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No women on tickets of 30 parties

Only 109 of 2,568 JS aspirants are female

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Women remain largely absent from the electoral race, with 30 of the 51 political parties contesting the upcoming national election fielding no female aspirants at all, Election Commission data shows.

The figures lay bare a stark imbalance -- despite women making up half the population, their presence among candidates remains marginal.

Of the 2,568 aspirants for the February 12 polls, only 109, just 4.24 percent, are women. Seventy-two of them were nominated by parties, while the rest are independents.

The exclusion is most pronounced among Jamaat-e-Islami, which submitted 276 nominations without a single woman, followed by Islami Andolan Bangladesh with 268.

Several other parties, large and small, have also fielded exclusively male candidates, reinforcing what female activists describe as tokenistic and limited efforts at inclusion across the political spectrum.



DEA agents escort captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, from a helicopter as Maduro heads to the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse in Manhattan for an initial appearance on US federal charges including narco-terrorism, conspiracy, drug trafficking, and money laundering, in New York City yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS



Bangladesh's existence rooted in Liberation War

Says Tarique, likely to visit Bogura on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existence of Bangladesh would not have been possible without the 1971 Liberation War, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday.

Describing the Liberation War as the foundation of Bangladesh, he said the BNP believes the country will move forward while upholding the aspirations of the '71 Liberation War, and the '90 and '24 mass uprisings.

He emphasised his vision of creating a liberal, democratic, and welfare-oriented Bangladesh. PHOTO ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Cold wave taking a toll on children, elderly

Hospital admissions with cold-related diseases soar; experts blame La Niña

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dense fog that set in late December continues to persist, dragging down daytime temperatures and driving up cold-related illnesses. Daily life across Dhaka and the northern districts has slowed to a crawl, with children, the elderly, and low-income families bearing the brunt of the chill.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 48 people have died of cold-related diseases across the country since November.

Currently, a mild cold wave is sweeping across Rajshahi division and the districts of Dinajpur, Jashore, Chuadanga, and Kushtia.

Climate scientist Rashed Chowdhury, adjunct faculty at Arizona State University, said Bangladesh's cold spell is part of a wider global climate pattern rather than a local anomaly.

"La Niña is cooling not only Bangladesh but also the regional climate," he explained, adding that the polar jet stream is pushing cold air farther south.

"Large parts of the Northern Hemisphere, including regions of the United States and Canada, are also experiencing colder-than-normal winters," he added.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), in its monthly forecast, has already warned of two to three cold waves in January, one of which could be "severe", with temperatures dropping as low as 4°C.

Bazlur Rashid, senior meteorologist at the BMD, said the dense fog is not clearing due to a lack of westerly winds and rainfall. "The

- 48 died from cold-related diseases since Nov
- Polar jet stream cooling entire region
- BMD forecasts 2-3 cold waves in January

situation will not improve until the fog lifts. People will feel colder as foggy conditions block sunlight," he noted.

Around this time of year, Dhaka's daytime temperature usually hovers near 28°C. Yesterday, however, it was just 19°C due to heavy fog.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'I'm still president' of Venezuela

Maduro tells NY court, pleads not guilty to narco-terrorism charges, slams US ops

AGENCIES

Toppled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro yesterday pleaded not guilty to charges of narco-terrorism after President Donald Trump's stunning capture of him rattled world leaders and left officials in Caracas scrambling to respond.

Maduro, 63, pleaded not guilty in New York federal court to four criminal counts that include narco-terrorism, cocaine importation conspiracy and possession of machine guns and destructive devices.

"I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man. I am still president of my country," Maduro said through an interpreter, before being cut off by US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein. Maduro's wife Cilia Flores also pleaded not guilty.

Lawyers for both Maduro, and his wife said that their clients won't seek bail at this time. The attorneys added that they'll seek an application at a later date. Maduro and his wife will stay in a New York jail until their next hearing on March 17. Protesters gathered outside the courthouse ahead of the arraignment.

The ousted leader, his hands zip-tied, and his wife were transported under guard yesterday morning from a Brooklyn detention centre to a helicopter bound for the Manhattan court.

The arraignment got underway as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told an emergency UN Security Council meeting that there should

- Caracas softens tone towards Trump
- UN chief questions legality of US raid
- Dhaka expresses concern over Maduro's detention
- 32 Cubans killed in US raid in Venezuela

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh suspends IPL broadcast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh interim government decided yesterday to suspend the broadcast of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season, scheduled to start on March 26, until further notice.

In a press release issued by the country's TV-2 wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, it was stated that the directive by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to have Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman released from the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) squad last Saturday for the upcoming IPL had come to the government's attention.

The press release -- signed by Assistant Secretary Mohammad Firoz Khan and sent to state radio agency Bangladesh. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A family member of July martyr Faisal Sarker breaks down in tears at his grave in the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital yesterday. The Criminal Investigation Department had exhumed 114 unclaimed bodies of July martyrs to collect DNA samples for testing. Following analysis, the identities of eight victims, including Faisal, were confirmed. PHOTO: STAR

'At least now my son knows where his father rests'

Some families get closure as eight July martyrs identified in Rayerbazar unmarked graves

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and TOUSIF KAIUM

Little Hamim was just eight months old when his father Mahim Mia, a pickup driver, left their home to join the July movement in the capital's Mohammadpur on July 18, 2024.

However, Mahim never returned to see his little boy. Brutally killed during the movement in the same area, Mahim's body was buried unidentified and unclaimed in the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

For over a year and a half, Mahim's family, certain that he was among the 114 unclaimed bodies of July martyrs buried there, were unable to tell Hamim exactly where his father was laid to rest.

The search finally ended as the DNA matching results for eight of the bodies were presented at the graveyard yesterday.

Hamim was finally found in grave no-9. His wife Jasmin Akter, with tears in her eyes, said, "For the first time, my son touched the soil of his father's grave. At least now he knows where his father rests."

Along with Mahim, seven other July martyrs were identified so far.

The 114 bodies were exhumed by the Criminal Investigation Department of Police to collect DNA samples. SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Malaysia to introduce 10-year term limit for PM

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday he would introduce legislation this year to limit the prime minister's term to a maximum 10 years, fulfilling one of his campaign promises.

Speaking to ministers and civil servants after a cabinet meeting, Anwar cautioned against clinging to power and reminded them that "everyone has a term limit" without exception.

"We will table a bill to limit the term of the prime minister, not exceeding 10 years or two full terms," Anwar said in a special New Year's announcement.

After serving the term, "it is better for us to hand it over to the next generation", he added.

There is currently no term limit and former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad was in power for 22 years during his first tenure until he stepped down in 2003.

Mahathir then came out of retirement to lead a disparate opposition coalition that ousted the graft-tainted government of then prime minister Najib Razak in the 2018 elections.



A child suffering from cold-related illnesses and admitted to Bangladesh Shishu Hospital is being taken for medical tests yesterday. The child has been in the hospital for six days. Hospitals across the country are witnessing a surge in child patients suffering from pneumonia, cold, cough, and other respiratory diseases.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

2 shipbreaking workers found dead in Sitakunda

Witness cites beaching accident, yard owner alleges robbery attempt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The body of a shipbreaking worker and severed parts of another were recovered from the coast near a shipbreaking yard in Chattogram's Sitakunda yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Md Saiful Islam, 38, whose body was found severely dismembered, and Abdul Khalek Ratan, 34, both from Gaibandha and workers of KR Ship Recycling Yard.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Al Mamun, senior station officer of the Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence's Kumira Station, said, "The bodies were found lying on the seashore near the passenger jetty in Kumira and were recovered between 7:30am and 9:30am yesterday."

"We could recover one intact body and the severed hands, legs and head of another worker, and later handed them over to police."

Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, a co-worker of the deceased and a witness, told this correspondent that he, Ratan, Saiful, and another worker were on a boat on the left side of the yard to secure the anchor of a ship that was about to be beached. "Although the ship was supposed to be beached on the right side, it often veered to the left.... When the ship was coming towards us, we were about to jump into the water to save our lives, but the propeller hit me and another."

"We were thrown quite far into the sea and got stuck in the water near the jetty for around two hours before others came to rescue us. I later learned that Ratan's body and Saiful's body parts were recovered."

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Cold wave taking a toll on children, the elderly

FROM PAGE 1

BMD recorded the day's lowest temperature at 8.4°C in Ishwardi, Pabna, while the highest was 26.7°C in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar. In Dhaka, the maximum was 19.7°C and the minimum 13.2°C.

Local correspondents reported that the sun was absent in Ishwardi and adjoining areas throughout the day. The severe cold has disrupted lives and livelihoods, with many residents venturing outdoors only for emergencies. In Pabna, day labourers and homeless people were seen burning wood along roadsides to keep warm.

"I usually earn Tk 400-500 by pedalling from dawn to noon. Today, I made only Tk 150," said Abdul Latif, a rickshaw puller in Ishwardi

municipality.

He added that despite burning scrap paper to warm himself, his hands felt "frozen" and he struggled to steer his rickshaw.

COLD-RELATED ILLNESSES

As the cold wave sweeps parts of the country, the number of patients suffering from cold-related illnesses has risen sharply, particularly among children and the elderly.

DGHS data show hospital admissions for acute respiratory infections (ARI) continue to climb: 1,102 patients were admitted in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday, compared to 1,031 on Sunday and 632 on December 27.

Meanwhile, 2,220 patients were hospitalised with diarrhoea in the same 24-hour period, down from

2,332 on Sunday and 2,676 on December 29.

Since November 1, hospitals have admitted 1.02 lakh patients—30,657 with ARI and 71,406 with diarrhoea. Forty-eight people have died during this period.

Prof Mahbulul Hoque, director of Shishu Hospital, said 30-40 percent of patients at the hospital's outpatient department are suffering from cold-related illnesses. "Every day, some 1,000 to 1,400 people seek treatment at the outpatient department. Some, mainly with respiratory issues, require admission."

He warned that severe cold and dense fog are especially harmful to children and the elderly. "If possible, they should stay indoors,

wear masks, and cover their heads when outside. For common colds, guardians can use nasal drops and certain antihistamines. In cases of breathing problems, patients must be taken to hospital. Antibiotics should not be used without a doctor's consultation."

Meanwhile, the advisory committee on law and order yesterday urged authorities to take steps to ensure road safety amid the cold wave.

Drivers have been asked to remain cautious, as foggy conditions on highways have significantly reduced visibility.

Transport owners and workers have been directed to enforce safe driving practices during this period.

FROM PAGE 1

The party has asked multiple leaders to collect and submit nomination papers for single seats in a number of constituencies.

Several others, including JaSaD, Ganosamhati Andolon, Basad, and AB Party, nominated between three and six women each.

Even parties born out of mass movements with strong female participation showed limited inclusion. The NCP, formed by leaders of the July uprising, nominated three women among its 44 aspirants.

The Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972, requires parties to reserve at least 33 percent of committee posts for women, including at the central level.

Yet almost all parties have failed to meet this obligation. In 2021, the Election Commission extended the deadline to 2030.

Munira Khan, president of the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance, called the situation "deeply frustrating".

"Women contribute significantly to the economy and make up

half of the population, yet their representation in parliamentary nominations is negligible," she said.

"We shout about democracy all the time, but this picture of internal democracy within political parties is profoundly disappointing," she added, questioning whether parties truly enforce rules mandating women's inclusion in their structures.

Shireen Huq, chief of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, said she was "disappointed but not surprised" by the low level of women's representation.

"This scenario is a manifestation of a male-dominated political tradition and culture," she said.

Anticipating such an outcome, Huq said the commission had proposed a 50-50 model of representation, under which each constituency would have both a general seat and a reserved seat for women.

The proposal would expand parliament to 600 members, with women contesting the reserved seats against women and being elected through direct votes, she added.

'At least now my son knows where his father rests'

FROM PAGE 1

for testing, which began on December 7 and continued till December 27 with the help of the United Nations Human Rights Office, Dhaka Medical College, and both local and international forensic experts.

Samples were also taken from families of martyrs who went missing during the uprising.

The other identified victims are Asadullah, 31; Parvez Bepari, 23; Rafikul Islam, 52; Sohel Rana, 38; Rafikul Islam, 29; Faisal Sarker, 26; and Kabil Hossain, 58.

At the programme, the grave numbers were handed over to the grieving family members, many of whom broke down in tears. Some took fistfuls of earth and wept in the

memory of their loved ones.

Martyr Faisal had gone missing from the capital's Abdullahpur on July 19, 2024. His younger brother Fahad Sarkar said, "For a year and a half, we searched for him relentlessly -- in hospital morgues, police stations, jails -- but never found any clue. We were then informed that he was buried in Rayerbazar."

"We would visit the graveyard sometimes to pray for his soul, but always felt a deep sadness because we didn't know where he was laid to rest."

Expressing gratitude to the CID and the government's efforts in identifying Faisal's body in grave no 35, he said, "After being informed, five of us from the family came here

around 6:30am to offer prayers at grave no 35. It brought us some sense of peace."

Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk-e-Azam, Local Government Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan, Chief Adviser's Special Assistant (Health Ministry) Prof Syedur Rahman, and CID Chief Md Shibgat Ullah were present at the programme.

Stating that the government is committed to returning the bodies of all martyrs to their families, Faruk-e-Azam said, "After a long wait, we have successfully identified eight unidentified martyrs. Their families can finally know where their loved ones are laid to rest, bringing mental relief to them and the nation."

Adilur said the sacrifices made

during the July uprising would remain etched in the nation's history, and restoring the dignity of unidentified martyrs is the state's moral responsibility. He added that the state undertook a science-based process to ensure that exhumation and DNA sample collection were done with integrity and transparency.

Prof Syedur said the identification would assist the judicial process related to the uprising and stand as a strong example of Bangladesh's forensic capacity.

CID Chief Shigbat said that identifying these eight bodies has provided a measure of closure and accountability.

Bangladesh's existence rooted in Liberation War

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state and wanted to work in that direction.

Tarique made the remarks during a meeting at the Gulshan chairperson's office with leaders of the left-wing alliance "Democratic United Front", a confirmation made by Razequzzaman Ratan, assistant general secretary of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), in a press release.

Leaders also discussed the country's overall political and law and order, as well as various issues related to the upcoming national election.

In the meeting, BNP and front leaders said they believe that there will be ideological differences and differing opinions in politics, but they agree on ensuring the freedom to express constructive criticism and opinions.

"Both leaders agree that in the past, critics were tortured by the previous government by labelling them as traitors and against development. They agree that no one should be able to do this in future," read the release.

The front leaders told Tarique, "After the mass uprising of 2024, an opportunity has been created to bring the country back to the path of the Liberation War. But the anti-independence group is pushing for extreme communalism in the country. They want to erase the Liberation War and take the country back to 1947."

The Democratic United Front delegation included CPB Presidium member Mujahidul Islam Selim,

President Kazi Sajjad Jahir Chandan, General Secretary Abdullah Al Kafi Ratan, among others.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir was also present at the meeting.

Later, a four-member delegation of Ganosamhati Andolon, led by its Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, also met Tarique and discussed various issues related to politics and the upcoming election.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Monju, Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Iran, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader Junaid Al Habib, and among others, also held a meeting with the BNP acting chairman separately.

VISIT

Tarique is likely to visit his ancestral home and constituency in Bogura next Sunday, January 11.

He is expected to leave for Bogura from his Gulshan residence in the morning. Upon his arrival, he will attend a doa mahfil for late BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and later visit the house of Abu Sayed, who was killed during the mass uprising, in Rangpur. Rezaul Karim Badsha, Bogura BNP president, told this newspaper.

This will be Tarique's first visit to his ancestral home in Bogura after 19 years, the BNP leader added.

Tarique's father, BNP founder and former president Ziaur Rahman, has his ancestral home in Gabtali upazila of the district.

Party leaders said this would be

his first trip outside Dhaka after returning home from London. Tarique last visited Bogura in 2006.

In the upcoming national election, Tarique will contest from the Bogura-6 (Sadar) for the first time, in addition to Dhaka-17.

From 1991 to 2008, Khaleda ran in every national election from the Bogura-7 as the party's candidate and won each election by a large margin.

BNP leader Rezaul said Tarique would travel by road from Bogura to Rangpur, where he would visit the grave of Abu Sayed.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

A condolence message sent by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus over the death of Khaleda was handed over to Tarique.

Chief Adviser's Private Secretary Shazeeb M Khairul Islam delivered the message to Tarique at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

In the message, Yunus expressed deep sorrow and grief at the death of Khaleda, describing her as a symbol of the country's democratic movement.

Yesterday marked the final day of BNP's seven-day mourning following the death of party chief.

BNP senior leader Abdul Moyeen Khan described Khaleda as an exceptional leader whose name is closely linked with Bangladesh's political journey, democratic movement, and the long struggle to establish people's voting and fundamental rights.

He told reporters after visiting her grave at Zia Udyan in the capital.

Bangladesh suspends

FROM PAGE 1

Betar and various TV channels -- noted that no reason was communicated for the decision behind Mustafizur's exclusion, adding that it had caused distress among the people of Bangladesh.

"In this situation, it is hereby instructed that all broadcasts and telecasts of IPL matches and related programmes be suspended until further instructions are issued," the statement added.

The directive comes a day after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided not to send the national team to India for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, set to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7, considering the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and having heeded the advice of the Bangladesh government.

The BCB also requested the game's governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), to consider relocating Bangladesh's matches outside India. In an attempt to accommodate the request, the ICC, under chairman Jay Shah, is already drafting a revised schedule, as per a report by The Indian Express yesterday.

Mustafizur's exclusion from the IPL caused widespread criticism across borders. Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul condemned the move, which he said was on political grounds, while Cultural

Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki slammed Mustafizur's omission as "disgraceful". Information and Broadcasting Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan described the incident as an "unfortunate" one, saying "politics was brought into the game."

Indian politician and current Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor termed this decision by BCCI an "unnecessary politicisation of a sporting matter," according to a report by The Indian Express yesterday. Earlier, Tharoor had also called out the BCCI for "deplorably" forcing Mustafizur's removal, reiterating that politics should not be dragged into sports.

Mustafizur fetched INR 9.20 crore at last month's mini-auction, making him the most expensive Bangladeshi player in IPL history. The removal of Bangladesh's only representative in this edition of the glamorous T20 league caused an immediate uproar among cricket-crazy Bangladeshi netizens.

Bangladesh are scheduled to take on the West Indies on the opening day of the World Cup at Kolkata's Eden Gardens -- also KKR's home ground, which had received threats of disruption from protesters if Mustafizur featured in the IPL.

The Tigers are also scheduled to play their next two games at the same venue on February 9 and 14 before moving to Mumbai for their final group-stage match on February 17.

Philippines arrests ex-general who called for president's ouster

AFP, Manila

A former Philippine air force general accused of encouraging the military to abandon President Ferdinand Marcos was arrested on a charge of sedition yesterday at Manila's international airport.

Romeo Poquiz, who had publicly called for the armed forces to "withdraw their support" from Marcos amid a burgeoning corruption scandal, was detained by Philippine national police after returning from a holiday in Thailand, interior department secretary Jonvic Remulla told AFP.

"He was arrested for the charge of

sedition in connection with his recent statements. He was arrested upon arrival from Bangkok this morning," Remulla said in a text message.

Speaking at a news conference, acting police chief Jose Nartatez said Poquiz had been detained on the basis of a December 5 warrant.

The 67-year-old ex-general confirmed his arrest in a post on Facebook.

"I was arrested by the (Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) at the Airport Terminal ... Long live the Filipino!" Poquiz said, adding he was being taken to Manila's Camp Crame police headquarters.



Pakistan PM pays tribute to Khaleda Zia

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif yesterday visited the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad to offer condolences over the death of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

During the visit, the Pakistan prime minister wrote his remarks in the visitors' book, paying tribute to the late leader, who also served as chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, according to a message received in Dhaka.

Khaleda Zia, the first female prime minister of Bangladesh, breathed her last on December 30, 2025 at the age of 80 while undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital in the city.



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman in a meeting with the left-leaning alliance, Democratic United Front, at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Govt warns parties of sabotage ahead of elections

BAHARAM KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With the national elections approaching, the interim government has warned political parties about possible infiltration by agents of fascist forces and saboteurs posing as allies.

The concern was raised at a law and order advisory committee meeting held at the Secretariat yesterday.

The meeting also discussed drafting a new ordinance to ensure the protection of leaders of the July uprising, including student leaders who played key roles in the nationwide movement, sources told The Daily Star.

At least two sources present at the meeting confirmed that the decision to draft the ordinance has already been taken and that discussions have taken place focused on its progress. The ordinance is expected to be enacted soon.

Preserving communal harmony during the election period was another key issue discussed, said an official.

After the meeting, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury urged political parties to remain vigilant and prevent saboteurs from exploiting inter-party rivalries.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to holding the election on schedule, the home adviser said attempts to derail the process would fail.

He directed law enforcement agencies to adopt a stricter approach to prevent disruptions.

A home ministry official present at the meeting said surveillance has been intensified nationwide. Intelligence agencies have been instructed to strengthen monitoring, while law enforcement agencies will work in close coordination to maintain order. Training of security forces and election-related personnel is also being expedited.

Political activities, including rallies and campaigns, will be closely monitored to ensure stability, the official said.

The meeting discussed measures to maintain communal harmony and prevent the spread of rumours

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JnU student union polls today

Enthusiasm wanes after three postponements

RAKIB MADBER

After being postponed three times, the Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUcsu) and hall union elections are scheduled to be held today amid tight security on campus.

According to the Election Commission, voting will be taking place in a total of 178 polling booths at 39 centres. CCTV cameras have been installed at all centres to ensure transparency, and the vote-counting process will be broadcast live after polling ends.

A total of 16,445 voters are expected to cast their ballots. For the central union, 157 candidates are contesting 21 posts, while 33 candidates for 13 hall union posts.

Earlier, following student protests on September 17, the university administration initially scheduled the elections for November 27. It was rescheduled for December 22 due to earthquake panic and campus closure, before being deferred again to December 30.

On December 30, the election was postponed once again after the death of former prime minister and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia. The Election Commission later fixed today (January 6) as the new date.

The repeated postponements created uncertainty among voters and candidates, raising concerns over turnout.

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DHAKA AIRPORT Third terminal not opening under interim govt

Says civil aviation adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) will not open during the tenure of the interim government, Civil Aviation Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said yesterday.

He made the remarks at a press conference at the Secretariat on the Travel Agency (Registration and Control) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

"The government will not be able to open the third terminal during its tenure. We made every effort, including negotiations with



the Japanese vice minister, but our attempts were unsuccessful," the adviser said, adding that opening the terminal was not possible despite their best efforts.

He said the ministry is now working on completing the procedural requirements for the next steps.

The next government will take a decision on this issue, he added. Sources at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said the delay is due to unresolved issues over the operation and maintenance of the terminal.

Negotiations between CAAB and a Japanese consortium on the mandatory operation and maintenance agreement failed to reach a consensus, said a CAAB official.

The consortium includes Japan Airport Terminal Company, SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Severe cold paralyses daily life in Pabna

Ishwardi records lowest temperature at 8.4°C

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU,
Pabna

Severe cold and dense fog, with no sunlight, have been disrupting lives and livelihoods in Pabna and adjoining areas.

Ishwardi upazila recorded 8.4 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, the country's lowest temperature of the day. The temperature may continue to fall over the next four to five days, according to the Met Office.

Low-income people, including day labourers, have been suffering the most, as they have to venture out in the cold weather to earn a living.

"There is hardly any passenger, but I still have to come out. Today, I have had only one trip to Chatmohar upazila so far," said Md Shahid, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver on the Pabna-Ishwardi road. Md Jalal Uddin, an elderly rickshaw-puller, shared a similar ordeal.

In the Ishwardi rail station area, most trains were seen moving

slowly with fog lights turned on throughout the day amid dense fog and poor visibility.

"Because of slow movement amid dense fog, most trains are running at least 20-30 minutes late," said Hasina Akter, Pakshey divisional transportation officer of the railway. "Train lines are often affected by cold weather, so the trains are moving carefully, causing the delay," she added.

Day labourers and marginal people were found trying to get relief from the cold by burning wood and paper on roadsides throughout the day.

Agricultural activities have also been severely disrupted due to the biting cold.

Md Kamruzzaman, a farmer in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila, said, "This is the time for onion cultivation, but we are having a hard time working in the fields in such cold weather."

If the cold weather continues until next week, it will result in major losses for onion farmers, he added.



A rickshaw van-puller hauls a goods-laden vehicle to earn a living while people light small fires along roadsides to keep themselves warm amid severe cold in Pabna's Ishwardi yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

REINSTATEMENT OF CANDIDATURE

42 appeals filed with EC on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 42 appeal applications were submitted to the Election Commission yesterday, on the first day, against the returning officers' decisions following the scrutiny of nomination papers for the February 12 national elections.

EC data showed that of the 42 applicants, 41 appeals were filed against the cancellation of nomination papers, while one appeal was lodged against a returning officer's decision to accept a nomination paper.

Region-wise, three appeals were submitted in Rangpur, five in Rajshahi, three in Khulna, one in Barishal, one in Mymensingh, 15 in Dhaka, seven in Faridpur, four in Cumilla, and two in Chattogram. The only appeal filed against the acceptance of a

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



JULY KILLINGS IN ASHULIA Cross-examination of IO completed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

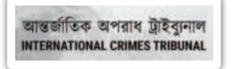
The cross examination of Investigation Officer Jane Alam Khan in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of seven people and the burning of five bodies and one victim alive during the July uprising in Ashulia was completed yesterday.

Afterwards, defence counsels for three of the 16 accused filed applications before the International Crimes Tribunal-2, seeking permission to produce six defence witnesses.

The prosecution opposed the pleas, arguing that applications for defence witnesses must be submitted at the commencement of the trial, which the defence had failed to do.

Prosecutor Mizanul Islam told the tribunal that the rules clearly require the defence to inform the court at the beginning of the trial if they intend to produce witnesses.

Tribunal chairman Justice Nozrul Islam SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES DNCC to form team to oversee management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka North City Corporation has taken an initiative to form a nine-member steering committee to ensure unrestricted public access to parks, playgrounds, and public spaces under its jurisdiction and to oversee their proper management and maintenance.

The decision was made at the 13th corporation meeting of DNCC held yesterday at Gulshan Nagar Bhaban. The committee is being formed to regularly monitor whether the 106 parks, playgrounds, and public spaces located across 52 wards under DNCC are being properly managed and maintained.

DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azaz SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



SC cautions media over misleading reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following some false reports on two judges' leaves, the Supreme Court administration yesterday issued a notification cautioning that any individual or organisation publishing or broadcasting false, misleading or untrue news about the SC will be held liable for contempt of court.

"In view of the above, all media professionals are hereby directed to verify the objectivity and authenticity of any news relating to the Supreme Court of Bangladesh with the Supreme Court's media focal person or the office of the registrar general prior to publication or broadcast. In the future, if any false, misleading, or untrue news concerning the Supreme Court of Bangladesh is published or broadcast, the individual or institution concerned shall SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



KM Mozibul Hoque elected UAP chairman

CITY DESK

KM Mozibul Hoque has been elected chairman of the Board of Governors of the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) Foundation and chairman of the UAP Board of Trustees for the 2026-27 term, said a press release.



Hoque was born in Muradnagar of Cumilla. Over the years, he has played a significant role in education, development, international engagement, and the corporate sector.

He has served as vice-chairman of the Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association and as president and dean of the Consular Corps Bangladesh from 2018 to 2020. Hoque is the honorary consul general of Yemen in Bangladesh and also serves as chairman of TAS Aviation Group, Shah Group, and Bakkah Holding.

Other members elected to the UAP Foundation and the UAP Board of Trustees include Alamzeb Farzad Ahmed, Abdul Malek Mollah, Zaki Alam, and Mahbuba Haque.

Russian worker found dead in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police recovered the body of a Russian worker from his dormitory in the Green City residential area of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna on Sunday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Raibak Maksim, 30, an employee of Atomotech Energy Company working at the power plant.

Md Muminuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, said Maksim was found dead in his dormitory when his roommate entered the room.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body, he said.

Following autopsy at Pabna General Hospital morgue, the body was handed over as per procedure on Sunday night, the OC added.

However, the findings of the autopsy report could not be known immediately.



PHOTO: STAR

Burning topsoil for bricks rampant in Rangpur

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Agricultural land across the Rangpur region has been experiencing a decline in productivity, coupled with environmental damage due to the loss of fertile topsoil, which is being openly extracted and supplied to around 595 brick kilns in the four districts.

Locals have alleged that topsoil is being extracted strategically – using day-labourers during the day and excavators at night.

In the past week, local administrations have fined 12 brick kilns a total of Tk 15 lakh in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha, and Rangpur districts for using fertile topsoil from croplands to make bricks. The fines were imposed during drives in Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas of Lalmonirhat, Phulbari, Nageshwari and Ulipur upazilas of Kurigram, Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha, and Taraganj upazila of Rangpur.

Despite repeated drives by local authorities, the extraction and use of topsoil for brick-making has continued.

Jamal Uddin, a technician at a brick kiln in Nageshwari upazila, said it takes about five kilogrammes of soil to make a single high-quality brick. "Each brick kiln produces 40-50 lakh bricks a year, requiring a huge amount of topsoil from agricultural lands," he added.

Aftab Hossain, a brick kiln owner from Hatibandha upazila, claimed, "We buy this soil directly from farmers. Farmers voluntarily sell the topsoil and benefit financially."

"If the collection of topsoil is stopped, brick kilns will have to shut down. If brick production stops, development activities of the state will also be disrupted," he added.

Dr Safinur Rahman, senior scientific officer of the Rangpur Divisional Soil Resource Development Institute, explained,

"The topsoil is the most important layer of soil, where the amount of organic matter is highest and most biological activities take place. Once this soil is removed, it takes more than 10 years for the land to regain its previous fertility."

Sirajul Islam, additional director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the Rangpur region, said due to brick kilns extracting and using topsoil from agricultural land, soil fertility is deteriorating and crop production is being disrupted.

Aftab Uddin, 65, a farmer from Durgapur village in Ulipur upazila, said, "Brick kiln owners extract topsoil from several bighas of land at once. As a result, that land elevation becomes lower than the surrounding fields, causing problems with irrigation and cultivation on the land. In this way, kiln owners are strategically blackmailing us into selling the topsoil of our land."

Narayan Sarkar, 60, a farmer

from Pargachha upazila, said the topsoil of one bigha of land sells for Tk 18,000-20,000.

"While it seems profitable at first, once the topsoil is removed, expected crop yields are not obtained for several years, thereby generating losses," he added.

Shafiqul Islam, a brick kiln owner from Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur, claimed that they buy soil from farmers at a fair price and never put pressure on them.

Rezul Karim, assistant director of the Department of Environment in Kurigram, confirmed, "The matter has been informed to the local administration, and fines are being imposed through drives in different places."

Rangpur Divisional Commissioner Shahidul Islam said that district administrators have been instructed to take legal action against brick kiln owners to stop the extraction of topsoil from agricultural land.

10 cops suspended for embezzling 1 lakh yaba in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The authorities have suspended 10 police personnel of Chattogram Metropolitan Police and Cox's Bazar District Police after an internal probe committee found their involvement in embezzling around one lakh yaba pills seized from a police constable in Chattogram city's Bakalia area on December 8 last year.

Among the 10 policemen, nine are members of different ranks of CMP, and one is a constable from Cox's Bazar District Police who carried the contraband yaba pills from Cox's Bazar, said police sources.

They were suspended after the single-member probe committee submitted its findings to CMP Commissioner Hasib Aziz. Additional Police Commissioner (Traffic) of CMP, Wahidul Hoque Chowdhury, headed the committee.

The suspended policemen are -- Inspector (Investigation) Tanvir Hossen, Sub-Inspector Md Al Amin Sarkar, SI Md Amir Hossain, Assistant Sub-Inspector Saiful Alam, ASI Ziaur Rahman, ASI Saddam Hossain, ASI Enamul Hoque, Constable Rashedul Hasan, Constable Umme Habiba Swapna, and Constable Intiaj Hossain Sowrav.

Among them, Constable Intiaj is a member of

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

RANGPUR DIVISION 3,152 held in anti-narcotics drives in 2025

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) arrested 3,152 people during a total 9,910 anti-narcotics drives across Rangpur division between January 1 and December 31 last year.

A total of 3,027 cases were filed during this time, said Masud Hossain, additional director of the DNC's Rangpur divisional office.

He said regular anti-narcotics operations are being conducted daily in eight districts under the division -- Rangpur, Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, and Thakurgaon.

During the drives, DNC teams seized around 10,600 kilogrammes of cannabis, 4,500 bottles of phensedyl, 500 grammes of heroin and approximately 5,500 yaba tablets, along with other locally produced and foreign illegal drugs.

The authorities also seized Tk 8 lakh in cash, 18 motorcycles, three minibuses, three CNG-run auto-rickshaws, 10 easy bikes and 64 mobile phones.

Officials said that, as a division along the border, Rangpur is being used as a key transit route for drug trafficking, adding that a significant number of those arrested were women, pointing to a growing trend in border areas.

Shahidur Rahman, a schoolteacher from Naodanga area of Phulbari upazila in Kurigram, said drug syndicates in border regions have been luring women from poor families into drug transportation, with children also being drawn into the activity occasionally.

A woman from the Naodanga border area, speaking on condition of anonymity, said traffickers use women to carry cannabis and phensedyl to Rangpur, Bogura, Natore and Dhaka in exchange for large sums of money.

Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000.

e-GP Tender Notice (OTM)

Date: বঙ্গাব্দ ১৪৩২ খ্রিঃ

e-Tender is invited in The National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods and related services mentioned below.

SL. No.	Tender/Proposal Package No. and Description	Tender/Proposal ID	e-Tender Publication Date & Time	e-Tender Last Selling Date & Time
01	P-381, Supply and Testing of Electrical Goods	1199854	04-01-2026 From 12:00	18-01-2026 Up to 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP System Portal (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 Banks branches. Further information and guidance are available in the national e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Director
Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS)
University of Dhaka,

GD-29

SC cautions media

FROM PAGE 3
be legally liable for such contemptuous conduct," said the notification signed by SC's Registrar General Mohammad Habibur Rahman

The notification said recently various media outlets, including television scrolls, have published erroneous news claiming that a senior judge of the Appellate Division has gone on leave due to the appointment of the chief justice in violation of seniority, and that a judge of the High Court Division has gone on leave due to not being

assigned to a bench. Such reports are entirely false, misleading, and deeply regrettable.

"It is pertinent to mention that the Hon'ble Mr Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam of the Appellate Division has availed leave due to his mother's illness, and the Hon'ble Mr Justice Farid Ahmed of the High Court Division is temporarily unable to participate in judicial functions as he has been hospitalized due to illness. These matters have no connection whatsoever with the news circulated in the media," according to the notification.

Cross-examination

FROM PAGE 3
Chowdhury observed that intentionally delaying a trial constitutes an offence.

The tribunal said it would pass an order today in this regard.

The 16 accused – 14 police personnel and two civilians – have been charged with superior command responsibility, conspiracy, incitement, facilitation, abetment, complicity, and failure to prevent or punish the crimes.

Eight of the accused are now in custody.

Those currently in custody include former superintendent of police Abdullah Hil Kafi, former

additional superintendent of police of Savar Circle Shahidul Islam, Inspector Arafat Hossain Arzu, former ASIs Abdul Malek, Arafat Uddin, Sheikh Afzalul Haque, Kamrul Hasan, and former constable Mukul Chokder. They were produced before the tribunal during yesterday's proceedings.

According to the prosecution, five protesters were already dead and one was critically injured when police, acting on instructions from senior officers and political leaders, piled their bodies together on a police pick-up van and set them on fire in Ashulia on August 5, 2024.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Appointment of Consultant for Ground Development Works

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/Admin/Grounds/2026/08 Date: 06th January 2026

Sealed Proposals are hereby invited from reputed, experienced & bonafide Consulting Firms/Organizations for Appointment of Consultant for 02 (Two) Nos. Ground Development Works (ICC Standard) including detailed drawing & design, estimate preparation as per the design and full-time construction supervision for the National Cricket Ground, Purbachal, as per terms and conditions stated in the Proposal Schedule:

Agency	Bangladesh Cricket Board
1	Chief Executive Officer, BCB
2	Appointment of Consultant for 2 Nos. Ground Development Works (Detail Architectural & Engineering Drawings, Design, Estimate & Full-Time Supervision) at National Cricket Ground, Purbachal.
3	
4	Procuring Entity District: Dhaka, Bangladesh
5	Invitation Ref: BCB/Admin/Grounds/2026/08
6	Procurement Method: Open tendering Method (OTM)/ Quality & Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
7	Budget and source of Fund: Bangladesh Cricket Board
8	Tender Opening date and Time: 02/02/2026 at 3:00 pm
9	Name and Address of the Selling Tender: Finance & Accounts Department of Bangladesh Cricket Board at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur - 2, Dhaka, 1216, Bangladesh
10	Place of Receiving & Opening Tender: Management Office of Bangladesh Cricket Board at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216.
11	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender meeting (Optional): To be notified
12	Eligibility of Tenderer: As a Consulting Firm/Organization, the following eligibility criteria must be fulfilled: i) Minimum 15 years' experience in Architectural, Structural & Civil Engineering consultancy. ii) Minimum 02 similar sports ground/stadium (ICC Standard) development consultancy projects completed in last 15 years. iii) Must have qualified & registered professionals - Architect, Structural Engineer, Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer, and Supervisory Staff. iv) Must demonstrate technical capacity for master planning, detailed design, BOQ preparation, and full-time site supervision. v) Firm must be flexible in providing required manpower, equipment, and professional support as per BCB's work schedule.
13	Brief Description of Goods or works: 1) Conduct topographic survey, geotechnical investigation & ground assessment. 2) Prepare detailed estimates, BOQ, technical specifications, and tender documents. 3) Provide full-time on-site supervision, quality control monitoring & progress reporting during project execution. 4) Ensure compliance with national building codes, sports facility standards & BCB guidelines.
14	Address of the Official Inviting Tender: Bangladesh Cricket Board, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216. Phone: +88 028031001-4. Fax: +88028031199
15	The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. Further, BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire tender process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for Tender by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the Tender.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2
Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh Tel: +880 2 8031001-4, Fax: 803 1199

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বেসরকারি শিক্ষক নিবন্ধন ও প্রত্যয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (NTRCA)

www.ntrca.gov.bd

তারিখ: ২০ পৌষ ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ
০৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

৭ম শিক্ষক নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি (বিশেষ)-২০২৬

দেশের সকল এমপিওভুক্ত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের (স্কুল, কলেজ, মাদ্রাসা, কারিগরি ও ব্যবসায় বাবস্থাপনা) নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্যপদে শিক্ষক নিয়োগ প্রদান করা হবে। আগ্রহী নিবন্ধন সমন্বয়কারী প্রার্থীদের নিকট থেকে নিম্নলিখিত শর্তে e-Application আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে:

শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠান ভিত্তিক শূন্যপদের বিবরণ:

শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ধরণ	পদের ধরণ	সংখ্যা
স্কুল ও কলেজ	এমপিও	২৯,৫৭১
মাদ্রাসা	এমপিও	৩৬,৮০৪
কারিগরি ও ব্যবসায় বাবস্থাপনা প্রতিষ্ঠান	এমপিও	৮৩৩
	সর্বমোট	৬৭,২০৮

*উল্লিখিত সংখ্যা কম/বেশী হতে পারে।

- e-Application ফরম পূরণ ও সি জমা প্রদানের তারিখ: ১০ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬খ্রিঃ হতে ১৭ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬খ্রিঃ দিবাগত রাত ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
- আবেদনকারীর বয়স ও শিক্ষক নিবন্ধন সমন্বয় মেয়াদ: ০৪ জুন ২০২৫খ্রিঃ তারিখে সর্বোচ্চ ৩৫ বছর এবং শিক্ষক নিবন্ধন সমন্বয় মেয়াদ নিবন্ধন পরীক্ষার ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে ০৩ (তিন) বছর (শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের গত ০১ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখের ৩৭.০০.০০০০.০০০.০৭৩.০৮.০০০১.২৫.১ নম্বরক)।
- ইন্ডেক্সপ্রার্থী কর্তৃক শিক্ষকদের আবেদন সক্রিয়করণ নির্দেশনাঃ কর্তৃত ইন্ডেক্সপ্রার্থী শিক্ষকগণ সমন্বয় আবেদনের যোগ্য হবেন না।
- শূন্য পদ এবং নিয়োগের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলীঃ পদভিত্তিক শূন্যপদের তালিকা, আবেদন ফরম এবং নিয়োগের অন্যান্য তথ্য ও শর্তাবলী এনটিআরসিএ এর ওয়েবসাইটে www.ntrca.gov.bd এবং টেলিটক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর ওয়েবসাইটে http://ngi.teletalk.com.bd পাওয়া যাবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ
এনটিআরসিএ

GD-32

INTERNATIONAL

Can't accept nations as 'world judge'

Says Chinese FM after US captures Maduro

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing cannot accept any country acting as the "world's judge" after the United States captured Venezuela's Maduro.

"We have never believed that any country can act as the world's police, nor do we accept that any nation can claim to be the world's judge," Wang told his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar during a meeting in Beijing on Sunday, referring to "sudden developments in Venezuela" without directly mentioning the US.

"The sovereignty and security of all countries should be fully protected under international law," China's top diplomat added, in his first remarks since images of the 63-year-old Maduro blindfolded and handcuffed on Saturday stunned Venezuelans.



Members of the militia group known as "Colectivos" march in Caracas on Sunday, calling for the release of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro after he and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured in US strikes on Venezuela. Inset, employees stand near rubble after the US airstrike destroyed a TV and telephone tower in El Hatillo, on the outskirts of Caracas. PHOTO: REUTERS

MYANMAR POLLS
Pro-military party wins in first phase

Official results show

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's dominant pro-military party won the first phase of junta-run elections, the last released official results showed yesterday, with the USDP taking nearly 90 percent of lower house seats.

The military staged a 2021 coup that ousted the democratic government of Aung San Suu Kyi, but is overseeing a month-long phased election it pledges will return power to the people.

Western diplomats and democracy advocates dismiss the poll as a ploy to rebrand military rule, citing Suu Kyi's jailing, her party's dissolution and a crackdown on dissenters.

The pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won 89 of 102 lower house seats included in the first phase, according to an AFP tally of official results released from Friday to yesterday.

The USDP win equates to more than 87 percent of lower house seats included in the first phase of voting on December 28 — the remainder mostly won by a smattering of parties representing ethnic minorities.

TRUMP'S CAPTURE OF MADURO
Concerns grow over potential war with Iran

AGENCIES

Hours after the United States announced the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Israeli politician Yair Lapid issued a warning to Tehran: "The regime in Iran should pay close attention to what is happening in Venezuela."

The forcible removal of Maduro from power came less than a week after US President Donald Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and threatened to launch new strikes against Iran.

Although Washington's tensions with Caracas and Tehran

"A new lawlessness makes everything less stable and war more likely,"

said Jamal Abdi, president of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC).

have different roots and dynamics, analysts say Trump's move against Maduro raises the prospects of war with Iran.

"A new lawlessness makes everything less stable and war more likely," said Jamal Abdi, president of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC).

"Whether Trump becomes enmeshed with 'surgical' regime change, or gives Netanyahu a US imprimatur for similar actions,

it's hard not to see how this gives momentum for the many actors pushing for renewed war with Iran."

He added that Maduro's abduction could prompt Iran "to do something that triggers military action", including developing its own military deterrence or preempting US or Israeli strikes.

Negar Mortazavi, a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy, also said the US actions in Venezuela show Trump's maximalist aims, further dimming the chances of diplomacy.

"What I see and hear from Tehran is that they are not interested in negotiating with the Trump administration the way this administration signals that they want total surrender," Mortazavi

told Al Jazeera.

"So, not much chance for diplomacy at the moment, which then opens the path to the opposite road, that is conflict. Right now, Israel, Iran and the US are on a path to potential conflict."

Abdi echoed that assessment. "This action reinforces every doubt and suspicion about US intentions, and gives more credence to those in Iran who say engaging the US is useless and [that] developing a nuclear deterrent is vital," he told Al Jazeera.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has also been emphasising Maduro's ties to Iran, accusing Caracas, without evidence, of providing the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah a foothold in the Western Hemisphere.



Moderate 5.4 quake hits India's Assam

AFP, New Delhi

A moderate 5.4-magnitude earthquake struck northern India's Assam state early yesterday morning, according to the US Geological Survey.

The shallow quake was centered three kilometres outside of the village of Dhing near India's border with Bhutan and hit around 4:17 am (2247 GMT on Sunday).

The USGS reported strong shaking in the area, but expected a limited population had been affected.

Tremors were felt across Meghalaya and parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal, prompting people in several areas to rush out of their homes. Authorities said there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

The Himalayan region experiences big earthquakes each year, and has been the site of some of India's largest and deadliest tremors.

A 1950 quake killed about 4,800 people in Assam and Tibet.

The Great Assam Earthquake of 1897 is said to be one of the most powerful to have hit India, leaving hundreds dead in the remote hills.

Income of Amir Khosru

FROM PAGE 12

lower than the amount he lost in the share market last year. A major portion of his recent earnings came from Tk 80 lakh in signing money received from Concord Real Estate.

Listed as a businessman, Khosru is contesting from the Chattogram-11 (Bandar-Patenga) constituency. His wife, also a businessperson, has seen her income rise from Tk 9.1 lakh in 2018 to Tk 37.8 lakh. She too received Tk 7.02 lakh in signing money from Concord.

Khosru's personal expenses, excluding share market losses, amount to Tk 31 lakh annually. He has also invested Tk 32.6 lakh each in expanding his commercial property in Chattogram's Khatungonj and his residence in Kattali.

In Khatungonj, he rents space to a bank and owns 12 shops.

His affidavit shows Tk 36.8 lakh earned in bonus shares from Alpha Securities and Tk 36.3 lakh from bonds and interest. He reported Tk 2 crore in liquid cash last year, while his wife held Tk 1.67 crore. In 2018, his liquid assets were Tk 1.72 crore, while his wife had Tk 3.3 crore.

Khosru declared his vehicle to be worth Tk 7.5 lakh, while his wife's is valued at Tk 40.5 lakh.

The affidavit also notes that Khosru once faced 35 criminal cases. Legal proceedings have eased significantly, with 34 cases either acquitted, exempted, or withdrawn. Only one case remains pending at the Special Sessions Judge Court in Dhaka.

Azad's net wealth

FROM PAGE 12

agricultural land ownership has dropped from 7.25 kathas in 2008 to 1.25 kathas now, he currently owns half of a six-storey, 3,625 sqft building in Dhaka's Rampura, with his wife owning the other half.

The declared market value of his immovable assets stands at Tk 60.9 lakh. He also owns a 2,066 sqft flat in Bashundhara, Dhaka, registered in the name of a minor, valued at Tk 67.43 lakh.

In 2008, he had a 10,900 sqft under construction building in Khilgaon worth Tk 20 lakh.

His income sources have shifted. In 2008, he reported earning Tk 2.98 lakh solely from business. Last year, he earned Tk 14.41 lakh from land sales and Tk 4.73 lakh from rent. Although Azad owns five companies, he didn't declare any revenue from them.

Azad's movable assets are declared at Tk 81.76

lakh, a massive jump from the Tk 9.26 lakh reported in 2008. His current holdings include Tk 47.56 lakh in cash, Tk 10.31 lakh in bank deposits, and Tk 7.26 lakh in shares of nine listed companies.

His wife also holds substantial property, including 25.63 decimals of land with immovable assets valued at Tk 1.16 crore. She has movable assets worth Tk 6.19 lakh and earns Tk 4.73 lakh annually.

The affidavit further reveals that Azad faced 72 criminal cases over the years — 39 of them filed in 2013. He has been acquitted or discharged in 47 cases, while 23 others were withdrawn. One case remains pending before the Appellate Division, and another has been stayed by the High Court.

Azad plans to spend Tk 38.78 lakh for his election campaign, with Tk 20.12 lakh coming from his personal income and the remainder from donations.

Sarjis Alam's

FROM PAGE 12

tax return. While the tax return lists total assets worth Tk 33.73 lakh, the affidavit's breakdown accounts for significantly less.

According to the affidavit, Sarjis holds liquid assets of Tk 5.61 lakh; Tk 3.11 lakh in cash, Tk 1 lakh in banks (without naming institutions or accounts), and Tk 1.5 lakh in electronic goods and furniture.

He also declared 16.5 decimals of agricultural land, noted as "gifted", with an acquisition value of Tk 7,500 and an estimated market value of Tk 5 lakh.

Sarjis paid Tk 52,500 in income tax for the 2025-2026 assessment year.

In his election expenditure statement, Sarjis said he expects to

receive Tk 11 lakh in gifts from four well-wishers who are not his relatives and another Tk 2 lakh in loans from an individual.

According to the document, he is also receiving funds in gifts from his father-in-law, mother-in-law, and paternal and maternal uncles.

However, the exact amount could not be ascertained, as the first digits of the six-digit figures were illegible in the scanned document available on the EC website.

Based on the visible digits, it appears he is receiving at least Tk 1 lakh from each of them. He also listed a contribution of at least Tk 1 lakh from his brother-in-law as a loan.

He faces one criminal case filed in Gazipur.

Govt publishes white paper

FROM PAGE 12

It also includes a set of recommendations aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability, and good governance in the future.

The government hopes the findings and recommendations outlined in the white paper will serve as an important guideline for institutional reforms, strengthening anti-corruption measures, and ensuring more efficient and citizen-friendly services in the telecommunications sector, the statement added.

According to the white paper, Bangladesh's telecom sector is suffering from entrenched corruption, systemic irregularities, and a governance breakdown that has weakened regulatory credibility, distorted markets, and wasted public resources.

Prepared by a seven-member committee headed by Professor Kamrul Hasan of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, the white paper also paints a bleak picture of a sector structurally misaligned, operationally

compromised, and failing to deliver trusted, affordable connectivity.

It found that policy neglect, unchecked favoritism, politicized appointments, and procurement manipulation had accumulated over the years.

The document, based on a forensic review of 10 key entities under the PTD, exposes a systemic "governance capture" that has crippled regulatory authority, bled state-owned enterprises, and defrauded the public.

From the highest regulatory body to project implementation cells, the sector operates on favoritism, bypasses competitive processes, and treats public resources as a vehicle for patronage.

"These structural deficiencies produce systemic risks to meritocracy, institutional credibility, service delivery, and long-term sector reform."

At the heart of the crisis is the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the agency tasked with regulating the sector. The white paper

found the BTRC itself to be a primary source of irregularity, with its credibility shattered by its own actions.

The commission was accused of "non-competitive recruitment, misclassification of candidates, excessive age relaxations, improper absorption of project-funded staff, re-employment of retirees, and conflicted commissioner appointments."

By blurring the lines between regulator and employer, the BTRC created a self-serving system.

"BTRC's practices have eroded institutional integrity and diminished the credibility of sector oversight," the report said.

The irregularities at the top set a precedent for the entire ecosystem.

The malaise spread through state-owned enterprises like Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited and Teletalk, where boards became instruments of governance capture and politicized board-level decision-making.

UK starts ban on junk food ads on daytime TV and online

AFP, London

New regulations come into force yesterday in Britain banning daytime TV and online adverts for so-called junk foods, in what the government calls a "world-leading action" to tackle childhood obesity.

The ban — targeting ads for products high in fat, salt or sugar — is expected to remove up to 7.2 billion calories from children's diets each year, according to the health ministry.

Impacting ads airing before the 9:00pm watershed and anytime online, it will reduce the number of children living with obesity by 20,000 and deliver around £2 billion (\$2.7 bln) in health benefits, the ministry added.

The implementation of the measure — first announced in December 2024 — follows other recent steps, including an extended sugar tax on pre-packaged items like milkshakes, ready-to-go coffees and sweetened yoghurt drinks.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Road Transport and Highways Division
Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited
Metrorail Bhaban, Uttara Depot, Sonargaon Janapath
Sector -16, Diabari Uttara, Dhaka-1230
www.dmtcl.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.05.0000.022.07.046.25-1589 Date: 05.01.2026

e-Tender Notice: OTM

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

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and No offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Goods	Tender ID No.	Tender Publishing (Date and time)	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)
1.	DMTCL/GR-16/2025-26	Supply of Diesel Generator Maintenance materials and related services for the Electrical Department (02 Nos for Uttara Depot, and 09 Nos for Uttara North to Agargaon Station) of DMTCL.	1207061	05-Jan-2026 17:00	25-Jan-2026 16:00	26-Jan-2026 15:00
2.	DMTCL/GR-12/2025-26	Supply of Air Conditioning Items and Related Services for Electrical Department. These items will be used for different buildings of Depot and MRT Stations (Station-3&5) under DMTCL.	1207022	05-Jan-2026 17:00	25-Jan-2026 16:00	26-Jan-2026 15:00
3.	DMTCL/GR-13/2025-26	Supply of Maintenance Items (Consumables, Safety Items and Tools) for Civil & P-Way Department under DMTCL.	1205799	05-Jan-2026 17:00	01-Feb-2026 16:00	02-Feb-2026 15:00
4.	DMTCL/GR-14/2025-26	Supply of Fire Protection Items and Related Services of Electrical Department under DMTCL.	1205923	05-Jan-2026 17:00	01-Feb-2026 16:00	02-Feb-2026 15:00
5.	DMTCL/GR-08/2025-26	Supply of Maintenance Items for Signaling and Telecom Department of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL).	1206214	05-Jan-2026 17:00	01-Feb-2026 16:00	02-Feb-2026 15:00

(A.K.M. Sarwar Alam)
Deputy General Manager (Store & Procurement)
Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited
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GD-31

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

State must shun the machinery of erasure

Report on enforced disappearances reveals systematic political purges

A harrowing final report by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances again confirms that this heinous practice under the Sheikh Hasina regime was not an aberration but a deliberate tool used against political opponents. The findings of the commission, submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on Sunday, also negate the notion that these abductions were the work of rogue officers. What emerges instead is a tightly coordinated system of political purging where disappearance became a primary instrument to silence dissent and physically eliminate opposition.

The commission verified 1,569 cases, although it estimates the real number may exceed 6,000. The pattern disclosed is unmistakable: nearly 97 percent of victims with known political affiliations belonged to opposition parties. For Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, it was particularly harrowing. They accounted for 75 percent of political victims, their members repeatedly cycled through secret detention and the criminal justice system, a process designed to harass, exhaust, and neutralise. For BNP, the principal challenger to Awami League's dominance, the objective was equally sinister. Though fewer in number, BNP activists constituted 68 percent of those who "never returned."

The victim list thus reads more like a curated hit list, with the overwhelming concentration of disappearances among Jamaat, BNP, and their affiliates laying bare the operation's true nature. This was indeed systematic targeting by an authoritarian regime. As Awami League tightened its grip on power, the pace of disappearances accelerated, peaking at 215 cases in 2016. This unfolded as the security apparatus operated with near-total impunity, and continued through 2017 and 2018, hollowing out the opposition ahead of the elections. For three consecutive years, to put the scale in perspective, the state abducted nearly one person every two days.

Such an extensive programme of erasure could not have functioned without the corrosion of the entire security establishment. Rab, for example, became the regime's execution arm. Intelligence agencies, including DGI and Detective Branch, worked in concert, coordinating cross-agency abductions that the inquiry commission concludes could not have occurred without explicit authorisation from the Prime Minister's Office. The "centralised style of decision-making" implicates Hasina directly. It means the orders did not merely end at the top; they often began there. The regime also constructed fictitious stories to disguise political cleansing as law enforcement. Sometimes victims killed in mangrove forests were labelled "pirates"; those in coastal regions were branded "drug dealers." These fabrications lent legal camouflage to extrajudicial executions.

The chief adviser has rightly credited the inquiry report for documenting the "collapse of democratic institutions." It is also a moral indictment of a state that abandoned its role as guardian and became a predator of its own citizens. The task now is to dismantle this culture of impunity that allowed people to vanish without a trace or accountability. The lesson could not be clearer—when state machinery is politicised, it ceases to serve the public and becomes an instrument of terror, leading to gross human rights violations. Future elected governments must shun these practices entirely.

Preventable deaths on roads must stop

Road safety must be made a priority in political manifestos

We are shocked and dismayed by the latest road crash data released by Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, revealing that at least 9,111 people were killed in 2025. According to their report, there were 6,729 road crashes last year, injuring a further 14,812 people. Beyond statistics, these numbers represent real lives lost and the persistent failure of the state to protect citizens on its roads. Road crashes are entirely preventable, yet they remain one of the most serious threats to public safety in Bangladesh. Students, transport workers, drivers, and teachers were among the victims of this catastrophe.

What is also alarming is the economic cost. Road crashes are estimated to drain around Tk 60,000 crore from the economy every year. This loss, stemming from deaths, injuries, medical expenses, and productivity setbacks, is a heavy burden on Bangladesh and its already strained public services. Yet, road safety continues to be treated as a peripheral issue rather than a national priority.

Compared to 2024, crashes rose by nearly seven percent, deaths by almost six percent, and injuries by a staggering 15 percent. Given the known politicised nature of the transport sector under the previous government, we had hoped that there would be significant changes in governance, enforcement, and accountability under the interim government. Instead, the numbers have worsened along with the everyday risks faced by ordinary citizens. Despite a change in power, the policies governing road transport remain largely unchanged. Poor enforcement, unfit vehicles, untrained drivers, dangerous overtaking, flawed road design, and a culture of impunity continue unchecked. Meanwhile, fare extortion and the dominance of owners' associations have made daily travel both unsafe and expensive.

What makes this situation even more unacceptable is that solutions are well known and have been discussed and publicised over many years. The Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity has identified a number of causes of road crashes and put forward concrete recommendations over time. These include increasing the road safety budget, establishing a road safety wing under the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, strict enforcement of the mandatory training of drivers at BRTA approved driving schools, and ensuring good governance in the transport sector by ending monopolies of owners' associations, corruption, irregularities, and extortion. We urge that these recommendations be taken seriously. As the country moves towards another national election, political parties must commit to road safety reforms and improved public transport in their manifestos to curb the loss of lives from road crashes.

Khaleda Zia's economic legacy, lessons, and the road ahead

MACRO MIRROR



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

FAHMIDA KHATUN

Over the 55 years since Bangladesh's independence, the processes of state-building, political transformation, and economic reconstruction have unfolded in deeply interconnected ways. During this period, the country has traversed multiple political turning points, each leaving a lasting imprint on its economic direction and institutional architecture. Within this long and complex history, Begum Khaleda Zia's leadership represents an important phase, particularly regarding economic reform and policy realignment.

First, her tenure, which began in 1991, coincided with a critical phase as Bangladesh gradually shifted from a state-controlled economic framework towards a market-oriented, export-led development model. This was not merely a moment of policy adjustment. It marked a broader reconfiguration of the relationship between the state, the market, and society. One may recall that the major impetus for this came from the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, through the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) introduced during the 1980s. These programmes emphasised macroeconomic stabilisation through fiscal and monetary discipline, reduced state intervention, trade liberalisation, and greater openness to global markets. SAPs, however, attracted widespread criticism for their uniform policy prescriptions, which were often linked to rising inequality, weakened social protection, and pressures on domestic industries with weak institutional capacity. While debates over SAPs remain part of a broader ideological and developmental literature, Bangladesh's reform trajectory led to improved macroeconomic performance in the mid-1990s. However, the BWIs recognised the need for improved governance and further reform to achieve better outcomes. Any assessment of Khaleda Zia's economic role must therefore situate her leadership within this wider national transition, as part of an evolutionary reform process rather than an isolated intervention.

Second, in 1991, Bangladesh had recently emerged from military rule and returned to democratic governance after a long period. At the time, low productive capacity, a weak revenue base, and heavy reliance on regulatory controls constrained the economy. Against this backdrop, her government placed the private sector at the centre of the development process by expanding the role of markets, fostering an investment-friendly environment, and redefining the state as a facilitator rather than a direct controller.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

Third, the RMG industry, which emerged in the 1980s, received crucial structural support in the 1990s through policy instruments such as export performance benefits, bonded warehouse facilities, back-to-back letters of credit, cash incentives and trade facilitation measures. These policies were pragmatic, enabling Bangladesh to rapidly secure a significant position within global apparel value chains, a success that continued to drive economic growth in subsequent decades.

Fourth, one of the most consequential initiatives of Khaleda Zia's first term was the enactment of the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act in 1991, marking a fundamental shift in

Bangladesh's tax system. The reform aimed to replace a narrow, inefficient revenue structure with a modern, broad-based framework. Although implementation encountered obstacles and later required further adjustments, the initiative strengthened the foundations of revenue administration, essential to financing development expenditure, expanding social protection, and supporting infrastructure investment.

Fifth, two significant changes in the external sector were introduced during her time in office. In 1994, Bangladesh adopted current account convertibility, which energised import and export activity. This was followed in 2003 by the transition to a floating exchange rate regime. Together, these reforms enhanced flexibility in trade and monetary policy and deepened Bangladesh's economic integration with the global economy, contributing to greater macroeconomic resilience and stability over the long run.

Sixth, financial sector reform

Securities and Exchange Commission Act, was also a notable reform, providing an institutional framework for capital market development and strengthening the financial system's architecture.

Seventh, economic growth during this period, driven by export expansion and rising remittance inflows, created new employment opportunities. From the 1990s through the mid-2000s, gross domestic product (GDP) increased, and poverty rates declined significantly. Programmes aimed at poverty reduction, such as rural employment schemes, food security initiatives, and targeted assistance, were expanded. At the same time, the gradual extension of social safety nets sought to strengthen state support for vulnerable and low-income groups. Together, these initiatives helped reinforce the foundations of social progress. It must be acknowledged that this achievement cannot be attributed to any single government. It reflects the cumulative impact of sustained policy continuity. Nevertheless, the relative policy stability during Khaleda Zia's tenure helped accelerate this process.

These economic policies and reforms collectively constitute Khaleda Zia's economic legacy. Despite several achievements on the economic front, governance deficits, political polarisation, and uneven enforcement limited the full impact of the reforms. Notwithstanding the implementation challenges faced, these measures remain an important chapter in Bangladesh's development trajectory.

The lessons from that period remain relevant today, when governance weaknesses continue to be unaddressed. A lack of discipline in the banking sector, persistent political influence, and weak enforcement mechanisms have slowed the pace of reform. These challenges are structural and long-term. They remind us that reform is not merely a matter of policy design. It requires political commitment, institutional continuity, and a sustained, long-term vision working in concert.

As Bangladesh approaches the February 12 national elections, political parties must move beyond rhetoric and reflect seriously on the economic policies of all governments in power to understand what worked well, what failed, and why. The credibility of future agendas will depend on translating these lessons into reforms that strengthen institutions, restore discipline, and address citizens' everyday economic needs through inclusive and accountable governance.

Democracy cannot survive on silence and fear



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ZILLUR RAHMAN

After a long stretch away from the country, Tarique Rahman's return to Bangladesh marks the beginning of a tougher chapter, one that's about real responsibility, not symbolic. Naturally, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its followers are feeling a mix of excitement and hope. But it's important to remember that this moment isn't just about one leader or party. It is a time when the democratic environment in Bangladesh appears unstable.

There had been a troubling trend in the weeks leading up to Rahman's return: attacks on political figures and the very institutions that support democratic life. Two major independent media outlets, *Prothom Alo* and *The Daily Star*, faced grave dangers. Journalists found themselves trapped in their own office, which was set on fire. Many were caught in chaotic situations, while others had to escape. Cultural institutions tied to Bangladesh's secular and pluralist heritage, like Chhayanaut and Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi, were also destroyed.

These attacks didn't happen in isolation. They were accompanied by targeted intimidation against individuals. Nurul Kabir, a respected editor and journalist, faced harassment and threats. In a particularly tragic

event, Dipu Chandra Das, a citizen from the Hindu community, was brutally killed. This raised serious concerns about the safety of minorities and highlighted a growing atmosphere of impunity. All these incidents together seem to send a clear message.

When minorities feel unsafe, and journalists are intimidated, it sends a signal meant for those beyond the directly affected. It tells society who is allowed to speak and who isn't. Democracies can erode gradually when intimidation is normalised, silence is mistaken for stability, and fear replaces open dialogue.

Elections aren't standalone events. They depend on a wider ecosystem that includes enforcement of law, free flow of information, and protection of dissenting voices. When citizens are targeted based on their identity, newspapers are attacked, and editors face threats, elections risk becoming mere formalities rather than democratic milestones. While there is no alternative to a credible election, votes alone can't compensate for a compromised public sphere.

This isn't a new issue for Bangladesh. For over a decade, journalism has faced restrictions, opposing views have been silenced, and cultural expression has been stifled, both publicly and privately. Many viewed the July uprising as a

reaction to this suffocation. It wasn't just about changing power; it was a call for accountability and dignity.

That's why the rise of mob violence is particularly alarming. It suggests that bigotry persists, even if political loyalties shift. Mob politics is inherently destructive. Once violence is justified as "public anger," accountability disappears. Mobs create chaos instead of supporting causes. They target minorities and journalists today, and tomorrow, they could go after political figures, ultimately consuming society as a whole.

Leadership today requires more than just words and mobilisation. It demands self-restraint. Clear boundaries need to be established and communicated. In these contexts, silence is often interpreted as complicity rather than neutrality. And in politics, interpretations can have serious consequences.

A genuine commitment to democratic renewal can't coexist with uncertainty about violence. A different tone is necessary, one that firmly opposes communal targeting, unequivocally defends media freedom, and clearly condemns attacks on journalists. These messages matter not just for party supporters but also for the broader public, who are weary of political cycles marked by retaliation and escalation.

However, it's important to recognise that no single person can shoulder this responsibility alone. Despite its constitutional ambiguities, the current interim government has a fundamental duty to uphold law and order fairly. Protecting citizens like Dipu Chandra Das, safeguarding journalists, and defending institutions that support free speech represent the

bare minimum needed for effective governance.

Given the inconsistent responses to recent attacks, concerns about commitment outweigh worries about capability. When those who break the law aren't held accountable, while critics face intimidation, a troubling message emerges which even elections can't erase. Over time, these issues weaken institutions.

Internationally, speculations about Bangladesh's political future have grown. It's not just outsiders meddling. When democratic protections seem weak, foreign governments, human rights organisations, and multilateral bodies will inevitably take notice. Weak systems don't enhance sovereignty; strong systems do.

But this situation isn't just a test for politicians or governments. It's a test for society as a whole. Journalists aren't the only ones affected when a newspaper is burned. When an editor faces threats, it silences many voices. The social contract starts to break down when a citizen is attacked because of their identity.

The upcoming election won't be judged solely on results and turnout. It'll be evaluated based on how freely journalists can operate, how safe dissenting voices feel, how secure minorities are, and whether law enforcement serves the public interest rather than those in power.

Tarique Rahman's return is undoubtedly significant. Yet, its true impact won't be measured by celebrations or conflicts but by what comes next. Democracy can't thrive in an atmosphere of silence and fear. How Bangladesh responds now will shape not just this election, but public trust for many years ahead.

VENEZUELA ATTACK:

When a president is abducted, sovereignty becomes conditional



Barrister Khan Khalid Adnan is advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, fellow at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and head of the chamber at Khan Sajir Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

The United States' overnight assault on Venezuela and the seizure of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, are being sold as an anti-drug mission and a law enforcement action. Yet the White House has already described the aftermath in the language of control, not custody. Trump spoke of the US "running" Venezuela, rebuilding its oil sector, and keeping the option of "boots on the ground" on the table. He also blamed Venezuela for stealing US oil interests, saying Washington would take them back. In essence, a raid marketed as an "arrest" is being packaged for a geopolitical reset with economic spoils.

This is not a semantic dispute; it goes to the heart of the post-1945 trade-off between states, under which borders became legal facts protected by international law, not negotiable obstacles to be overcome by force. The UN Charter's baseline rule is explicit: states must refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. The exceptions are deliberately narrow: UN Security Council (UNSC) authorisation, and self-defence after an armed attack.

By those standards, Washington's legal story reads more like a post hoc alibi. International law experts, including Geoffrey Robertson KC, stated that the attack on Venezuela violated



Nicolás Maduro seen blindfolded aboard the USS Iwo Jima after the US military captured him.

PHOTO: AFP

If a superpower can seize a sitting leader, fly him out for trial, and then speak casually about administering the country, sovereign equality is downgraded from a right to a privilege. Smaller states will draw rational but destabilising conclusions—aligning with a patron because neutrality is unsafe, investing in deterrence because the law is unreliable, and hardening internal security and labelling dissent as 'foreign-backed' because the fear of intervention becomes politically useful.

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and constituted the crime of aggression, regarded as the gravest offence under international law. According to international law, drug trafficking and gang

violence are criminal activities that do not meet the accepted threshold for armed conflict that would justify military force, and a criminal indictment does not itself authorise armed

force to depose a foreign government. Experts criticised the US administration for trying to describe the operation as both a targeted law enforcement mission and a potential prelude to long-term US control of Venezuela. If force can be recast as policing, then the prohibition on force becomes a technicality, and any powerful state can claim it did not "invade"; it merely "arrested." The world should not turn an invasion into due process simply by

UN secretary-general's spokesperson called the developments a "dangerous precedent" and stressed the need for full respect for international law, including the Charter. Many states have also reacted strongly. Spain rejected an intervention that violates international law, while Mexico explicitly cited the UN Charter in condemning unilateral military action. Brazil's president warned that attacking countries in flagrant violation

pressure to prove loyalty to one side or the other, eroding the space for independent foreign policy and regional problem-solving.

This is where the incident stops being "about Venezuela" and starts being about sovereign security everywhere. If a superpower can seize a sitting leader, fly him out for trial, and then speak casually about administering the country, sovereign equality is downgraded from a right to a privilege. Smaller states will draw rational but destabilising conclusions—aligning with a patron because neutrality is unsafe, investing in deterrence because the law is unreliable, and hardening internal security and labelling dissent as "foreign-backed" because the fear of intervention becomes politically useful.

The timing magnifies the damage because this action lands in a world already saturated with norm-breaking uses of force. In September 2025, Israel struck in Doha, Qatar, targeting Hamas leaders and drawing accusations of sovereignty breach from a Gulf state central to mediation. In June 2025, Israel's operation against Iran escalated into an air war, and a US strike hit Iranian nuclear sites before a ceasefire, showing how easily limited operations become escalatory templates. Despite a ceasefire, Gaza's health ministry puts the death toll above 71,000, and reports continued killings. In Europe, Russia's war in Ukraine grinds on, with fresh drone strikes reported even as diplomats pursue talks. In East Asia, China has staged major live-firing drills around Taiwan, tightening tension in a region already primed for miscalculation.

Against this backdrop, Venezuela is not an isolated eruption; it is another crack in the same dam. Washington's strike may hand Beijing rhetorical ammunition and potentially embolden China's territorial claims, even if it does not trigger an immediate Taiwan attack. The hypocrisy is strategic as well as moral: a country that invokes the Charter when convenient cannot demolish the Charter when impatient and expect rivals to keep respecting it.

None of this is in defence of Maduro. Accountability for abusive rulers is necessary. But accountability delivered by invasion does not strengthen law; it replaces law with dominance. A rules-based world cannot survive on the logic that illegal force becomes acceptable if the target is unpopular and the actor is powerful. If Maduro must face justice, it should come through lawful cooperation, multilateral pressure, and credible international mechanisms, not through a precedent that normalises cross-border abduction and open-ended political control.

attaching handcuffs at the end.

The way the operation was executed compounds the damage. Congress was not notified in advance, and Trump defended secrecy by arguing that lawmakers might have leaked the plan. In a democracy, oversight exists to slow down reckless force and provide clarity about aims, costs, and exit routes. Here, the constraint is treated as the threat. For smaller states, the lesson is stark: even Washington's internal guardrails can be switched off when a foreign target is politically useful, and the public relations dividend is large.

International reaction has been swift. The

of international law is a first step towards a world where the law of the strongest prevails. These are not abstract anxieties. They are a recognition that once this threshold is crossed, it will be crossed again.

Some leaders, particularly in Latin America, have also celebrated Maduro's removal, while others are seeking urgent multilateral action, including UNSC engagement. This is how the hemisphere is dragged back into a geopolitics of camps, clients, and punishments, the dynamic that has historically produced coups, proxy violence, and lasting institutional trauma. It also puts every regional government under

Why we need microcredit banks



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MD MAIN UDDIN

"Financial inclusion" has been a buzzword in Bangladesh for many years. It has been used to justify the increase in the number of banks in the country, as many—primarily the poor—still do not have bank accounts.

At present, there are 62 banks in Bangladesh. Despite the large number of banks, only 28.3 percent of people have bank accounts, according to the Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics. This is indeed a paradox. Although state-owned banks operate both in rural and urban areas along with a handful of private banks, the poor have less access to them. Foreign banks do not operate in rural areas, let alone offer any services at all to the poor.

Besides, the rural poor are less interested in maintaining bank accounts and the urban poor keep their money in semi-formal and informal repositories. Nevertheless, it is impossible to create a fair banking system by keeping these people outside the banking network. Hence, banks should customise their services to the needs of the poor, instead of just offering priority services to large depositors.

Historically, banks used to collect short-term deposits to provide short-term loans. Over time, they shifted their preference to long-term and large loans, creating a maturity mismatch problem, where deposits mature earlier than the loans. As a result, banks now have to maintain high liquidity to allow assets (loans) to be converted into cash easily to meet the liability (deposit) withdrawal. A sudden surge in deposit withdrawal may leave banks in a position to liquidate assets at very low prices. Also, large loans are always a threat to bank sustainability because the failure of some large loans can eat up the total capital of a bank.

Conventional banks fail to reach the poor as their lending approach is inappropriate.

They sanction loans with collateral, but the poor rarely have any assets to provide as collateral. The banks also follow some defined criteria for lending, which most of the poor fail to comply. They prefer large loans to minimise transaction costs, including loan origination fees, application fees, legal fees, etc. But the poor demand small loans, which these banks avoid as their transaction costs are high.

Also, the cost of monitoring numerous small borrowers is high for traditional banks because rural poor live in remote areas and urban poor are mobile and lack permanent addresses. As the poor belong to a deficit group, it reduces the probability of loan repayment. The poor also often use loans in unproductive sectors. Hence, lending to the poor following traditional methods is risky.

Conventional banks also face the problem of asymmetric information—a situation where one party has more

Even though traditional banks do not mind receiving deposits from the poor, they have reservations about granting them loans. The current banking system transfers the funds of the poor to the rich and creates a financial inequality between the rich and the poor. So, a banking system that will reinvest deposits from disadvantaged communities back into those communities is needed. This can be done by microcredit banks to a large extent.

information than the other—while selecting poor borrowers. The poor often lack a formal credit history, which may lead to adverse selection—selecting the wrong borrowers at the cost of the right ones. If the wrong borrowers are selected, they tend to divert loans to unproductive sectors, leading to moral hazard. Therefore, banks prefer collateral-backed lending to the poor.

Moneylenders provide loans to the poor without collateral in the informal credit



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

market. As they live in the same community, they possess vast knowledge about potential borrowers. As a result, they can select the right borrowers for lending. But a limited number of professional moneylenders with inadequate funds cannot reach all the poor. Moreover, their interest rates are abnormally high.

In this setting, microfinance institutions (MFIs) have been able to grant collateral-free loans to the poor, reducing the asymmetric information problem through self-selected groups and joint liability. They leave the responsibility of borrower selection to the poor. In the microcredit system, generally, a group of five members is formed. Although a loan is sanctioned to a borrower, all members of the group remain liable for its repayment.

If the loan is not repaid, other members will not be granted any new loans. So, every member has an incentive to monitor the loan performance. They ensure that the loan is appropriately used and repaid on time. This motivates poor households to select those people for the group who tend to be honest. Living in a well-connected society, the poor have comprehensive information about each other's financial discipline.

The provision of collateral-free loans

rates; they fail to target the ultra-poor; and their funds are not enough to cover all the poor. Thus, many poor find microcredit unfit for their needs.

Even though traditional banks do not mind receiving deposits from the poor, they have reservations about granting them loans. The current banking system transfers the funds of the poor to the rich and creates a financial inequality between the rich and the poor. So, a banking system that will reinvest deposits from disadvantaged communities back into those communities is needed. This can be done by microcredit banks to a large extent.

Microcredit banks will provide financial services to low-income individuals, who are usually excluded from traditional banking systems. Their main objective should be to fight poverty by increasing the financial inclusion of underserved communities. They will essentially grant short-term and small loans without collateral at reasonable interest rates. Their loan application process will be simple, and loans will be sanctioned within a short time. They will create a congenial financial environment for rural and urban poor, which will contribute to the growth of small businesses, leading to sustainable development. The poor will find a dedicated banking system for them. With its help, they will come out of the debt-trap, taking new loans to repay the old ones, leading to growing indebtedness. Eventually, this new institution will help the poor come out of poverty.

Furthermore, conventional banks offering small loans will face competition from microcredit banks. The presence of usurious moneylenders will come down. Some MFIs will be compelled to rationalise their interest rates. By maintaining an acceptable level of maturity mismatch between deposits and loans, microcredit banks will face less liquidity risk, which is a principal source of bank failure. This will ensure a viable banking system by protecting deposits and promoting public confidence. The emergence of microcredit banks will highlight the failure of our prevailing financial system to reach the poor, and show the conventional banks how they missed a big business opportunity by ignoring a large section of consumers.

2026 brings a new beginning for RESOLUTE STARS

This year is anticipated as an important one for the Bangladeshi cultural scene, as it is filled with a renewed sense of hope and energy. After navigating a year of change, uncertainty, and creative breakthroughs, artistes from film, television, music, and theatre are hoping for a change, more resilience, and greater respect for art and culture. From seasoned names to new voices, there is a shared desire to grow, connect and create with purpose—hinting at a more confident, collaborative and inspired chapter ahead for the industry.

SHARMIN JOYA

Veteran actor Zahid Hasan hopes to remain healthy and safe this year, as he wishes for everyone else. "Like everyone else, my first wish is that we all stay healthy," he said, adding that he wants people across the country to live safely. Referring to violence, arson and unrest, he noted, "So many things are being burned and destroyed, my prayer and wish is that I don't want this imbalance. I want peace for everyone."

He also expressed a desire for religious freedom and collective wellbeing. "May everyone practise their faith freely, live independently, stay healthy and be happy."

For the audience, renowned filmmaker Shihab Shaheen has several announcements looking ahead this year. "A new series is slated for Eid, which we will announce shortly, while I can assure that the second season for *Golam Mamun* and the third season for *Myself Allen Swapan* are in the pipeline for this year. My next film's announcement will also arrive by the end of this year."

On a wider scale, Shihab expressed hope for the industry. "We have gone through a difficult phase; however, I believe that after the election, better days will return." He remains optimistic that despondency will fade, a culture-friendly environment will prevail, and creative work will continue smoothly in the year ahead.

Actress Sadia Ayman calls 2025 a turning point, with web projects and brand work ahead. "I'm lucky to be part of a special web



Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed



Pritom Hasan



Tasnia Farin



Raihan Rafi



Sadia Ayman



Shihab Shaheen



Zahid Hasan

project with so many great artistes including some legends," she said. Looking to 2026, she plans "meaningful choices," prioritising health, balance, family and quality over haste.

"I want to maintain my confidence in fitness and health, make deliberate work decisions, and ensure my family and pets stay well," she explained.

Young and multitalented artiste Pritom Hasan did not just win hearts, but kept the entire 2025 buzzing with his masterful creations. "I would call 2025 my year! A year I consider so far, the best of my life career-wise."

He revealed plans for April this year, marking his official ten-year milestone in the Bangladeshi music industry—and expressed hope for a major shift in his work. This year, he will be seen sharing the screens with Xeler

Rahman in one of Shihab Shaheen's web projects, and he also assured that, "I hope to collaborate with Shakib *bhai* again; talks are underway."

With film, song and announcing her own production house, Tasnia Farin had an eventful 2025, which she wants to focus more on settling down this year. "Entering into a new role in my career, I realise that acting is quite uni-focused, while producing comes with so many responsibilities, from pre- and post-production to marketing and reaching audiences. The pressure is completely new for me, but seeing even a small production succeed gives me immense confidence for bigger plans."

Music will remain a key focus, and she hopes to produce quality content for OTT

platforms, bringing exciting stories to life. "But no matter what role I take, I want to contribute meaningfully, whether through acting or producing."

Farin is particularly excited about her first collaboration with Shakib Khan on the big screen. "Working with Shakib *bhai* for Eid is both nerve-wracking and thrilling. His films have a unique connection with audiences, and I'm hoping to experience that energy firsthand," she said, expressing anticipation for a year of creative growth, new challenges, and meaningful contributions to the industry.

As an artiste, Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed has always spoken and stood for the art, philosophy of life and peace. Nawshaba spoke about life, art, and responsibility with heartfelt clarity, sharing how she sees her journey and the year

ahead.

"Whatever I do—whether it's theatre, film, OTT projects, or my own creations—I express what I genuinely believe in. Even in personal life, I try to act consciously, holding on to my principles without seeking validation. I don't feel the need to explain myself; I just let my work speak," she said. For her, art is not just entertainment—it is a means to heal, inspire, and reflect culture.

Looking forward, she wants to use her work to make a real difference. "I want to reach people who feel frustrated or isolated, bring them into creative spaces, and help them understand themselves. It's not about pointing fingers; it's about awareness and change," she said. Her vision includes nationwide initiatives and even international projects, with dreams of creating theatre on a Broadway scale.

Nawshaba aims to continue expressing her beliefs through art, building consciousness and empathy step by step. "I will keep holding on to what I believe in, whether on stage, on screen, or in my own life. Change doesn't happen overnight, but gradually, we can make a difference—for ourselves, our society, and beyond," she said, highlighting a journey of integrity, purpose, and transformative creativity.

Filmmaker Raihan Rafi already begun work on a new film, a long-cherished dream project for the big screen. While the project has not yet been officially announced, he confirmed that a formal announcement will come early in the new year. "It's something I've wanted to do for a long time, and I'm finally doing it," he added. "I believe that I've been successful in gradually building a diverse audience that regularly comes to theatres. Now I want to offer them something different—films I've always wanted to make but held back for commercial reasons," he said.

The new year will also mark a milestone in his career with the release of his first film as a producer under his own banner, Kanon Films, named after his mother. "This is a new identity for me," he said, noting plans to produce films by new directors in the future.

NEWS

A section of civil service is biased

FROM PAGE 12
central publicity department.

The council said a "new Bangladesh" was achieved through the sacrifice of 1,500 martyrs and injuries to more than 30,000 protesters after 16 years of struggle against fascism, adding that it must not be allowed to "fall hostage to any conspiracy, plot, or group".

The party demanded strict measures to ensure 100 percent neutrality of the administration and urged the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies to carry out their responsibilities without partisan bias.

Meanwhile, addressing a rally in front of the Raju Memorial Sculpture, Nasiruddin alleged that the civil administration had begun "leaning towards a specific party, the BNP," mirroring the partisan practices of the previous regime.

"When Tarique Rahman arrived in Bangladesh, we welcomed him. But we saw government officials leaving their offices to greet him by the roadside," he said.

"We witnessed such activities during the Sheikh Hasina regime, and we do not want to see them in the current Bangladesh," Nasiruddin, a

prospective parliamentary candidate for Dhaka-8, spoke after visiting the grave of Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, the slain leader of Inqilab Moncho, beside the university's central mosque. He expressed frustration that the killers of Hadi, who was gunned down last month in Dhaka, have yet to be traced.

Outlining his election plans, Nasiruddin said he would contest under the II-party alliance Azadi Jote, using the NCP's Shapla Koli (water lily bud) symbol.

He declared the Dhaka-8 constituency, comprising Ramna, Shahbagh, Motijheel, and Shahjahanpur, as well as the rest of the country, as "Azad Zones" (Free Zones).

Calling on people to resist extortion and corruption, he urged citizens to protect future generations. "If any individual or party attempts extortion or illegal occupation in these zones, arrest them raising the 'Azadi' slogan and hand them over to the administration," he said.

He also warned authorities against siding with extortionists and terrorists, vowing to carry the movement for economic, political, and cultural freedom, born at Dhaka University, into parliament.

'We need Greenland'

FROM PAGE 12
Of Iran, which is being roiled by protests, Trump said, "If they start killing people like they have in the past, I think they're going to get hit very hard by the United States."

Trump suggested that military intervention was unnecessary in Cuba, a key ally of Venezuela, because it was "ready to fall."

"I don't think we need any action," Trump said. "It looks like it's going down."

"I don't know if they're going to hold out, but Cuba now has no income," he added. "They got all their income from Venezuela, from the Venezuelan oil."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio had suggested earlier in the day that Cuba could face US military action.

Rab complicit in 25% cases

FROM PAGE 12

recommended withdrawing the armed forces from internal law enforcement agencies, enforcing strict legal accountability for all security forces, and repealing or fundamentally amending the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009.

The commission chief said Rab was responsible for nearly 25 percent of complaints it received, followed by the police at 23 percent and the Detective Branch at 14.5 percent. Other agencies, including the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit (CTTC), Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), and National Security Intelligence (NSI), were also involved in the crimes.

Justice Moyeenul said enforced disappearances carried out "systematically and institutionally" by these forces reflect coordinated state action rather than isolated incidents.

Other measures recommended by the commission include adopting community-based preventive counterterrorism policies, repealing Section 13 of the Armed Police

Battalion Act of 2003, making human rights training mandatory for forces, ensuring victim-centered justice, compensation, and rehabilitation, and converting the 'Aynaghar' (detention) sites into museums as symbols of truth and accountability.

The commission also recommended creating a comprehensive DNA database, following international standards, to identify missing victims, who were mostly political figures, he said.

The inquiry reviewed 1,913 complaints and verified 1,569 as cases of enforced disappearance, including 287 considered "missing and dead." It estimates that 4,000 to 6,000 such cases occurred between 2009 and 2024.

The commission emphasised that armed forces officers should be withdrawn from law enforcement and civilian intelligence agencies.

"The police are responsible for maintaining law and order. The army's job is to train and prepare for war and develop combat strategies. They [army officers] should be withdrawn," he said.

He added that a specialised elite force could instead be formed from skilled police officers.

"Every intelligence agency in the country needs reform. Our intelligence agencies have meddled in internal politics because they want a share of power," the commission chief said.

He added, "Previous governments have all misused them. But the last government did so to a much greater extent. This trend must end."

Justice Moyeenul said 40 detention centers, including 22 to 23 operated by Rab, have been identified. He, however, alleged that the elite force destroyed much of the evidence.

The commission chief also said no enforced disappearance victims were found among Bangladeshis detained in Indian prisons or those pushed back by India after August 5, 2024, except for one case.

Members of the commission, including Justice Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, Nur Khan Liton, Nabila Idris, and Sazzad Hussain, were present at the press briefing.

2 shipbreaking workers found dead in Sitakunda

FROM PAGE 2

However, Taslim Uddin, owner of KR Ship Recycling Yard, said, "A new ship was brought to the yard for scrapping on Sunday. A group of robbers attempted to enter the yard by boat at night to loot the ship's parts."

"When the workers on another boat tried to resist, the robbers attacked them with sharp weapons, forcing the workers to jump into the water. One worker was dismembered after being struck by the robbers' boat propeller, while another worker also died in the incident."

Tapan Dutta, convener of the Shipbreaking Workers Trade Union Forum, said the workers died while ship beaching was underway at night.

He said the incident was the result of negligence and demanded action against those responsible, as well as compensation for the families of the deceased.

Contacted, Abdullah Al Mahmud, superintendent of police in Chattogram (Industrial Police), said the bodies were sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital for autopsy. "The exact cause of the incident can be determined only after an investigation."

After being informed, a team from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) visited the yard and formed a probe body.

Shahid Parvez, an inspector of the DIFE's Chattogram office, said, "We've already spoken to

the two other workers who were injured in the same incident. We're working to find out the cause of the deaths."

According to the annual report of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, 48 accidents occurred in Sitakunda's shipbreaking yards in 2025, resulting in the injuries of 58 workers. Among them, four lost their lives. Nearly 63 percent of the accidents were classified as serious, with severe consequences such as amputations; fractures; head, eye, or chest injuries; burns from fire or explosions; and permanent disabilities.

The report states that of last year's accidents, 30 were serious, 14 were minor, and multiple workers were injured in four.

Widow alleges rape, torture

FROM PAGE 12

the phone, the victim said Shahinur had repeatedly made advances on her since she purchased the house.

He also demanded money from her at various times, she alleged.

"On that evening, two of my relatives came to my house. At that time, Shahinur and Hasan forcibly entered my house and claimed that I had an immoral relationship with my relatives," said the woman.

"They confined my relatives in one room, took me to another room and raped me," she added.

"Later, they dragged me along with my relatives out of the house. They tied us to a tree, beat us and cut my hair."



Justice for Hadi within interim govt tenure

FROM PAGE 12

Council Committee on Law and Order at the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Secretariat.

The government is treating the case with the highest priority, he said, adding that the charge sheet will be submitted on January 7. So far, 10 people have been arrested in connection with the killing.

Law enforcement agencies have also been instructed to take appropriate and effective measures to prevent similar incidents in the future, he added.

Jahangir Alam urged political parties to remain vigilant so that agents of "fascists" or saboteurs cannot infiltrate their ranks. He also cautioned against blaming one another, warning that such actions could create opportunities for saboteurs to exploit the situation.

Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho and an aspiring candidate for Dhaka-8, was shot in the capital's Paltan area on December 12 and died on December 18 while undergoing treatment in Singapore.

On December 14, Inqilab

Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber filed an attempted murder case with Paltan Model Police Station against Faisal Karim Masud as the prime accused, along with several unnamed individuals. The case was later converted into a murder case and subsequently transferred to the Detective Branch.

On Friday, Shafiqul Islam, DB chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told this newspaper that the investigation was at its final stage. Asked about the number of accused to be named in the charge sheet, he declined to give a specific figure but indicated it could range between eight and 12.

Of the 11 arrestees, six have given confessional statements under Section 164 of the CrPC, while the court has recorded statements from four witnesses.

Following Hadi's killing, Inqilab Moncho has been staging demonstrations demanding justice. The platform has also launched a "March for Insaaf (justice)" campaign to mobilise public opinion, which will continue at various locations until January 6.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS
The Department of Environment launches a campaign against sound pollution, aiming to raise awareness -- specially among drivers -- about the harmful effects of excessive noise. The photo was taken on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

Third terminal not opening

FROM PAGE 3
Sumitomo Corporation, Sojitz, and Narita International Airport Corporation.
Officials involved with the proceedings told The Daily Star that the ministry and the Japanese consortium couldn't finalise the modalities for running the terminal, causing the delay.
"The two sides couldn't come to a consensus regarding the terms and conditions of the agreement," sources at CAAB and the ministry said.
"The government considered the consortium's revenue sharing proposal too high," a CAAB official said, adding that several meetings were held late last year without any conclusive outcome.
CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq said about 99 percent of construction work on the terminal has been completed.
CAAB had earlier

announced that the terminal would open in October 2024.
In September 2023, the Public-Private Partnership Authority signed a deal with the International Finance Corporation for transaction advisory services for the terminal's operation and maintenance. The ousted Awami League government had decided in principle to operate the terminal under a public-private partnership with the Japanese consortium.
Under the interim government's plan, Biman Bangladesh Airlines was to manage passenger and cargo handling for two years under the consortium's supervision, while CAAB would oversee data security.
Officials said that even after signing the agreement, opening the terminal would require at least six months to recruit and train manpower. Besides, the standard operating procedure for

the terminal is yet to be formulated, they said.
The terminal spans 5,42,000 square metres and will require around 6,000 personnel to operate in four shifts, including about 4,000 security staff.
The government contributed Tk 5,000 crore to the project, with the remainder funded through loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.
Business leaders have repeatedly called for the terminal's swift opening, especially after India suspended third-country transshipment on April 8, creating challenges for Bangladeshi garment exporters.
Air transshipment through India had gained popularity due to lower costs and faster services compared to Dhaka airport, which has long struggled with inefficiency and mismanagement.

42 appeals filed

FROM PAGE 3
nomination paper came from the Cumilla region.
For this purpose, the EC has set up 10 region-based booths at the Election Bhaban in Agargaon.
On January 3, the scrutiny of nomination papers for the election ended. Following the scrutiny, the EC declared 1,842 nomination papers valid, while 723 were rejected across the country.
Candidates themselves, as well as banks or financial institutions, government service-providing agencies, or anyone authorised in writing by a candidate, may file appeals with the EC.
A total of 2,568 candidates had submitted nomination papers in the 300 constituencies by the December 29 deadline to contest the polls.
While visiting the appeal booths at the

Election Bhaban, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday said the election environment ahead of the national election has been satisfactory so far.
Meanwhile, Tasnim Jara, an aspirant for Dhaka 9 constituency (Khilgaon, Sobujbagh and Mugda), filed an appeal with the EC challenging the cancellation of her nomination papers for the upcoming national election.
Speaking to reporters after submitting her appeal at the EC's headquarters, Jara said she would continue to pursue legal remedies against the decision.
"We will continue the legal fight," she said.
On Saturday, the Dhaka district returning officer rejected her nomination papers following scrutiny.

JnU student union polls today

FROM PAGE 3
Labib, a student of the Economics department, said enthusiasm among students has declined. "This is the first JnUCSU election in the university's history. However, the excitement seen initially is no longer there after three postponements. Many students have already left campus," he said.
Ivan Tahsib, general secretary candidate of the Somajtantrik Chhatra Front-backed Maulana Bhasani Brigade panel, urged students to participate in the voting.
BM Atikur Rahman Tanzil, assistant general secretary candidate of the Chhatra Dal and

Chhatra Odhikar backed Oikyoboddho Nirbhik Jobian panel, said, "We want a free, fair and neutral election with participation from all students."
Four panels are contesting the central union election: Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Odhikar Parishad backed Oikyoboddho Nirbhik Jobian; Chhatra Shakti-backed Oikyoboddho Jobian; Somajtantrik Chhatra Front-backed Maulana Bhasani Brigade; and Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed Odmmo Jobian Oikko.
Meanwhile, three panels are in the race for the hall unions: Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed Odmmo

Jobian; Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Odhikar backed Aparajitar Ogrojatra; and Somajtantrik Chhatra Front-backed Rokeya Parshad.
To ensure security, police, Rab, BGB, the Army and Ansar members have been deployed in and around the campus, while volunteers from BNCC, Rover Scouts and Rangers will be assisting in maintaining order.
JnU Proctor Prof Dr Tazammol Hoque said all preparations had been completed to ensure a peaceful election.
Election Commissioner Prof Dr Kaniz Fatema Kakolee said voting and result publication would be completed within the day.

10 cops suspended for embezzling

FROM PAGE 4
Cox's Bazar District Police as well as a gunman of a judicial magistrate in the district.
The remaining nine police personnel were attached to Bakalia Police Station.
Additional Police Commissioner (Traffic) Wahidul Islam said, "The 10 policemen were suspended after their involvement in the drug scam was found during investigation. I submitted my findings, mentioning their roles, to the CMP commissioner, who ordered their suspension."
Police sources

confirmed that on the night of December 8, a patrol team from Bakalia Police Station led by SI Amir Hossain in Notun Bridge area of Bakalia was conducting searches on passenger buses coming from Bandarban via Satkania and Cox's Bazar.
Around midnight, on suspicion, Intiaj was asked to get off a Dhaka-bound Desh Travels bus along with his bag, and then taken to a roadside police box, where one lakh yaba tablets were recovered from his possession during bag search. At that time, he identified himself as a

police member and claimed that he was working as a judge's gunman.
Meanwhile, Inspector (Investigation) Tanvir Ahmed and SI Al Amin arrived there along with another police team. Despite the recovery of the drugs, Intiaj was later released, and the drugs were embezzled by police. After being released from the police box, Intiaj reportedly went to his village home in Cumilla.
After the news came to light, a Chattogram court ordered CMP to launch an inquiry and submit a report by January 12.

Govt warns parties

FROM PAGE 3
and inflammatory content on social media. "Strict measures have been outlined to curb the spread of harmful online content," the home adviser said.
The government has also issued a zero-tolerance policy towards actions causing public inconvenience, such as road blockades or unnecessary disruptions, according to meeting sources.
Law enforcement agencies have been directed to take immediate action if such incidents occur.
The overall law and order

situation and ongoing operations, including the "Devil Hunt Phase-2," were also reviewed.
Launched on December 13, the operation has led to the arrest of 14,569 people as of January 4, 2026. Authorities have seized 201 firearms, over 1,500 rounds of ammunition, 165 locally made weapons, and explosives.
The meeting also discussed security along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, focusing on smuggling, drug trafficking, and other cross-border crimes.

DNCC to form team

FROM PAGE 3
said, "Parks and playgrounds in Dhaka city are operated under different ownerships and management authorities. One of the main reasons for mismanagement and encroachment of parks and playgrounds is this fragmented ownership. Therefore, it has been decided to form a steering committee to bring all stakeholders involved in the management onto a coordinated platform and to oversee their overall activities."
The committee will submit a monthly report to the city corporation, he said.
The committee will also monitor to ensure that no club or commercial institution occupies parks, playgrounds, or public spaces, he added.
Of the 1,06,37 are currently owned by DNCC, 17 are owned by the National Housing Authority, and the remaining ones are owned by other institutions and organisations. In addition, some playgrounds and public spaces are managed by various school and college authorities.
The meeting decided to include representatives

from the city corporation, Rajuk, Public Works Department/National Housing Authority, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, district administration, and representatives of civil society as members of the committee.
It was also decided that each park and playground will be managed by citizen committees, formed with local residents, under the chairmanship of DNCC's 10 regional executive officers.
The steering committee will supervise the activities of parks and playgrounds through these regional committees.
In cases where parks, playgrounds, and public spaces fall under DNCC's jurisdiction but are not owned by DNCC, development activities will be undertaken by forming committees comprising appropriate representatives of the concerned authorities, local communities, and DNCC representatives.

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Bangladesh Power Development Board
www.bpd.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date & time	Opening date and time
01	ID-1205926	EE-GRF-02 (FY:2025-26)	27.11.0000.304 26.210.26, Date: 01/01/2026	Supply of 11KV 630 Amps ACR	16-Feb-2026, 17:00	17-Feb-2026, 14:00	17-Feb-2026, 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01768015538).

Md. Nannu Miah
Md. Nannu Miah
ID No. 1-01304
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

বিদ্যুৎ/কল-২১(০)/০৫/০১/২৬

GD-30

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
হবিগঞ্জ পানি উন্নয়ন বিভাগ
বাপাউবে, হবিগঞ্জ
ফোনঃ ০২-৯৯৮৮৩৭০৪৪

Office of the Executive Engineer
Habiganj WD Division
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E-mail: xen.bwdb.habiganj@gmail.com

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

Memo No. 42.01.3300.000.283.32.0004.26.788 Date: 05-01-2026

Invitation for e-Tender (OTM)

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

Sl No.	e-Tender ID & Package No.	Name of the work	Tender publication date & time	Tender documents last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	ID No. 1207910, Package No. Habi/CCTF-01/W-01	Re-excavation of Sutang River from km 29,500 to km 33,000 Total 3,500 km in Upazilla-Sayestaganj & Habiganj Sadar, District-Habiganj under CCTF Project.	Date: 05-01-26 Time: 22:30pm	Date: 19-01-26 Time: 17:00pm	Date: 20-01-26 Time: 17:00pm
2	ID No. 1207911, Package No. Habi/CCTF-01/W-02	Re-excavation of Sutang River from km 33,000 to km 36,000 Total 3,000 km in Upazilla-Sayestaganj, District-Habiganj under CCTF Project.	Date: 05-01-26 Time: 22:30pm	Date: 19-01-26 Time: 17:00pm	Date: 20-01-26 Time: 17:00pm
3	ID No. 1207912, Package No. Habi/CCTF-01/W-03	Re-excavation of Sutang River from km 36,000 to km 39,500 Total 3,500 km in Upazilla-Chunarughat & Sayestaganj District-Habiganj under CCTF Project.	Date: 05-01-26 Time: 22:30pm	Date: 19-01-26 Time: 17:00pm	Date: 20-01-26 Time: 17:00pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Tender will be available on 05-01-2026 at 22:30pm. Last date & time of tender receiving mentioned in IFT. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

পানি-৫৪০/২০২৫-২০২৬ (৬'৩০)

Sayedur Rahman
05.01.2026
Sayedur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Habiganj WD Division
BWDB, Habiganj

GD-33

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Zone-1 (Nagar Bhaban)

"e-Tender Notice"

Memo No.: egp/dscc/zone-01/04/2025-2026 Date: 05/01/2026

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Sl. No	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of works	Publishing Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1.	1203947 WR06/Z_1/RCR/2025_26	Repair Of Excavated Section of Roads Under Zone 01 cutting done by various organizations Group-ka (FY 2025-26).	05/01/2026 16:00	20/01/2026 10:00	20/01/2026 12:30
2.	1203949 WR07/Z_1/RCR/2025_26	Repair Of Excavated Section of Roads Under Zone 01 cutting done by various organizations Group-kha (FY 2025-26).	05/01/2026 19:00	19/01/2026 10:05	19/01/2026 12:30
3.	1204718 WR20/Z_1/RCR/2025_26	Repair Of Excavated Section of Roads Under Zone 01 cutting done by various organizations Group-Ga (FY 2025-26).	05/01/2026 19:00	20/01/2026 10:30	20/01/2026 12:30

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ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৬০/২০২৫-২৬

GD-34

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Narayanganj Sadar, Narayanganj
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.4908.000.18.001-5 Date: 05/01/2025

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1208235	e-Tender/UDF/Elec/NAR/SAD/2025-2026/W-12	Supply and installation of street LED light with lamp post and cable among 7 unions under Narayanganj Sadar Upazila	13-Jan-2026 15:00	13-Jan-2026 16:05	13-Jan-2026 16:05

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Yiaser Arafat Rubel
05.01.2026
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GD-35

How the Dutch East India Company invented the MNC

A history of the world's first multinational corporation and its forgotten ties to Bengal

ZARIF FAIAZ

On a March day in 1602, the Dutch Republic tried to solve a problem of commerce with a piece of statecraft. Rival merchant groups were bidding up the cost of spices in Asia, squeezing profits at home, while the war for independence from Spain made overseas trade inseparable from national security. The answer was the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC: a single chartered company with a monopoly on Dutch trade east of the Cape, and a mandate to defend it.

Over the next two centuries the VOC built a network of forts, factories and settlements from southern Africa across the Indian Ocean to Japan. It also created something that looks uncannily familiar: permanent share capital, tradable stock, a central board, regional chambers, layers of overseas management, and a culture that treated distance as a problem to be solved by paperwork. This is why the VOC is often described as the world's first multinational corporation, even if its rise came with an older, darker inheritance of coercion and conquest.

From scattered voyages to a single company

The VOC has rivals for the title of "first". The English East India Company was founded earlier, in 1600. But historians often point to the Dutch firm as the first multinational in a distinctly modern sense: it moved from temporary, single-voyage ventures to a permanent, centralised corporation designed to operate across borders for decades, funded by a broad shareholder base.

Dutch merchants had been pushing into Asian trade since the late 16th century through voyage-specific partnerships. By 1602, a flurry of expeditions had proved the profits were real, but also that competition among Dutch syndicates was self-defeating. The States General backed a merger that brought the pre-companies into one united enterprise, and granted it a renewable 21-year monopoly over Dutch trade in a vast maritime zone. The purpose was commercial and political at once: protect trade routes, squeeze out rivals, and help fund a young republic at war.

The structure mattered as much as the monopoly. The VOC raised capital from the public and locked it into the company rather than tying it to individual voyages. Investors received shares that could be transferred, which helped turn Amsterdam into an early centre of securities trading. The crucial shift was continuity: the company could keep operating even as ownership changed hands.

Inside the VOC: limited liability and the separation of ownership and control

Early modern trade was hazardous, and

investors had good reason to fear that one shipwreck could ruin them. One of the VOC's foundational contributions to corporate practice was to normalise a principle that now underpins modern company law: shareholders' risk was limited to what they had invested. The company, meanwhile, could survive the failure of individual voyages, borrow money, hold assets, and keep trading.

This legal and financial design accelerated a second shift that defines corporate culture today: the separation of ownership from control. Shareholders did not sail the ships or negotiate in Asian ports. They delegated authority to directors and managers, who delegated further to factors, clerks, captains and soldiers spread across continents. That chain of delegation created scale, but it also created the perennial corporate problem: how to supervise managers who operate far from



scrutiny, and how to reassure investors who can see little of what they own.

At home, the VOC was organised into six chambers in Dutch port cities. Their delegates formed the Heeren XVII, the central board that set strategy and tried to supervise a far-flung organisation of warehouses, ships and personnel. This arrangement resembles a modern multinational's mix of powerful regional offices and a central board that controls capital allocation, priorities and policy.

Overseas, the company's answer to distance was bureaucracy. Letters, reports, account books and rules were the tools that turned scattered outposts into something that behaved like a single entity. It was corporate governance by paperwork, and it worked well enough to sustain an empire of trade for generations.

The first IPO, the first modern shareholder culture

The VOC is widely recognised as the first company to issue publicly tradable shares at scale, a step that helped create the architecture of the modern stock market. It

did not merely ask a handful of merchants to underwrite one expedition. It gathered funds from a broad investor base and made ownership liquid.

That liquidity changed the relationship between company and shareholder. Shares could be bought and sold, and price movements became a running verdict on confidence, rumour and expectation. Early Amsterdam trading produced practices that feel familiar: speculation, sophisticated contracts, and disputes about whether market activity helped discipline management or destabilised it. Just as today, the existence of shareholders did not guarantee control, only pressure.

Bengal and the forgotten footprint of the first multinational

One of the most striking reminders of the VOC's global network sits not in the Netherlands, but in Bengal.



A seventeenth century Dutch trading post at Hooghly Chinsurah became the base of the VOC in Bengal, staffed by dozens of Dutch employees and more than a hundred local workers, and focused on commodities that modern multinationals would recognise as supply chain essentials: silk, textiles, opium and saltpetre.

This matters for two reasons. First, it underlines the company's multinational character. Bengal was not a marginal stop. It was a managed node in a corporate system that linked European capital to Asian production and global distribution. The VOC did not simply "trade with Asia" as a single market. It operated a network of regional hubs, each with its own specialised procurement role, feeding into wider corporate objectives.

Second, it ties the world's first multinational corporation to Bengal's economic history. The Hooghly lodge, depicted in a well known painting now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, shows the VOC not just as a maritime trader but as an employer, administrator and armed

presence in the region. It also points to the human cost: the museum notes that in the seventeenth century Bengal was among the places where the VOC and its employees bought large numbers of enslaved people, who were transported to other company outposts around the Indian Ocean.

The VOC's legacy in today's corporate culture

The VOC's early success did not make it immortal. Over time it became more deeply entangled in the politics and landholding of its Asian possessions. Costs rose, competition intensified, corruption spread, and the burden of defence and administration grew heavier. By the end of the 18th century the company was heavily indebted, and in 1799 its charter ended, with its assets and liabilities absorbed by the Dutch state.

Yet the VOC's legacy remains visible in the architecture of modern corporate life. It normalised the idea that a company could be bigger than its founders, with ownership dispersed among large numbers of investors and management delegated to professionals. It embedded the boardroom as a centre of power, balancing regional interests, political pressure and shareholder expectations. It showed how standardised branding and documentation could turn a far-flung trading network into a single corporate identity. It also revealed how monopoly privilege and state support can accelerate corporate growth, and how weak oversight can invite abuses.

Most importantly, the VOC demonstrated that a company could operate as a global system: capital raised in one country, decisions made by a central board, procurement organised through regional directorates, and risk pushed down supply chains spanning continents. That is the multinational corporation as we still recognise it.

The VOC's legacy, in the end, cannot be separated from the methods used to sustain its profits. Monopoly in a world of competing powers often meant coercion. In the Banda Islands, the nutmeg rich archipelago the company was determined to control, the campaign culminated in 1621 when Jan Pieterszoon Coen ordered the capture of the Banda Archipelago, an episode Cambridge University Press describes as genocide that destroyed Bandanese civilisation and secured a VOC monopoly over nutmeg and mace production.

The costs were profound, and not incidental. The same tools that enabled scale, limited liability, delegated authority and monopoly power also enabled exploitation, opacity and violence. The modern corporate world inherited the structures the VOC helped pioneer, and it inherited the moral arguments that follow them.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

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Minimum experience: 3-4 years

Plan International

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Eligibility:

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Swisscontact

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Deadline: January 13

Eligibility:

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Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.

- Robert Collier

Decoding corporate lingo: what people mean, and how to ask for clarity

NEXT STEP DESK

Corporate language can sound like a dialect. It is full of acronyms, metaphors, and phrases that mean different things in different organisations. Sometimes the shorthand genuinely helps people coordinate work at speed. Sometimes it obscures responsibility, softens bad news, or makes simple decisions sound more technical than they are.

Decoding corporate lingo is less about memorising buzzwords and more about identifying what is missing from the message: the decision being made, who owns the work, what "success" means, and when something needs to happen.

Why corporate lingo exists

Corporate lingo often develops for practical reasons. Efficiency is one. Concepts that recur across meetings and documents get compressed into short phrases, especially in large organisations where teams need to move quickly. Coordination is another. Shared labels can help people align across functions and geographies, particularly when projects involve many stakeholders, dependencies, and approvals.

There are also softer incentives. Vague phrasing can reduce perceived commitment, and euphemisms can make conflict or poor performance easier to discuss without direct language. Some terms also signal familiarity with internal processes, which can carry status in highly structured workplaces.

Patterns worth recognising

Certain patterns appear repeatedly across sectors. First, there are vague verbs that delay commitment. Words like "explore", "consider", "look into", and "ideate" often indicate early stage thinking, or

a desire to avoid a firm decision. The practical question is whether there is a clear owner and a date for the next decision.

Second, there are euphemisms that reframe uncomfortable topics. "Rightsizing", "optimisation", and "efficiency programme" frequently refer to cost cutting, restructuring, or redundancies. "Reprioritisation" can mean planned work will stop or slip, even if it is described as a simple change in order.

Third, there are metaphors that add urgency without adding detail. Phrases borrowed from sport or the military can raise the emotional temperature while leaving the plan unchanged. When you hear them, it is useful to ask what actions, deadlines, or constraints have actually changed.

Fourth, acronyms can hide the real work. Frameworks such as KPIs and OKRs can be useful, but only when they translate into specific targets, measures, and accountability. Without that, they can become decorative labels.

Common phrases and how to translate them

"Circle back" usually means the topic is being postponed. If it matters, ask when it returns and who will bring it back.

"Take this offline" usually means the discussion will happen outside the meeting, often with a smaller group. Ask who needs to be included and what outcome is expected.

"Alignment" can mean genuine agreement, or it can mean there is no active objection. Ask what decision is required and what would count as aligned.

"Socialise this" typically means sharing a plan widely to gather reactions and reduce surprises. Ask who needs to see it, by when, and what kind of feedback is being requested.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

"Bandwidth" means time and capacity. A useful follow-up is what work should be paused to make room.

"Leverage" usually means using an existing tool, asset, relationship, or team. Ask which resource is being used and what dependency comes with it.

"Deep dive" means a detailed review. Ask what questions the review should answer and what output should come out of it.

"North star" means a guiding objective. Ask how progress will be measured.

"Scope creep" means requirements are expanding beyond the plan. Ask what is in scope, what is out, and who approves changes.

"Deliverables" means the outputs expected. Ask what "done" looks like and what the deadline is.

"Stakeholders" means people affected or people with influence. Ask who makes the decision, who is consulted, and who only needs to be informed.

"Rebaseline" means targets or timelines are being reset. Ask what

changed and what the new baseline date or number is.

"Low-hanging fruit" means easier tasks first. Ask about impact and effort, and whether the easiest work is also the most valuable.

"Value add" means benefits beyond the minimum. Ask what the specific benefit is for customers, users, or the business.

"Action items" means tasks assigned after a meeting. Ask who owns each task and when it is due.

"Moving forward" signals a shift in approach. Ask what changes immediately and what stays the same.

How to interpret tone without overreading it

Corporate lingo often carries implied messages. These cues are common, but context matters.

"We should" is usually a suggestion, while "We will" is a commitment. "Let's explore" can be genuine curiosity, or a way to pause a decision. "Not a priority right now" is often a soft no unless it

comes with a clear trigger for when it becomes a priority.

If a phrase sounds positive but lacks specifics, it may be functioning as a holding statement. If you want clarity without sounding combative, focus on practical details. Ask what decision is being made and whether it is needed today. Ask who is accountable for delivery. Ask for the deadline and any intermediate milestones. Ask how success will be measured. Ask what trade-offs are required, including what will be delayed or stopped. Ask for the very next step and who will take it.

These questions are usually welcomed because they reduce risk. They also force the conversation back to concrete commitments.

How to write plainly in corporate settings

Clear corporate writing tends to include four elements: purpose, context, request, and constraints.

State what you need and why. Provide the minimum background needed to understand it. Make the request explicit, whether it is a decision, approval, or action. Then specify constraints such as deadlines, budgets, dependencies, and risks.

Replacing abstract nouns with concrete details often eliminates the need for jargon. "We need alignment" becomes "We need legal and finance approval by Friday so we can sign the supplier contract on Monday."

Corporate lingo is most damaging when it hides responsibility, timing, or consequences. If it is unclear who owns the outcome, ask directly. If dates are vague, ask for a timeline. If the impact of delay is not stated, ask what happens if the work does not ship or the decision is not made.

A shared vocabulary can be useful. A shared understanding is essential.



PHOTO: BCB

NASUM'S RECORD FIFER CRUSHES NOAKHALI

Nasum Ahmed delivered a record-breaking spell to power Sylhet Titans to a six-wicket win over Noakhali Express in the Bangladesh Premier League in Sylhet yesterday. The left-arm spinner registered the best figures by a spinner in BPL history, returning five for seven -- also a career-best -- as Sylhet skilted Noakhali for 61 in 14.2 overs. The previous record was held by Shakib Al Hasan, who claimed five for 16 for Dhaka Dynamites against Rangpur Riders in 2017. Chasing a modest target, Sylhet reached the target in 8.4 overs.

NOAKHALI'S campaign unravels on and off the field

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Newcomers Noakhali Express continued their miserable run in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 as they suffered their fourth consecutive defeat on Monday, going down by six wickets to Sylhet Titans in Sylhet.



While the on-field performances of Noakhali -- the only winless side in the tournament -- have been alarming, their off-field troubles have been far more concerning and wide-ranging.

Noakhali's losing streak is not unfamiliar territory for head coach Khaled Mahmud Sujon. In 2024, he coached Durdanto Dhaka, who lost 11 straight matches to finish bottom while last season, his Dhaka Capitals managed just three to end sixth out of seven teams.

During the tournament, a member of the team's coaching staff has reportedly faced questioning by the BCB's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) after doubts emerged about the authenticity of his professional credentials.

The troubles with the coaching panel had started a day before the season began, when head coach Sujon and assistant coach Talha Jubair boycotted a practice session over inadequate training arrangements and equipment, before rejoining later the day, calling it a 'misunderstanding'.

The captaincy situation of the team has also been murky from the start. Before the tournament, the team's Managing Director Bazlur Rahman Ratan publicly stated that he did not want national team wicketkeeper Jaker Ali to lead the side.

Eventually, the team named Shykat Ali -- a 32-year-old uncapped local cricketer -- as captain, only to replace him two matches later with Pakistani batter Haider Ali.

Noakhali is also struggling at bringing in players from overseas. They had signed West Indies batter Johnson Charles, Sri Lankan batter Kusal Mendis and Afghanistan's Sediqullah Atal as direct recruits.

However, Mendis was ruled out due to injury, while the participation of Charles and Sediqullah remains uncertain, with a concerned team official admitting that both are unlikely to feature and the franchise is unsure about who to bring in their places. They have already roped in local players Munim Shahrir and Abu Jayed Rahi mid-tournament, trying to salvage a season that looks destined for humiliation.

BCB awaits ICC reply as speculation grows

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) plea to the International Cricket Council (ICC) to relocate its ICC Men's T20 World Cup matches from India has sparked widespread speculation among officials, players, stakeholders and fans, with all pondering what will happen next.

On Sunday, the BCB formally wrote to the ICC, informing them it won't send the national team to India for the tournament amid "growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India" and "considering the advice from the Bangladesh Government".

As of Monday, the ICC is yet to respond and sources indicate that cricket's global governing body is likely to issue an official statement within a day or two.

The ICC now faces a choice, with a few possible courses of action.

The ICC could accept Bangladesh's request, in which case the Tigers could possibly play their matches in Sri Lanka -- joint hosts of the tournament alongside India.

Some online reports have claimed that the ICC is heading down this path. However, a BCB director isn't convinced.

"How can the ICC agree so quickly?"

We sent the letter on Sunday [a holiday]. So, reports of an agreement are just rumours," he said, requesting anonymity.

The Daily Star attempted to contact ICC officials regarding their position but did not receive any response.

A number of scenarios could unfold from here on. If the ICC rejects the BCB's request and the board remains

the 2003 World Cup, England and New Zealand skipped their matches in Zimbabwe and Kenya respectively for similar reasons, resulting in walkovers.

The ICC could also replace Bangladesh with another team. Australia had opted out of the 2016 Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh just 22 days before it began and ICC named Ireland as their replacement.

tomorrow [today]," said the BCB director, expecting a reply in this regard.

However, former BCB general secretary Syed Ashraf Haque, who previously served as CEO of the Asian Cricket Council, sees the situation differently.

"In this case, I believe the Indian government will say that they will provide 'head-of-state' level security for Bangladesh. Then the ball will come again to our court. Then we will decide whether we will travel or not," Ashraf told The Daily Star over the phone from Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"Based on my experience, with only one month remaining before the tournament, relocating venues is an extremely uphill task. Shifting matches involve massive logistical challenges.

"Moreover, if Bangladesh does not play -- or if the ICC refuses relocation and Bangladesh opt out -- the board is unlikely to receive its share of World Cup revenue. This could also lead to direct conflict with the BCCI. We can't get emotional everytime. It's not about just losing money. It's about the goodwill as well. International cricket is big business."

All eyes are now on the ICC's decision, which can either resolve the uncertainty or trigger further discord.



firm in its position, Bangladesh will not feature in the global event.

The tournament then could end up becoming a 19-team event, with Bangladesh's Group C opponents -- the West Indies, England, Italy and Nepal -- getting walkovers.

In the 1996 World Cup, Sri Lanka received walkovers from Australia and the West Indies, who didn't travel to Sri Lanka over security concerns. During

Zimbabwe had also pulled out from the 2009 T20 World Cup a year prior and were replaced by Scotland.

The BCB could still revert its stance and participate as per the original schedule, but it's unlikely to happen unless the government changes its directive.

"As the government has taken a stance, we are bound to follow it. We will probably hear from the ICC



PHOTO: REUTERS

Day two of the fifth and final Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground belonged to an imperious Joe Root, although a rapid-fire unbeaten 91 from Australia opener Travis Head helped the hosts to a strong finish against England on Monday. Root's 242-ball 162 powered England to 384 all out in the first innings, with Australia ending the day on 166 for two, still trailing by 218 runs.

ROOT equals Ponting at SCG

** Resuming the day on 72, Root reached an almost chanceless century off 146 balls to reaffirm his status as an all-time great. It was his 41st hundred in the format, drawing him level with Australia great Ricky Ponting in third place on the all-time list of Test centuries.

** Only India's Sachin Tendulkar (51) and South Africa's Jacques Kallis (45) have scored more Test centuries than Root, who remains top of the list among current players. Next on that list among active players is Australia's Steve Smith, who has 36 centuries in 123 Tests.

** Root starred in a 169-run fourth-wicket stand with Harry Brook, who could add only six runs to his overnight score of 78. So far, it is the highest partnership of the five-match series, surpassing the 162 put on by Head and Alex Carey in Adelaide.

** Australia lead the series 3-1 and have already retained the Ashes, with England desperate for another win after their victory in the previous Test in Melbourne.

United sack Amorim after turbulent tenure

REUTERS, London

Ruben Amorim's turbulent 14-month tenure as Manchester United manager ended abruptly on Monday when he was sacked a day after voicing a passionate defence of his role and vowed not to quit in the wake of a disappointing 1-1 draw with Leeds United.

The Portuguese coach, 40, took over from Erik ten Hag in November 2024, ending his first season with the club 15th in the Premier League -- their worst placing since they were relegated in 1974 -- and losing to Tottenham Hotspur in the Europa League final. This season they are sixth after 20 games, having won three of their last 11 matches, and the Leeds result triggered a fiery outburst in a press conference from Amorim.

He bristled at questions about his job security, delivering a defiant message that he came to United as a manager with full authority and not merely a coach taking orders. "I'm not going to quit. I will do my job until another guy is coming here to replace me," he said.

Amorim's replacement will be assistant Darren Fletcher, as United again set about trying to find a big-name operator who can bring back the glory days of the Alex Ferguson era.

Since Ferguson retired in 2013, United have turned to David Moyes, Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Ralf Rangnick, and Ten Hag with limited success and it is now 13 years since they won the last of their 20 league titles.

'Expectations are natural'

Bangladesh U-19 team left for Zimbabwe early Monday to take part in the 16th ICC U-19 World Cup, scheduled from January 15 to February 6 in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Having played extensive youth international cricket at home and abroad over the past two years, the side head into the tournament as one of the contenders. Captain Azizul Hakim Tamim spoke to The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan about preparation, expectations and challenges ahead of departure. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): With the World Cup approaching, how would you assess the team's overall preparation?

Azizul Hakim Tamim (AHT): We are well prepared in every aspect. We have played over 30 matches and are fit both physically and mentally... Now it is about execution on the field.

DS: What do you see as this team's biggest strength?

AHT: It is not just one thing. At this level, we chased 284 in the Asia Cup. Our bowling has always been good, and now our batting is also very strong.

DS: After winning the 2024 Asia Cup and following it up with several successful series, but missing the final in the last Asia Cup, do you believe the selected 15 players are the best available?

AHT: We won every series we played, Alhamdulillah, except for the last Asia Cup where we lost only one match against Pakistan. Everyone is fit now.

DS: You had a great start in the National Cricket League for the Mymensingh Division. Several players in this squad have exposure to senior domestic cricket, which is rare at this level.

AHT: Domestic cricket gives us valuable

experience. Playing alongside national and foreign players helps a lot... and that experience will be very useful in the World Cup.

DS: Conditions in Zimbabwe are often compared to Bangladesh. How familiar are you with them?



AHT: We have played in similar conditions before, so we have a good idea about the wickets, weather and grounds.

DS: Since Bangladesh won the U-19 World Cup in 2020, expectations have been high. Do you see that as pressure?

AHT: Winning the 2020 World Cup is part of Bangladesh cricket's history. Expectations from the people are natural,

and it is good that they expect from us. We will try our best to live up to that.

DS: You are grouped with India and New Zealand, with India first up. How important is the opening match?

AHT: Every match is important because the World Cup quickly becomes like a knockout stage.

DS: Does the rivalry with India add extra motivation?

AHT: It is not just about India. Against big teams, there will be sledging. We have to play not just with our heads, but with body language.

DS: This squad has many all-rounders. How much of an advantage does that give you as captain?

AHT: It is a big advantage... When everyone contributes, it creates a strong impact.

DS: You have previously said the team's biggest strength is collective unity rather than individuals. Could that be key to success in this World Cup?

AHT: Yes, definitely. We have played together since U-15 and U-17, which has created a strong bond. The combination among the players is very good, and the senior players are very supportive.



MANAGERLESS CHELSEA DENT CITY'S TITLE HOPES

Chelsea interim manager Calum McFarlane celebrates as Enzo Fernandez scores a dramatic stoppage-time equaliser in a 1-1 draw, while Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola cuts a dejected figure after City failed to cut the gap on league leaders Arsenal to four points. The Blues handed their London rivals a timely boost in the Premier League title race just three days after the club sacked head coach Enzo Maresca. Fernandez's goal, scored at a freezing Etihad Stadium, ensured Arsenal finished a congested festive schedule with a six-point lead at the top. The Gunners sit on 48 points from 20 matches, with City and Aston Villa both on 42. Photo: Reuters



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'A section of civil service is biased'

Allege Jamaat, NCP

STAR REPORT

Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party yesterday alleged that sections of the civil administration were working in favour of a particular political party ahead of the upcoming election.

Jamaat leaders raised the allegation at a meeting of the party's central executive council at its Moghbazar headquarters, while NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary echoed similar concerns at a rally at Dhaka University.

At the meeting, chaired by Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, the party observed that conditions for a free, fair, and neutral election have yet to be established in the country.

"Allegations are coming in from different areas that some government officials within the administration are working in favour of a particular party. In various parts of the country, political leaders and activists are still being killed in broad daylight," said a press release issued by Jamaat's

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Customers gather at a hardware and stove repair shop in Dhaka's Nawabpur yesterday to repair their old kerosene burners amid a LPG cylinder supply shortage. The fuel crisis is pushing residents to switch to kerosene or electric alternatives. PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Rab complicit in 25% cases

Commission recommends disbanding it

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Withdraw armed forces from internal policing
- Repeal or overhaul the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009
- Scrap Section 13 of the APBn Act, 2003
- Turn 'Aynagar' detention sites into museums
- Shift to community-based counterterrorism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances has recommended extensive institutional and legal reforms to end enforced disappearances and human rights abuses, including disbanding the Rapid Action Battalion, the worst offender.

Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, chairperson of the commission, said yesterday that they also

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

Widow alleges rape, torture

Case filed against 4, one arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

A woman has been allegedly raped and brutally tortured in Jhenaidah's Kaliganj upazila.

The victim, a widow, filed a case yesterday, accusing two men of raping her and two women of abetting the men in torturing her, said Kaliganj Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Md Jellal Hossain.

The accused are Shahinur Islam, 55; Hasan, 45; Rupali Khatun, 30; and Mosammat Mukta, 25. All are residents of Arpara village under the upazila headquarters.

Of them, Hasan has already been arrested, and efforts are underway to arrest the others, added the OC.

Contacted, Kaliganj Police Station's Inspector (Investigation) Mofazzel Haque told this correspondent that the accused forcibly entered the woman's house and raped her. Later, they took her outside, tied her to a tree, and subjected her to inhuman torture.

Locals rescued her and took her to Jhenaidah General Hospital.

OC Jellal Hossain said the incident occurred on December 31, but the victim informed police about it on January 3.

He also said there was a delay in filing the case, as the woman was hospitalised.

According to locals, the woman has been living there since she bought a house around two years ago.

Talking to this correspondent over

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'We need Greenland'

Says Trump, threatens US action in Colombia, Cuba

AGENCIES

President Trump suggested on Sunday that the United States could take action against other countries after its attack on Venezuela. He threatened Colombia and its president, described Cuba as "ready to fall" and reasserted his desire to take control of Greenland.

Trump has been facing questions about his plans for Venezuela since a US raid in Caracas captured the country's president, Nicolás Maduro, and brought him to New York City to face federal drug trafficking and weapons charges. As Trump took questions about that on Sunday, he spoke of other countries in Latin America and beyond.

On Air Force One, Trump told reporters that Colombia was being "run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States."

"He's not going to be doing it for very long," he said of Colombia's president, Gustavo Petro, who has frequently criticised Trump. "He has cocaine mills and cocaine factories."

Trump and Petro have been locked in an escalating dispute over the United States' series of boat strikes in the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific, which have ratcheted up pressure on Colombia, a nexus of the region's drug trade, reports The New York Times online.

Asked whether his administration would carry out an operation targeting Colombia, Trump replied, "It sounds good to me."

Trump also suggested that the United States could take action against a number of other countries, including Mexico and Iran, over a range of issues.

He said that drugs were "pouring" through Mexico and that "we're going to have to do something," adding that the cartels there were "very strong."

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As the February 12 election nears, affidavits submitted by candidates open a window into their assets, liabilities, and personal histories. The Daily Star is running stories based solely on these filings.



Income of Amir Khosru doubles in seven years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury's annual income has more than doubled since 2018, rising to Tk 1.6 crore despite a Tk 78 lakh loss in the share market last fiscal year.

According to his election affidavit, Khosru currently holds Tk 5.27 crore in shares and bonds, while his wife, Tahera Alam, owns Tk 98 lakh in similar investments. In 2018, he owned shares worth Tk 1.97 crore -- less than half the present amount.

During the 2018 election, his annual income was Tk 73.7 lakh,

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Azad's net wealth grows five-fold in 17 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The net wealth of AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad, assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, has increased nearly 5.3 times over the last 17 years, reaching Tk 1.93 crore in 2025.

A comparison of his affidavits and tax returns from 2008 and 2025 shows his annual income has surged more than six times -- from Tk 2.98 lakh to Tk 19.27 lakh.

Azad, contesting from the Cox's Bazar-2 constituency, previously won the seat in 2008.

His affidavit indicates intensified investment in real estate in recent years.

While his non-

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Sarjis Alam's documents show income mismatch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party candidate Sarjis Alam has declared conflicting income figures in documents submitted to the Election Commission.

In his affidavit, the 27-year-old postgraduate listed Tk 9 lakh as annual business income, while his tax return for 2025-26 shows Tk 28.05 lakh -- more than three times higher. Both figures appear separately in the affidavit.

Sarjis, contesting from Panchagarh-1, described himself as a businessman. His affidavit also shows inconsistencies between declared assets and the net wealth reported in his

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Justice for Hadi within interim govt tenure

Says home adviser; charge sheet to be submitted tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice will be ensured for the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent youth leader of last year's July uprising, within the tenure of the interim government, Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said yesterday.

A decision has been made to transfer the murder case to a speedy trial tribunal, he told reporters following a meeting of the Advisory

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Correction

In our Sunday's issue, we inadvertently published the photo of Islami Andolan Bangladesh founder Syed Fazlul Karim instead of its Nayeb-e-Ameer Mufti Syed Foyjul Karim. We have already corrected it in the online edition. We regret the error.

'Tuna King' pays record \$3.2m for a bluefin



AFP, Tokyo

A Japanese sushi entrepreneur paid a record \$3.2 million for a giant bluefin tuna yesterday at an annual prestigious new year auction in Tokyo's main fish market, smashing the previous all-time high.

Dave Gershman at the Pew Charitable Trusts' international fisheries team used news of the auction to highlight that stocks of Pacific bluefin tuna were improving after being "near collapse".

Self-styled "Tuna King" Kiyoshi Kimura's sushi restaurant chain paid the top price for the 243-kilogramme (536-pound) fish that was caught off Japan's northern coast.



Even a bone-chilling cold wave, which is sweeping across much of the country and making it difficult to venture outdoors, cannot take away the precious smiles of schoolgoing children. The photo was taken yesterday on Kakan Rajabari Road in Rajshahi's Godagari upazila.

PHOTO: AZHAR UDDIN

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Govt publishes white paper on telecom sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday published a white paper on the telecommunications sector, outlining corruption, irregularities, administrative weaknesses, and structural problems over the past 15 years.

The white paper was prepared by a task force formed in April last year with the approval of the chief adviser to review and analyze allegations of corruption and misconduct within the posts and telecommunications ministry.

Following months of investigation and evaluation, the task force submitted the report in its final form, according to an official government statement.

The document noted that various activities of the Posts and Telecommunications Division during the last decade and a half were affected by systemic irregularities, misuse of authority, weak governance mechanisms, and institutional shortcomings.