, loan defaults, dual citizenship complications, and

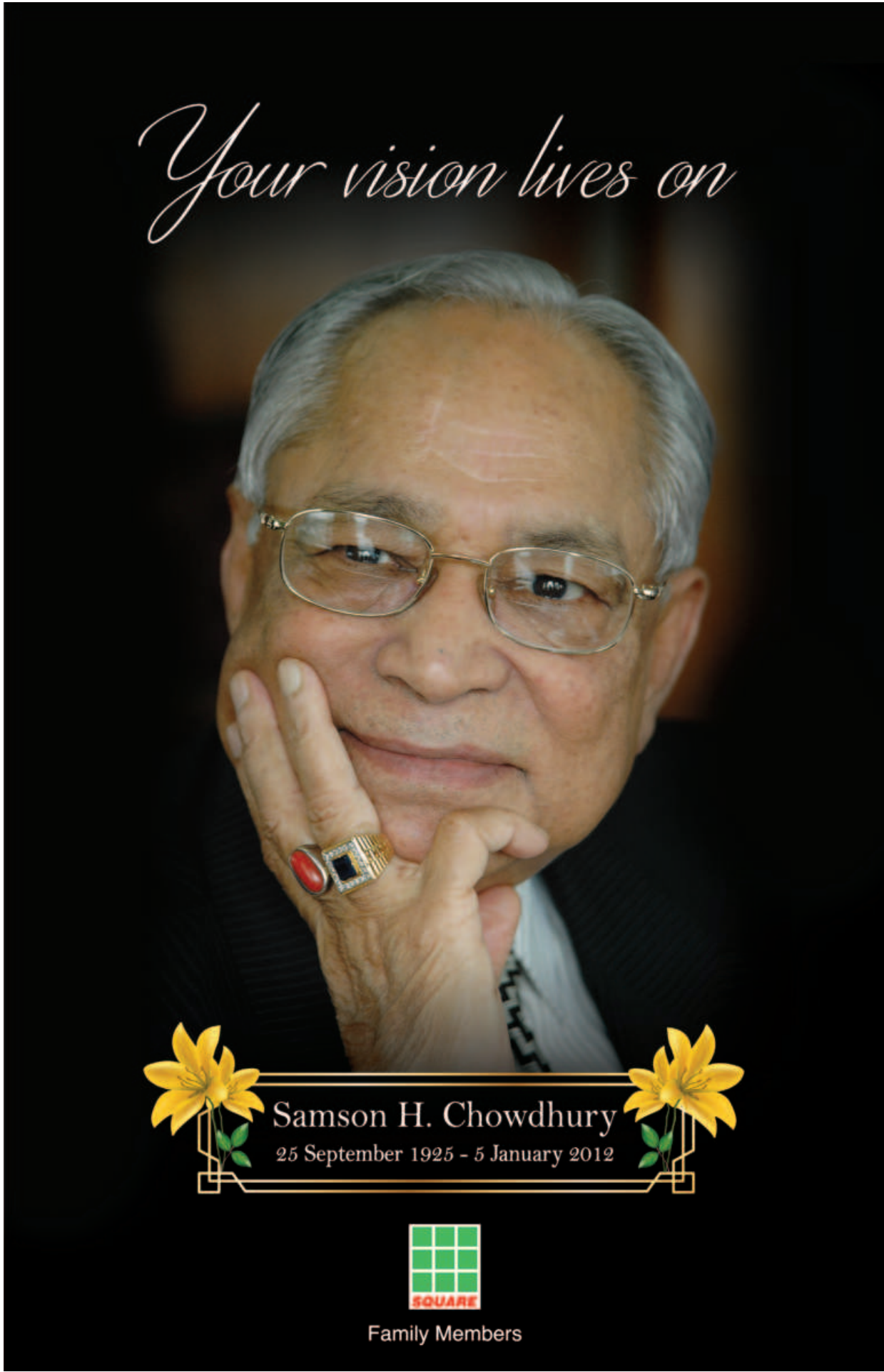


Scrutiny of nominations began on December 30 and ended yesterday. Appeals against the returning officers' decisions can be filed with the EC until January 9. The commission will dispose of appeals between January 10 and 18.

similar irregularities.

Scrutiny of nominations began on December 30 and ended yesterday.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



Tarique to take over as BNP chairman in a few days

Says Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman would become the chairman within the next few days.

He made the remarks while speaking to journalists at a views-sharing programme at a hotel in Sylhet city in the evening.

Fakhrul said the post of BNP chairperson has remained vacant following the death of Khaleda Zia, and Tarique would fill the vacancy.

He added that the BNP would once again launch its election campaign from Sylhet, as it did in the past.

Fakhrul said, "The election is important for the nation as people had long been deprived of their voting rights. Although the media has expressed concerns over the polls, the BNP does not share those fears. The party has consistently demanded an election."

He said Khaleda had continued her democratic struggle, and expressed hope for building a democratic Bangladesh in line with her vision.

"Democracy is not built overnight, nor does democratic culture develop in a single day. BNP is committed to forming a democratic parliament through the electoral process."

"Since the interim government took office, a culture of mob violence has taken root over the past year, eroding democracy."

The BNP leader stressed that only collective resistance could counter the trend, adding that such resistance is possible only by returning to a democratic system through a free and fair election.



A still image from video, posted on the White House's Rapid Response 47 account on X, shows Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro being escorted in custody down a hallway at the US Drug Enforcement Administration headquarters in New York City on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Assailants storm home, kill man, injure wife, child

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A 35-year-old man was killed in a gun attack that also left his wife and daughter injured in Bagha upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sohel Rana of Palashi Fatepur Karali Naoshara Char area under Chakrajapur union.

According to a neighbour, who spoke on condition of anonymity, the attackers created panic by repeatedly striking the tin walls of Sohel Rana's house around 1:00am, producing loud noises that woke nearby residents.

As locals came out of their homes, the armed assailants reportedly threatened to shoot anyone who approached the house. They then cut through the tin wall, entered the house and opened fire.

One bullet hit Sohel Rana in the abdomen, while his wife and daughter were also injured in the gunfire, locals said.

The victims were rushed to Bagha Upazila Health Complex, where the on-duty doctor declared Sohel Rana dead. His wife and daughter were admitted to the health complex and are undergoing treatment.

Bagha Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Suprabhat Mondol said police initially suspect the killing was a planned attack linked to a previous murder case.

"The body has been recovered and sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy," he said, adding that legal action would be taken following the investigation.

The attackers created panic by repeatedly striking the tin walls of Sohel Rana's house around 1:00am, producing loud noises that woke nearby residents.

75% from Jamaat, 68% of still missing are from BNP

FROM PAGE 1

"Given the centralised style of decision-making during this period, and the degree of coordination required across agencies, it is difficult to conceive that such a system could have functioned for over a decade without the awareness of Sheikh Hasina and those immediately around her," it said.

Commission Chairperson Justice Moynul Islam Chowdhury and members Justice Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, Nur Khan Liton, Nabila Idris and Sajjad Hossain formally handed over the report at Jamuna in the presence of Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan and Chief Adviser's Principal Secretary Sirajuddin Mia.

Commission member Nabila Idris said complaints were still coming in, supporting the estimate of 4,000 to 6,000 disappearances. She said tracing survivors often led to other unreported cases, while some victims refused to speak or had moved abroad.

DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

The data show sharply diverging patterns of harm. Among survivors, 22 percent were linked to the BNP and its allies. Among those still missing, 22 percent belonged to Jamaat Shibir.

The victims include 476 Jamaat members, 236 from Islami Chhatra

Shibir, 142 BNP members, 46 from Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and 17 from Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal.

The report identifies two distinct strategies. Jamaat and Shibir members were more likely to be detained, surveilled, harassed and pushed through criminal cases before they eventually resurfaced. BNP activists, by contrast, were more often made to disappear permanently and, in many cases, eliminated.

This concentration of victims among Jamaat, Shibir and the BNP points to "selective and systematic targeting of specific political ideologies", not random abuse. "The core finding -- that disappearances were deeply entangled with political identity -- therefore remains robust," it said.

According to a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing, ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her defence adviser Major General (ret'd) Tariq Ahmed Siddique, and then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan were directly involved in several high-profile disappearance cases.

Victims cited include BNP leaders Ilias Ali, Humam Qadir Chowdhury, Salahuddin Ahmed and Chowdhury Alam; Jamaat leader and former brigadier general Abdullahil Aman Azmi; Mir Ahmad Bin Qasem; and



Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances hands over its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

former ambassador Maruf Zaman.

Commission members said Hasina personally issued orders in several cases. Evidence of secret renditions to India, carried out without legal process, pointed unmistakably to authorisation from the highest levels of government.

Prof Yunus praised the commission's work as historic, describing the crimes as brutal

and emblematic of a collapse in democratic institutions.

He urged that the report be made accessible to the public in simple language, instructed the commission to submit recommendations and action plans, and ordered the mapping of all sites linked to extrajudicial killings and disappearances, including known torture centres.

The commission thanked the chief

adviser for his support, called for restructuring the National Human Rights Commission, and urged stronger protections for victims so that, it said, such darkness never settles again over the state.

PATTERNS

The report also maps how enforced disappearances evolved over time. Cases surged after 2012, peaked during the 2013-14 election crisis, and rose again ahead of the 2018 polls.

Another spike followed street protests in 2022. After the 2016 Holey Artisan attack, counterterror operations increasingly overlapped with political repression, with the same agencies and officers moving between both roles.

Disappearances resulting in permanent loss were mostly concentrated between 2011 and 2016.

After 2017, such cases declined, but the practice persisted in another form. Victims were detained secretly, prosecuted in fabricated cases, and later released under controlled conditions.

The removal of Major General Ziaul Ahsan from his post as Rab's additional director general (operations) in 2016 coincided with a gradual fall in permanent

disappearances.

Survivors described systematic efforts to erase political identities. Victims killed in the Sundarbans were labelled "pirates", those in Cox's Bazar "drug traffickers", and those in Narayanganj "gang members" -- narratives the commission said lacked credibility.

The report names the Rapid Action Battalion as the most frequently cited force, appearing in nearly 25 percent of complaints, followed by police (23 percent) and the Detective Branch (14.5 percent).

The CTC accounted for about 5 percent. DGFI and NSI appeared less frequently, though the commission noted this likely understates their role due to the secrecy of intelligence facilities.

In 37 cases, victims were abducted by unidentified plainclothes men. Another 119 complaints cited captors who described themselves only as "proshashoner lok" (people from the administration), suggesting deliberate ambiguity to shield perpetrators from accountability.

Joint operations were common. The most frequent combinations involved DB and police, DGFI and Rab, CTC and DB, DB and Rab, and police and Rab, with several cases involving three or more agencies.

Business leaders call on Tarique

FROM PAGE 1

In response, the BNP assured them that if voted to power, the party will address these matters.

Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman of Pran-RFL Group, said that Tarique Rahman gave significant time and attention to the concerns raised by the business community during the meeting.

"He listened to us for two and a half hours and took note of everything we said. It gives us hope that the future of business in Bangladesh will improve," Ahsan told reporters after the meeting.

He said the discussion covered a wide range of issues -- from law and order to banking challenges -- and that no major concern was left unaddressed.

"Our fellow business leaders were able to present the problems faced in the country very clearly, and he was patient throughout," he added.

He expressed optimism that the BNP leader would take necessary steps to address the issues if the party returns to power.

Abdul Mukhtar, president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, said, "...some business leaders raised common issues -- lack of gas supply, deteriorating law and order, inconsistent NBR policies, infrastructure problems, high bank interest rates, and high VAT."

The BAPI president quoted Tarique as saying that BNP aims to develop the capital market to reduce the cost of funds for businesses.

"Tarique Rahman told us clearly: 'You are the manufacturers; you generate employment and drive prosperity. We will only provide an enabling environment.'"

Mohammad Hatem, president

of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said he highlighted concerns around Bangladesh's upcoming graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

"I told Tarique Rahman that the government's current approach to LDC graduation is self-destructive. He agreed with my view."

Hatem also expressed deep concern about the recently proposed labour law reforms, warning that they could severely impact the readymade garment (RMG) sector -- much like how the once-thriving jute sector declined.

"Tarique Rahman acknowledged the concerns and said he had already spoken to the current government, urging them not to implement the law at this stage."

According to Hatem, the discussion also covered issues such as the ongoing gas and electricity crisis, corruption, instability in law and order, and frequent policy changes by the National Board of Revenue.

"Everyone present echoed concerns over deteriorating law and order, along with the broader impact of corruption and inconsistent tax policies."

Banking sector problems were also raised, with several participants, including some bank owners, addressing policy shortcomings and the growing number of struggling industries.

"In total, the core issues discussed were labour law reforms, LDC graduation, law and order, tax policy, corruption, infrastructure, and banking sector instability."

Talking to reporters after the meeting, BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said business leaders

have trust in the party, adding that if voted to power, BNP will address their expectations and problems.

He said that Tarique listened to the major problems business leaders are facing, which is why investment is not happening in the country.

"Our employment is declining. We discussed the problems in the banking sector, the stock exchange, the capital market, and other related issues. They hope that if BNP is voted to power, it will be able to address the expectations."

"There are problems with bureaucrats, problems with extortionists, and high bank interest rates. Because of corruption, the cost of doing business is increasing, and people have to pay more. As a result, prices of essential goods are rising."

He said business leaders are unable to run their businesses in an unfavourable situation. "... If Bangladeshi business leaders cannot invest, how will foreign businesspeople invest?" he asked.

"Tarique Rahman has promised businesspeople that these problems will be solved."

Among others present at the meeting were, Mahbubur Rahman, president International Chamber of Commerce; Simeen Rahman, group CEO of Transcom and vice president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI); Anwar ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI); AK Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group; Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals; Mir Nasir Hossain, former president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Matiur Rahman, chairman and managing director

of Uttara Group of Companies; Ali Akbar, chairman of Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mills; Ahsan Khan Chowdhury, chairman of Pran-RFL Group; Taskeen Ahmed, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI); Md Jahangir Alam, president of Bangladesh Steel Manufacturers Association; Mohammad Hatem, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA); Mostafa Kamal, chairman and managing director of Meghna Group of Industries; Matiur Rahman, chairman of Uttara Motors; Kamran T Rahman, president of MCCI; Kutubuddin Ahmed, former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA); Fazlul Hoque, former president of the BKMEA; Nihad Kabir, former president of the MCCI; Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of BGMEA; and Shawkat Aziz, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

In addition, Azizul Kayser of Partex Group; Hossain Khaled, former president of DCCI; Md Shahriar, president of the Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies; Moynul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers & Exporters Association; Abdul Mukhtar, president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI); Abdul Hai Sarkar, president of the Bangladesh Association of Banks; Amirul Haque, managing director of Seacom Group; Preeti Chakraborty, senior vice president of BCI; Fazle Shamim Ehsan, president of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation; and Sharif Zahir, chairman of United Commercial Bank were also present.

Venezuela VP to pay 'big price'

FROM PAGE 1

a report by the New York Times late Saturday.

At home, Maduro's allies were still in charge and have denounced their leader's "kidnapping" as part of an imperialist oil grab.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday said the Trump administration will work with the existing Venezuelan leadership. Rubio told NBC's "Meet the Press" that the US was fighting drug traffickers, "not a war against Venezuela."

Trump on Saturday evening appeared to reject the possibility of Venezuela's opposition taking power and said he could work instead with Maduro's vice president, Delcy

correspondents said.

The Venezuelan military announced it recognised Maduro's vice president, Delcy Rodriguez, as acting president, and urged people to resume normal life.

A US government plane carrying Maduro landed at a military base shortly after nightfall on Saturday, and he was transported by helicopter to New York City, where the couple were to be arraigned on drug trafficking and weapons charges.

The White House posted video on X of Maduro, handcuffed and in sandals, escorted by federal agents through a US Drug Enforcement Administration facility in New York. "Good night, happy new year," the 63-year-old leftist is heard saying in English.

Indicted on various federal charges, including narco-terrorism conspiracy, Maduro is expected to make an initial appearance in Manhattan federal court today, according to a Justice Department official.

The US lifted airspace restrictions over the Caribbean late on Saturday after barring commercial flights during the military operation.

Venezuela's ally China said it "strongly condemns" the US operation, and called for Maduro to be "immediately released."

"The US's move is in clear violation of international law, basic norms in international relations, and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter," China's Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Meanwhile, France warned a solution cannot "be imposed from outside."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "deeply concerned that the rules of international law have not been respected."

At Venezuela's request, the UN Security Council will meet today to discuss the crisis, the Somali presidency of the Council told AFP.

- Venezuela's SC orders VP Rodriguez to assume power
- Maduro to appear in Manhattan federal court today
- US to work with Venezuela leaders if they choose right path: Rubio
- US lifts Caribbean airspace restrictions
- UNSC to meet today over US action in Venezuela

Rodriguez.

Rodriguez, however, poured cold water on that, demanding Maduro's release and vowing to "defend" the country, reports AFP.

Late Saturday, Venezuela's Supreme Court ordered Rodriguez to assume presidential powers "in an acting capacity."

The streets of Caracas were calm yesterday in the wake of Saturday's raid. Residents queued up to buy food in grocery stores and the masked, heavily armed police visible the previous day were gone, AFP

Rab to act as 'striking force' during election

Says DG Shahidur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab Director General AKM Shahidur Rahman yesterday said the elite force will act as a striking force to maintain law and order during the upcoming national election, working alongside other law enforcement agencies.

Speaking at a press conference at the Rab Media Centre in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, he said police and Ansar members will be deployed at polling centres, while the Army and Border Guard Bangladesh will remain on mobile duty.

"Rab will perform its duty as a striking force," he said, adding that more personnel will be deployed than in any previous election.

During the briefing, the Rab chief also updated the media on several high-profile cases.

He said they arrested three accused on Saturday night in connection with the burning and murder of businessman Khokon Chandra Das in Damudya upazila of Shariatpur and have so far arrested seven people in the lynching of Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh.

Rab also arrested one person over the double murder on the Khulna court premises, with efforts underway to arrest

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



Inqilab Moncho continues its blockade at Shahbagh in Dhaka yesterday, demanding a swift trial over the killing of its spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, who died on December 18, six days after being shot in the city.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

JUSTICE FOR HADI

Inqilab Moncho launches 'March for Insaaf'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Moncho has launched a new campaign to mobilise public opinion demanding justice for its slain leader and July frontliner Sharif Osman Bin Hadi.



As part of the campaign, titled "March for Insaaf," the platform yesterday began a truck-mounted march scheduled to cover six locations in Dhaka.

Fatima Tasnim Zuma, convener of the Dhaka University unit of Inqilab Moncho and Ducus secretary for Liberation War and Democratic Movement Affairs, said, "We will continue this campaign till January 6 to build public opinion for justice for Hadi ahead of the police chargesheet scheduled for January 7."

The platform also aims to inform people about its four-point demand, she said.

The programme began at the Shahbagh intersection around noon. According to the announced schedule, the march will pass through Shahbagh, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Pallabi, Mirpur 10 and Uttara.

SUNDARBANS

Bengal tiger rescued from poachers' trap



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Forest Department has successfully rescued a Bengal tiger from a trap allegedly set by deer poachers deep inside the Sundarbans.

The incident took place in the forest area near Sharkir Khal, close to Baiddyamari in Bagerhat's Mongla upazila, according to the Forest Department.

Nirmal Kumar Pal, the divisional forest officer of the Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division, Khulna office, confirmed that the tiger was rescued around 2:50pm yesterday.

"We used a tranquilliser gun to sedate the tiger and safely freed it from the trap. Since there is no veterinary surgeon in Khulna, we arranged for one from Gazipur Safari Park. The tiger has been transported to Khulna," he told The Daily Star.

According to the Forest

Department and local sources, the tiger was trapped on Saturday between the Baiddyamari and Joymoni areas, where poachers frequently set snares to hunt deer.

Mohammad Mofizur Rahman Chowdhury, a fisheries expert and smart data coordinator at the Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division, said the tiger is an adult and has sustained a serious injury to one of its legs.

"The tiger has become somewhat weak, so we are administering saline. It has been taken to the Forest Department's Wildlife and Nature Conservation Rescue Centre in Khulna. After treatment, further decisions regarding its care will be made," said Howlader Azad Kabir, in charge of the Karamjal Eco-Tourism Centre under the Chandpai Range of the Forest Department.

Over 9,100 killed on roads last year

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity, blames unchanged policies, poor governance and extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country witnessed higher road crashes and casualties last year compared to previous years, exposing poor road safety, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

The organisation said at least 9,111 people were killed and 14,812 injured in 6,729 road crashes last year.

Compared to 2024, road crashes have increased by 6.94 percent, fatalities by 5.79 percent, and injuries by 14.87 percent last year, the Samity said in its report, which was prepared based on news reports.

In 2024, at least 8,543 people were killed and 12,608 injured in 6,359 road crashes across the country.

At least 2,983 people were killed and 2,219 injured in 2,493 motorcycle-related crashes last year, accounting for 37.04 percent of total crashes, 38.46 percent of deaths, and 14.98 percent of injuries, it said.

Among those killed were 1,691 drivers, 551 transport workers, 832 students, and 29 teachers. Of the total fatalities, 1,056 were women and 622 were children, it said.

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of the organisation, revealed the data at a press conference

at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

He said despite a change in power, road crashes and public suffering on roads have increased as relevant policies remain unchanged.

Due to rising traffic congestion and extortion, fares for goods and passenger



9,111 killed, 14,812 hurt in 6,729 road crashes last year

Crashes up 6.94%, deaths 5.79%, injuries 14.87% from 2024

Motorcycles involved in 37.04% of crashes; caused 38.46% of deaths

1,056 women and 622 children among the dead

Annual economic loss estimated at Tk 60,000cr

transport have increased again, he alleged.

As the interim government has failed to reform the road transport sector, people's daily travel woes, road safety, and fare anarchy remain at the mercy of transport owners, he said.

He added that the country incurs financial losses of around Tk 60,000 crore annually due to road crashes and fatalities, stressing that strong political commitment is essential to prevent further loss of lives.

To reduce deaths and financial losses, he urged all political parties contesting the national election to include commitments to road safety and improved public transport in their election manifestos.

The organisation identified 22 causes of road crashes, including overspeeding, dangerous overtaking, unfit vehicles, driver incompetence, ignorance of traffic laws, and flaws in road construction.

It also made 12 recommendations to curb road crashes.

They include increasing the road safety budget, establishing a road safety wing under the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, stopping the issuance of driving licences without completion of the mandatory 60-hour training at BRTA-approved driving schools, and ensuring good governance in the transport sector by ending monopolies of owners' associations, corruption, irregularities, and extortion.

Food stock hits 2 million tonnes, highest in 5yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's food stock has reached its highest level in the last five years, totalling 20.24 lakh tonnes.

Of this, 1,696,787 tonnes are rice, 2,33,224 tonnes wheat and 97,409 tonnes paddy.

In previous years, stocks were recorded at 15.52 lakh tonnes in 2024, 18 lakh tonnes in 2023, 18.81 lakh tonnes in 2022 and 7.27 lakh tonnes in 2021.

Addressing a press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday, Food Adviser Ali Imam Majumder said the country's food stock situation is highly satisfactory and that there is currently no risk of a food shortage.

He said the country's annual wheat demand is around seven million tonnes, while domestic

	2025: 20.24 lakh tonnes
	2024: 15.52 lakh tonnes
	2023: 18.00 lakh tonnes
	2022: 18.81 lakh tonnes
	2021: 7.27 lakh tonnes

production is about one million tonnes, making imports necessary to meet the remaining demand.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Food, quoted by Majumder, most of the country's rice comes from local production, with only a small portion imported. Some rice is still in the import pipeline, and the exact quantity cannot be confirmed at this time.

"We will be able to provide numbers in a few months. However, compared to previous years, we expect this year's import requirement to be lower," he said.

On trade relations with India, the press release quoted Majumder as saying political factors would not affect economic and trade ties between the two countries.

"We import rice from India, and they sell it.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Tamal elected president, Badsha GS of CRAB



Tamal

Badsha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mirza Mehedi Tamal of Bangladesh Pratidin has been elected president, and MM Badsha of Bangla TV general secretary of the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) for one year.

The election was held at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, where Tamal secured 145 votes as president, and his nearest contender, Alauddin Arif of Kalbela, got 130 votes.

MM Badsha bagged 119 votes as the general secretary while his rival Sirajul Islam of Jugantor got 114 votes. Zia Khan was elected vice-president (uncontested). Sohulul Islam Razi was elected joint secretary.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

'Overhaul national security framework' Urge speakers at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fundamental overhaul is required for the country's national security framework, said security analysts, retired military officials, and academics at a seminar yesterday.

They stressed institutional reform, civilian oversight, and a holistic response to emerging regional geopolitical threats.

The seminar, titled "National Security Risks in the Context of New Equations in Regional Relations", was jointly organised by Voice for Reform and BRAIN at the BDBL Building in Karwan Bazar.

Speakers said the post-2024 political landscape and shifting global alliances require a new way of analysing national security.

They emphasised that security guidelines must be shaped through a democratic process led by political leadership, with the military and other civic institutions playing supportive roles.

Lt Gen (ret) Aminul Karim described national security as a "broad canvas" that includes political stability, food, energy and environmental stability.

He said political interference has "crippled the upper tiers of the military and intelligence agencies."

"Past governments misused the DGF to suppress political opponents, although its primary role is to address external threats. This politicisation over the last 15 years has severely weakened its capacity to provide security," he said.

"Politics is the head; if politics is fixed, the military will follow," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A large hole dug by Dhaka South City Corporation for drainage work has remained without safety barriers for over a week on Bailey Road, near the Officers' Club in Dhaka, posing a risk to pedestrians and approaching vehicles. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

KHOKON MURDER

Three suspects arrested: Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

Rapid Action Battalion has arrested three people in connection with the murder of Khokon Chandra Das, 50, a businessman and a mobile banking agent, who was stabbed and set on fire in Shariatpur's Damudya upazila.

A special team from Rab-14 and Rab-8 arrested the suspects from Kishoreganj's Bajitpur upazila on Saturday, said Rab-8 Madaripur Camp Commander Muhammad Shahadat at a press briefing yesterday.

The arrestees are Sohag Khan, 27, Rabbi Molla, 21, and Palash Sardar, 25 – all residents of Damudya.

The victim's father filed a murder case with Damudya Police Station on Thursday night.

Around 9:00pm on Wednesday, attackers assaulted Khokon when he was returning home after closing his pharmacy. The assailants stabbed him multiple times before setting him on fire with petrol.

In an attempt to save himself, Khokon jumped into the water. Locals rescued and took him to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital. Doctors later referred him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Asked whether the motive behind the killing had been identified, the Rab official said the arrestees were giving inconsistent statements during interrogation, which the investigators did not find credible.

"Further questioning would be conducted and details would be shared later," he said.

Shanto Das, nephew-in-law of the deceased, said Khokon's condition did not improve and he was admitted to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka around midnight on Thursday.

He died there on Saturday morning while undergoing treatment. His body was cremated later that night.

While injured, Khokon had initially named two attackers -- Sohag Khan and Rabbi Molla. Police later identified a third suspect involved in the attack as Palash Sardar.



Nearly 3,000 children and more than 1,500 elderly people received treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital for cold-related ailments over the past week. *Inset*, tea workers huddle around a fire for warmth in Sreemangal. The minimum temperature in the region was recorded at 9.5 degrees Celsius yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

RANGPUR MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

16 die of cold-related ailments in past 7 days

Biting cold continues to disrupt lives across country

STAR REPORT

At least 16 people, including nine children and seven elderly persons, have died of cold-related ailments at Rangpur Medical College Hospital in the past week as an ongoing cold spell continues to disrupt lives and livelihoods across the country, particularly in the northern districts.

Brigadier General Ashikur Rahman, director of the hospital, confirmed the deaths.

With no sunshine and bone-chilling northern winds, daily life has largely come to a standstill across the Rangpur region.

The deaths were caused by respiratory complications, pneumonia, diarrhoea and asthma. The children who died were aged five or below, while the elderly victims were over 70 years old, Ashikur Rahman said.

"People in these two age groups are

more vulnerable to cold-related illnesses and face higher risks."

During a visit to the hospital yesterday, it was seen that wards were overwhelmed with patients, while anxious relatives crowded around them.



Ashikur Rahman said nearly 3,000 children and more than 1,500 elderly people received treatment for cold-related ailments at the hospital over the past week.

"The number of patients is increasing

daily," he added.

Mahfuzar Rahman, a physician at the hospital's paediatric department, said cases of pneumonia, diarrhoea, respiratory distress and fever were rising alarmingly, mostly among children and elderly people.

He advised keeping children and elderly persons warm, particularly at night, and said they should be hospitalised immediately if they appear seriously ill.

District and upazila hospitals across the five districts of Rangpur division – Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Nilphamari – have also been overwhelmed by an influx of hundreds of patients suffering from cold-related illnesses every day. The cold spell has severely affected the lives of working-class and low-income people.

Mahidul Islam, 50, a day labourer from Kaunia upazila of Rangpur, said, "There

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

273 including 10 'traffickers' detained in Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The Bangladesh Navy detained 273 people, including 10 members of a human trafficking syndicate, while they were attempting to travel illegally to Malaysia by sea.

The detainees were intercepted on Saturday night during a special operation conducted by the navy ship BNS Swadhinata in the Bay of Bengal near St Martin's Island, the navy said in a press release yesterday.

The release said that during preliminary interrogation, the detainees admitted they had begun the journey with the help of human traffickers, aiming to reach Malaysia illegally.

The navy said a wooden boat showed suspicious movement about 30 miles southwest of St Martin's Island. When signalled to stop, the vessel attempted to flee by increasing speed. The navy ship immediately pursued the boat and managed to intercept it.

Ten members of the trafficking gang were among those detained, bringing the total number of detainees to 273.

The boat and detainees were handed over to Teknaf Police Station for further legal action. The press release also added that the boat lacked basic life-saving equipment, adequate food, water, and safety arrangements. Under such conditions, a journey in the deep sea could have led to a major humanitarian disaster, the navy said.

Three abducted in Sundarbans rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Three people, including a resort owner, who were abducted by armed robbers while visiting the Sundarbans in Bagerhat, were rescued last night following a joint operation by law enforcement agencies, police said.

The three were freed around 8:00pm and brought out from deep inside the forest area where they had been held. They were reported to be in good health, said Shukla Saha, additional DIG (supernumerary promoted) of the Tourist Police, Khulna region.

The abduction occurred on Friday afternoon in the Kenur Khal area adjacent to the Sundarbans, under the Dhangmari area of the Chandpai Range. According to police and local sources, four tourists from Dhaka arrived at the "Gol Kanan" resort around noon for an overnight stay.

Later in the afternoon, resort owner Shripati Bachhar and the tourists boarded a boat to explore a narrow canal inside the forest.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Obituary

Prof. Dr. Hosne Ara Tahmin Chanu breathed her last on 08.12.2025 at 6:00am (Innailahi Wa Innailaihe Rajeun). She was the first and only woman Principal of esteemed Dhaka Medical College (2003-2006) and Principal, Nightingale Medical College (2010-2017). She graduated from Dhaka Medical College in 1974. Later, she obtained MPhil from IPGM&R, MSc from St. Andrews University, Scotland, UK and MPhil from Kings College London, UK. She was awarded FCPS from BCPS. She was born in 1953 in Bogura in a respectable Muslim family. She was sports champion of Dhaka Medical College from 1964, Sports Secretary of DMC. She was Vice President and later President of Anatomical Society of Bangladesh between 2001-2010. She left behind her husband Prof. Dr. Md. Tahminur Rahman Sajal and three daughters, all living in Australia. She also authored three books on medical science.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ঃ বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাতাদিসহ টাঃ ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- বেতন স্কেলে (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শহিদ বুদ্ধিজীবী ডা. মোহাম্মদ মোতাজা মেডিকেল সেন্টারের শুল্ক ১ (একটি ফিজিওথেরাপিস্ট (নারী, ৯ম গ্রেড) পদ পূরণের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকার বিনিময়ে রেজিস্ট্রারের দপ্তরে প্রাপ্তব্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে সরকার অনুমোদিত কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ফিজিওথেরাপিতে ৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদী স্নাতক (সম্মান) ডিগ্রিসহ ১ বছরের ইন্টার্নী থাকতে হবে। প্রার্থীদের বিশ্ব ফিজিওথেরাপি সংস্থা কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত ফিজিওথেরাপি পেশাগত সংগঠনের রেজিস্ট্রেশন থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে তৃতীয় বিভাগ/গ্রেড/সম্মান জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। প্রার্থীর বয়স অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর হতে হবে। অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যে কোনো একটি শর্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) সেট দরখাস্ত আগামী ২২-০১-২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষে) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার সনদপত্রসমূহ আবেদনের (যদি থাকে) সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদেরকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত করতে হবে।

জিডি-২৪

Office of the Chief Engineer
University of Dhaka
Dhaka-1000

Fax: 88-02-55167810
E-mail: vcooffice@du.ac.bd
registrar@du.ac.bd

Invitation for e-GP Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 725-(2) Engg
Dated: 04/01/2026

e-GP Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1131610	XEN/Elect-2/DU/24-25/10	Re-estimation of the supply of necessary materials for the immediate repair of pumps and 6" and 4" diameter water lines installed at various locations, University of Dhaka	19-Jan-2026 17:00	20-Jan-2026 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/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 branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guidance are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Khaleedur Rahman Chowdhury
Executive Engineer-Elect (Zone-2)
University of Dhaka

GD-22

Overhaul national security

FROM PAGE 3

He also expressed concern over the army's deployment in policing roles, saying it hampers training. "Training is the best welfare of a soldier. If the army cannot train, it cannot fight," he said.

Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahfuzur

Rahman pointed to the absence of a comprehensive National Security Policy to guide foreign and economic strategies.

He said foreign analysts are now advocating "grey-zone warfare", including disinformation and economic pressure, to "destabilise Bangladesh".

He pointed to the establishment of new Indian cantonments near the border as indicators of shifting regional dynamics. "We need to build credible deterrence – not only through hard power, but through national unity, a strong economy and a patriotic media."

Former US diplomat Jon Danilowicz said, "Bangladesh needs a separate and competent civilian defence minister to ensure proper oversight and rational use of defence resources."

He questioned high spending on advanced fighter jets such as the Eurofighter Typhoon, suggesting greater focus on maritime security and border protection.

International relations researcher Mobasher Hasan said social cohesion and healing national trauma are more critical than military hardware.

He argued that systematic division of society and prolonged

politicisation of agencies such as the DGFI, NSI and police have weakened the country's security foundation.

He urged the government to shift from reactive to proactive measures, including state-backed psychosocial support for victims of enforced disappearances and torture.

"Restoring social cohesion is the key to sustainable security," he said.

Prof Dilara Chowdhury warned of "existential threats" if a truly representative government is not formed through credible elections.

She criticised the interim government for failing to prevent the escape of those accused in the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi.

She also identified upstream water supply as a major future security concern and called for transparency in foreign relations. "All past treaties with India must be made public and reviewed," she said.

Speakers agreed that coordinated action involving state institutions, political parties and civic forces is essential.

The event was moderated by Fahim Mashroor of Voice for Reform and Shafiqur Rahman of BRAIN.

Food stock hits

FROM PAGE 3

We do not see it politically. The market works based on the needs of buyers and sellers, and we buy from wherever we can get products at a lower price," he said.

The press release also noted that rice prices rose slightly last year due to natural disasters shortly after the new government took office.

"With better preparation this year, rice prices remain at a tolerable level, and we expect this situation to continue," Majumder said.

Regarding the upcoming elections, he said preparations for a free, fair and transparent election are on track and that the administration is taking all necessary steps to ensure it is held on time.

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
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

সারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.৪১৩.০৭.০০১.২৬.০৫ তারিখঃ ০৪/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের সিভিল ওয়ার্কস দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works
1189220	27.21.0000.413.07.001.25.994; Date: 03/12/2025	Installation of acoustic panels on walls & ceiling, lighting and sound system works of Auditorium cum Multipurpose Hall at Power Grid Head Office, Aftabnagar, Dhaka.
1203181	27.21.0000.413.07.001.25.1046; Date: 24/12/2025	Re-construction of Boundary Wall at Tongi 230/132/33 KV Grid Sub-Station, Power Grid.

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ আজিজুল ইসলাম সরকার
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সিভিল ওয়ার্কস

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Rangpur
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.8500.000.07.12.25-23 Date: 04/01/2026

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 34/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works, details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of work	Tender document last selling (date & time)
1	1200568	PRO/RANG/GANG/VR/25-26/W-689	Improvement of Gangachara Rangpur Road Aranjiniyamot (Pannur Mill) to Sokan Chaki Pacca Road Ch: 00-755.00m in/c. Const. of 2 Nos. 0.750m x 0.750m U-Drain at Ch: 415m & 600m Road ID: 185275500 under Gangachara Upazila, Dist. Rangpur [Salvage material cost Tk. 22,13,272.00] [OTM]	28/01/2026 16.00pm

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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Musa
Executive Engineer
LGED, Rangpur
Ph: 02589-962730
E-mail: xen.rangpur@lged.gov.bd

GD-28

VENEZUELA REGIME CHANGE

Trump takes huge political gamble

Democratic party leaders call US operations ‘reckless’

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump crowed over the US military triumph in Venezuela on Saturday, but his sudden enthusiasm for intervention abroad puts him in a political minefield back home.

Trump has railed against US entanglements abroad for years. When he branded the post-9/11 Iraq invasion “a stupid thing” a decade ago, he was setting out a central tenet of the nationalist, isolationist MAGA ideology that would win him the White House.

So, Saturday’s operation by special forces to swoop into Caracas and seize Venezuela’s leader Nicholas Maduro was doubly risky.

The service members in the complex assault -- including troops ferried in by helicopter, jets bombing sites around



the city, and an armada of Navy ships off the coast -- got away without losing a single soldier.

But for Trump, the domestic political risks are only just starting. Not surprisingly, Democratic Party leaders swiftly attacked. The senior Democratic senator, Chuck Schumer, called the operation “reckless.”

“Second unjustified war in my life time. This war is illegal,” Senator Ruben Gallego, an Iraq veteran, said. “There is no reason for us to be at war with Venezuela.”

Many in the Republican Party that Trump dominates came out to applaud.

The White House spokeswoman ramped up enthusiasm with a social media post in the early hours of Saturday featuring strong arm, fist and fire emojis. And Senator Tom Cotton was quickly on board.

Mike Johnson, the Republican speaker of the House of Representatives and a key cog in the Trump political machine, quickly sought to scotch questions over the military operation’s legality.

“Today’s military action in Venezuela was a decisive and justified operation that will protect American lives,” he said.

But there are signs of disquiet among Republicans.

Soon after news first broke that the extraordinary raid on Caracas was underway, conservative Senator Mike Lee wrote on X that he was looking “forward to learning what, if anything, might constitutionally justify this action.”



Jesus Linares, 48, stands with a local resident as he looks at his damaged apartment building in Catia La Mar, Venezuela, yesterday, following a US strike.

PHOTO: REUTERS

OPERATION ABSOLUTE RESOLVE

How the US captured Nicolás Maduro

REUTERS, Washington

At a press conference earlier on Saturday, General Dan Caine described in detail how the US carried out its attack on Venezuela and captured President Nicolas Maduro. Here are the key points that were mentioned:

--Air, ground, space, maritime and intelligence personnel coordinated over a period of months to plan the mission.

--At 22:46 ET on 2 January (03:46 GMT) Donald Trump gave the mission the go-ahead.

-- Operation ‘Absolute Resolve’ saw 150 aircraft launched towards Venezuela from 20 different bases across the Western Hemisphere.

--An extraction force made up of helicopters and a ground team approached Maduro’s compound in Venezuela at 01:01 ET (02:01 local time) on 3 January to capture the leader and his wife.

--The force was protected overhead by F-22, F-35, F/A-18, EA-18, E-2 aircraft, B-1 bombers and drones.

--Helicopters came under fire and one was hit - although it “remained flyable” during the rest of the mission.

--Maduro and his wife embarked on the USS Iwo Jima at some time after 03:39 ET (08:39 GMT).

--As the troops left Venezuelan territory, Caine said, they were involved in “multiple self defense engagements.”

--By 3:20 am EST, the helicopters were over water, with Maduro and his wife on board.

--Almost exactly seven hours after Trump announced the operation on Truth Social, he made another post.

--This time it was a photograph of the captured Venezuelan leader blindfolded, handcuffed and wearing grey sweatpants.

--“Nicolas Maduro on board the USS Iwo Jima,” Trump wrote, referring to the amphibious assault ship.

Trump said the Venezuelan leader had tried to reach a safe room but was unable to close the door. “He got bum rushed so fast that he didn’t get into that,” Trump said. Some US forces were hit, Trump said, but none were killed.



16 dead in Iran during week of protests

Says rights group; 582 arrested

REUTERS, Dubai

At least 16 people have been killed during a week of unrest in Iran, rights groups said yesterday, as protests over soaring inflation spread across the country prompting violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

Deaths and arrests have been reported through the week both by state media and rights groups, though the numbers have differed.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to come to the protesters’ aid if they face violence, saying on Friday “we are locked and loaded and ready to go”.

That warning prompted threats of retaliation against US forces in the region from senior Iranian officials and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিমিটেড (বিআরপিএল)

আইইবি ভবন (৯ম তলা), ৮/এ, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০

www.brpowergen.gov.bd

অকেজো ঘোষিত যানবাহন বিক্রয়ের পুনঃ নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ এর ০১ (একটি) অকেজো ঘোষিত টয়োটা মাইক্রোবাস (অফ হোয়াইট) নিলামে বিক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত যোগ্য ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে স্বহস্তে স্বাক্ষরিত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আগামী ২০/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত নির্বাহী পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব), বিআরপিএল এর দপ্তর হতে দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। এ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি বিআরপিএল এর ওয়েবসাইট (www.brpowergen.gov.bd) এ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে।

মোঃ ওয়াহিদুর রহমান

(৩৯x৩৩)

জিডি-১৯

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

(স্ট্রোল্ডা ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)

প্রধান কার্যালয়

মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

Email: info.bsccs@bb.org.bd

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ০২/২০২৬

তারিখঃ ১৭ পৌষ, ১৪৩২

০১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত ইনভেস্টমেন্ট কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ-এ ২০২২ সাল ভিত্তিক ডাটা এন্ট্রি/কন্ট্রোল সুপারভাইজার (১০ম গ্রেড) (Job ID-10210) এর ০২টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে অনুষ্টেয় লিখিত পরীক্ষার কেন্দ্র সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এ সচিবালয়ের বিগত ১৭/১২/২০২৫ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ১৬৬/২০২৫ এর প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণপূর্বক জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, BSC-এর সদস্যভুক্ত ইনভেস্টমেন্ট কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ এর ২০২২ সাল ভিত্তিক ডাটা এন্ট্রি/কন্ট্রোল সুপারভাইজার (১০ম গ্রেড) (Job ID-10210) এর ০২টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে ২ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী অনুষ্টেয় লিখিত পরীক্ষা আগামী ০৯/০১/২০২৬ তারিখ, শুক্রবার বিকাল ৩.০০টা-০৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আওতাধীন সামসুল হক স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ (স্কুল ক্যাম্পাস), ওয়ার্ড নং-৬৫, মাতুয়াইল, ডেমরা, ঢাকা-১৩৬২ কেন্দ্রে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এ সচিবালয়ের বিগত ১৭/১২/২০২৫ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ১৬৬/২০২৫ এর অন্যান্য নির্দেশাবলি অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

স্বাক্ষরিত/-

মিজানুর রহমান আকন

পরিচালক (বিএসসিএস) ও

সদস্য-সচিব, বিএসসি

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৬-৪৯

তারিখঃ ০৪/০১/২০২৬

জিডি-২৬

স্বাক্ষিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

ROs cancel 723 nominations

FROM PAGE 1

Among political parties, nomination papers of 28 Communist Party of Bangladesh aspirants, including General Secretary Abdullah Al Kali Ratan in Cumilla-5, were scrapped for signature inconsistencies. At least seven Jamaat aspirants and three BNP aspirants were also disqualified.

BNP candidate Mahbubur Rahman Lito (Mymensingh-7) was disqualified for incomplete case information, while party aspirant Fahim Chowdhury (Sherpur-2) was rejected over dual citizenship. BNP nominee TS Ayub (Jashore-4) was disqualified for being a loan defaulter.

Jamaat candidates faced similar grounds: Mahbub Alam (Kurigram-3) and AKM Fazul Haq (Chattogram-9) were rejected for dual citizenship; Moshle Uddin Farid (Jashore-2) for credit card default; Mujibur Rahman Azadi (Jamalpur-3) for irregularities in proposer and supporter forms; Abdul Haque (Dhaka-2) for loan default; Yusuf Sohel (Cumilla-3) for incomplete affidavit; and Hamidur Rahman Azad (Cox's Bazar-2) for failing to provide case details.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, in a statement, alleged yesterday that candidatures were rejected on “trivial issues” and claimed the actions were instigated by a certain quarter.

The nomination of Mujibul Haque Chumnu, executive president of a Jatiya Party faction, was scrapped for loan default. Earlier, Anisul Islam Mahmud (Chattogram-5), chairman of the same faction, was disqualified over a mismatch in signatures of party authorities.

In Dhaka, Nagorik Oikyo President Mahmudur Rahman Manna's nomination for Dhaka-12 was declared valid, though his Bogura-2 nomination was rejected. Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mustafizur Rahman Iran's nomination for Jhalokathi-1 was cancelled, but his Dhaka-12 nomination was upheld.

Independent aspirants Hasnat Quaiyum (Kishoreganj-5) of Rasthro Sangskar Andolan and Tasnim Jara (Dhaka-9), who recently resigned from NCP, also had their nominations cancelled. Both said they would appeal to the EC.

Israeli forces kill 3 Palestinians in Gaza

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli forces shot and killed at least three Palestinians in separate incidents in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis yesterday, local health authorities said.

Medics reported that the dead included a 15-year-old boy, a fisherman killed outside areas still occupied by Israel in the enclave, and a third man who was shot and killed east of the city in areas under Israeli control.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the reported incidents. Israel has carried out repeated air strikes since a ceasefire took effect in October, saying they are aimed at preventing attacks or destroying “militant infrastructure”.

Office of the Chief Engineer
University of Dhaka
Dhaka-1000

Fax: 88-02-55167810
E-mail: vcoffice@du.ac.bd
registr@du.ac.bd

Invitation for e-GP Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 723(2) Engg Dated: 04/01/2026

e-GP Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1175185	XEN/Elect-2/ DU/25-26/03	Supply and Installation of 03 (Three) Nos. new split type air coolers in place of 03 (Three) Nos. old air coolers. Two for the office room of the Honorable Vice Chancellor of University of Dhaka and one for the computer room.	14-Jun-2026 17:00	15-Jan-2026 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/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 branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guidance are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Khaledur Rahman Chowdhury
Executive Engineer-Elect (Zone-2)
University of Dhaka

GD-21

Office of the Chief Engineer
University of Dhaka

Fax: 88-02-55167810
E-mail: vcoffice@du.ac.bd
registr@du.ac.bd

Invitation for e-GP Tender Notice

Memo No. 3017(2)/Engg. Dated: 4/01/2026

e-GP Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Tender system	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1204049	prokou/civil /du/2025-2026/25	OTM	Necessary repair works for Provost Banglow of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall at University of Dhaka.	15-01-2026 12:30	15-01-2026 15:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/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 branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guidance are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Ibrahim
Executive Engineer, Zone-3
University of Dhaka

GD-23

Are we entering an era of ‘might is right’?

US action may embolden other powers and destroy global stability

We are shocked by US President Donald Trump's decision to kidnap Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, fly them over, and try the couple in a US court for “narco-terrorism conspiracy, cocaine importation conspiracy, possession of machine guns and destructive devices, and conspiracy to possess machine guns and destructive devices against the United States.” Following Saturday's attack on Venezuela, Trump also declared that the US will “run” the country until a “judicious” power transition occurs. He further declared that US oil giants will rush to Venezuela to “fix oil infrastructure, and start making money for the country.”

But as Matthew Waxman, professor of law at Columbia University, told Reuters, “A criminal indictment alone does not provide authority to use military forces to depose a foreign government...” Rebecca Hamilton, a law professor at American University in Washington, DC, told DW that bringing the Venezuelan president before a court violates the international rule of law around the immunity of a head of state. “He can't be brought before a US domestic court,” she said.

US legalities aside, Trump's actions to capture a foreign country's president, proclaim that the US will run Venezuela, and extract its resources for the benefit of the occupier represent a blatant disregard for other countries' rights and a fundamental violation and disrespect of international laws and norms. The US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's warning to global leaders not to “play games” with President Trump, terming him a “president of action” who will address direct threats to US national interest, is also a grave and worrisome warning to the rest of the world: follow what we say or be ready for consequences.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has rightly warned that this action by the US administration sets a “dangerous precedent” where a militarily powerful country can create havoc for a militarily weaker country and literally capture its resources for its own greedy ends. Ever since World War II, a certain international legal system was put in place—with the US being a significant player—through the United Nations, international courts, global instruments, and international and regional conventions to create a functioning global order for peace, international trade, investment, and mutual prosperity for both big and small countries. One of the main purposes of this system was to ensure the “sovereignty” of all countries so that peace and order at the global level are assured, and invasions of other countries are never repeated. Trump's action is a serious violation of that international legal system, a system on which much of present-day global prosperity depends.

We call on the international community to come together to condemn this blatant disregard for international laws and norms, which also left at least 40 people dead on Venezuelan soil. World leaders must urge a legal and peaceful solution to this crisis. Finally, we hope that Trump's action does not embolden other superpowers to think that now is the time to realise their own power-hungry ambitions.

Politics must not intrude into cricket

BCCI's unjust treatment of Mustafizur deplorable

The decision by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to force the release of Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League (IPL) is deplorable. This move, driven by far-right pressure rather than sporting considerations, represents a clear case of politics intruding into a sport that has long served as a bridge between nations. The outrage sparked in Bangladesh afterwards is, therefore, only natural. The incident, or more specifically the hostile reaction that led to it, has also raised concerns about the safety of our players in the upcoming international fixtures in India, including Bangladesh's matches in the ICC T20 World Cup. As such, we support the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) decision not to send our national team to India for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Mustafizur Rahman, the only Bangladeshi player selected in this year's IPL and one of the most accomplished fast bowlers in T20 cricket, earned his place purely on merit. His sudden removal thus sends a message that a player's nationality or religious identity can outweigh merit, professionalism, and contractual fairness. This may also further strain Bangladesh-India relations, which have already been under pressure since the fall of Awami League government. While the post-uprising period was marked by diplomatic sensitivities and increased border tensions, disinformation campaigns—spread largely by a section of Indian media portraying Bangladesh as unsafe for minorities—have compounded the problem. Against this backdrop, the recent incident could deepen mistrust and harden public opinion on both sides.

Cricket has historically played a vital role in fostering people-to-people connections between Bangladesh and India, even during periods of political strain. The IPL, in particular, has enjoyed immense popularity among Bangladeshi fans who have followed the tournament with enthusiasm. By allowing political considerations to dictate player participation, the BCCI risks eroding this goodwill and undermining the league's claim of being a global, inclusive sporting platform.

We, therefore, urge the BCCI to review and reverse its decision regarding Mustafizur Rahman. This would not only correct an injustice but also send a message that sport can rise above division. It is noteworthy that voices within India itself, including sitting MPs and former cricketers, have criticised the BCCI's move, calling it deplorable and cautioning against the “mindless politicising” of sport. Bangladesh's cricket board has also decided to seek clarifications from the ICC and the IPL governing body in this regard. We hope these bodies will make proper interventions. Cricket should remain a common ground for fair practices and interactions while both nations try to mend their ties at the political and diplomatic levels.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The arrival of the Great Frost

On this day in 1709, Europe's coldest winter in 500 years began to take hold. It would kill hundreds of thousands of people, make travel and trade nearly impossible, and disrupt two wars.

The quiet strain behind economic headlines



Dr Selim Raihan is professor of economics at Dhaka University and executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM). He can be reached at selim.raihan@gmail.com.

SELIM RAIHAN

Bangladesh's economy seems to be stabilising at first blush. Reserve levels have climbed, imports have slowed, and officials are finding some signs of resilience in the aftermath of a tumultuous period. For a country accustomed to absorbing shocks, this narrative of cautious recovery sounds reassuring.

However, underneath it, there is slowing growth, stubbornly high inflation, fragile investor confidence, and deep cracks in the financial sector. In reality, the recovery is a pause in deterioration rather than a return to strength. The economy is not collapsing, but it is far from healthy. It is moving forward, unevenly and uncertainly, when a far more decisive momentum is needed.

Bangladesh's growth story once stood out in South Asia. Over more than a decade, steady expansion, rising exports, and falling poverty reinforced the idea of a resilient development model. That momentum has clearly broken. Growth in the last fiscal year slipped below four percent, far from the six percent norm that once underpinned employment creation and fiscal space.

This slowdown did not start with the current political troubles. Growth was already losing momentum prior to the upheavals of 2024. Private investment had already stagnated, productivity gains were weakening, and the economy was becoming increasingly dependent on a narrow export base. The recent shock merely exposed vulnerabilities that had been accumulating quietly for years. The result is an economy caught in a low-growth equilibrium. Consumption is constrained by high prices. Investment is held back by uncertainty and financial stress. Exports face headwinds from global demand, tariffs, and intensifying competition. Growth has not collapsed, but neither has it found a new engine.

Inflation remains the most visible pressure point. While headline figures have eased marginally at times, the lived experience tells a harsher story. Non-food inflation is high and persistent. Rents, transport costs, healthcare, and education expenses continue to rise, squeezing urban households in particular.

Meanwhile, wages have not kept up. For many workers, particularly in informal and service jobs, real incomes have fallen, turning inflation into a silent tax on the majority of households. This explains why the

modest improvements in macro indicators have not translated into public relief.

The policy response has been conflicted. Tight monetary conditions were necessary, but their delayed application blunted their effectiveness. Meanwhile, liquidity provision to troubled banks has been diluting disinflationary pressure, keeping costs elevated. The result is an uncongenial equilibrium of high interest rates and high inflation, which suppresses investment but does not definitively restore price stability. Also, non-performing loans have risen



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKRABORTY

to levels unmatched in the region. In banks and non-bank financial institutions alike, asset quality has deteriorated sharply, capital buffers have eroded, and confidence has weakened.

All these create a structural constraint on growth. When banks are burdened with bad loans, credit for productive firms dries up. Small and medium enterprises, which generate most employment, are the first to be squeezed out. High interest rates matter, but access to finance matters even more, and for many firms, that access has narrowed dramatically.

The proposed responses have been mixed. Bank mergers and liquidity injections may protect depositors in the short term, but they do little to address the deeper governance failures that produced the crisis. Without transparency, credible enforcement, and a clear break from the culture of repeated rescheduling and implicit bailouts, the system risks recycling the same problems under

new institutional labels.

There is also the unquantifiable yet decisive factor: political uncertainty and the resulting deterioration in the everyday governance environment. Investment does not only respond to interest rates, exchange rates, or tax policies; it also responds to predictability which, in recent years, has become rare.

Frequent disruptions on the streets, rising informal “costs” in supply chains, or a weakening of ordinary law and order, push businesses to postpone expansion, delay hiring, hold cash, and reduce exposure. Uncertainty turns into an investment freeze and, despite the relative improvement in some macro indicators, the private sector appears reluctant to move fast.

Furthermore, the perception that rule enforcement is uneven and sometimes replaced by informal power has real economic consequences. It raises transaction costs, weakens contract enforcement, increases risk premiums, and undermines the

Domestic businesses may restart stalled expansion plans. Foreign investors may revisit a market they have been watching from the sidelines. Credit conditions could improve, not only through policy signals but also through renewed confidence in institutions.

However, if the election deepens uncertainty or fails to restore public order and institutional credibility, the economy risks staying stuck in stagnation. In that scenario, even improving reserves would reflect compression rather than strength, and even lower inflation prints would not bring genuine relief.

Exports, long the backbone of the economy, are showing signs of fatigue. Earnings have declined year-over-year for three consecutive months from September to November 2025. Within the garment sector, both woven and knitwear segments are under pressure, reflecting weaker global demand, tariff shocks, and intensifying competition.

The challenge is not simply cyclical. It is structural. Heavy dependence on one sector makes the economy particularly vulnerable to external changes over which it has little influence. Meanwhile, export diversification attempts have consistently disappointed amid policy uncertainty, infrastructural shortfall, and limited technological upgrades.

With the country on course to graduate from LDC status in 2026, these weaknesses matter more. Preferential market access will gradually erode, while compliance standards will tighten. Without productivity gains and diversification, competitiveness will be harder to sustain.

Nevertheless, recovery is possible. Reserves have improved. Remittances remain resilient. Certain infrastructure investments could generate momentum. A clearer political settlement after February 2026 could revive confidence and restore the basic predictability that markets need.

But none of this is guaranteed. Persistent inflation, a weakened financial system, limited fiscal space, and worldwide uncertainty, including the recent US invasion of Venezuela that might impact global oil prices, form a tight constraint. Graduation from LDC status will raise the stakes further, exposing unresolved weaknesses rather than masking them. The central question is whether Bangladesh can break out of stagnation and rebuild a growth model that is more diversified, more transparent, and more inclusive, under a governance environment where rules matter and public authority is credible. Whether 2026 becomes a turning point will depend heavily on whether the political transition restores order, reduces uncertainty, and persuades investors that the future is brighter.

Khaleda Zia as a shaper of history

Arifur Rahman is a PhD student of political science at the University of Alabama, USA.

ARIFUR RAHAMAN

The death of Khaleda Zia on December 30, 2025, has prompted an outpouring of emotion and political remembrance, and for good reason. But much of that remembrance remains trapped in familiar binaries: rivalry versus reconciliation, hero versus villain, victory versus defeat. What is often missing from these reactions is a more sobering question: beyond political equations and personal animosities, what did she contribute to our democratic architecture?

The truth is, Khaleda Zia has been a big influence on our democratic journey, as her leadership coincided with—and at times influenced—critical democratic pivot points in Bangladesh: the fall of military rule, the restoration of parliamentary government, and the search for procedural solutions during crises of electoral legitimacy.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that her entry into politics was triggered by a rupture. Following President Ziaur Rahman's assassination in 1981, she transitioned from a private life

into a hostile political arena. By the late 1980s, under military ruler HM Ershad, opposition politics needed not only sustained dissent but also proper coordination. Khaleda Zia became a central figure in alliance-based mobilisation against the regime, particularly through the BNP-led coalition. The anti-Ershad movement culminated in his resignation in December 1990, restoring democracy and electoral politics.

Her role in that transition remains one of her core achievements. Bangladesh then moved towards the 1991 elections. Khaleda Zia became prime minister in March 1991. The key question then was one of constitutional design: would Bangladesh remain effectively presidential in its concentration of power, or return to a parliamentary system in which executive authority is directly accountable to the legislature? The Twelfth Amendment of 1991 reintroduced parliamentary government, reducing the presidency to a largely ceremonial role. It proceeded through a rare moment of multi-party cooperation. In a country where politics often treats opposition as an enemy rather than a competitor, this stands out as a meaningful, if fragile, democratic norm.

If her first term symbolised the return of parliamentarism, her

decision in 1996 regarding electoral administration points to another democratic contribution that deserves mention. The demand for a neutral electoral environment grew out of the lived experiences of mistrust, political violence, and fears that incumbents would rig the rules of competition. During the 1996 crisis, Khaleda Zia's government faced mounting pressure over election legitimacy and moved towards institutionalising a caretaker framework to oversee elections. Even those who debate the long-term consequences of caretaker politics can recognise the democratic logic of that moment.

Her second term, from 2001 to 2006, unfolded amid major disputes over the state's coercive capacities. Critics often highlighted rising polarisation and the corrosive normalisation of winner-takes-all instincts. The point here is not to offer either a hymn or an indictment, but to recognise how her career illuminates a persistent truth: in weakly institutionalised democracies, leaders can simultaneously defend electoral competition and damage democratic culture.

That is why the moments following Khaleda Zia's death felt politically significant. The millions who gathered at her namaz-e-janaza, the state-declared mourning period, and the visits of international

dignitaries were more than rituals of respect. They served as public affirmations that a vast number of people regarded her as an inseparable part of the republic's democratic heritage. Some mourners called her “mother”—a term that is emotional, yes, but also political, a homage to a legacy of protection, sacrifice, and moral claim. Such endearments do not settle the historical debate surrounding her eventful career, but they do show her impact.

So how should one remember her? Not as a saint, and not as a villain. She should be remembered as an agent of democratic reopening in 1990, as an architect of parliamentary restoration in 1991, and as a leader whose choices during moments of legitimacy crisis helped keep competitive politics from collapsing into pure chaos.

Bangladesh has often treated politics as a battlefield where the goal is to eliminate the rival, not to out-argue them. Khaleda Zia's life both embodied that tragedy and, at key moments, resisted it through rule-making and the transfer of authority. So if her death is to mean something beyond mourning, it should serve as a prompt to rebuild the democratic ethic that institutions require: an opposition that is legitimate, competition bounded by rules, and power that is temporary by design.

Memory, museums, and the danger of forgetting



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a columnist for The Daily Star.
Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

Recently, while rereading The Museum of Innocence, I was struck again by Orhan Pamuk’s insistence that memory does not disappear all at once. It fades quietly and slowly, fragment by fragment, often under the cover of necessary historical revisions. While Kundera helps us understand the weight expectations place on those in power, Pamuk, in his own poetic way, offers a gentler reminder that memory, too, demands care, or it begins to slip away. Sometimes it survives not because it is institutionally preserved, but because someone or a particular quarter insists on keeping it, object by object, story by story, even when the world around it moves on.

This thought has stayed with me, with a disquieting sense of concern and urgency as Bangladesh navigates its post-July political moment.

There is no denying that the July uprising represented a reawakening, perhaps even a rapture of sorts. It unsettled a long-standing political order and challenged a narrative monopoly that had solidified over time. For many, this felt overdue. For others, it was destabilising. Both reactions are anticipated and understandable. What deserves a closer look, however, is not the reawakening or rupture itself, but what seems to be unfolding in its aftermath: a gradual erasure of our shared public memory—our national legacy—projected as reckoning and correction.

While penning this concern, one must also admit, without nostalgia or selective amnesia, that Bangladesh’s political class has long treated our national history as a political instrument that can be moulded and presented to suit its cause, often with a Kundera-esque lightness. Regime after regime has rewritten, reordered, and reframed the past to meet their political agenda. History has shifted in school textbooks with each government. National days have been declared, scrapped, and reinstituted. Heroes have been lionised, debated, or replaced altogether, depending



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

on who held power at the time.

Each revision was justified as a correction of distortion; each, in turn, produced its own distortions. This pattern cuts across parties and decades. The danger now is not that history is being rewritten, which has happened before, but that the rewriting has become so frequent and so brazen that history itself begins to feel fragile, owned not by the nation but by whoever happens to be in power.

Yet something about the present moment

feels different, not only in intent, but also in pace: in how quickly it is being carried out without pausing to contemplate the consequences.

Selectively, monuments have been dismantled. Certain national days are being observed quietly; others are being blatantly ignored, including ones that mark the milestones through which the nation was shaped with blood and sacrifice. Language

correcting excess and suppressing facts.

What is emerging, particularly among some political actors, is a tendency to treat history with suspicion—valuable only if it can be detached from the immediate past regime, disposable if it cannot. In this framing, erasure passes as neutrality, and silence is justified as balance. This approach is not right.

Public memory is not merely about monuments or slogans. It is about continuity.

strewn with messy nostalgia; it is incomplete, and sometimes it can be very inconvenient. Bangladesh’s political actors, new and old, would do well to accept that discomfort rather than rush to “fix it.”

The urge to correct history after years of narrative monopoly by a specific quarter can be very tempting. But correction demands care. It requires polyphony and meaningful public discourse, agreement among historians and key stakeholders, correct documentation, a transparent procedure, and most importantly, a willingness to live with complexity. What it does not require is destruction driven by revenge, or the sidelining of milestones simply because they were previously overused.

There is also a generational cost to this mayhem that we rarely acknowledge.

Young Bangladeshis are growing up in a political environment where history seems easily negotiable. Textbooks change. Public symbols change. Heroes turn villains, and then reverse again, resembling Bakhtin’s carnivalesque—only stripped of irony, and made more grotesque. The danger is not that they will forget the past, but that they will stop believing that the past matters. When everything becomes political, nothing retains credibility. And when nothing feels stable, national identity loses its moral legacy.

Such conditions do not nurture critical thinkers. More often, they raise disengaged ones. A society that loses its shared memory becomes vulnerable to simpler myths and louder narratives. They become vulnerable to versions of history that are easier to accept than to examine. Over time, the space for nuance—the very space democratic politics requires—shrinks.

This is not inevitable. But it does require restraint.

Political transitions are always characterised by an eagerness to reshape the past in their own image. The challenge is to resist that temptation long enough to ask harder questions: what do we preserve even when it is inconvenient? What do we critique without erasing? How do we create spaces for facts, which are not necessarily comfortable for all parties, to coexist?

Bangladesh does not need a new history to replace an old one. It needs political restraint to live with a complicated one. If we fail at that, the danger is not that we will forget who we were, but that we will no longer recognise who we are becoming.

Venezuela attack and the geopolitics of oil control



Kollof Kibria
is an advocate, human rights activist, and political analyst. He can be reached at kollofkibria@gmail.com.

KOLLOF KIBRIA

The US strike in Venezuela has triggered a crisis with potentially global consequences. Early on Saturday, strategic sites across Caracas, including military complexes, were reportedly targeted in what the United States described as a “large-scale operation.” The situation escalated when US President Donald Trump announced that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro had been captured during the strike. According to Washington, Maduro faces charges of narcotics trafficking, conspiracy to flood the US with cocaine, links to armed groups, and narco-terrorism. While the legality of this entire episode is highly questionable, there is little doubt that the detention of a sitting head of state through a military strike on a sovereign state constitutes an act of war.

At a press conference, Trump described the operation as a major success, saying the US would temporarily “run” Venezuela to manage what he called a “safe and responsible” transition. He stressed that the US would “be there to stay” until a leadership that truly serves the Venezuelan people is in place. Trump also said that major American oil companies would invest billions of dollars to rebuild Venezuela’s oil infrastructure.

International law, however, is clear about this forced intervention. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter forbids the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Heads of state enjoy sovereign immunity and cannot be treated as military prizes. Following news of the attack, France and Brazil have rightly condemned it as a violation of international law. China called it “hegemonic,” and the UN Secretary-General warned that the attack set a dangerous precedent, while Mexico, Chile, South Africa, and the EU urged restraint. Russia



This grab taken on January 3, 2026, from UGC video footage shows smoke billowing over Caracas, Venezuela, after a series of explosions during a US military operation that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

PHOTO SOURCE: AFP

Control over Venezuelan oil offers Washington something strategically priceless: insulation. US dominance in the Persian Gulf has long been vulnerable to disruptions. Confrontations with Iran—whether through war or sustained escalation—threaten shipping lanes,

refineries, and production facilities that underpin the global economy. Venezuela alters that equation. With heavy crude under US influence in the Western Hemisphere, disruptions in the Gulf become more manageable. Military pressure becomes easier to justify domestically and to sustain internationally.

Another, quieter layer is equally consequential: control over oil also means control over pricing, contracts, and currency. Influence over Venezuelan production reinforces the dollar’s central role in global energy markets. The petrodollar system, often declared moribund but remaining persistently resilient, would receive renewed reinforcement.

Seen this way, the Venezuela attack is no longer just a Latin American issue. It signals how economic pressure, political manoeuvring, and military action can fundamentally

alter the trajectory of a country and those associated with it. But history does not always cooperate with seemingly neat strategies. If the US becomes bogged down in Venezuela for long with hardening internal resistance, events may not unfold as planned. A prolonged crisis would

drain its political capital, stretch its military and economic resources, and weaken its influence elsewhere, particularly in the Middle East. Allies would hedge, rivals would test limits, and the world would once again ask a familiar question: how far can US power realistically stretch?

The echoes of Iraq are unavoidable here. Large-scale strikes in Caracas evoke Baghdad in 2003. The justification then was the presence of “weapons of mass destruction”; now, it is “narco-terrorism and criminal networks.” Different slogans, similar actions, each wrapped in moral urgency built on false or contested evidence. The irony is also stark for Donald Trump. Having risen to power condemning the Iraq invasion as a “big, fat mistake,” he now presides over an intervention that mirrors the same flawed logic: that force can deliver order without consequences.

For South Asia, this situation

demand attention. Energy security, strategic independence, and respect for international law are closely intertwined. But if a global power can seize a sitting president to control resources, no country is entirely safe. Most countries in South Asia depend on stable oil supplies from the Middle East, where the threat of disruption from hostile US Iran relations looms perpetually. A US-backed Venezuelan oil network could shift supply chains and prices, giving Washington indirect leverage over Asian economies. China, with significant investments in Venezuelan oil, also faces a major strategic risk. Its Belt and Road-linked energy projects could be disrupted if US-backed authorities restrict Chinese access or renegotiate contracts, affecting both financial returns and long-term influence in the region.

The broader strategic message here is unmistakable. If a superpower

can abduct a sitting president to secure energy leverage, Asia’s smaller states cannot assume immunity from coercive global politics. This underscores the need for diversified energy sources, regional energy diplomacy, and adherence to international law as a protective framework. For Bangladesh, heavy reliance on global oil supplies makes it particularly vulnerable. The country needs to diversify its energy sources, strengthen regional partnerships, and practise smart energy diplomacy to safeguard its interests, as any spike in oil prices or supply shock could hit the economy hard.

In the final analysis, what happens in Venezuela will not remain confined within its borders. It will shape how energy is controlled, how sovereignty is respected—or disregarded—and how far American power can be pushed before it bends or breaks.

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Government Press
Department of Printing & Publications
Ministry of Public Administration
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
www.bgpress.gov.bd

No. 05.82.0000.000.018.07.0053.25-19

Date: 04-01-2026

Tender Notice

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

Name of goods	Tender Proposal ID	Publishing date and time	Last Selling date and time	Closing date and time
Goods for Heidelberg Four Color & Bi-Color Offset Press with 32 items	1152895	05-01-2026 at 12:00	19-01-2026 Up to 17:00	20-01-2026 Up to 14:00
Goods for KBA-75 Bi-Color Offset Press with 11 items	1152992	05-01-2026 at 12:00	19-01-2026 Up to 17:00	20-01-2026 Up to 14:00
NVR with 14 items.	1153148	05-01-2026 at 12:00	19-01-2026 Up to 16:00	20-01-2026 Up to 14:00

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

The fees for the Downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

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

(Mohammad Abu Yusuf)
Deputy Director
(Deputy Secretary)

GD-23

Runa Khan fronts psychological thriller ‘Roktochaya’

Runa Khan is set to appear in the role of a police officer for the first time in her upcoming short film **Roktochaya**, directed by Ali Zulfikar Zahedi. Shooting for the project has recently been completed.

Describing the film, Runa Khan said **Roktochaya** is a female-centric psychological thriller. She plays Shivana Nasrin, a principled and outspoken police officer who remains steadfast in her sense of duty and integrity. “This is my first experience playing a police officer. The story shows a rise in crime in the city, and Shivana is given the responsibility of controlling the situation,” she said.

Runa Khan also noted that the film reflects the social reality in which women in positions of authority are frequently questioned for their competence. “The same pattern appears in the story. Alongside that, the film highlights various inconsistencies and contradictions within our society,” she added.



I wanted to be like Shabnur:

TAMA MIRZA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Tama Mirza has carved a distinct niche for herself in the Dhallywood film industry. A versatile performer, she earned the National Film Award for her compelling role in the film **Nodijon**.

Recently, she has also garnered significant acclaim for her performances in web films, particularly earning praise for her chemistry with actor Afran Nisho. Audiences warmly received her work in **Daagi** and **Amolnama** last year.

As the new year begins, the actress is gearing up to start shooting two new films. In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, Tama opens up about her upcoming projects, inspirations, and personal philosophy.

What are you up to?

I have signed two new films – the shooting for one will begin soon.

I always try to associate myself with diverse work – and I’m excited because I won’t be in my usual ‘glamorous’ look. This new year, I will be presenting myself in a new way.

Who is your inspiration in this industry?

Look, many actresses have graced Dhallywood over the decades. Shabana, Kabori, Babita – they are legends. Shabnur is the heroine of our time, so is Moushumi. They are dear to me, and I respect them very much.

However, it was seeing Shabnur that made me want to become a heroine. I dreamed of becoming an actress, as I was watching her films. I have watched so many of her movies – **Ananda Ashru**, **Char Shotiner Ghor**, **Mollabarir Bou**, and **Ke Oporadhi** are some of my favourites. Shabnur was the heroine in all four of these.

How much support did you receive from your family to become an actress?

To be honest, when I first started, my family suggested I do just one film. After acting in my first film, I thought, “Let’s do one more where I can present myself even better, something that satisfies my soul.”



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Essentially, I kept working in pursuit of that one good film. I am still waiting for a truly great project. Whenever I finish something, I feel like I need to do even better in the next one. That is how several years have passed on the silver screen. But, coming here, I have received the love of many people.

How happy are you with your work from last year?

I am elated. Last year, my film **Daagi** was released. This was my second film with Afran Nisho. **Daagi** received praise from everyone, and I received immense love from countless people for it; it truly touched everyone’s heart.

Then again, I received praise and

love for my performance in the web film **Amolnama**. I played two completely different characters in these two projects. In **Amolnama**, I played a mother. I had to work very hard to portray how helpless a girl becomes in a specific situation. I prepared extensively on my own for that character, just as I rehearsed for **Daagi**. That is why I can say I am extremely happy with both projects.

How would you define ‘love’ in your life?

Love is essential in life. The kind of love that makes life beautiful and brings mental peace is necessary. However, the love that does not bring mental peace – there is no need for that.



Anil Kapoor buys copyrights for ‘Nayak’

Actor Anil Kapoor has reportedly acquired the copyrights to his 2001 political drama **Nayak**, sparking speculation about a possible sequel nearly 25 years after the film’s release. Media reports suggest the rights were purchased from producer Deepak Mukut, with Kapoor keen to retain them due to the film’s personal significance.

Sources indicate the actor is also interested in producing a follow-up, believing the story still has strong potential, though no official confirmation has been made. Originally produced by A S Rathnam and directed by Shankar, **Nayak** told the story of a journalist who becomes chief minister for a day to challenge corruption. Despite mixed reviews initially, the film later achieved cult status, making a sequel an idea of growing interest among audiences.

Akshaye Khanna joins Rs 2,000-crore box-office club



Actor Akshaye Khanna has reached a rare box-office milestone, becoming only the second Indian actor after Shah Rukh Khan to cross Rs 2,000 crore in worldwide earnings within a single calendar year. Despite a career spanning three decades, 2025 has emerged as a defining phase for Khanna, who earned widespread acclaim for playing antagonist roles in two of the year’s biggest Hindi films.

The streak began with **Chhaava**, directed by Laxman Utekar and starring Vicky Kaushal, which grossed Rs 809 crore globally. It was followed by **Dhurandhar**, directed by Aditya Dhar, where Khanna’s performance stood out despite a star-studded cast. The two films together have taken his 2025 total to Rs 2,000 crore, placing him in an elite box-office club.

NEWS

BNP rebels rattling allies

FROM PAGE 12
organisational action. “If anyone stays in the race by going against party decisions, the party may decide to expel them for life.”

Under the alliance arrangement, the BNP did not field candidates in eight constituencies: Dhaka-12, Bhola-1, Patuakhali-3, Sylhet-5, Nilphamari-1, Narayanganj-4, Brahmanbaria-2, and Brahmanbaria-6.

As part of its strategy, six leaders from allied parties joined the BNP and were given nominations in Jhenaidah-4, Habiganj-1, Cumilla-7, Kishoreganj-5, Lakshmipur-1, and Dhaka-13.

However, in Bogura-2, the BNP initially left the seat for Manna but later announced its own candidate, citing legal complications.

Sources said nine BNP leaders have already been expelled for submitting nomination papers in seats shared with alliance partners.

Allied leaders said the situation has reached a point where they have directly urged BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman to intervene, saying that rebels at the grassroots could damage the credibility of the alliance and affect results in multiple seats.

Saiful Haque, general secretary

of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh, who contests in Dhaka-12, said a BNP leader entered the race as an independent contender even after being expelled.

“This is uncomfortable and embarrassing for me. Tarique Rahman will speak to the matter individually. I hope a decision will be made within five to seven days.”

Saiful said he met Tarique yesterday afternoon and raised his concerns. “He may talk to those who have become candidates by going against party instructions.”

In Cumilla-7, Redwan Ahmed, who joined the BNP after stepping down as general secretary of the LDP, said he does not expect support from BNP rebels, even if they withdraw from the race.

The BNP has also shared four seats with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh, but alliance leaders alleged that BNP figures are contesting in those constituencies and are not assisting alliance nominees.

Jamiat Secretary General Manzurul Islam Afendi, running the race from Nilphamari-1, said the situation is embarrassing for partners and expressed hope that Tarique would resolve the issue.

“Not only my seats, in the other four seats where BNP leaders have contested as independent candidates, it is embarrassing for all of us. We hope Tarique Rahman will resolve this problem.”

In Kishoreganj-5, Syed Ehsanul Huda, who dissolved his party Bangladesh Jatiya Dal and joined the BNP, said he hopes that the BNP high command will instruct grassroots leaders to work for the nominee.

In Brahmanbaria-6, Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, is contesting with BNP support after the party refrained from nominating its candidate.

An expelled BNP leader submitted his nomination papers, but they were cancelled.

“I hope BNP leaders accept the central decision,” Saki said.

In Habiganj-1, BNP contender Reza Kibria, who joined the party recently, said, “Some people work for personal interests, some for party interests. We understand this.”

In Patuakhali-3, the BNP left the seat for Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur, but a BNP leader is running there as a rebel contestant.

To address concerns about unsold unauthorised handsets, the BTRC confirmed that IMELs of existing stock would be connected to the network upon payment of a nominal duty, even without documentation, and that ongoing imports would also be accommodated.

However, the BTRC clarified that permitting the import of used mobile phones does not fall under its jurisdiction and requires approval from the commerce ministry.

It warned that importing used handsets poses quality risks and could lead to consumer fraud.

Responding to public concerns, the BTRC explained that reports of multiple or unstructured IMELs are largely due to cloned, refurbished or used devices – precisely what the NEIR aims to prevent.

Issues such as multiple devices appearing under a single NID stem from historical data and are being addressed.

Delays in OTP delivery during registration are due to heavy traffic and are being handled in coordination with mobile operators.

The BTRC also assured users that all customer data under the NEIR system remains fully secure.

Multiple protests

FROM PAGE 12
adding that several of them were detained while many took shelter in nearby buildings.

Members of the Bangladesh Army and Rapid Action Battalion were later deployed to prevent further unrest.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Tejgaon Division Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ibne Mizan said law enforcers had first asked the mobile phone traders to leave the area. “As they refused, we used tear gas shells, a water cannon and sound grenades to disperse them.... The protesters later regrouped and attacked police by throwing brick chips. We chased them to the Motalib Plaza area.”

He added that at least 10 people were detained. Mobile Business Community Bangladesh Vice President Shamim Mollah said 11 traders were detained from the spot.

Over a dozen people, including several police personnel, were injured during the clashes.

DC Mizan said the detainees would be questioned and, if found involved, they may be shown arrested in a case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station over vandalism of the BTRC building during their January 1 protest.

Meanwhile, Tejgaon College students blocked the Farmgate intersection around 10:00am, demanding justice for fellow student Sakibul Hasan Rana, who died on December 10, four days after sustaining injuries in an attack in the college dormitory.

The blockade brought traffic in the surrounding areas to a complete standstill.

Habib Rahman, a friend of the victim, said, “We are here because we want justice for Rana. Earlier, we withdrew our blockade after assurances from the authorities. But the identified killers are still roaming free.”

Around 12:30pm, leaders and activists of Inquilab Moncho gathered at the Shahbagh intersection and began their “March for Insaf” programme, demanding the immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers of Sharif Osman Hadi.

Organisers said they marched through Dhanmondi Jigatala, Shankar Bus Stand, Mohammadpur Bus Stand, Pallabi and Mirpur-10 roundabout before concluding at the BNS Centre in Uttara.

The protest programmes triggered widespread traffic congestion, with vehicles stranded at major intersections.

Throughout the day, traffic alert Facebook groups were flooded with posts by commuters asking about the gridlocks near Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, Panthapath and Bijoy Sarani, while others urged avoiding certain areas.

Google Maps showed major roads around Farmgate and Karwan Bazar marked red, indicating heavy congestion stretching from Manik Mia Avenue to Bashundhara City and along Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

Contacted, Anish Kirtaniya, assistant commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Tejgaon Zone, said the protests disrupted traffic from 11:00am to around 3:30pm.

Samiha Alam, who was travelling from Mohakhali to Farmgate, said she was stuck near Bijoy Sarani for over an hour from around 12:00pm. Using an alternative route, she reached Karwan Bazar where she was stuck for another hour before returning home, unable to get to her office.

Another commuter, Rajib Ahmed, said he left Mohammadpur for Karwan Bazar around 10:30am in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw but got stuck at Khamarbari. The vehicle was later diverted towards Indira Road, where traffic remained gridlocked, forcing him to walk the rest of the way.

Rahat Islam, who usually travels from Bailey Road to Farmgate in 20 minutes on a motorcycle, said the same journey took him about an hour and a half as he was stuck near the Moghbazar flyover for a long time.

5 held for tying

FROM PAGE 12
Some students noticed her and raised alarm, which led to her being held, he said.

When questioned, the woman told the madrasa authorities that she had come to admit her daughter. After being informed that the madrasa was only for male students, she allegedly changed her statement and said she had come to admit her son.

Suspecting that she was stealing, madrasa authorities and some local people decided to punish her by pouring water on her, police said.

Later, the woman was released. A video of the incident was circulated on social media afterwards.

NCP aims

FROM PAGE 12
Besides the 29 constituencies, negotiations are still under way for three seats – Dhaka-9, Brahmanbaria-3 and Bagerhat-3. NCP sources said Javed Rasin, Ataullah and Molla Rahmatullah have been proposed for the three constituencies respectively, but differences persist.

Several NCP leaders said that beyond the confirmed allocation, the party is also negotiating for a further 10 constituencies, aiming to contest a total of around 40 seats.

Speaking to The Daily Star on the condition of anonymity, a senior NCP leader said the final number of seats would depend on whether Islami Andolan Bangladesh remains in the alliance. “If Chormonai does not remain, we will contest around 40 seats.... Negotiations are still ongoing. We hope to finalise our allocation before the alliance reaches its final settlement on January 19.”

At a press conference last evening, Akhtar Hossain said discussions on the matter are ongoing with Jamaat-e-Islami.

Meanwhile, NCP sources said its confirmed list of nominees includes several student leaders who played visible roles during the July uprising, alongside party organisers and professionals.

In the capital, NCP has confirmed several candidates beyond the opt-out seats. Tarek Mohammad Adel, who recently left the Jatiya Party to join the NCP, will contest from Dhaka-7, while Ariful Islam has been nominated for Dhaka-18. Dilshana Parul and Nabila Tasnid will contest from Dhaka-19 and Dhaka-20 respectively.

Outside Dhaka, several candidates associated with the July movement and professional backgrounds have also been finalised. Sarwar Tushar is set to run from Narsingdi-2, while Jobairul Islam will contest from Chattogram-8.

Other confirmed candidates include Barrister Nurul Huda Junaied for Sylhet-3, Ali Naser Khan for Gazipur-2, Mahbub Alam Mahir for Lakshmipur-1, Sultana Muhammad Zakaria for Noakhali-2, Pritom Das for Moulvibazar-4, Saifullah Haider for Tangail-3, Ashraf Mahdi for Brahmanbaria-2, Likhon Mia for Sherpur-1, Molla Faruk Ehsan for Chuadanga-1 and Zarjis Kader for Natore-3.

Saif Mustafiz has been nominated for Sirajganj-6, while Abdul Ahad will contest from Dinajpur-5. Ariful Daria from Gopalganj-3, and Suja Uddin from Bandarban.

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
মিজানুর রহমান আকন
পরিচালক (বিএসসিএস
ও
সদস্য সচিব, বিএসসি

IN A CITY CALLED ELIAS

Rereading Chilekothar Sepai

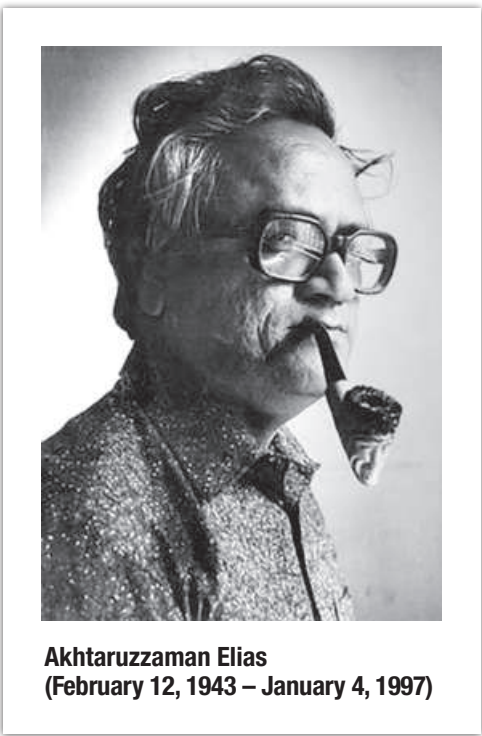
KAZI KHALEED ASHRAF

In a city called Elias, there is no beginning and there is no end—“it lives imperishably.” The past and the dead are as vital as the rank waters of the Buriganga. There are only waves that rise and come tumbling down, and rise again, with the occasional force of a tsunami. Only then do the wretched and the trodden become lions, and the concatenated jonjal of the social contract is rattled. It was 1969, and Dhaka was swept by “tsunamis of a thousand waves.”

1969 was the year of revolution for Bengali identity and rights against the repressive Pakistani regime. Akhtaruzzaman Elias’s literary masterpiece, *Chilekothar Sepai* (*The Sepai in the Rooftop Room*), published some seventeen years later, traces that revolution through the lives of colourful characters inhabiting the old city of Dhaka.

When the country burns, writes Elias, its searing heat is felt most intensely in Dhaka. A revolution overpowers the city. Slogans reverberate amidst bursts of gunshots. “*Tomar amar thikana, Padma, Meghna, Jamuna.*” Yet it is the city, Khaliquzzaman Elias remarks of his brother’s work, that lives imperishably in *Chilekothar Sepai*. In the novel, one is brought face to face with a sharp-eyed brilliance in seeing and rendering the city. Reading Elias, one no longer looks upon the usual architecture of the city—a ramshackle house, a rooftop room, a tortured lane, a dreary drain, or a “widowed road”—with nonchalance. Having followed the city as an architect and writer, I find *Chilekothar Sepai* a masterful psychogeography of a *talmatal* place.

As we open the first pages of the book, we are already in the middle of the tsunami,



Akhtaruzzaman Elias
(February 12, 1943 – January 4, 1997)

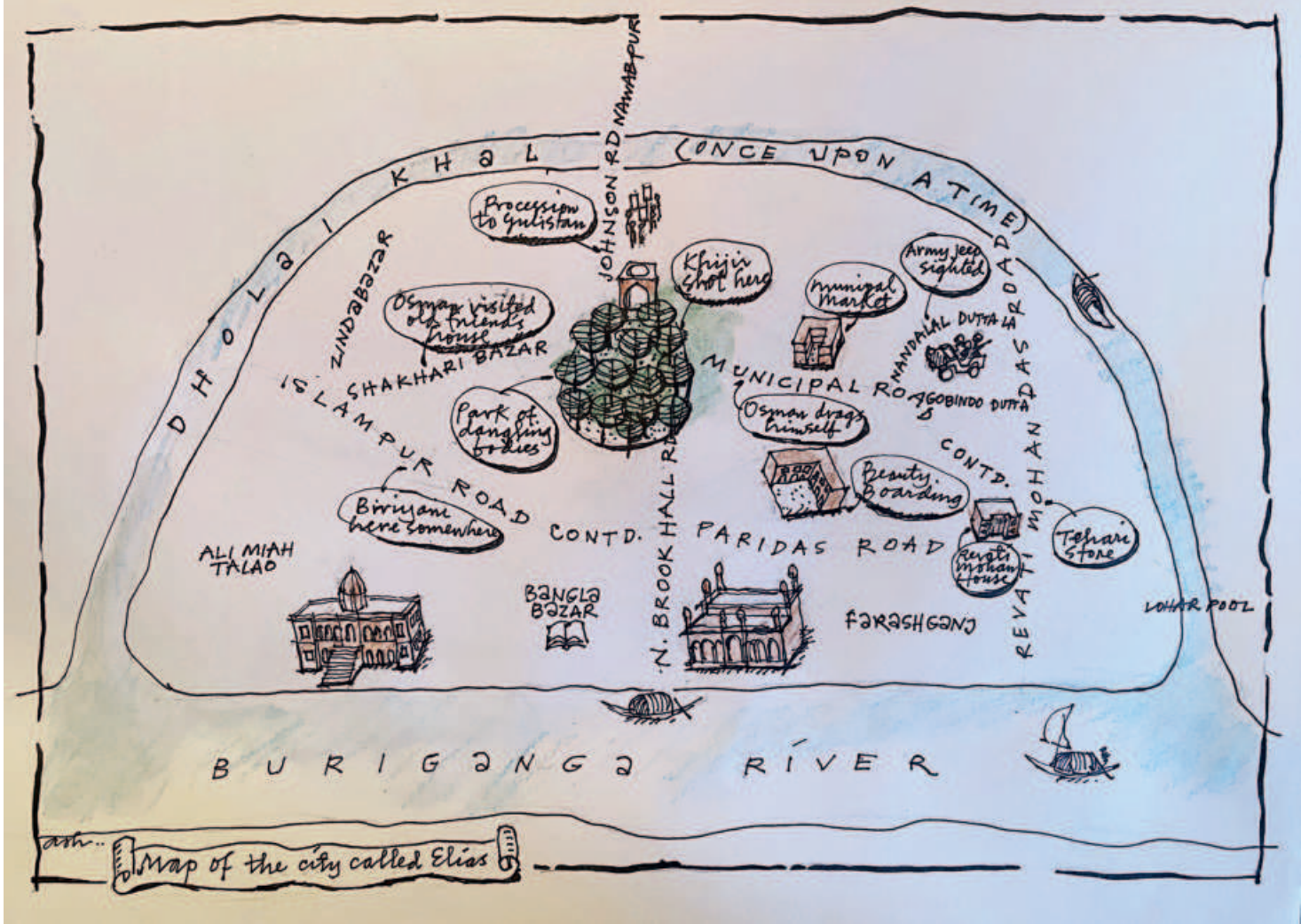
confronted with a dead body—a student shot by the police. We are also in the heart of Elias’s city, the spatial locus of *Sepai*. A provincial capital is on the verge of metamorphosis; it is about to uncoil from its placid omphalos. By the 1960s, the city of Dhaka had many cores, but the one Elias chose to anoint in his book lies within the nested city of old Dhaka. The nested city is like an onion, with one skin enfolding the next.

Although Elias takes us on excursions to other parts of the city, the centre of this enigmatic onion is an area roughly bordered by the old Dholai Khal, the Buriganga to the south, and Northbrooke Hall Road and Nawabur Road to the west. I am not the first person, and I certainly will not be the last, to speak of the spatial and urban dimensions of *Chilekothar Sepai*, for Elias has given us an enduring map with which to embark on many journeys while navigating Dhaka.

Often described as a psycho-political novel, the landscape of *Chilekotha* is too vast to be fully explored in a short essay. Yet a few summary observations may be offered. The setting of the book is the old quarters of Dhaka (the omphalos), with a brief mirrored sojourn in a northern village near the Brahmaputra River. The story is as much a damning dissection of Dhaka’s various social clouts and classes as it is a penetrating psychological exposé of a troubled soul. In his archaeology of 1969, Elias advances two political truisms: that revolutions have evolutions, and that a promising class struggle is upended by a bourgeois movement.

At the centre of the torrent that strikes Dhaka stands the protagonist Osman Gani, living as a resident in a rooftop attic. Osman’s world is a walkable city, punctuated only by occasional rickshaw rides. No matter how much he walks the streets of Dhaka—in memory, imagination, or lived experience—and witnesses an urban theatre unfold, Osman remains both detached from the ongoing revolution and unmoored from the social life of the city. Not born a citizen of Dhaka, nor of a village in Bangladesh—having grown up instead in a village in West Bengal—he feels listless and homeless, desperately seeking communion with either an individual or an ideology. His relationship with the crowd—the pulsating mass moving through the city—is dubious, and his intimacy with others remains fragile.

Other characters illuminate the social tapestry. Anowar, the political activist, is a version of Osman but without the latter’s psychological perturbation; the landlord



Map of the city called Elias.

ILLUSTRATION: KAZI KHALEED ASHRAF

Rahmatullah Sardar stands as the emblem of the conniving political class; the contractor who helps fill up Dholai Khal to make a road there is also mirrored in the figure of Khoybar Gazi in the village—a character that later expands into a fuller portrayal in Elias’s magnum opus *Khwabnama*; Chengtu emerges as the village rebel poised to upend the status quo; Alauddin appears as Rahmatullah’s nephew, a nationalist activist yet not averse to marrying the daughter of his despicable uncle; and there are the few female characters, often known simply as Jummoner Ma or Khijirer Ma, who endure economic hardship, marital abuse, and lecherous advances.

And, of course, there is the sparkling character of Haddi Khijir Ali, who, with his volatile nature—holding a pair of pliers in one hand and a screwdriver in the other, and on occasion a can of kerosene—becomes the portrait of the impetuous proletariat, always ready to join the crowd milieu and stand up to injustice. Khijir is the personification of the tumultuous city.

While all the characters are part of a revolutionary theatre, only Osman exposes the deep interiors of a Kafkaesque mind. An aspiration incarnate of the fidgety middle class, he is torn between revolution and self-preservation. He is either introspecting alone in his *chilekotha*, unraveling by himself, or ambulating the streets in quest of connection. Only gradually does Osman discover his affinity with the anarchic figure of Haddi Khijir—the skeletal man who is both homeless and deeply rooted in Dhaka.

We come to see how the social theatre unfolds in rhythm with the city itself. In *Chilekothar Sepai*, there is an oscillation between two spatial realms—the street and the rooftop of a building. These two realms, however, generate three social situations: the street, with the heaving crowd-mass acting literally as the tsunami; the rooftop, with the attic or rooftop room functioning as a kind of space shuttle, quietly and invisibly drifting close to the skies; and the intermediate zone of the house, with its everyday domestic movements.

From his solitary rooftop room, where he is mostly alone and confronts his demons and desires, Osman eventually descends into the street in a surprising climax to the novel. The rooftop room also signals a tangential space occupied by a perpetual outsider. The *chilekotha* further evokes, for me, the image of a Buddhist stupa. At the very top of a stupa—regarded as an embodiment of transcendence—there is a small structure called the *harmika*, literally the “little house.” It is often described as the final house in the stages of Buddhahood. Close to *osman*, the *chilekotha* becomes a kind of *harmika*, from which there is only a descent down to the turbulent street. It is transcendence in reverse.

Osman’s building is three storeys high and, as we are told, it is “hopeless”. There is no open space in front; the house begins immediately after the drain. A short doorway serves as the entrance, making the house resemble a fort. The three storeys accommodate a shoe factory at ground level and rental units on the upper two floors, with rooms awkwardly divided by cardboard and bamboo screen partitions. With a factory below and a rickshaw garage next door, the building exemplifies the impromptu mixed-use character of old Dhaka’s quarters. The rich, the aspirational, and the utterly poor live there side by side in a mutually dependent and often anxious arrangement.

This is how Elias describes Osman’s *chilekotha* on the roof: “There is only one room on the roof; there is no kitchen or toilet. To excrete or bathe, one needs to stand in a queue on the ground floor [Osman urinates in a corner of the roof while brushing]. But Osman’s room has

plenty of light and air. There are two doors—one facing the stairs and another opening onto the roof. The roof is rather large, with railings all around; the railing at the front is high. Standing on one side, the street in front looks wonderful. Directly opposite the road is a one-storey house, rather large and similarly unwieldy. A masjid straddles that house, and a signboard on the veranda bears the name *Haqqa Nur Maktab* in Bangla and Arabic. From time to time, Osman comes up to the roof. Standing there, the roof beneath his feet briefly appears desolate amidst the cramped houses. He quickly slithers back to his room.”

To me, the novel conveys the ambulatory layout of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and an urban panorama in which a “sociologically rich realism depicts the tensions of city life” (as in the work of the American novelist Richard Price). We learn from Elias’s friends about his readings of Joyce’s work. *Ulysses* captures life in a city over a single day, in which the principal characters—especially Leopold Bloom—move through particular locations and streets in Dublin, described with meticulous accuracy. Writing the famous novel from Paris, Joyce would ask his friends back in Dublin to describe the details of a shopfront or a street corner. Joyce claimed, grandly, that if



Cover of the novel Chilekothar Sepai.

Dublin were destroyed, it could be rebuilt from the pages of *Ulysses*. As with Dublin in *Ulysses*—though without its mesmerising pictorial quality—*Chilekotha* reveals a Dhaka discovered through walking, unlike any other work in Bangla.

The work of poet Shamsur Rahman also explores the Dhaka of 1969. In an essay, Elias admits to being inspired by the poet’s work, especially *Smritir Shohor*, but highlights the difference between poetic melancholy and detached description. To unearth the mysteries of life, the poet selects the city and sees it through the eyes of a curious visitor (*probashi*) or an anxious lover (*prono*). Yet the city is rendered as a wreck in the poem *Towards a Devastated City*—simply looking at it becomes nerve-racking. If the poet harboured a melancholic love for the city, this is not the case for Elias. What a novelist needs in order to write about “garbage-filled empty streets clad in moonlight” is *nirliptota*, a cool detachment.

Laxmibazar is the omphalos in the city called Elias, from where the city spreads outward through streets and lanes, verandas and roof terraces, *chilekothas* and pigeon coops. In April, a friend and I went looking for

Elias’s Dhaka. I had returned to that area after about twenty-five years. It was nothing like the Bloomsbury wanderings haunting Joyce’s Dublin in 1954, when Joyce aficionados undertook a pilgrimage through the streets and spaces described in *Ulysses* (an event that has since become annual, taking place on June 16, the day on which *Ulysses* is set).

In the city of Elias, rickshaws jostled with *thelagaris*, hawkers cried themselves hoarse, metal shops jingled and jangled, and pedestrians navigated like ballerinas—even when the street was not transformed into a rain-made puddlescape. Shamsur Rahman,

Joyce claimed, grandly, that if Dublin were destroyed, it could be rebuilt from the pages of Ulysses. As with Dublin in Ulysses—though without its mesmerising pictorial quality—Chilekotha reveals a Dhaka discovered through walking, unlike any other work in Bangla.

writing some sixty years ago, vividly captures the city when it lies empty during a *hartal*: “Finding the streets of the city of Dacca empty, I made up, as I strolled along, so many things, giving free rein to my fancy: a golden fish suddenly leaped up on the tip of my finger, began to grow and then flew away to a tender garden to seek out some different shape in the boudoir of endless flowers. As I strolled along, I wiped out the signboards and set there the shining lines of my favourite poems; hung on each street corner Picasso, Matisse and Kandinsky.” [From the poem *Strike*.]

My friend and I, however, encountered a city in full motion. Not quite flâneur-like, nor quite painting Picasso onto poster-splattered plastered walls, we quickly became part of a hurried tableau.

We began at Bahadur Shah Park, which forms a perfect fulcrum: one arm leads to Municipal Road and Subhas Bose Road and into the depths of Elias’s city; another turns towards the waters of the Buriganga; and a third stretches north to Gulistan and beyond, towards the threshold of the new city that Osman and his friends often frequented for their *addas*. Except for a trip or two to Islampur and Shakhari Bazar, *Chilekotha* largely perambulates around Laxmibazar. We reached the gate of St Gregory’s High School on Municipal Road and stood before the old school, recalling the time when I was a student there—uncannily, in the year 1969, that tumultuous moment when the youth of Dhaka poured out from halls, messes, and classrooms to shake the edifice of the strange nation called Pakistan. A vendor selling chaat, *amli*, and *phuchka* was still stationed outside the gate.

We walked east along Municipal Road. I did not tell my walking companion that I was looking for a particular building from my schooldays. Not having seen it for some distance, I thought it had suffered the bulldozer fate of many of Dhaka’s buildings. But there it was—old and reliable, tattered and glorious at the same time—a three-storey structure with a courtyard: the Municipal Market. I recalled an eatery on the ground floor that we frequented after school, the one that served memorable Mughlai parathas.

Throughout *Chilekotha*, there are references to eateries and restaurants that archive Dhaka’s food haunts: breakfast with naan and paya at Islamia Restaurant; raucous *addas* at Central Hotel and Amjadia; sheekh kebabs in Thatari Bazar; tea at Rex; fish with *patla jhol* at Anandmoyee Hindu Hotel;

murag pulao at Palwan’s shop; *haleem* in Nawabpur; paratha and *kaleeza* at Nigar; *roti gost* at Nejami; a plate of rice at Provincial in Stadium; pastries at Capital or Shaheen Restaurant; and sweetmeats opposite Jorpur Lane.

We entered Nandalal Dutta Lane, narrow and dusty, and walked past Shaheed Suhrawardy College—once known as Quaid-e-Azam College, inaugurated by Sher-e-Bangla himself (what a line-up, I thought, for such a small lane). Elias writes: “*Pichchis* (kids) playing cricket at the mouth of a lane near Quaid-e-Azam College, but rush to puncture a rickshaw wheel whenever one appears, shouting ‘down with Ayub shahi, Monem shahi.’ Suddenly, an open-top jeep appeared from Gobindo Dutta Lane with Punjabi, Baloch, and Bengali soldiers wearing helmets and carrying machine guns. In a wink, the *pichchis* disappeared down Nandalal Dutta Lane and Panchbhai Ghat Lane.”

Turning east onto Revati Mohan Das Road, which is equally narrow and lined with shops of one kind or another, it began to rain, and we took shelter in one of the ubiquitous metal shops. Giant steel pulleys and chains hung everywhere. The man inside invited us to sit. We preferred to stand on the threshold and watch people scurrying along the road as the rain continued. Realising that the rain would not relent, we took a rickshaw so that we could continue our journey. We went south along Revati Mohan Das Road and then turned right onto Paridas Lane. The grand house of an old merchant family that gave the road its name still stood at the intersection, though it had lost its former meaning. Neither the streetscape nor the traffic had changed much.

The rain had slowed by the time we stopped near Beauty Boarding, the famous haunt that offered meals and gathering spaces for Elias and other writers of his time, including Shamsur Rahman. *Chilekotha*’s description of the close proximity of house, rickshaw garage, and *tehar* shop came vividly alive in the neighbourhood. We ordered rice, *daal*, and fried *rui* from Beauty’s wall menu and wondered about the spirits of times past lodged in the fraying two-storey building.

The Buriganga lay just steps away, although Elias does not speak much of the river unless its waters rise to the song of the revolution’s fire. We walked south to reach Northbrooke Hall and the riverbank, and then took a rickshaw back to Bahadur Shah Park. Sadarghat remained as boisterous as ever when I had set foot there many years ago.

Subhas Bose Avenue, Hemendra Das Road, Gobindo Dutta Lane, Patla Khan Lane, Panchbhai Ghat Lane, Narinda Pool, Golak Pal Lane off Nawabpur—the streets read like names from a secret map. Golak Pal Lane, Pannu Sardar Lane, Thakur Das Lane, Tipu Sultan Road, Padma Nidhi Lane: *mohollas* staggered between reconciliation with a ragged old past and a hodgepodge present.

In a city called Elias, the dead dangle with the living. They inhabit the same urban space, most often oblivious to one another, but in times of tsunamis, they rise and march together. The book ends with the spectre of the deceased Khijir, killed earlier in a police firing near Bahadur Shah Park, and his rickety, chassis-like body beckoning Osman to join him and his dead comrades, who are suspended effortlessly a few feet above the city. The homeless Khijir will take Osman home.

In a dance of the dead, levitating rebels arrive from different historical times, from different tsunamis that shook the imperishable city—people from Tantibazar rising from the cold depths of a lost canal; people thrashed by the Mughals, Moghs, and *beniyas*; fighting *faqirs* of Majnu Shah; Muslim weavers thrusting up their arms with amputated thumbs; sepoys from Meerut, Bareilly, Sandwip, and Goalundo hanged in Victoria Park; the trade unionist Somen Chanda killed by hooligans; Barkat shot dead in 1952.

In the first story of Joyce’s *Dubliners*, a character looks up at a building from the street and peers into an interior life through the frames of a window. In the last story of the book, in a reversal, the character Gabriel is inside a room and looks out of the window. “Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in was dissolving and dwindling.”

In a scene that is at once fabulous and cinematic, magical and chilling, *Chilekothar Sepai* ends near the fulcrum of the city, Bahadur Shah Park, where rebel bodies dangle like the many steel pulleys I saw earlier. The solid world is dissolving. Existence, as known, is flickering. The imperishable becomes impalpable. Bursting out of his roof-room in a catatonic daze (or perhaps in catharsis), tumbling down the stairs, breaking down the main door, and toppling into the street, Osman rushes out to follow his floating friend with pliers, ready to accompany him beyond the realm of the city. No longer recognisable, he drags himself along Municipal Road, past the Mughlai shop and my old school, towards the cursed park—a path I had taken last April, though in the opposite direction, as an act of homage.

Kazi Khaleed Ashraf is an architect and writer and directs the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements. He is the author of The Mother Tongue of Architecture: Selected Writings.



NEIR system to stay: govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday reiterated its stance on continuing the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system despite protests by mobile phone traders.

The NEIR would not be suspended under pressure, said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for posts, telecommunications and information technology.

“The government cannot give anyone a licence to commit crimes or engage in fraud,” he told reporters after visiting the headquarters of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in the capital’s Agargaon.

Meanwhile, mobile phone traders said they would continue to keep their shops closed across the country unless their demands are met, said Shamim Mollah, senior vice president of the Bangladesh Mobile Business Community, an organisation representing mobile traders, many of whom sell unauthorised phones.

The traders’ demands include the withdrawal of cases filed by the BTRC against mobile traders, the release of those detained in connection with

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Police removing protesters from the street in front of Sonargaon Hotel in the capital yesterday, after mobile phone traders blocked the road as part of a nationwide shutdown to press home their demands, including the postponement of implementation of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR).

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Multiple protests halt traffic in capital

Key intersections blocked, causing citywide sufferings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic in several key areas of the capital came to a near halt yesterday as separate protest programmes blocked major intersections, causing severe congestion and suffering for commuters.

Office-goers, students, and patients were especially affected as public transport movement was restricted, forcing many to walk long distances to reach their destinations.

Around 10:30am, mobile phone shop owners from across the country staged a sit-in and blocked the Karwan Bazar intersection as part of a nationwide shutdown over several demands, including the postponement of implementing the National Equipment Identity Register.

The traders had announced yesterday’s sit-in, which was joined by their families, on Saturday and declared an indefinite shutdown of mobile phone shops across the country.

Around 11:30am, police baton-charged the protesters to clear the roads. However, some of them returned around noon and resumed their demonstration, leading to chases between them and the law enforcers across the surrounding areas, including the Sonargaon intersection, near Bashundhara City Shopping Complex, Panthapath and Kathalbagan.

Police also used tear gas shells, sound grenades and a water cannon to disperse the protesters, witnesses said,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

LPG import hurdles may cause supply crunch

Traders tell govt

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The current supply of liquefied petroleum gas is sufficient to meet local demand despite difficulty in importing the fuel, importers said.

The country requires 14-15 lakh tonnes of LPG in a year, meaning the monthly demand is about 120,000 tonnes.

In December last year, traders imported about 127,000

➔ Traders blamed artificial shortages for recent price hike

➔ LPG imports rose to 1.27 lakh tonnes in Dec from 1.07 lakh tonnes in Nov

➔ Monthly LPG demand is about 1.20 lakh tonnes

➔ BERC fixed Tk 1,306 for the standard cylinder for Jan, up Tk 53

tonnes of LPG, about 21 percent more than the previous month.

This was disclosed by traders in an emergency meeting yesterday with the high-level officials of the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the discussions.

“The overall stock of LPG remains satisfactory,” said LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh (LOAB), the body representing LPG importers, in a statement after the meeting.

Subsequently, traders urged the government to take action against those who are manipulating the market by increasing prices in the name of crisis.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

NCP aims for 40 seats from Jamaat

29 finalised so far

SHAMIMA RITA and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The Jamaat-led alliance has so far left 29 parliamentary seats for the National Citizen Party, but aspirants from other allies remain in the race in at least 21 of those constituencies, NCP sources said.

Candidates from allied parties have already opted out in eight constituencies to make way for NCP nominees, and talks are ongoing for a bigger share of seats.

NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar said, “We are negotiating for 35 to 40 seats. Talks are ongoing, and we expect confirmation within two to three days.”

According to alliance sources, the eight seats where allied parties have withdrawn candidates for NCP include Dhaka-11, where party Convener Nahid Islam is set to run; Dhaka 8, earmarked for Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary; Cumilla-4, where Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah will contest; Rangpur-4, allocated to Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain; Panchagarh-1, finalised for Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam; Kurigram-3, where Atik Mujahid has been nominated; Narayanganj-4, allocated to Abdullah Al Amin; and Noakhali-6, where Hannan Masud is set to contest.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

BNP rebels rattling allies

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Alliance partners have expressed deep frustration, as the BNP failed to rein in its leaders who are contesting the national election in seats allocated to allies, defying repeated warnings from the party high command and even after expulsion from the party.

At least a dozen alliance leaders told this correspondent that they are concerned as BNP leaders continue to run as rebel or independent candidates, undermining the seat-sharing arrangement.

They said they had expected active support from local BNP leaders and activists. Instead, the presence of them has confused voters, disrupted coordination at the grassroots, and weakened campaign efforts.

According to party sources, the BNP has shared 14 seats with its partners, including six seats given to leaders who joined the party.

Alliance candidates are now facing their main challenge from BNP rebel candidates rather than rivals from other parties.

Tensions are most visible in Bogura-2, where Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna alleged that a BNP candidate created “many problems and complications” during the nomination process.

Manna said that although the BNP high command had earlier encouraged him to contest from the seat, he faced organised

resistance when he went to submit his papers.

“On the day of nomination submission, not only the BNP candidate, but also district BNP leaders and almost all leaders of the lawyers’ organisations, along with lawyers brought from Dhaka, used their full strength to create a mob and oppose my nomination,” he said.

After overcoming those hurdles, Manna said he later found that those involved in obstructing him had been given BNP tickets.

He also claimed that the same nomination papers rejected in Bogura-2 were later accepted in Dhaka-18. “I will file an appeal and then make my next decision.”

Similar allegations have emerged in Jhenaidah-4, where Rashed Khan, who joined the BNP after resigning as general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad, accused supporters of a BNP rebel candidate of issuing threats and intimidation.

“Local BNP leaders and activists should cooperate with me, since I am a BNP-nominated candidate. But supporters of another BNP rebel candidate are threatening me. They are even creating obstacles when I try to rent an office to run my election campaign.”

He claimed that he has received death threats on social media and said he expects the party high command to resolve the matter.

Contacted, BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince warned of strict

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Ziaul changed Rab tactics post N’ganj 7-murder

Says chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday told International Crimes Tribunal-1 that former Rab official Ziaul Ahsan allegedly changed the force’s methods of disposing of bodies after the Narayanganj seven-murder victims were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river.

After the incident triggered widespread public outrage, Ziaul ordered that bricks matching the victims’ body weight be tied to corpses before dumping them into rivers so they would not surface, Tajul said.

Citing the account of a victim of enforced disappearance, the chief prosecutor told the tribunal that a guard at the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell where the victim had been detained revealed the instruction. The guard, Tajul said, spoke on a quiet night, burdened by guilt.

The guard also told the victim that as part of a plan to kill him, his weight had been measured about a week after his detention. The victim survived only because Ziaul was later transferred, Tajul added.

The prosecutor made the submission during the hearing on charge-framing against Maj Gen

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Rogue planet spotted drifting in space

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have spotted a “rogue” planet floating on its own through space.

Most of the planets we know are found orbiting as part of a star system. But some worlds, known as free-floating or rogue planets, drift through the universe independently, seemingly not attached to any

star system of their own.

These objects have been much more mysterious in part because they are far less bright than those other planets. One of the key ways of detecting other worlds, for instance, is spotting them as they move in front of their star – but, without a star, such rogue planets are much harder to see.

Now scientists have spotted one of those planets using a micro-lensing event, which happens when the gravity from an object magnifies the light from a star behind it.

And because that effect was seen from both ground- and space-based telescopes, astronomers were able to compare those different positions and use them to work out the mass of the planet.

It is roughly 22 percent of that of Jupiter, they say, and the planet is around 3,000 parsecs from the centre of our Milky Way galaxy.



Locals put on clothes on stray dogs of the neighbourhood so that they are a little comfortable during the cold spell sweeping over the country. The photo was taken from Nurjahan Road in Mohammadpur in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

5 held for tying woman to pole, pouring cold water on her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have detained five people after a video showing a woman tied to an electric pole and having cold water poured on her in the capital went viral on social media.

Ali Ahmed Masud, assistant commissioner of Gulshan Zone, yesterday said the detainees were seen in the video and are currently being questioned.

“No case has been filed yet, as the woman has not been located so far,” he said, adding, “If we find her, we will be able to know what actually happened.”

According to the detainees, they apprehended the woman two days ago while she was allegedly trying to steal from a local madrasa in the Norda area, the police officer said.

Quoting the detainees, Masud said madrasa students were resting in their rooms at the time, and their clothes were on hangers. The woman allegedly went to the second and third floors of the madrasa and searched the pockets of the clothes.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5