



‘Over 500’ killed in Iran anti-regime unrest

War fear grows as Tehran vows to strike US interests if attacked; Trump weighs ‘a series of military options’



Protesters gather during anti-government unrest in Mashhad, in Iran’s Razavi Khorasan province. The screen grab has been taken from a social media video released on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AGENCIES

Unrest in Iran has killed more than 500 people, a rights group said yesterday, as Tehran threatened to target US military bases if President Donald Trump carries out threats to intervene on behalf of protesters. With the Islamic Republic’s clerical establishment facing the biggest demonstrations since 2022, Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene if force is used on protesters. According to its latest figures, from activists inside and outside Iran, US-based rights group HRANA said it had verified the deaths of 490 protesters and 48 security personnel, with more than 10,600

people arrested in two weeks of unrest. Iran has not given an official toll, and Reuters was unable to independently verify the tolls. Trump was to be briefed by his officials on Tuesday on options over Iran, including military strikes, using secret cyber weapons, widening sanctions and providing online help to anti-government sources, the Wall Street Journal said yesterday. CNN, quoting two officials, yesterday said Trump is weighing a series of potential military options in Iran. Trump was briefed in recent days on different plans for intervention, the officials told CNN. Some of the

discussions have also included options that do not involve direct US military force, one of the officials said. The president has not yet made a final decision on intervention, the officials said, but he is seriously considering action as the death toll in Iran continues to rise. The casualty figures were reported as Iranian authorities step up efforts to quell the country’s largest protests in years, which have seen thousands of people take to the streets in anger over the soaring cost of living and inflation. The protests, which began on December 28, have spread to more than 100 cities and towns across

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CA assures EU of free, fair election Says law enforcers ready to tackle disruption attempts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday assured the European Union polls observers that the upcoming national election and referendum would be held in a free, fair, peaceful, and festive environment. At a meeting with the head of the EU polls observers delegation Ivars Ijabs, Latvian political scientist and politician; EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Michael Miller; and others at the State Guest House Jamuna, he said people linked to the fallen autocratic regime may try to disrupt the election and that law enforcement agencies are fully prepared to handle any situation. Yunus added that one of the biggest challenges is the spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media. “False information is often being used to incite violence.” Thanking the EU for sending an observation mission, he told the meeting that all political parties will get a level playing field, stressing that a fair election is crucial for Bangladesh’s democratic transition. He added that law enforcers will be equipped

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Gas crisis fuels sufferings, extra costs

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Dhaka residents are struggling to cook daily meals amid a worsening gas crisis affecting both pipeline supplies and bottled liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Thousands of households in areas including Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, New Market, Hazaribagh, Gabtoli, Khilgaon and adjacent localities have experienced little to no piped gas for days, forcing many to rely on electric stoves, high-cost LPG cylinders or outside food. Most pipeline users report receiving gas for only a couple of hours a day, often late at night or early in the morning. For the rest of the time, kitchens remain cold. Take the case of Mir Hojaila Al Mamdub,

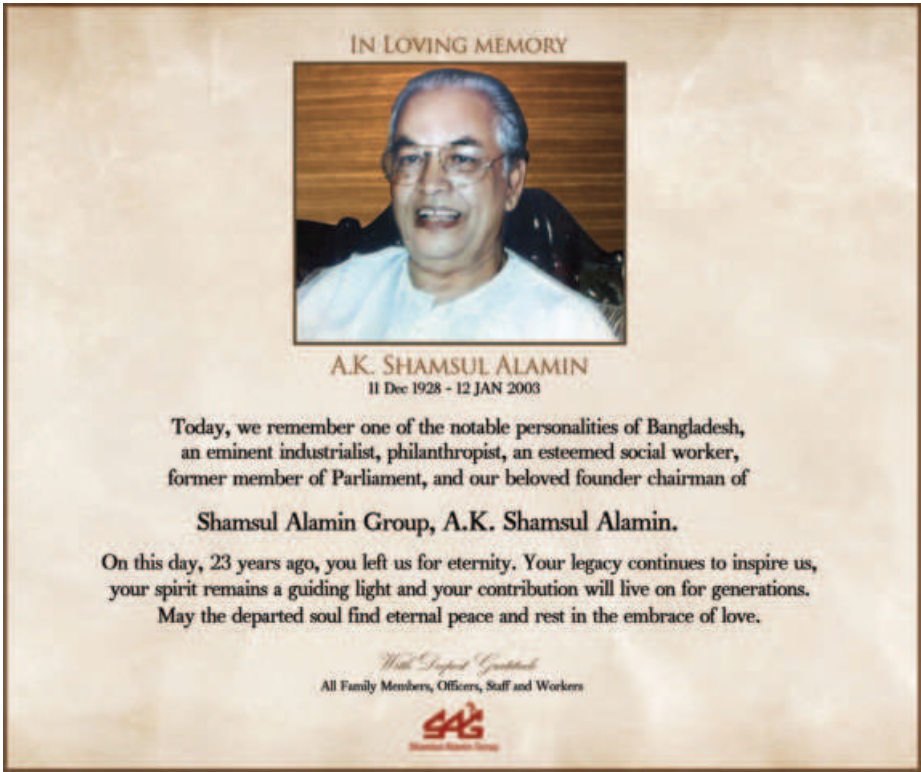


The past few days have been mentally distressing. My salary is limited and most of it goes toward rent and daily expenses. The additional cost of buying an electric stove would be a heavy burden.

Fahim Reza Shovon, a resident of West Dhanmondi

a resident of Mohammadpur, who said his household had no gas supply at all since Tuesday. Although a technician worked on the pipeline on Saturday night, he said only

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ROHINGYA GENOCIDE ICJ begins hearings on case today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Court of Justice will today begin public hearings in the case concerning Rohingya genocide, bringing renewed hope of ending decades-long suffering of the ethnic people denied of citizenship.

The public hearings at the ICJ in The Hague, Netherlands, will continue until January 29, according to a press statement.

"The hearings will be devoted to the merits of the case and will include the examination of witnesses and an expert called by the parties," it said.

"Seeing Gambia's landmark case against Myanmar finally enter the merits phase delivers renewed hope to Rohingya that our decades-long suffering may finally end," said Wai Wai Nu, founder and executive director of the Women's Peace Network, in a joint statement issued by the Human Rights Watch.

"Amid ongoing violations against the Rohingya, the world must stand firm in the pursuit of justice and a path toward ending impunity in

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Supporters march in Caracas on Saturday calling for the release of Venezuela's deposed President Nicolás Maduro, after he and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured by US forces during strikes on Venezuela.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Avalanches claim three lives in French Alps

AFP, Lyon

Two separate avalanches claimed the lives of three off-piste skiers in the French Alps Saturday, local officials said.

In one incident, two French off-piste skiers died after being buried by an avalanche at Val-d'Isere, the resort's tourism office said. The two men were buried under 2.5 metres of snow.

Members of their group had raised the alarm, but rescuers were unable to revive them after finally reaching them, said a statement.

CA assures

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with body-worn cameras in polling centres considered "risky", and that a central app will be monitoring the footage. "This will allow authorities to monitor activities from Dhaka and all districts and upazilas. All centres will also have CCTVs so that those causing trouble can be identified. Besides, the army will remain deployed as a rapid response striking force."

Yunus also acknowledged at the meeting that an EU delegation observing the polls was a major step for Bangladesh's journey towards a democratic transition.

Following the meeting, CA Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told journalists that the chief adviser told the delegation that women and young people had expressed a strong interest in voting. The CA said he expects a good voter turnout.

Shafiqul added that there was no discussion about the Awami League or its participation in the polls.

He said the interim government is campaigning for a "Yes" vote in the referendum, adding that it sought opinions from senior legal experts on whether it can do so. "They said there was no legal barrier in doing so."

The press secretary claimed that the law and order situation is now well under control. "A few incidents have occurred, but both the Election Commission and the government believe the overall situation remains stable and satisfactory."

He said law enforcement agencies successfully handled situations surrounding the funeral of Sharif Osman Hadi, the return of Tarique Rahman to the country, and the funeral of Khaleda Zia. He mentioned that the law enforcers also played an active role in arresting those responsible for several high-profile incidents, including the killing of Swechhasebak Dal leader Aziaur Rahman Musabbir.

"Everyone is enjoying all the necessary facilities related to the election. Both small and large parties are getting a level playing field, and all will continue to enjoy equal opportunities even after the official election campaign begins. The government is not giving any extra advantage to any party."

Responding to a reporter's question regarding fake news, Shafiqul said the CA Office regularly issues alerts from its official page in this regard. "Coordinated efforts are underway involving government bodies, including the ICT Division and BTRC. We believe everyone, including the media, has a responsibility in this regard."

He urged newspapers and all media outlets to conduct their own fact-checking and help prevent the spread of false and fake information ahead of the election.

Noting that around 120 million people are likely Facebook users and about 60 million use TikTok, Shafiqul said it takes several hours to intervene on even one such large platform.

He also expressed frustration over not receiving timely feedback from the platforms.

'Over 500' killed in Iran anti-regime unrest

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every province in Iran, according to the BBC and other international media. Protesters are now calling for an end to the clerical rule of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, speaking in parliament yesterday, warned against "a miscalculation".

"Let us be clear: in the case of an attack on Iran, the occupied territories (Israel) as well as all US bases and ships will be our legitimate target," said Qalibaf, a former commander in Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards.

Earlier, Iran Human Rights, a Norway-based NGO, said at least 192 people have been killed in two weeks of protests. It said the toll could be much higher as a days-long internet blackout hampered verification, but did not break down the figures between protesters and security forces.

Meanwhile, Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news agency yesterday reported that 109 security personnel had been killed in the protests across the country.

Staff at several hospitals told the BBC they have been overwhelmed with the injured and dead, with BBC Persian verifying 70 bodies brought to one hospital in Rasht city on Friday night and a health worker reporting around 38 people dying at a Tehran hospital.

face the death penalty.

Speaking to state broadcaster IRIB, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian yesterday said that the US and Israel want to "sow chaos and disorder" in Iran by ordering "riots", and called



upon Iranians to distance themselves from "rioters and terrorists".

On Saturday, Reza Pahlavi, the US-based son of Iran's ousted shah, urged Iranians to stage more targeted protests with the aim of taking and then holding city centres. He also said he was "preparing to return to my homeland" on a day he believed was "very near".

However, analysts doubt how much support the shah still carries in Iran and say the protests appear to be spontaneous and targeted at "dictator Khamenei", whom they blame for their economic woes.

Khamenei has dismissed demonstrators as a "bunch of vandals" seeking to "please" Trump.

Three Israeli sources, who were present for Israeli security consultations over the weekend, said Israel was on a high-alert footing, but did not elaborate on what that meant.

An Israeli government spokesperson declined to comment. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel and Iran fought a 12-day war in June last year, in which the US joined Israel in launching airstrikes. Iran retaliated for those US strikes by firing missiles at an American air base in Qatar.

The flow of information from Iran has been hampered by an internet blackout imposed by the authorities since Thursday. Internet monitoring watchdog Netblocks reported national connectivity levels remained about 1 percent of the norm.

Video verified by AFP showed large crowds taking to the streets in new protests on Saturday night in several Iranian cities, including Tehran and Mashhad in the east, where images showed vehicles set on fire.

A social media video posted on Saturday showed large crowds gathered in Tehran's Punak neighbourhood at night, drumming rhythmically on the railings of a bridge or other metal objects in an

apparent sign of protest. Reuters verified the location.

Iranian state TV broadcast funeral processions in western Iranian cities such as Gachsaran and Yasuj for members of the security forces killed in the protests.

The Revolutionary Guards on Saturday accused "terrorists" of attacking security facilities. On the same day, Iranian army said in a statement that it would defend the country's "national interests" as it accused Israel and "hostile terrorist groups" of seeking to "undermine the country's public security".

Iran's rulers have quelled previous bouts of unrest, most recently in 2022 over the death in custody of a woman accused of violating dress codes.

Trump, posting on social media on Saturday, said: "Iran is looking at



FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!"

His comments came a day after he said Iran was in "big trouble" and again warned that he could order strikes.

"That doesn't mean boots on the ground, but it means hitting them very, very hard - where it hurts," the US president said.

In a phone call on Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the possibility of US intervention in Iran, according to an Israeli source who was present for the conversation.

A US official confirmed the two men spoke, but did not say what topics they discussed.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar yesterday said that Israel supports the Iranian people in what he described as their "struggle for freedom".

A senior US intelligence official on Saturday described the situation in Iran as an "endurance game". The opposition was trying to keep up pressure until key government figures either flee or switch sides, while the authorities were trying to sow enough fear to clear the streets without giving the United States justification to intervene, the official said.

BB orders banks

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same, he added.

He said the letter from the CA's office also asked banks to provide funds to nongovernmental organisations campaigning to raise public awareness of the referendum.

"We will also provide support through the ABB. Banks will undertake many activities because it's complicated, and ordinary people need to understand it."

"As the ABB chairman, I will spend money here and carry out some activities," he added.

Earlier last week, the BB sent a letter instructing banks to put up banners at each branch to raise public awareness and encourage a 'Yes' vote in the upcoming referendum, said a managing director of a private commercial bank who attended the meeting.

A significant number of banks have already started campaigning at their branches.

When contacted, Arif Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson for the central bank, said he was not aware of the issue.

Gas crisis fuels sufferings

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a brief flame appeared the next morning before the supply dropped again, making cooking impossible. The family managed to cook just one meal using a rice cooker.

With LPG cylinders both scarce and costly, Hojaifa said he was forced to buy breakfast and dinner from outside almost every day.

The long queues at eateries made the situation even more difficult, as he struggled to find time to wait in line between office hours and returning home exhausted at night. "I have lived in Kathalbagan since 2018, and this is the first time I am facing such a severe problem. I had to throw away half-cooked rice," said Tamim Hasan, who gets a scanty gas supply for a couple of hours early in the morning.

West Dhanmondi resident Fahim Reza Shovon said his household's two-burner pipeline gas stove has remained cold since the night of January 7.

Gas returned briefly at low pressure around 10:00pm on January 8. Some supply resumed the following morning but pressure remained weak before stopping again from Saturday morning.

As the outages persisted, his wife began urging him to buy an electric stove.

"The past few days have been mentally distressing. My salary is

previously dependent on trickling gas -- has not been possible for days.

"Even during the usual late-night window, there has been no gas at all. The stove is completely shut," she added.

Mogbazar resident Rafsan Jani has been unable to refill his 45-kg LPG cylinder for three days now and is barely getting by with the little gas left.

The gas distributor, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution PLC, has attributed the ongoing severe shortage to damage to a major pipeline beneath the Turag River and a burst valve in the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area, incidents that further reduced pressure in an already strained distribution network and disrupted supply across large parts of the capital.

Data from Petrobangla show that the capital's average daily gas supply has declined compared with previous years. Between January 1 and 10, the average supply fell from 2,826 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) in 2022 to 2,596 mmcf in 2026.

Although the import of liquefied natural gas -- which needs to be blended with the local gas production -- have increased over the years, a drop in local production has kept overall supply constrained, limiting pipeline distribution to households.

However, Fouzul Kabir Khan,



PHOTO: STAR

An LPG shop hangs a notice that says "sale is suspended due to no gas supply". The photo was taken in Bosila area of the city yesterday.

limited and most of it goes toward rent and daily expenses. The additional cost of buying an electric stove would be a heavy burden," Shovon added.

Khilgaon resident Sadekun Nahar Dilruba said her household depends on LPG cylinders, which are close to running out.

At present, a 12-kg cylinder is selling for Tk 2,400-2,500, nearly double the regulated price of Tk 1,350.

Dilruba also described the situation at her mother-in-law's residence, where the piped gas supply was completely cut yesterday. Pipeline gas usually flows only after midnight and disappears before 7:00am, but even that limited supply has not been available in recent days.

They are now cooking entirely on electric stoves, she said, adding that breakfast is often brought in from outside, while evening cooking --

adviser to the power, energy and mineral resources ministry, did not agree with the statistics. The pipeline gas supply has increased during his tenure, he said.

In 2025, the government imported a total of 109 cargoes of LNG, up from 94 in 2024.

As a result, despite a shortfall in domestic production, gas supply has not decreased, he said.

The adviser blamed the pipeline problem and valve disruptions for the ongoing crisis. About the volatile LPG situation, he said the government is exploring imports on a government-to-government basis, as nearly 98 percent of the fuel is currently imported by the private sector.

"The government has taken various measures, including approval of larger capacities sought by some private sector firms, and the situation will ease," he added.

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Chinese envoy condemns attacks on *Star*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has strongly condemned the recent attacks, vandalism and arson at the office of The Daily Star in Dhaka, expressing solidarity with the newspaper and support for independent media.

He made the remarks during a visit to The Daily Star building yesterday, which was vandalised, looted and set on fire in the early hours of December 19.

He described the attacks as unacceptable and emphasised that violence against media institutions undermines freedom of expression and the rule of law. Yao Wen said China firmly supports the role of independent media in a democratic society, and lauded The Daily Star's stance on democracy, freedom of speech and human rights.

He also stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of journalists and media organisations so they can carry out their professional duties without fear or intimidation.



Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen walks amid charred rubbles at The Daily Star office, which was attacked and torched in the early hours of December 19. During his visit yesterday, the envoy strongly condemned the attack.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Tarique to kick off campaign from Sylhet on Jan 22

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman will formally launch his party's election campaign for the 13th national parliamentary election from Sylhet on January 22.

"Tarique Rahman will go to Sylhet on January 22. However, the detailed tour plan is yet to be finalised," his Press Secretary Saleh Shibly told UNB.

Traditionally, Shibly said, the BNP begins its national election campaign from Sylhet by offering fateha at the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) and Hazrat Shah Paran (R).

"During the visit, he will offer fateha at both shrines. It has not yet been decided where the campaign will formally begin, but I believe it will start in Sylhet after visiting the two shrines," he added.

On Saturday, while exchanging greetings with editors and senior journalists at a hotel in Dhaka, Tarique said his party will go to the people with its plans from January 22.

Party sources said Tarique Rahman, who assumed the post of party chairman on Friday night, will visit all divisions during the election campaign period -- from 6:00am on January 22 to 7:30am on February 10 -- to seek votes for the candidates of his party and alliance partners.



Seat-sharing talks between Jamaat, NCP nearing end

Shafiqur, Nahid hold meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday held a special meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, a day after announcing that seat-sharing within their alliance would be finalised soon.

According to NCP sources, the one-on-one discussion between the two leaders of the 11-party alliance focused on seat distribution and overall election strategy.

NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar told The Daily Star that during the meeting, the NCP and Jamaat chiefs also discussed ways to maximise the number of alliance candidates winning in the February 12 election.

The meeting took place at the Jamaat ameer's office in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area.

In a post on his verified Facebook page after the meeting, Nahid said they discussed the upcoming national parliamentary election and the recent political situation, describing it as a "special meeting".

The meeting comes amid intense discussions to finalise seat-sharing among the 11 like-minded parties, including Jamaat, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the NCP.

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BNP struggles to rein in rebels


SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Despite repeated warnings from the BNP, most rebel candidates have remained in the electoral race, causing discomfort among party high-ups.

Only four of around 200 rebel candidates have withdrawn so far, party insiders said. However, the leadership expects more rebels to pull out in the coming days and pledge support to the nominated candidates.

The large number of rebel contenders has already triggered internal feuds and displeased the party's electoral partners. Political analysts said continued defiance of party decisions could weaken BNP candidates and open the door for opposition contenders to win in several constituencies where tough contests are anticipated.

According to the Election Commission, January 20 is the final date for withdrawal of candidature. Party leaders said with nine days remaining, they hope rebel



4 of around 200 BNP rebel candidates withdrew so far

Jan 20 set as final deadline for withdrawal of candidature

BNP already expelled 10 leaders for defying party directives

Rebel candidates active in at least 118 constituencies outside Dhaka

Party leadership warns of further expulsions if rebels do not step aside

instructions by contesting the polls as rebel candidates.

An analysis of nomination papers submitted in 63 districts outside Dhaka shows that in 118 constituencies, around 179 BNP leaders filed nomination papers.

In the Dhaka-12 constituency, the BNP did not field any candidate, leaving the seat for Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque. Former convener of the Dhaka North City BNP unit, Saiful Alam Nirab, was expelled from the party for contesting the polls in defiance of party directives.

Nirab said he hopes a decision may come from the BNP within the next two to three days.

In Brahmanbaria-2, the BNP has also not announced its own candidate, as the seat has been allocated to a candidate of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh.

BNP Assistant International Affairs Secretary Rumeen Farhana, who was expelled for contesting the seat, announced that she would

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Participatory and peaceful polls key to democracy

Says EU chief election observer Ivars Ijabs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union's Election Observation Mission (EOM) yesterday said a peaceful, participatory and transparent election in Bangladesh is crucial to strengthening democratic institutions.

"These historic elections will be crucial to bolster democratic institutions through the ballot box," said EU EOM Chief Observer Ivars Ijabs at a press conference at a city hotel.

The full mission will comprise around 200 observers from all 27 EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway and Switzerland. This is the EU's first fully fledged election observation mission in Bangladesh since 2008.

An 11-member core team began work in Bangladesh in late December, while a 56-member long-term observer team arrived yesterday and will be deployed across all 64 districts. In addition, 90 short-term observers will arrive shortly before the

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Defence delaying Palak trial

Prosecutor tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that the defence representing former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak appeared to be hoping the trial would not continue until after the election and was therefore attempting to delay proceedings.

Tribunal member Justice Shofiul Alam Mahmood immediately responded, "Will Awami League come to power if the election is held -- do not say like this."

Tajul replied that such remarks by the defence had reached the prosecution's attention.

The comment came after Palak's defence counsel requested more time to prepare for the charge-framing hearing, even though the date had earlier been fixed for Wednesday. The defence said jail authorities had not allowed them to bring laptops and pen drives when they visited Palak last Friday for privileged communication, and sought a tribunal order to permit this.

After hearing both sides, the tribunal set next Thursday for the defence hearing. Palak remains in custody after

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A pedestrian pauses to admire blooming flowers displayed on a footpath beside the Abahani playground in Dhaka's Dhanmondi, where passersby often stop to admire or buy plants for indoor and rooftop decoration. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HC questions EC decision to accept NDF, JP nominations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule questioning the legality of the Election Commission's decision to accept the nomination papers of candidates from the National Democratic Front (NDF) and Jatiya Party (Ershad) for the February 12 national election.

In the rule, the court asked the EC, the government, NDF, and Jatiya Party to explain within two weeks why the EC's decision should not be declared illegal and why it should not be directed to cancel the nomination papers of the two parties' candidates.

The bench of Justice Razik-Al-Jalil and Justice Md Anowarul Islam issued the rule following a writ petition challenging the EC's decision to allow NDF and Jatiya Party to contest the election.

Abdullah Al Mahmud, a July warrior, filed the petition with the High Court on January 6, also seeking a directive for the EC to cancel the nomination papers submitted by NDF -- led by Anisul Islam Mahmud and Anwar Hossain Manju -- and Jatiya Party (Ershad), represented by its general secretary Shameem Haider Patwary.

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ACC sues 93
over Tk 47cr
UCB loan scam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The ACC has filed seven cases against 93 individuals over embezzling nearly Tk 47 crore in loans from various branches of United Commercial Bank using fake companies and nominal borrowers.

ACC officials filed the cases yesterday with the ACC Chattogram-1 Integrated District Office.

According to case statements, at least Tk 46.73 crore was siphoned off by opening current accounts in the names of farmers, day labourers and tailors from rural areas, falsely presenting them as business owners and securing loans under the names of non-existent firms.

ACC Deputy Director Subel Ahmed told The Daily Star that NID cards and other personal information of villagers were collected and misused to embezzle large sums through fake entities. The FIRs state that the loans were disbursed from the bank's Chawkbazar, Pahartali, Port and Bahaddarhat branches by opening accounts in the names of non-existent firms such as Hossan Trading, Karnaphuli Emporium, Cats Eye Corporation, Shah Trading, etc.

The commission said former top executives, branch managers and credit officials of the bank colluded to approve the loans using fake trade licences, forged documents and fabricated verification reports.

The FIRs also mentioned the alleged involvement of the bank's former directors Anisuzzaman Chowdhury Rony and Bashir Ahmed.

UAE pardons 25
Bangladeshis
jailed over protests

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has pardoned 25 Bangladeshi citizens who were previously convicted in the Emirate.

The pardon was granted following a request from Bangladesh, which sought clemency for the expatriates arrested in connection with the events surrounding the July 2024 uprising in Bangladesh and subsequently sentenced by UAE courts, according to a statement issued by the UAE embassy in Dhaka.

"All 25 individuals have been pardoned and returned to Bangladesh," the statement confirmed.

The embassy described the decision as a humanitarian gesture, saying, "This reflects the UAE leadership's commitment to compassion, tolerance, and justice, as well as the deep-rooted, brotherly relations between the United Arab Emirates and the People's Republic of Bangladesh."



On both sides of a key arterial road connecting Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj, contractor companies have occupied more than half of the carriageway to produce cement blocks, severely disrupting pedestrian and vehicular movement. The work has been ongoing for months due to a lack of proper supervision by the authorities, alleged locals. The photo was taken in the Court Dhalan area recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

JAMALPUR GENERAL HOSPITAL

Child patients surge
as cold bites

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB

The number of child patients suffering from cold-related illnesses has been rising steadily at Jamalpur General Hospital, with the paediatric ward becoming increasingly crowded as temperatures drop.

Hospital sources said most children currently admitted to the ward are suffering from pneumonia, cold and fever, or diarrhoea. With admissions continuing to climb, two to three children are often treated on a single bed.

Eight-month-old Khadija is among the patients receiving treatment. She was admitted with pneumonia last Thursday morning.

Khadija's mother, Happy Begum, said her daughter's condition has improved since admission. "After the cold intensified, my child fell sick. Medicines from the local pharmacy did not help. Now

she is better, but the ward is overcrowded," she said.

Doctors said the number of patients suffering from cold-related diseases has increased sharply with the fall in temperature, affecting children

were children suffering from pneumonia, cold and fever, or diarrhoea. Although the paediatric ward has only 24 beds, 111 children were admitted there, while 45 children were receiving treatment at the 24-

highlighted staffing shortages at the hospital. Of the 71 sanctioned posts for physicians, only 36 are currently filled. The paediatric department has three specialists – one junior consultant and two medical officers – while the post of senior consultant has remained vacant for a long time.

Nurse Sadia Akter said the patient load has been increasing every day. "Most children are suffering from cold and fever. Managing so many patients at once is extremely challenging," she said.

Assistant Director of the hospital, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, said, "Every year, the number of patients rises during winter. This year is no exception, with a noticeable increase in cold-related illnesses. However, the number of admitted children is nearly three times higher than the available paediatric beds."



PHOTO: STAR

and elderly people the most.

According to hospital records, a total of 553 patients were admitted to the hospital on Thursday. Of them, 142

bed paediatric special care unit. Another 31 children were admitted to the diarrhoea ward.

The growing number of paediatric patients has also

Don't join Gaza
Stabilization Force
Palestine Solidarity
Committee urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Palestine Solidarity Committee, Bangladesh yesterday strongly condemned and protested the interim government's interest in principle in joining the proposed international stabilisation force for Gaza, expressing deep concern and demanding an immediate withdrawal from the decision.

In a statement, Prof Dr Md Harun-or-Rashid, member secretary of the committee, said women and children in Gaza are living in inhumane conditions amid extreme winter, facing the threat of death due to a severe shortage of food, shelter and water, while no one is standing by them in this crisis.

He said the international community bears responsibility for addressing the situation. However, instead of protecting Palestinians, US President Donald Trump has adopted a plan to form an International Stabilization Force for Gaza, the statement alleged.

According to the statement, the main responsibility of the proposed force would be to disarm freedom fighters in Gaza under the pretext of ensuring the security of Israel, and thereby eliminate the Palestinian resistance movement.

The committee expressed concern that National Security Advisor Khalilur Rahman, who is visiting the United States, has conveyed Bangladesh's interest in participating in the stabilisation force for Gaza during a meeting in Washington with US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Alison Hooker and Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapoor.

The Chief Advisor's Press Wing released the information.

The Palestine Solidarity Committee, Bangladesh strongly condemned and protested the initiative, reiterating its demand for the government to withdraw from the decision immediately.

The statement said the people of Bangladesh have always stood firmly in favour of the rights and freedom of the Palestinian people. "We strongly demand an immediate end to this heinous act of the government," it added.

In November last year, the UN Security Council passed a US-sponsored resolution backing US President Donald Trump's 20-point plan for ending Israel's war on Gaza. One of the clauses supported the creation and deployment of an international stabilisation force to provide security and oversight of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza.



A festival
of greens

Thakurgaon celebrates
'Shak Pitari' festival

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The Shak Pitari Festival, a community-led rural gathering featuring communal dining, art, songs and film screenings, was held yesterday at Sonapatila village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, aiming to transfer elderly women's knowledge of wild leafy greens to the younger generation.

The day-long celebration centred on showcasing dishes prepared from foraged wild greens and related artworks.

The event was initiated by Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts in association with the British Council, aiming to preserve inter-generational knowledge of edible plants.

Joba Rani, 28, of Sonapatila village took part in the event with six dishes prepared from leafy greens, including Ghima Tita, Bathua, Dhekia, Dulfu, Hengsha and Kolmi. She said she collected the leaves from around her house and nearby barren lands.



She said she has attended the event every year since the festival began in 2022.

Nosiman Begum, 50, and Rejina, 45, of the village also attended the event with several dishes, saying it gave them a chance to meet others and sample each other's cooking.

Chowdhury Fardin, a student from Sarkarpara in Thakurgaon municipality, who visited the event, said, "It is hard to imagine an event centred solely on leafy greens. I counted the dishes, and there were 80 different preparations of cooked greens, most of which I did not recognise. This was the first time I tried several greens, including Ghechu, Shushni, and Shulkas."

Speaking about the event, Salma Jamal Mousum, research and planning director of Gidree Bawlee Foundation of Arts, said, "The current generation does not know the names or benefits of many of these greens. Through various activities at the festival, that knowledge is being passed on and promoted."

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প্রধান কার্যালয়
মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০
বাংলাদেশ

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তারিখঃ ২৭ পৌষ, ১৪৩২
১১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির পদসংখ্যা সংশোধন প্রসঙ্গে

এ সচিবালয়ের বিগত ০১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ০৪/২০২৬ এর মাধ্যমে প্রকাশিত নিম্নোক্ত ২টি ক্যাটাগরিতে শূন্য পদের সংখ্যা পুনর্নির্ধারণ করা হলোঃ

ক্র. নং	পদের নাম ও গ্রেড	বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫)	পদ সংখ্যা কম/বেশি	সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান	Job ID
১	অফিসার (IT) (গ্রেড-১০)	ট্যঃ ১৬,০০০-৩৮,৬৪০ এবং তৎসহ নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধা।	৬৪টি	সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-১৭টি অগ্রাণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-৪৪টি প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক-০৩টি	25105
২	এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/ সিনিয়র অফিসার (এসিস্ট্যান্ট হার্ডওয়্যার ইঞ্জিঃ)/এসিস্ট্যান্ট মাইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ার/সহকারী মাইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিঃ/ সহকারী রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ প্রকৌশলী (গ্রেড-৯)	ট্যঃ ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০ এবং তৎসহ নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধা।	৩৪টি	সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-০৩টি রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-১৫টি বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক-০৬টি আনসার ডিডিপি উন্নয়ন ব্যাংক-০৬টি প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক-০৪টি	25107

এ সচিবালয়ের বিগত ০১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ০৪/২০২৬ এর অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৬-১৪১
তারিখঃ ১১/০১/২০২৬

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

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কোনো অভিযোগ ব্যাংকসে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

জয়পুরহাট পৌরসভা
জয়পুরহাট
(www.joypurhatpourashavbd.com)

Memo No. JPS/PROKU/2025-2026/475
Date: 07/01/2026

e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-26

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

Sl. No.	Package No. & e-Tender ID No.	Name of work	Tender last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time	Procurement method
01	e-GP/Vehicle-repair/25-26/01 Tender ID: 1207743	Repair work of Truck No. 05 damaged by fire under Joypurhat Pourashava, Joypurhat	21-01-2026 Time-16:00	22-01-2026 Time-14:00	OTM
02	e-GP/Vehicle-repair/25-26/02 Tender ID: 1207744	Repair work of unused Truck No. 10 under Joypurhat Pourashava, Joypurhat	21-01-2026 Time-16:00	22-01-2026 Time-14:00	OTM

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. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk.

Obligatory condition and information for the bidder:

- The contractor will be bound to follow the PPR-2025 (up to latest amendment), latest circular at also PE instruction.
- The Procuring Entity/authority reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders/proposals decision of the PE on the behalf of the Joypurhat Pourashava undersigned only will be the ultimate and final.

Abu Zafar Md. Reza
Executive Engineer
Joypurhat Pourashava
District: Joypurhat
Phone: 02587722107

GD-73

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Information and Communication Technology Division
Office of the Controller of Certifying Authorities
ICT Tower, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
www.cca.gov.bd

Ref. No: 56.03.0000.000.001.25.0001.22-475
Date: 11.01.2026

e-GP Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Information Security Training (Certified Ethical Hacker Version-13 with AI and Certified Information System Auditor (CISA)).

Tender ID & Ref. No.	Name of scheme with package	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender closing Date and Time
1210221 Ref: 56.03.0000.000.001.25.0001.22-475 Date: 11.01.2026	Information Security Training (Certified Ethical Hacker Version-13 with AI and Certified Information System Auditor (CISA)).	27 January 2026 at 11:00	27 January 2026 at 14:00

- This is an online tender, only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office /hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender form from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP recommended bank before 13:30 on 27 January 2026.
- Further Information and guidelines are available in the e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Shahiduzzaman
Deputy Controller (Finance, Admin and Law)
Office of the Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA)
Phone: +8802-41025667

GD-78

Tension rises as Israeli fire kills 3 in Gaza

Hamis urges mediators to intervene to stop daily killings

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli fire killed at least three Palestinians in two separate incidents across the enclave, local health authorities said, as tension rises over continued violence.

Medics said one Palestinian was killed in the Tuffah neighbourhood in Gaza City, in an area under Palestinian control, while two others were killed in the town of Bani Suhaila east of Khan Younis, an area Israel still occupies.

There was no comment from the Israeli military on the two incidents.

Fighting has largely abated since Israel and Palestinian group Hamas agreed to a ceasefire in October, two years into the war, but it has not stopped entirely. Israel and Hamas have traded blame over the violations of the deal.



A Hamas official told Reuters yesterday that the group urged mediators to intervene to stop “daily Israeli killings that aim to derail the ceasefire deal.”

More than 440 Palestinians, most of them civilians according to Gaza health officials, have been killed since the truce, as well as three Israeli soldiers.

Meanwhile, at a hospital in Gaza, wards are filled with patients fearing they will be left without care if Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is forced out under an Israeli ban due to take effect in March.

Last month, Israel announced it would prevent 37 aid organisations, including MSF, from operating in Gaza from March 1 for failing to provide detailed information on their Palestinian staff.



Syrian security officers patrol the streets after a ceasefire in the Kurdish-majority Ashrafiyeh neighbourhood of Aleppo, northern Syria, yesterday. *Inset*, people ride in the back of a vehicle in Ashrafiyeh neighbourhood, after Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters withdrew from the city.

PHOTO: REUTERS



‘Make a deal, before it is too late’: Trump to Cuba

Suggests Rubio could lead the communist-ruled country

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday urged Cuba to “make a deal” or face unspecified consequences, warning that the flow of Venezuelan oil and money to Havana would now stop.

“THERE WILL BE NO MORE OIL OR MONEY GOING TO CUBA - ZERO!” Trump said on his Truth Social channel. “I strongly suggest they make a deal, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.”

His remarks come a week after US forces seized Venezuela’s authoritarian leader Nicolas Maduro in a nighttime operation in Caracas that killed dozens of Venezuelan and Cuban security forces.

Earlier yesterday, Trump reposted a message suggesting that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio could become the president of now communist-ruled Cuba. Trump shared that post with the



comment: “Sounds good to me!”

In his own post soon afterwards, Trump said that “Cuba lived, for many years, on large amounts of OIL and MONEY from Venezuela. In return, Cuba provided ‘Security Services’ for the last two Venezuelan dictators, BUT NOT ANYMORE!”

“Most of those Cubans are DEAD from last week’s U.S.A. attack, and Venezuela doesn’t need protection anymore from the thugs and extortionists who held them hostage for so many years.”

Under a US trade embargo, Havana since 2000 has increasingly relied on Venezuelan oil provided as part of a deal struck with Maduro’s predecessor Hugo Chavez, reports AFP.

US intelligence has painted a grim picture of Cuba’s economic and political situation, but its assessments offer no clear support for Trump’s prediction that the island is “ready to fall,” Reuters reported on Saturday, citing three people familiar with the confidential assessments.

The CIA’s view is that key sectors of the Cuban economy, such as agriculture and tourism, are severely strained by frequent blackouts, trade sanctions and other problems.

The potential loss of oil imports and other support from Venezuela, for decades a key ally, could make governing more difficult for the administration.

Myanmar votes in 2nd phase of junta-run polls

AFP, Kawhmu

Myanmar’s junta held the second phase of elections yesterday that democracy watchdogs warn will let the military prolong its rule, opening polling in the constituency of deposed democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Farmer Than Than Sint acknowledged Myanmar’s “many problems” but told AFP she voted in pursuit of peace.

“We know it will not come right away. But we need to go step-by-step for our future generations,” the 54-year-old said after voting.

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), described by many analysts as the military’s prime proxy, won nearly 90 percent of lower house seats in the first phase.

US, allied forces carry out strikes against IS in Syria

AFP, Washington

US and allied forces carried out “large-scale” strikes against the Islamic State jihadist group in Syria on Saturday, the US military said, the latest response to an attack last month that killed three Americans.

US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American military forces in the region, said multiple strikes “targeted ISIS throughout Syria,” using an acronym for the jihadist group.

CENTCOM’s post on X did not give specifics on where they took place. Grainy aerial video accompanying the post showed several separate explosions, apparently in rural areas.

The strikes were part of Operation Hawkeye Strike, which was launched “in direct response to the deadly ISIS attack on US and Syrian forces in Palmyra,” CENTCOM said.

Jordan’s air force also carried out targeted air strikes against IS as part of the operation, its military said on Sunday. It said in a statement it struck “a number of targets... in several areas within Syria territory.”

Two US soldiers and a US civilian interpreter were killed on December 13 after a lone gunman – whom Washington described as an IS militant – ambushed them in Palmyra, home to Unesco-listed ancient ruins and once controlled by the jihadist group.

Syria’s interior ministry later said the gunman was a member of the security forces who had been set to be fired for extremism.

RUSSIAN STRIKES 1,000 apartment blocks in Kyiv still without heating

REUTERS, Kyiv

More than 1,000 apartment buildings in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv are still without heating following a devastating Russian attack earlier this week, local authorities said yesterday.

Russia has intensified bombardments of Ukraine’s energy system since it invaded its neighbour in 2022. On Friday, a missile strike on Kyiv left virtually the entire city without power and heating amid a sharp cold snap, and it was not until yesterday that authorities restored water supplies and partially restored electricity and heating.

The war’s fourth winter could be the coldest and darkest yet, with the accumulated damage to the grid bringing utilities to the brink and temperatures, already below minus 12 degrees Celsius (10.4 F), set to plunge to minus 20 degrees (-4 F) later this week.



Firefighters battle a bushfire in Mount Pirque near El Hoyo, in Argentina’s Patagonian Chubut province, on Saturday. More than 5,500 hectares of forest have been destroyed by the region’s main wildfire.

PHOTO: AFP

Ex-king voices concern over state of Nepal after protests

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal’s former king Gyanendra Shah has expressed concern over the state of the country four months after a youth-led uprising toppled the previous government.

At least 76 people were killed during the demonstrations last September, which saw four-time prime minister KP Sharma Oli ousted and replaced by former chief justice Sushila Karki in an interim capacity until elections scheduled later this year.

Shah, who was deposed in 2008 at the end of a decade-long civil war, has largely refrained from commenting on Nepal’s fractious politics. But in a 12-minute video address on Saturday for national unity day, he warned Nepal “itself might not survive anymore.”

“Nearly two decades since we left the palace, the crisis the country continues to face has us worried,” Shah said.

“Yesterday, there was a concern that there was no development in the country, but today there is a bigger worry that the country itself might not survive any more.”

He criticised leaders who had failed to heed the needs of young people and this had “bred dissatisfaction among the youths”.

TRUMP’S IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

Tens of thousands protest in Minneapolis

REUTERS, Minneapolis

Tens of thousands of people marched through Minneapolis on Saturday to decry the fatal shooting of a woman by a US immigration agent, part of more than 1,000 rallies planned nationwide this weekend against the federal government’s deportation drive.

The massive turnout in Minneapolis despite a whipping, cold wind underscores how the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Good by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer on Wednesday has struck a chord, fueling protests in major cities and some towns.

Minnesota’s Democratic leaders and the administration of President Donald

Trump, a Republican, have offered starkly different accounts of the incident.

Led by a team of Indigenous Mexican dancers, demonstrators in Minneapolis, which has a metropolitan population of 3.8 million, marched towards the residential street where Good was shot in her car.

The boisterous crowd, which the Minneapolis Police Department estimated in the tens of thousands, chanted Good’s name and slogans such as “Abolish ICE” and “No justice, no peace — get ICE off our streets.”

“I’m insanely angry, completely heartbroken and devastated, and then just like longing and hoping that things get better,” Ellison Montgomery, a 30-year-old protester, told Reuters.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)

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স্মারক নম্বর- ২৭.০২.০০০০.০১১.১১.০০১.২৪-১০

তারিখ: ২৭ পৌষ ১৪৩২
১১ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬

জনবল নিয়োগের লিখিত পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষের (স্রেডা)- এর সহকারী পরিচালক (ইউইড এন্ড আদার্স) এর ০১ (এক)টি শূন্যপদে জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে “দৈনিক যুগান্তর ও The Daily Star” পত্রিকায় গত ০৮ আগস্ট ২০২৫ তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির প্রেক্ষিতে যোগ্য আবেদনকারীগণের লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের তারিখ, সময়, কেন্দ্র ও প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহের তথ্যাদি নিম্নরূপ:

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১৭.০১.২০২৬ শনিবার	দুপুর ০২.৩০ হতে বিকাল ০৪.৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	আজিমপুর গভর্নমেন্ট গার্লস স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ ৪৯/ই, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা।	www.sreda.teletalk.com.bd ১২.০১.২০২৬ তারিখ দুপুর ০২.০০ টা হতে ১৭.০১.২০২৬ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০ টা পর্যন্ত

১। আবেদনকারীগণকে ইউজার আইডি এবং পাসওয়ার্ড সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক উল্লিখিত ওয়েবসাইট হতে প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহপূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে নিতে হবে। **আবেদনকারীগণের নিকট ডাকঘোশে কোন প্রবেশপত্র প্রেরণ করা হবে না।**

২। প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ করতে কোনো সমস্যা হলে টেলিটক নম্বর থেকে ১২১-এ অথবা যেকোন অপারেটরের নম্বর থেকে ০১৫০০১২১১১ নম্বরে কল করুন। এছাড়া নিচের ই-মেইল যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন:

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১১.০১.২০২৬

মোহাম্মদ আল-আমীন
উপসচিব
পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)
ও
সদস্য সচিব
নিয়োগ বিষয়ক বাছাই কমিটি
টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ

GD-77

Persistent gas crisis calls for bold policies

Invest in our own resources for energy sustainability

At a time when households are already grappling with high food prices, the persistent gas crisis has added to their hardship. On Saturday, a pipeline leak led to a complete or partial gas shutdown in many Dhaka neighbourhoods, leaving families unable to cook. This comes amid an ongoing LPG shortage driven by flawed policies and a nexus of opportunistic suppliers, dealers, and distributors, which made cylinders unavailable even at prices far above the fixed rate. The gas shortage also forced most autogas stations to shut down, affecting private car owners and ride-sharing drivers. While middle- and upper-income groups managed through electric cookers or takeaways, the poor and marginalised are having to bear the brunt of the crisis, highlighting the country's energy vulnerability.

According to media reports, Saturday's natural gas shortage in Dhaka was caused by a valve explosion on a distribution line near Gono Bhaban. Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution had to shut down several adjacent valves to repair the damage. This came at a time when some neighbourhoods have already been receiving almost no gas supply for a couple of months due to a leaking pipeline under the Turag River. In recent winter sessions, low gas pressure has become a common phenomenon, forcing families to adjust household routines around an erratic supply while continuing to pay full bills.

In the last fiscal year, the country experienced a demand-supply deficit of more than 130 crore cubic feet of natural gas. According to a *Bonik Barta* report, year-on-year gas supply on January 10 this year was 17.60 crore cubic feet lower. To bridge this gap, the government increased LNG imports, but that too failed to prevent the current crisis.

Meanwhile, a handful of companies controlling LPG imports appear to have created a supply shortage, citing vessel unavailability and high shipping costs. In some cases, they charged inflated wholesale prices, which distributors and retailers passed on to consumers. Distributors have also alleged that refilling empty cylinders has become increasingly difficult. This is partly attributed to the reduced presence of some influential LPG importers who once controlled a large share of the market during the Awami League government.

While we cannot expect the interim government to initiate long-term solutions with only about five weeks left in its tenure, we must say that it could have done more than conduct ad hoc drives against small retailers to control the LPG market. That said, the government's recent decision to reduce and exempt VAT at several supply and distribution stages to expedite LPG shipments, directing the central bank to ease the LC opening process and removing LPG import ceiling, is welcome. In the long run, the next government must heed expert opinion and enact bold policies to reduce dependency on energy imports. Investment in natural gas exploration, renewable energy, and the strengthening of public institutions in the energy sector should be among its highest priorities.

Rein in brick kiln growth in Satkania

Protect agricultural land, hills and livelihoods

We are alarmed by the unchecked expansion of brick kilns along the Dhaka-Chatogram Highway, particularly in Satkania upazila. Once home to lush hill forests and fertile farmlands, the area is now dominated by rows of brick kilns. Similar trends have been reported in the neighbouring upazilas of Patiya, Chandanaish and Lohagara. Despite clear provisions in the Brick Manufacturing and Kiln Establishment (Control) Act, most kilns in these areas continue to use fertile topsoil from agricultural land, excavate hills, and emit toxic smoke with little fear of consequences. A recent report in this daily shows that at least 70 brick kilns operate in Satkania alone, 41 of them illegally, highlighting the routine flouting of regulations.

Reportedly, both licensed and illegal kilns are stripping fertile topsoil from farmlands and hills to produce bricks, undermining food security in an already land-scarce country. According to the local agriculture office, at least 75 acres of cultivable land have been damaged over the past five years. Farmers report declining yields as smoke, soot and ash blanket their fields, forcing many to abandon traditional crop farming. Hill-cutting to supply soil for kilns continues openly in areas such as Aeochia union, increasing the risk of landslides during the monsoon. Despite claims of surveillance and sporadic enforcement by the authorities, action remains weak and inconsistent, as locals say. Restrictions on burning firewood and coal are also frequently violated. Locals complain that fruit trees no longer bear fruit, homes must remain shut during the kiln season, and entire communities are forced to live under a toxic haze.

Another report by this daily recently highlighted how brick kilns continue to operate in Bandarban, despite being prohibited in the hill districts by a High Court directive. Clearly, the current government measures are failing to address the problem.

Therefore, the government must act decisively. Illegal brick kilns should be permanently closed, while syndicates involved in illegal soil extraction must be dismantled and held accountable. At the same time, strict monitoring is essential to ensure that licensed kilns comply with environmental laws. Protecting fertile land and vulnerable hills must be treated as a priority. Equally urgent is the transition from traditional, polluting brick kilns to cleaner, more sustainable construction alternatives. Achieving this requires both a clear policy shift and rigorous enforcement. If decisive action is not taken now, the cost will be far too high on our agriculture and the environment.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Haiti hit by an earthquake

On this day in 2010, an earthquake of 7.0 magnitude devastated Haiti, killing more than 300,000 people, according to the country's official count, and creating a prolonged humanitarian disaster.

Three cardinal rules for building democratic governance



RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

As Bangladesh approaches the 13th parliamentary election scheduled for February 12, the nation is not merely preparing to elect a new government. It is also being called upon to rebuild the state itself. The autocratic dispensation overthrown by the 2024 mass uprising did not collapse just because of its electoral illegitimacy; it fell because power was centralised, institutions were captured, accountability was extinguished, and democratic norms were systematically dismantled.

If the upcoming election is treated as an end in itself, history is likely to repeat itself. If, however, it serves as a gateway to a genuine reset for a durable democratic transition, the country may finally break free from the cycle of authoritarian relapse. In my view, achieving this goal requires adherence to at least three cardinal rules or governing principles, drawn from global experience as well as Bangladesh's own painful lessons.

Resetting parliamentary and bureaucratic functions

The first rule is that the elected executive (parliamentarians) will be in full control of policymaking while the permanent executive (bureaucrats) will be responsible for execution—both playing their part within the bounds of their respective mandates. This distinction, however, has rarely been respected in Bangladesh. Ministers are constitutionally responsible for laws and policies, yet real power often resides in an entrenched bureaucracy that shapes policy, controls implementation, and operates with limited accountability.

This is not accidental. Bangladesh's bureaucracy is a direct descendant of the colonial state designed by the British Raj to extract revenue and control subjects, not to serve citizens. Independence did not dismantle this extractive system; it merely transferred it. Over time, bureaucratic discretion became a source of power and rent, while democratic oversight weakened, creating a vast resource-distributing ecosystem involving corrupt or compromised politicians, bureaucracy, judiciary, and business under the fallen regime.

The result of this erosion has been immense and multidimensional. Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio hovers around six to seven percent, which

is among the lowest globally. Public investment suffers not only from fiscal constraints but also from bureaucratic gatekeeping and delay. Annual Development Programme implementation repeatedly falls behind schedule, with cost overruns reflecting persistent administrative failure. A survey conducted early last year by the Public Administration Reform Commission found that 66 percent of people thought that civil servants behaved like “rulers,” while an overwhelming 80 percent believed they were not friendly to the general



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

public—a perception that remains more or less unchanged.

Global experience offers a clear contrast here. Beyond the pre-World War II democracies, countries such as South Korea and Indonesia restored democratic governance by professionalising their civil services while reasserting political control over policy. Singapore's merit-based bureaucracy, protected by constitutional safeguards, illustrates how insulation from partisan capture can coexist with strong accountability. Pakistan's repeated governance failures, by contrast, demonstrate the cost of a politicised administration.

Bangladesh can establish the parliamentary-bureaucrat boundary through law and practice: clearly demarcated roles, independent oversight of the civil service, and firm parliamentary control over policy direction. Elected officials must lead policymaking, while bureaucrats must execute professionally, neutrally,

and transparently. In this regard, a concrete remedy would be the enactment of a Constitutional Service Act to legally demarcate functions, shield the bureaucracy from partisan rotation, and establish an independent oversight authority.

Activating the judicial hierarchy to ensure justice delivery

The second rule requires a functional judicial pyramid to end the tyranny of delay in, or denial of, access to justice. Over the years, the systemic politicisation and under-resourcing of subordinate courts have destroyed public trust, often compelling citizens to bypass them and, at times, even resort to extrajudicial means out of frustration.

As of June 30, 2025, pending cases at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court stood at 37,002, while the High Court Division's burden grew to 6.16 lakh. Meanwhile, across all tiers of the judiciary, the total number of pending cases stood at 46.52 lakh. An

overburdened apex court struggling with so many pending cases is a stark warning of what happens when the judicial hierarchy collapses. No legal system can function this way. Justice must be delivered at the appropriate level, not perpetually escalated to the top.

Here, we must acknowledge the key judicial reforms rolled out in recent months, including the establishment of a Supreme Court Secretariat to safeguard and streamline judicial authority, transferring control over promotions, postings, and transfers of lower court judges from the law ministry to the apex court. Civil and criminal courts have been separated at the district level. There will also be permanent High Court benches in every division. These measures are intended, among other things, to streamline judicial functions and reduce case backlogs. They also reflect the urgency of activating the judicial pyramid. For without a functioning

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Climate leadership demands thinking beyond today



EJAJ AHMAD
is founder of the Global Youth Leadership Center and Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center.

EJAJ AHMAD

On January 7, President Donald Trump withdrew the US from 66 international organisations, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This made the US the first nation stepping back from the foundational frameworks of global climate science.

The implications are consequential. The IPCC depends on international scientific cooperation. US federal agencies—Nasa, NOAA and others—have been essential to building the global datasets governments use for climate assessments. Withdrawing means individual scientists may still contribute, but the US will no longer help guide the scientific consensus that shapes policy worldwide.

The year 2024 was the hottest on record, while sea levels rose 5.9 mm last year alone, with the rate doubling from 2.1 mm per year in 1993 to 4.5 mm per year today. Without immediate action, the UN Environment Programme projects 2.3 to 2.8 degrees Celsius of warming this century. The IPCC's latest assessment warns of sea levels potentially rising two metres by 2100 and five metres by 2150 under high-

emission scenarios.

But the US withdrawal reveals something deeper than a policy failure: humanity's fundamental leadership crisis. Climate processes unfold across centuries. Our decision-making operates in quarters and election cycles. This mismatch between the timeframes of our challenges and the horizons of our thinking is driving us towards catastrophe.

Over the years, while training thousands of young leaders across the world, I have learnt that it is not their passion that sets them apart, though it's abundant—it is their temporal thinking. When a 23-year-old from Khulna designs a climate adaptation programme, she is planning for her grandchildren's world, not the next quarterly report. When youth delegates from small island nations advocate at COP negotiations, they are fighting for outcomes decades beyond their own lifetimes. They think in generations while politicians think in election cycles. This points towards what I call thousand-year leadership: a framework that matches decision-making timeframes to the actual timeframes of climate processes.

Withdrawing from the IPCC strips

the US's ability to shape assessments governments worldwide depend on. As former climate envoy John Kerry noted, this is a “gift to China” and “a get out of jail free card” for polluters. But it's more than lost influence; it fragments global scientific cooperation precisely when coherence matters most.

The leadership we need is already taking shape. At COP27, youth

America's withdrawal is not America First—it's America Alone. Our interconnected world needs leaders who can work across boundaries, think globally, and plan for horizons beyond their lifetimes.

delegates secured the establishment of a loss and damage fund. At COP30, young negotiators from Africa and Latin America have demanded transparent accountability, climate education in school curricula, and protection for climate-induced displacement. Their priorities span generations because they will inherit the consequences.

Thousand-year leadership requires three shifts. First, recognise that climate leadership emerges from mobilising people across boundaries, not from holding office. Second, institutionalise long-term thinking through governance structures and economic incentives that

lower judiciary, constitutionalism itself becomes fragile and selective. The challenge now is in ensuring proper implementation of these and other recommended reforms.

Confining political contests to parliament

The third cardinal rule is to install Jatiya Sangsad as the centre of democratic politics by constitutionally embedding a meaningful opposition. Democracy functions through structured disagreement and sustained scrutiny.

Bangladesh's recent parliamentary history reveals a dangerous pattern: following deeply flawed elections, parliament effectively became a one-party system with minimal debate and negligible amendment of legislation. Between 2008 and 2024, fewer than one percent of bills were substantively altered through opposition input. Unsurprisingly, opposition politics shifted from the chamber to the streets.

Street politics is not a cultural inevitability but rather an institutional failure. When opposition is denied space in parliament, it seeks relevance and redress elsewhere. Hartals, blockades, confrontations, and disruptions impose heavy economic and social costs, particularly on informal workers and the poor.

The true test of a democracy is its ability to institutionalise opposition. In mature democracies, opposition is formalised through mechanisms such as a “Shadow Cabinet,” ranking members, guaranteed “Opposition Days,” etc. For Bangladesh, the imperative is clear: constitutionalise the opposition. This means not only granting the opposition leader in parliament statutory status and resources but also legislating opposition chairmanship of key oversight committees, guaranteeing parliamentary time for opposition business, and forging a social contract that establishes parliament as the exclusive and effective arena for any political struggle and disagreement.

The mass uprising of 2024 was a call not merely for a change of rulers, but also for the institutionalisation of rules-based governance. The dysfunctions of the deposed regime—politicised bureaucracy, judicial paralysis, and a hollowed-out parliament—must not be reproduced under a new mandate.

Citizens want elected leaders to govern properly, a professionalised bureaucracy to implement properly, an activated judicial hierarchy to adjudicate properly, and an empowered parliamentary opposition to scrutinise properly. This architecture is essential to transform the hope of the uprising into an enduring and legitimate democracy that the people of Bangladesh rightly demand.

make extended temporal horizons emotionally resonant. Third, accept that effective climate action requires thinking across centuries while acting with the urgency the next decade demands.

America's withdrawal is not America First—it's America Alone. Our interconnected world needs leaders who can work across boundaries, think globally, and plan for horizons beyond their lifetimes. Politicians with short-sighted vision won't change the world. They will drive us towards destruction, not security.

The young leaders inheriting this crisis need partners, not politicians walking away from the tables where solutions are built. They deserve decision-makers whose temporal horizons match climate's actual timeframes. They deserve leaders who recognise that legacy is not built in monuments but in the futures we make possible. The solutions exist, and young people worldwide demonstrate the capacities we all need. What we lack is political courage to think beyond the next election and moral imagination to care about futures we will never see.

The US can rejoin these frameworks. The Senate's 1992 ratification provides a pathway. But the deeper question is whether we are willing to transform how we think about time itself. The climate crisis is ultimately a crisis of temporal imagination: our inability to grasp that today's decisions shape human civilisation for centuries.

The science is clear. The impact is visible. Denial should no longer be an option.

Tarique Rahman and the burden of leadership

Azman Rahman
is a political commentator.

AZMAN RAHMAN

Tarique Rahman's formal elevation to the position of the chairman of BNP confirms what has effectively been the case for several years. Since Khaleda Zia's imprisonment in 2018, he has directed the party's strategy and organisation. What gives this moment significance is not the announcement itself, but the political conditions under which it arrives. Bangladesh is approaching a crucial political transition amid persistent economic strain, still-floundering institutions, and growing public exhaustion with confrontational politics.

BNP has now fully entered its second generation of leadership. This carries symbolic weight, but it also concentrates

landscape is saturated (with increasingly assertive pressure groups), trust in state institutions remains persistently low, and public grievances are rising alongside expectations of redress.

Coming as it does at this critical juncture, the timing of his ascension leaves little room for adjustment. With the national election barely a month away, the gap between leadership consolidation and the possibility of governing is extremely narrow. At the same time, inflationary pressures, fragile law and order, and a deteriorating economic situation constrain policy choices at the national level. Regional and global uncertainties further reduce the margin for error. Leadership at this stage demands discipline, clarity, and restraint, not rushed improvisation.

One factor that defines the present political landscape is the absence of Awami League from active competition, particularly in the election. This absence does not simplify



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

law enforcement, institutional independence, and political inclusion are no longer tactical signals; they are read as indicators of future governance. Without an established governing party to absorb pressure, early missteps will carry outsized consequences.

The role of young people sharpens this pressure further. Bangladesh's youth were central to pushing the Hasina government out, driven by frustration with closed political space, limited economic opportunity, and a sense of stalled futures. This was not a symbolic protest; it was a generational intervention. Young people now make up the largest share of the population—constituting about 44 percent of the 12.76 crore listed voters—and they are no longer willing to accept symbolic change or recycled narratives.

For many young voters, BNP represents the organisation with the scale, experience, and reach necessary to govern. This, however,

does not amount to unconditional trust. It is a conditional expectation. This generation is not interested in revisiting old conflicts. It wants answers. How will jobs be created? How will the economy be stabilised? Will the persistent cost-of-living crisis be resolved? Will freedom of expression be protected? Will institutions function as they should? Will there be safety at home or on highways? Will the environmental crisis be addressed?

BNP's leadership history adds another layer of pressure. Khaleda Zia was widely regarded as a measured leader and never lost an election (at the constituency level) while heading the party. Even under hostile conditions, she maintained the party's electoral discipline and avoided overreach during campaigns. Her authority rested not only on legacy but also on results.

In this regard, the upcoming election represents untested ground for Tarique Rahman. This will be the first time he

contests a national election as the party's formal leader. More importantly, it is the first time he is leading an entire election from the front—shaping strategy, public messaging, alliances, and internal discipline while under intense public scrutiny. This is not only a test of electoral appeal; it is a test of judgement under pressure.

Tarique Rahman does enter this moment with one clear advantage: firm control over the party. Over the past seven or eight years, he has consolidated authority across leadership levels and grassroots networks. Organisational coherence provides stability. But party discipline does not automatically translate into governing capacity. Managing a state demands a different set of skills, particularly in a political environment without traditional counterweights.

Age and experience heighten expectations rather than reduce them. Ziaur Rahman formed BNP at 42. Khaleda Zia assumed leadership at 38. Tarique Rahman takes charge at 60, after many years outside the country. That distance offered time for reflection and reassessment, but it also raised expectations of restraint, foresight, and institutional thinking.

One reality is unavoidable. BNP is now led by a second generation, while Bangladesh is navigating a critical political transition without its oldest and longest-serving ruling party in the field. Legitimacy in such moments cannot be inherited or deferred; it must be built through conduct, early signals, and respect for institutions.

So, for Tarique Rahman, this moment cannot be defined simply by winning office. It will be defined by whether his leadership can meet the unusually concentrated expectations without any escalation or exclusion. Whether this transition marks renewal or repetition will be decided by decisions made when pressure is at its highest.

BNP has now fully entered its second generation of leadership. This carries symbolic weight, but it also concentrates responsibility. Ziaur Rahman founded the party while in power, with state institutions and public momentum working in his favour. Khaleda Zia assumed leadership during a difficult period, but it was a time when a degree of tolerance and political courtesy still shaped competition, and pro-democracy parties could unite around a common goal. Tarique Rahman takes charge in a far more fragile environment.

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politics; it intensifies it. Without a dominant ruling party in play, the usual mechanisms of counterbalance and shared accountability are missing. Expectations no longer disperse across multiple actors; they converge on those closest to power.

In this setting, BNP is no longer viewed as one contender among many. It is being evaluated as the central political force in waiting. Decisions and statements on dissent,

The ‘rial revolt’ and the geopolitics of Iran’s cracking regime



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 Sajjur Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

Iran's newest wave of unrest began because of money. When shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar shut their doors on December 28, 2025, in protest of a collapsing rial and soaring prices, an economic strike rapidly turned into a national political challenge. The state's answer has been blunt: lethal force, mass arrests, and a near-total internet blackout that Amnesty International says is being used to obscure grave abuses.

The obvious comparison is the 2022 “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement after the custodial death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year old detained over alleged hijab violations, an episode condemned by human rights experts. That movement attacked Iran's claim to moral guardianship. This one attacks something even more foundational: the regime's promise that it can keep society afloat, and that sacrifice today will yield stability tomorrow.

The economic roots of the protest are neither mysterious nor temporary. Iran is trapped in a cycle of sanctions pressure, corruption, and opaque institutions that punish productivity while rewarding loyalty. Chronic inflation has become a form of daily dispossession. The International Monetary Fund projects consumer price inflation in 2026 in the low 40 percent range, a level that shreds wages and savings. Currency collapse is not a technical problem in Iran; it is a political event that tells citizens the state has lost control of the most basic guarantee of economic order.

Economics alone does not topple regimes. What turns economic pain into regime rejection is coalition. In Iran, protests have often been segmented: students, women, workers, and ethnic peripheries, each rising and then being isolated. A bazaar strike changes that geometry. The bazaar is a social institution as much as

a market, and it signals when private frustration has become public refusal. When merchants join street politics, the regime cannot dismiss dissent as marginal. It reads as an economic vote of no confidence.

That is why the communications blackout matters. Internet shutdowns are not just censorship but a counterinsurgency tool designed to prevent coordination and hide the scale of violence. But



Protesters gather as vehicles burn during an evolving anti-government unrest in Tehran, Iran, in this screen grab obtained from a social media video released on January 9, 2026.

SOURCE: REUTERS

they also advertise fear. Under a blackout, casualty and arrest figures vary and are hard to verify, yet the trend is clear. Overseas rights monitors point to dozens killed and thousands detained in Iran as protests expand. The movement has rapidly shifted from economic grievances to explicit denunciations of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the Islamic republic itself, with some demonstrators invoking the exiled Reza Pahlavi, reflecting both deepening anger and a fractured opposition.

Geopolitically, Iran is not merely another state facing street anger; it is a strategic hub in an already unstable region. Tehran's rulers have spent decades building influence through aligned armed actors and political partners across the Middle East, a posture the Council on Foreign Relations tracks from Lebanon to Yemen and Iraq. Supporters call this deterrence. Many Iranians see it as an expensive foreign policy that delivers prestige to the security elite while ordinary life becomes a permanent austerity exercise.

The regime's strategic environment has also tightened. Syria is the clearest reminder that systems that look permanent can crumble quickly. The fall of Bashar al Assad in December 2024 disrupted an arena where Iran had long sought strategic depth. Then came a direct

the US is “locked and loaded” if Iranian authorities kill peaceful protesters. Such statements may aim to deter bloodshed. They also risk reinforcing Tehran's narrative that dissent is a foreign plot, a frame that can harden the security apparatus and split wavering constituencies who fear chaos more than they hate the state.

So what comes next for Iran? Survival through repression remains possible, but it has a shelf life when the economy offers no credible route back to dignity for a young population. Collapse through exhaustion is also possible if protests persist, strikes deepen, and elite cohesion frays. Succession uncertainty around an ageing supreme leader only deepens the sense of drift. The least violent outcome would

dissolve when a patron weakens. Some act autonomously, some splinter, and some escalate to secure relevance. The timing is combustible because the wider region is already traumatised by the Gaza war, with the UN's humanitarian reporting continuing to track catastrophic loss of life.

The energy dimension turns Iran's crisis into a global risk, and it matters for Bangladesh. Iran sits beside the Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption flowed in 2024, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Even without a deliberate disruption, miscalculation can raise prices. Bangladesh is exposed to these shocks because its fuel supply chains

depend on Gulf stability, a vulnerability that has already been flagged in the context of earlier Iran-Israel tensions.

The central geopolitical truth is that Iran's legitimacy crisis at home and the region's crisis abroad have fused. Tehran's leaders have treated nuclear brinkmanship and regional militancy as tools of survival. Iran's protesters increasingly see these tools as drains on a society that cannot afford them. Supporting Iranians' rights to protest and communicate is essential. Turning their revolt into another externally managed project would be a strategic and moral failure. The rial's fall is not only a financial story but also a warning signal for the entire region.

মোবারকগঞ্জ সুগার মিলস্ লিমিটেড

পোঃ নলডাঙ্গা, জেলাঃ বিনাইদহ

তারিখঃ ০৮.০১.২০২৬খ্রিঃ

মোড়িক/বাঁধ/প্রচার-৪০/২০২৫-২৬/১২৯

টেভার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, মোবারকগঞ্জ সুগার মিলস্ লিমিটেড, পোঃ নলডাঙ্গা, জেলাঃ বিনাইদহ কর্তৃক অত্র মিলের ১নং বয়লারের ডাঙ্কসহ চিম্নী পরিবর্তন কাজের জন্য প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত নামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সম্বলিত টেভার সিডিউল প্রতি সেট নির্ধারিত মূল্যে (১) অত্র মিলের হিসাব বিভাগ (কাশ) ও (২) ব্যবস্থাপক (কাশ), বিএসএফআইসি, চিনিশিল্প ভবন, ৩, দিলকুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা এর দস্তর হতে ক্রয় করা যাবে। দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ২৭.০১.২০২৬খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২-০০টা পর্যন্ত বিএসএফআইসির প্রধান (বিপণন) এর অফিস ও মিলের মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন) এর দস্তরে রক্ষিত টেভার বাগে একযোগে গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং সকল দস্তর হতে দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে ২৮.০১.২০২৬খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকায় মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন) এর দস্তরে খোলা হবে। টেভার গ্রহণের দিন কোন টেভার সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না এবং বিলম্বে প্রাপ্ত কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।

কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

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মোহাম্মদ মিজানুর রহমান
মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Eastern Zone of Bangladesh
Railway Project
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram
Mobile No. 01711-506101
E-mail: pd.trep@railway.gov.bd

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Reference No. 54.01.1500.109.07.067.25

Dated: 06.01.2026

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

Sl. No.	Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Procurement nature and name	Tender method	Tender document last selling (date and time)	Tender closing (date and time)
1.	e-Tender/GD-1/2025-2026	1191055	Goods: Procurement of Rails	OTM (ICT)	17-February-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.
2.	e-Tender/GD-2/2025-2026	1200707	Goods: Procurement of Sleepers & Fittings	OTM (ICT)	17-February-2026 at 17:00 Hrs	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs

N.B.:
1. Tenderers, registered in the e-GP System who meet the eligibility criteria are requested to participate through e-GP System.
2. Tenderers are requested to purchase the tender documents and submit the tender security from a schedule bank through e-GP System.

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Md. Tanvirul Islam
Project Director

GD-76

DIFF Day 3: Mousumi Hamid starrer ‘Noya Manush’ to screen today

The 24th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) continues today with its third day of screenings across multiple venues in Dhaka, bringing together a diverse selection of films from around the world. This year's edition features 245 films from 91 countries, including Bangladesh, showcased across sections such as Asian Film Competition, Bangladesh Panorama, Cinema of the World, Short and Independent Films, Women Filmmakers, Spiritual Films, and Children's Film Session. Among today's highlights from the Bangladesh Panorama Full-Length section is *Noya Manush*, directed by Sohel Rana Boyati and starring Mousumi Hamid. A total of 13 films will be screened today at the Bangladesh National Museum's Main Auditorium and the Sufia Kamal Auditorium in Shahbagh. Seven films are scheduled at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's National Art Gallery Auditorium, while Alliance Française de Dhaka will host four screenings. Another nine films will be shown at Stamford University Bangladesh Auditorium on Siddeswari Road. The festival will continue until January 18, offering audiences a wide-ranging cinematic experience. For the full screening schedule, visit the festival's official website.



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY

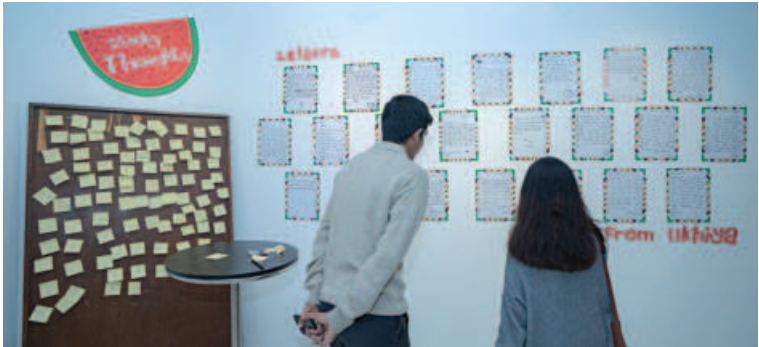
FROM UKHIYA TO GAZA: Children's art of solidarity in Dhaka

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

The healing-centered fundraising exhibition, *Echoes of Hope – Children for Children*, organised by HopeWave Foundation was inaugurated at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka on January 6. The exhibition brought together drawings, handwritten letters, photographs, and process documentation created by children from Ukhiya, including those from refugee, indigenous, and underserved communities. Displayed across the gallery walls, the works present personal yet collective messages addressed to the children of Palestine, shaped by empathy, resilience, and lived understanding. Through uncomplicated visuals, handwritten words, and candid imagery, the children articulate solidarity that travels across borders, geographies, and circumstances.

Each exhibited work emerged from a three-day psychosocial art campaign conducted with children in Ukhiya. During the campaign, structured creative sessions guided participants through drawing, writing, and visual storytelling as tools for emotional expression. The process created space for children affected by displacement and instability to articulate feelings, reflect on global events, and respond through their own creative language.

Beyond its role as an exhibition, *Echoes of Hope – Children for Children* functions as a fundraising initiative. Organised in partnership with PACSOC, all funds raised through the exhibition will support the Owneh Initiative, which works with children in Gaza. This structure connects creative expression with direct material support, positioning art



as an active contributor to global solidarity rather than a symbolic gesture.

Speaking at the inauguration, Munimah Mahreen, poet, activist, and founder of HopeWave Foundation, described the exhibition as an expression of solidarity rooted in shared humanity. She highlighted the ability of children's art to communicate compassion and collective responsibility in ways

that remain direct and impactful. Curator Mubtasim Alvee noted that the exhibition centers shared empathy, drawing attention to the clarity and sincerity present in the children's work. He emphasised that the absence of overt curatorial intervention allows the expressions to remain unfiltered and authentic. Founded in July 2024, HopeWave Foundation focuses on creating

healing-centered and culturally grounded spaces for mental health recovery, youth engagement, and global solidarity through arts-based and psychosocial initiatives. The organisation began as a community-based effort supporting individuals affected by collective trauma, with an emphasis on resilience and emotional recovery. The exhibition *Echoes of Hope – Children for Children* concluded on January 9.

Bindu denies return rumours linked to Hoichoi series

Actress Afsan Ara Bindu has denied rumours suggesting her return to the screen in an upcoming Hoichoi web series alongside long-time co-actor Ziaul Faruq Apurba. Speculation had circulated on social media claiming the popular duo would reunite in the political thriller *Headline*. However, Hoichoi Bangladesh's Country Director Sakib R Khan dismissed the reports, stating that no such decision has been finalised and calling the claims false. Bindu also rejected the rumours, saying she was unaware of any such project and had nothing to comment on. While she acknowledged speaking to a few directors about potential stories, she clarified that *Headline* was not among them. The duo last appeared together on television in 2016's *Trityojon*.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Pulsiraat’

Prachyanat stages *Pulsiraat*, a gripping adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, tracing three Palestinian refugees' perilous journey toward dreams of prosperity in Kuwait. Through suspense, moral reckoning, and human fragility, the play illuminates displacement, hope, and survival in a world fraught with despair and injustice.

DATE: MONDAY | JANUARY 12, 2026
TIME: 6:30PM ONWARDS
VENUE: EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE HALL, BSA



NEWS

Flee Venezuela ‘immediately’

FROM PAGE 12

Lopez, were also not seen at the demos. Trump has signed an executive order protecting US-held money derived from sales of Venezuelan oil, the White House said on Saturday. In an order signed Friday, Trump – who has made clear that tapping Venezuela's vast oil reserves was a key goal in the US ouster of Maduro – is acting “to advance US foreign policy objectives,” the White House said in a fact sheet accompanying the order. In Caracas, anxious relatives

meanwhile camped outside jails, awaiting the promised release of political prisoners. Prisoners' rights groups and the opposition said only 21 people had been released by Saturday evening, including several prominent opposition figures. Rights groups estimate there are 800 to 1,200 political prisoners in Venezuela. Meanwhile, Maduro claimed he was “doing well” in jail, his son Nicolas Maduro Guerra said in a video released Saturday by his party. Despite the shock of his capture

during deadly nighttime raids on January 3, signs emerged Friday of cooperation with Washington after Trump's claim to be “in charge” of the South American country. Rodriguez said Venezuela would deal with the United States through “the diplomatic route,” and Washington said, US envoys visited Caracas on Friday to discuss reopening their embassy. The Venezuelan government did not respond when asked by AFP whether the US officials had met with Rodriguez.

Girl in ICU after stray bullet from Myanmar

FROM PAGE 12

union, said sporadic gunfire had been heard across the border over the past two to three days, but the situation deteriorated from around 11:00pm on Saturday. “People fled their homes along the border due to the sound of gunfire

and explosions,” he said, adding that the firing continued until around 10:00am. Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ramu sector commander in Cox's Bazar, told reporters that 53 Rohingyas were detained after they crossed the border. He added that BGB would take all

necessary measures to ensure the safety of Bangladeshis. Rohingya sources at the Teknaf camp said the Arakan Army used drones to bomb a Rohingya armed group camp at Totar Dwip. Due to the attacks, many Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh.

EC restores candidacy of 58 more

FROM PAGE 12

of Morshadul Islam Asif (Faridpur-3), Habiba Begum (Rajshahi-3), Elias Uddin (Sherpur-1), Taslima Begum (Bhola-2), Jaynul Abedin (Rangpur-4), SM Azmal Hossain (Khulna-4), and Shamsul Islam (Mymensingh-9). Those who regained their candidacy include Gono Forum General Secretary Mizanur Rahman (Magura-1) and three Jamaat-e-Islami candidates: Md Abdul Momin (Chandpur-2), Md Moshleh Uddin

Farid (Jashore-2), and Md Mujibur Rahman Azadi (Jamalpur-3). Among other parties, seven candidates from Khelafat Majlis, six from the Jatiya Party, two from Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, and two from Islami Andolon Bangladesh were cleared to contest. Ten independents also regained candidacy. Hearings are being held daily from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the EC auditorium in Agargaon, Dhaka. A total of 645 appeals were filed

between January 5 and 9 against returning officers' scrutiny decisions. Hearings began Saturday and will continue until January 18. Of 2,568 nomination papers submitted for the 13th general election, returning officers initially rejected 723 and accepted 1,842 during scrutiny. Candidates may withdraw by January 20, while election symbols will be allotted on January 21, marking the start of campaigning.

Ctg microbus driver

FROM PAGE 2

Police were working to identify and arrest those responsible, the OC said. The other victim, a Pathao motorbike driver, was identified as Aijur Rahman, 36, hailing from Bagerhat district. He lived with his wife in the Dup Pole area under Bandar Police Station. Talking to The Daily Star, Bandar Police Station OC Abdur Rahim said a police patrol found Aijur with a stab wound on his chest on the main road near Bandar Dakhil Madrasa

in the Port Colony area of the Port Connecting Road. They took him to CMCH, where the on-duty doctors declared him dead at around 2:00am. The OC said Aijur, in his dying declaration, told police that he was knifed in the Boropole area. After being stabbed, he managed to flee the scene riding his bike, but collapsed in the Port Colony area. The body was sent to CMCH morgue for autopsy, and police started analysing CCTV footage, the police officer added.

Bomb attacks on Thailand petrol stations injure 4

AFP, Bangkok

Assailants detonated bombs at nearly a dozen petrol stations in Thailand's south early yesterday, injuring four people, the army said, the latest attacks in the insurgency-hit region. A low-level conflict since 2004 has killed thousands of people as rebels in the Muslim-majority region bordering Malaysia battle for greater autonomy.

Top criminal's aide behind killing: DB

FROM PAGE 12

operations in Dhaka, Manikganj, Gazipur, Mymensingh, Netrakona, Bhairab and Kishoreganj, leading to the arrests. Police also recovered the motorcycle used in the killing and seized Tk 6,000 in cash from the arrestees, he said. The DB chief said Bilal was the main planner of the murder. “We have also arrested his brother Abdul Kadir, who assisted the accused in fleeing after the incident,” he said, adding that another alleged shooter, Rahim, who remains at large, is also Bilal's brother. Md Reaz was arrested for “assisting the accused in conducting reconnaissance ahead of the murder,” he added.

Asked about the motive behind the killing, Shafiqul Islam said police are probing all possibilities and that the investigation is still at an initial stage. “We have not yet been able to recover the weapons used in the crime. However, we have arrested the accused and questioned them. During preliminary interrogation, they have admitted their involvement in the killing,” he said. He added that police are trying to identify and arrest anyone else involved behind the scenes. “If anyone else played a role in planning or facilitating the crime, they will be brought to justice,” he said, adding that the motive would be clearer after further investigation.

The DB chief further said the accused previously lived in the Mohakhali area and had links with traders or business establishments in the Karwan Bazar area, where Musabbir also had influence. Police are analysing the call detail records (CDR) of the accused through the Criminal Data Management System (CDMS) to gain a clearer picture, he added.

Police are also examining whether Musabbir's political activities played a role in the murder. Shafiqul Islam said Musabbir was an emerging and increasingly popular political leader who had once contested a ward councillor election. “A few days before the killing, he organised a human chain against extortion. Violence broke out during the programme and a case was later filed. These issues are also being examined,” he said.

Addressing reports that Tk 15 lakh was sent from abroad to finance the murder, the additional commissioner said the matter is under investigation. “There are several aspects we are looking into, and this is one of them,” he added. Musabbir, the former general secretary of the Swachchhasebak Dal's Dhaka North City unit, was shot dead on January 7 in an alley near Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. DB sources, however, said the assailants had planned to kill him a day earlier and had gone to the same spot, but failed to carry out the attack. According to a DB official, Bilal,

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Ibrahim and Reaz took positions in the alley near the crime scene on January 6 with the intention of carrying out the killing. As per the plan, Reaz was supposed to open fire first, but he did not shoot.

The following day, Reaz was dropped from the plan and Zinnat was hired instead. Zinnat, Bilal and Rahim later carried out the killing.

The official further said Zinnat was promised Tk 3 lakh and a motorcycle for his role. “Immediately after the incident, they rode a motorcycle to Mohakhali's Ghoramath area and handed over the arms used in the killing to Bilal,” he said.

DB sources said Bilal and Zinnat spent that night at a hotel in Sector 9 of Uttara. They later bought new mobile phones and SIM cards, replacing their old ones.

The next morning, they parted ways, with Zinnat returning to his village home in Kolombeshwar, Gazipur, and Bilal heading to Satoria in Manikganj. DB officials said the money used to purchase the new phones and SIM cards after the killing was provided by Bilal's younger brother Abdul Kadir.

A total of Tk 1.80 lakh was sent by Kadir to the accused. The primary investigation suggested that Bilal planned to start a family business with the money promised by Jahidul, an associate of a top criminal in Dhaka's underworld whose name police have not yet revealed.

The ICJ found these declarations admissible. Human Rights Watch in a statement said the Myanmar military has long subjected the Rohingya people to various atrocities, including the ongoing crimes against humanity of apartheid, persecution, and deprivation of liberty.

Since late 2023, Rohingya civilians have been caught in the fighting between the junta and the Arakan Army, an ethnic armed group. Both sides have carried out grave abuses, including extrajudicial killings, widespread arson, and unlawful recruitment. “The Myanmar military's vicious cycles of abuses and impunity need to end,” said Shayna Baugnier, Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch. “This should begin with governments holding the junta to its legal obligation to comply with the ICJ-ordered provisional measures.”

ICJ begins hearings on case today

FROM PAGE 2

Myanmar and restoring our rights,” Nu said. On November 11, 2019, The Gambia filed the Rohingya genocide case against Myanmar with the ICJ. In 2017, about 750,000 Rohingya citizens fled a military crackdown in Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh. In its application, The Gambia alleged that Myanmar breached its obligations under the Genocide Convention and that it must cease forthwith any internationally wrongful act and perform the obligations of reparation in the interest of the victims of genocidal acts. As a basis for the ICJ's jurisdiction, the applicant invokes Article IX of the Genocide Convention. The application was accompanied by a request for the indication of provisional measures. On January 23, 2020, the ICJ

made an order indicating a number of provisional measures addressed to Myanmar. Following the filing by The Gambia of its memorial, Myanmar raised preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the ICJ and to the admissibility of the application. By its judgement of July 22, 2022, the ICJ found that it has jurisdiction, on the basis of Article IX of the Genocide Convention, to entertain The Gambia's application. Subsequently, Myanmar filed its counter-memorial. The Gambia and Myanmar then filed a reply and a rejoinder, respectively. Declarations of intervention under Article 63 of the Statute of the ICJ were filed by Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (jointly), the Maldives, Slovenia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium and Ireland.

Verifying wealth of candidates difficult in short timeframe
Says ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen admitted yesterday that verifying the wealth information submitted by candidates in their election affidavits is difficult within a short timeframe.

“There is a big gap between the time candidates submit their asset statements and the time required for the ACC to conduct a proper inquiry. This makes it hard for us to detect discrepancies immediately,” he said, as scrutiny of candidates’ declared wealth comes into focus ahead of the polls.

He made the remarks while speaking to reporters after attending the 22nd anniversary programme of Reporters Against Corruption (RAC) at the ACC headquarters media centre in Dhaka.

Against the backdrop of the upcoming national election, Momen said corruption remains one of Bangladesh’s biggest challenges and stressed the need for honest and accountable leadership.



Two crocodiles seen face to face in a waterbody at Rajshahi Central Park and Zoo, one of the few remaining animal attractions at the facility after most animals and birds were relocated or died. Once a major recreational centre in the northern region, the zoo now draws visitors mainly for its deer and a handful of surviving species. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

NATIONAL POLLS
KPM delivers 914 tonnes of paper to EC



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Karnaphuli Paper Mills Limited (KPM) in Kaptai, Rangamati, has delivered 914 tonnes of paper ordered by the Election Commission for the 13th National Parliament election ahead of the scheduled deadline.

KPM Managing Director Mohammad Shahid Ullah confirmed the matter to The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the paper, which was scheduled to be delivered by January 15, was supplied earlier than planned through the Bangladesh Stationery Office (BSO).

The consignment includes green, pink and brown paper, with an estimated market value of Tk 11,8,93,781.

He added that besides the Election Commission order, KPM will supply another 1,200 tonnes of paper in phases to 11 institutions, including Dhaka University, various education boards and the National University, through the BSO.

Participatory and peaceful polls key to democracy HC questions EC

FROM PAGE 3
polls, along with a delegation from the European Parliament.

The full mission will comprise around 200 observers from all 27 EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway and Switzerland. This is the EU’s first fully fledged election observation mission in Bangladesh since 2008.

Ijabs said the mission will engage with election authorities, political parties, the judiciary, civil society and the media. It will observe election preparations, the legal framework and its implementation, campaigning, dispute resolution, and the overall space for political and civic participation, including for women, youth and vulnerable groups.

The EOM will also monitor traditional and social media to assess whether voters are able to make informed choices. Its assessment will be based on national law and international democratic standards, guided by the principles of independence, impartiality and non-interference.

“We will observe the process, but we will not certify the results. These elections belong solely to the people of Bangladesh,” said Ijabs, a member of the European Parliament from Latvia.

He added that the mission hopes to contribute to public confidence in the electoral process.

Two days after the polls, the EOM will issue a preliminary statement, followed by a final report two months later.

Asked about the election environment, Ijabs said the Election Commission appears committed to holding a credible and participatory election.

He noted that credibility and competitiveness need to be restored after previous elections.

On security, he said law enforcers must maintain order while protecting freedom of expression and association.

He added that a “participatory and inclusive” election means the involvement of all social groups, regardless of faith, ethnicity or gender, and a voter turnout that reflects

active civic engagement.

Regarding inclusivity, he said it encompasses everything, including both the capacity of citizens to participate and the assurance that they are counted in a fair and transparent manner.

Regarding the ban on the Awami League, Ijabs said the issue involves complex questions of political reconciliation and transitional justice, and he would not comment on it.

“But of course, we are going to pay attention to it as long as it makes an impact on the election and on the turnout,” he said.

He also said observers would pay special attention to any risk of intimidation of minority communities.

Meanwhile, Ijabs met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday to discuss election preparations, the level playing field for parties and the referendum, according to the Chief Adviser’s press wing.

“He described the meeting as highly important, with extensive discussions covering election preparedness, the level playing field for

political parties, and the referendum, particularly the ‘Yes’ vote,” said the press wing in a statement.

Prof Yunus described the EU mission as vital for a credible election and democratic transition.

He identified misinformation on social media as a major challenge and warned that elements linked to the fallen autocratic regime may attempt to disrupt the polls.

However, Prof Yunus said the security forces are fully prepared to respond to any challenges.

FROM PAGE 3
According to the petition, NDF and JP (Ershad) are associate organisations of the Awami League, whose activities were banned on May 5 last year.

Despite the ban, Anisul and some other members of JP formed a political party named Jatiya Party (Anis) and an election coalition in the name of NDF, and submitted nomination papers for the upcoming 13th parliamentary election, the petition stated. JP also submitted nomination

papers to contest the polls.

The petition further said the AL instructed its members to contest the election as independent candidates, describing the practice as a direct threat to the July Charter and a betrayal to the martyrs of the July uprising.

Barrister ASM Shahriar Kabir appeared for the writ petitioner, while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state during yesterday’s hearing.

Defence delaying

FROM PAGE 3
being arrested in connection with alleged crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising, in which Sajeeb Wazed Joy, former ICT adviser to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, is also accused.

Palak’s lawyer Liton Ahmed told the tribunal that they wished to complete the communication next Friday and hold the charge-framing hearing on January 18. Opposing the plea, the chief prosecutor said January 14 had already been fixed for the hearing and added that the lawyers could meet Palak yesterday in the tribunal’s lock-up room if they wished.

Echoing the prosecution, the tribunal chairman asked, “Why wait until Friday? You can do it today.” The defence lawyers, however, remained firm in their request. At this stage, the chief prosecutor reiterated that the defence was deliberately trying to delay the trial.

The prosecution urged the tribunal to frame charges against both accused, saying prima facie evidence had been found.

Meanwhile, ICT-2 fixed January 14 for prosecution arguments after completion

of the recording of a defence witness in a case over the burning of six bodies in Ashulia during the July uprising.

The tribunal also granted bail on humanitarian grounds to Humayun Kabir Patwary, former AL Lakshimpur Sadar unit president, in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of five people during the July 2024 uprising – the first such bail in a July uprising case.

He was granted bail due to liver cirrhosis, the prosecution said.

The tribunal imposed strict conditions, including house confinement, bans on media and social media communication, and restrictions on tampering with evidence or contacting co-accused or witnesses.

Two other accused, Shaheen Alam and Md Salahuddin Chowdhury, remain in jail.

PRAYER
TIMING

JANUARY 12

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00

JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BNP struggles to rein in rebels

FROM PAGE 3
continue to run in the election.

In Patuakhali-3, BNP leader Hasan Mamun submitted nomination papers as an independent, defying the party’s decision to leave the seat for Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque.

In Narayanganj-4, Muhammad Gias Uddin collected nomination papers for a seat that has also been allocated to Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam.

In Bhola-1, the BNP gave up the seat for Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partha, yet BNP leader Golam Nabi Alamgir filed nomination papers.

In Natore-1, Jhalokathi-1

and Kishoreganj-1, four rebel candidates are contesting the polls.

TARIQUE’S INTERVENTION
On January 9, BNP Executive Committee member Mijanur Rahman Choudhury, a rebel candidate in Sunamganj-5, announced his decision to withdraw from the election following a meeting with BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman.

In a verified Facebook post, Mijanur said, “My respected guardian, BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, called me to his Gulshan office and requested me to step down from the election for the sake of the party and the country.”

Former lawmaker and Sunamganj BNP convener

Kalim Uddin Ahmad is contesting the seat as the party-nominated candidate.

On January 5, BNP leader Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, wife of late senior party leader Moudud Ahmed, who was contesting as an independent candidate in Noakhali-5, also announced her decision to withdraw after meeting Tarique.

In a Facebook post on January 6, she said, “He (Tarique) asked me to withdraw. In respect to the new chairman, I am withdrawing as an independent candidate for Noakhali-5.”

In Brahmanbaria-6, BNP leader Abdul Khaleque, who had submitted nomination papers as a rebel candidate, announced that he would

withdraw from the race.

According to party sources, Tarique held a meeting with Khaleque at his Gulshan office in Dhaka on the afternoon of January 6, where he instructed him to withdraw his nomination.

At a party meeting at Tejkhali in Bancharampur on January 10, Khaleque publicly confirmed his decision. “The party chairman has called me. The party has nominated Zunaaid Saki. If the party chief asks me to do this, how can I refuse?” he said.

In the Brahmanbaria-6 constituency, the BNP did not field its own candidate, as the seat was allocated to its partner Ganosamhati Andolon’s chief coordinator Zonayed Saki.

In Brahmanbaria-1, former lawmaker Syed AK Ekramuzzaman, who was earlier expelled from the BNP, announced on January 8 that he would withdraw his nomination and work in support of the BNP backed candidate.

Ekramuzzaman met Tarique at the Gulshan office the same day, where he was instructed to step aside in line with the party’s electoral strategy.

In Jhenaidah-4, independent candidate Murshida Khatun applied to withdraw her nomination. Murshida is the wife of senior BNP leader Shahiduzzaman Beltu. In the same constituency, Rashed Khan, who recently joined the BNP, remains in the race as a party-backed contestant.

Senior party leaders warned that further expulsions would follow if others failed to withdraw within the stipulated time.

BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said the party expects all rebel candidates to step aside before the deadline.

“We have asked them to respect the party decision and withdraw their nomination papers. We hope they will withdraw. Otherwise, organisational action will be taken,” he said.

Nazrul said many rebel candidates have already informed the party of their intention to quit the race.

Senior BNP leaders said the party has also offered assurances to those stepping aside, including consideration for organisational responsibilities and future participation in local government elections.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Eastern Zone of Bangladesh
Railway Project
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram
Mobile No. 01711-506101
E-mail: pd.trep@railway.gov.bd

Refence No. 54.01.1500.109.07 067.25

Dated: 06.01.2026

Advertisement Correction Notice

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Tender Closing (Date and Time)	
		Published (Date and Time)	Corrected (Date and Time)
1.	1191055	18-February-2025 at 12:30 Hrs	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs
2	1200707	18-February-2025 at 12:30 Hrs	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs

Md. Tanvirul Islam
Project Director

GD-75

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
JASHORE WATER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
BWDB, JASHORE**

Invitation for Tender

e-Tender has been invited in the national e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for Procurement of the following works.

Invitation Reference No	Tender ID	Package No & Description	Tender/Proposal Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing & Opening Date & Time
42.01.4100. 622.01.07.0 9.25-45 Date: 07.01.2026	1209595	Package No- CSAWM-WDB-SWZ-WD-14/01-J-1 Re-excavation of Chitra River from 38.550 to 50.500 Km=11.950 Km, Rehabilitation of 6 nos. WCS & Construction of 1(One) No WMG building in Chitra-Bhairab-Afra Sub-Project (Jashore Part) in e/w "Climate-Smart Agriculture and Water Management (CSAWM) Project (BWDB Part)" under Jashore WD Division, BWDB, Jashore during the year 2025-2026 & 2026-2027.	09-Feb-2026 17:00 hrs	10-Feb-2026 12:00 hrs

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

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(Polash Kumar Banerjee)
Executive Engineer,
Jashore Water Development Division,
BWDB, Jashore.

GD- 79

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
Engineering Department
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.tcb.gov.bd

সাপ্তাহিক ভাড়া টেন্ডার
অতিরিক্ত ব্যবহার করুন
০১৯৫০-৭৭১৮০৯

e-Tender Notice for Works

Memo: 26.05.0000.006.14.019.25.

Date: 11 January, 2026

e-Tender Notice No: 05/2025-26

This tender notice for procurement of Construction of boundary wall, internal road, sand filling and other works on the own land purchased for TCB's regional office Barisal. Dhaka e-GP Tender ID No. 1204510 is published in e-GP website. This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration on e-GP system (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is mandatory for more details contact e-GP help desk.

Tender ID No.	Name of works	Tender Publication Date	Tender Security	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1204510	Construction of boundary wall, internal road, sand filling and other works on the own land purchased for TCB's regional office Barisal.	12 January 2026	35,00,000/-	01 February 2026 16.00 pm	02 February 2026 12.00 pm	02 February 2026 12.00 pm

Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-55013923

GD-80

AMANUL HUQ

The romantic documentarian

On the blood-stained afternoon of February 21, risking his life, Amanul photographed the shattered skull of language martyr Rafiquddin Ahmed, who was killed while demanding recognition for Bangla, using his Zeiss Ikon camera.



Amanul Huq
COURTESY:
AMANUL HUQ ARCHIVE

On a Sunday morning in 1959, Amanul, accompanied by poet Subhash Mukhopadhyay, visited Satyajit Ray's home at 3 Lake Temple Road. That day, Amanul presented Ray with his framed photograph "Idle Noon." The image deeply impressed Satyajit, who praised it without reservation and compared it to the work of the world-renowned French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. This photograph secured Amanul a special place in Satyajit Ray's heart.

SHAHADAT PARVEZ

The international photography festival Chobi Mela will begin on January 16. This year's festival is being organised around the theme "Punô"—meaning *again* or *to begin anew, differently*. The contemporary world is looking towards a new time, and it is this idea that has shaped the festival. A special highlight of the event is the exhibition titled "Amanul Huq: The Romantic Documentarian." The exhibition will feature Amanul Huq's photographs of the Language Movement of 1952, the mass uprising of 1969, the election campaigns of 1970, the Liberation War of 1971, as well as images of Bangladesh's rivers, women, rural life, and various moments with Satyajit Ray. The exhibition will run at the Bangladesh National Museum until January 31.

Amanul Huq was born on the banks of the Jamuna, in his maternal grandparents' home in Kadda village of Sirajganj, exactly one hundred years ago, on an autumn evening in Kartik. After his birth, his father noted in his diary: "6 November 1925, 26 Kartik, 1332 Bangla year." Born on a Saturday, the newborn was named Amanul Huq, with the nickname *Moti*. Throughout his life, Amanul Huq travelled across the plains of Bengal, journeying by barge along rivers and canals, capturing through his camera reflections of a vast and abundant life. Rivers, women, boats, water and land, the sky, and the lives of people along the riverbanks became his meditation. Through his hands, the foundations of creative photographic practice in Bangladesh were laid.



Idle Noon (Kolkata, 1951)

PHOTO: AMANUL HUQ/DRIK

Amanul's ancestral home was in Ghorjan village of Sirajganj. Because of his father's job, his childhood was spent in Shahjampur and Ullapara. During the British period, Shahjampur was a subdivision; today it is an upazila of Sirajganj. In the 1940s, his father, Dr Abdul Huq, bought a house in Monirampur, the heart of Shahjampur town, and settled there permanently. His mother, Hajera Khatun, was trained in midwifery. Amanul was the second of eleven siblings, though two sisters died prematurely. In 1932, he began his primary education at Shahjampur Minor English School (now Ibrahim Girls' High School). As he grew up, he developed an interest in drawing, receiving his first lessons from his father. In 1939, he was admitted to Ullapara Merchant High School in Class Six. By the time he reached Class Eight, he was already obsessed with images. At the time, communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims in Shahjampur was strong. There were two studio photographers in the area—Biren Saha and Atul Saha. It was after seeing Biren Saha that Amanul became fascinated with the camera. The year was 1941.

In those days, almost every Hindu and Muslim household kept a *panjika* (almanac). One day, Amanul saw an advertisement for a Japanese camera in the almanac and wrote by post, saying, "I want this camera." A few days later, a beautiful parcel arrived at his home from Kolkata. On opening it, he realised it was not a real camera but a toy. The young Amanul was heartbroken and burst into tears. Soon afterwards, he got hold of a Baby Brownie camera and began taking photographs with it. Every morning, he would wake up and travel far from home—to remote villages such as Borpangashi in Ullapara, Kadda in Sirajganj, and Ruppur, Potajia, and Rautara in Shahjampur. He often went without food all day, which eventually led to ulcers. The physical toll of his undisciplined childhood habits stayed with him throughout his life.

After passing his matriculation, he

enrolled at Pabna Edward College, but his obsession with photography meant he could no longer concentrate on his studies. Around this time, he also became deeply interested in playing the violin. The country was then experiencing the Second World War and the post-famine devastation of the 1940s. During this period,

To avoid arrest, he went into hiding and was forced to resign from his job at Dhaka Medical College. During this time, he also lost his beloved camera, cutting off his source of income. As his situation grew increasingly desperate while in hiding, he was compelled to sell his cherished violin. With the small sum he received from its sale, he set off for Kolkata.

The year 1952 was a crucial moment in Amanul Huque's life. That year, his first joint photography exhibition was held at the Farmers' Fair of Tejgaon Agricultural College, alongside photographers Noazesh Ahmed and Naib Uddin Ahmed. A review of the exhibition was published in *Cultural Geography*. His photographs were also shown at England's Festival of Britain exhibition. That same year, the autumn special issue of Kolkata's progressive monthly magazine *Nabha Sahitya* featured his photograph titled "Idle Noon" on its cover. After its publication, art lovers on both sides of Bengal were visibly stirred, whispering among themselves: *Who is this extraordinary photographer?*

During his time in Kolkata, Amanul became acquainted with Satyajit Ray, who had by then achieved global fame with *Pather*

Amanul left Sirajganj and came to Dhaka. The suffering and deprivation of the urban poor on Dhaka's streets became the central subject of his photographic work. Through these humane images, he came to know the great artist Zainul Abedin, who recognised in him a rare artistic talent. Inspired by Zainul Abedin, Amanul enrolled at the Dhaka Art College, but even there he could not settle.

In the post-Partition period, he became acquainted with Habibullah Bahar Chowdhury, then the provincial Minister for Health. With his support, Amanul secured a position as an *artist*—as photographers were then called—at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Alongside photography, he drew illustrations of various parts of the human body for medical students. A few years later, the Language Movement began. On the blood-stained afternoon of February 21, risking his life, Amanul photographed the shattered skull of language martyr Rafiquddin Ahmed, who was killed while demanding recognition for Bangla, using his Zeiss Ikon camera. Renowned journalist Kazi Mohammad Idris sent Amanul's photograph to the office of *The Daily Azad* that very day, and blocks were even prepared for printing. But late at night, just as printing was about to begin, complications arose. Due to objections from the owners, the photograph was never published. Another block had been sent to students of Dhaka University, and the image appeared in their leaflets, which were later confiscated by the police.

This photograph taken by Amanul remains a significant document of the Language Movement. It placed the then West Pakistani government under severe pressure, as it proved conclusively that the police had not fired blank shots to disperse the procession, but had instead opened fire with lethal intent. Naturally, Amanul fell out of favour with the authorities. Intelligence agencies began searching for him relentlessly.



Boat race (Shahjampur, 1970s).

PHOTO: AMANUL HUQ/DRIK

Thereafter, Amanul became Ray's close companion during the shoots of *Devi*, *Teen Kanya*, *Kanchenjunga*, *Mahanagar*, *The Postmaster*, *Nayak*, *Ghare-Baire*, as well as Ray's documentary on Rabindranath Tagore. Amanul addressed Satyajit as his *guru*, while Satyajit regarded him as a friend. These details are recorded in the biography of Satyajit Ray by Marie Seton.

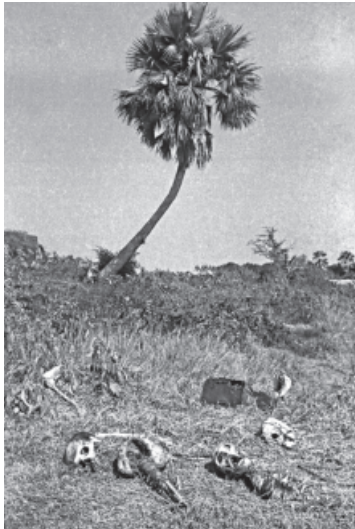
Following the Indo-Pak war of 1965, Amanul returned home from Kolkata. In Dhaka, he stayed at his maternal uncle Shamsuddin Almaji's house in Azimpur. The country was then simmering with the agitation surrounding the Six-Point Movement, which would soon lead to the mass uprising of 1969. The election of 1970, the Liberation War of 1971, and the post-war period all became subjects of his committed and militant camera.

Rabindranath Tagore and his life aboard the *bajra* had a profound influence on Amanul. During his childhood, owing to his father's job, he lived in the staff quarters of Shahjampur Government Hospital. To the west of the hospital stood Tagore's *kuthibari*. Between the hospital and the *kuthibari* flowed a thin stream



Amanul Huq with Anath Ali Majhi on the Jamuna char; their bajra boat in the background.

COURTESY: AMANUL HUQ ARCHIVE



Genocide (Manikganj, December 1971)

COURTESY: AMANUL HUQ ARCHIVE

Panchali and was in the process of writing *Devi*. On a Sunday morning in 1959, Amanul, accompanied by poet Subhash Mukhopadhyay, visited Satyajit Ray's home at 3 Lake Temple Road. That day, Amanul presented Ray with his framed photograph "Idle Noon." The image deeply impressed Satyajit, who praised it without reservation and compared it to the work of the world-renowned French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. This photograph secured Amanul a special place in Satyajit Ray's heart.

Dhaka, he also worked with a model named Nasrin Jahan Khan Ulka. In addition, he photographed several unknown village women as models. He personally selected every detail—their clothing, jewellery, and styling. Through his romantic lens, Amanul sought to portray an eternal image of Bengali womanhood.

Amanul was never a seeker of fame; such things did not preoccupy him. Yet recognition came to him like a tide. In 1954, a literary conference was held in Dhaka, attended by poets, writers, and journalists from around the world. At this conference, a special exhibition titled "Amar Desh", featuring over a hundred of Amanul's photographs, was organised—his first solo photography exhibition. It received a strong response from the intellectual community. His second solo exhibition took place in 1957 as part of the Kagmari Conference in Tangail, organised by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, who addressed Amanul simply as "Shilpi"—the artist. That same year, when China's first Prime Minister Zhou Enlai visited East Pakistan, United Front leader Ataur Rahman presented Amanul Huq's *Amar Desh* album to him as a gift.

During the 1950s and 1960s, photographs from Amanul's *Amar Desh* series were published in *Observer Sunday Magazine*, *Daily Pakistan* (monthly edition), *Dilruba*, *Mahe-Nao*, and *Saugat*. His photographs also appeared in *Ittefaq* and *The Daily Sangbad*. After independence, his images regularly adorned the covers of *Weekly Bichitra* and the fortnightly *Betar Bangla*. As the special photographer of *Daily Purbodesh*, his photographs were frequently used on the covers of the paper's magazine supplements marking national occasions. In the later years of his life, his work was prominently featured in special issues of *Daily Janakantha*. He also wrote memoir-essays for *Weekly Bichitra* and *Weekly Chitrali*. He is the author of four enduring works—*Ekusher Tamasuk*, *Prasanga Satyajit*, *Cameray Swadesh-er Mukh*, and *Smritichitra*—all published by Sahitya Prakash.

For his outstanding contribution to the Language Movement, Amanul Huque was awarded the Ekushey Padak in 2011. He was a man of rare integrity and self-denial. Throughout his life, he lived in financial hardship and never enjoyed material comfort. At the time of receiving the Ekushey Padak, he was given a cash award of five lakh taka and a house in Mohammadpur. He returned the house and said with quiet humility, "Even today, many freedom fighters sleep on the streets. I have a place to sleep. I do not need this house." With dignity and modesty, he gave the house back. He also donated the gold medal and citation he received as part of the Ekushey Padak to the Liberation War Museum.

In addition to the Ekushey Padak, Amanul received numerous honours: the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Sixth International Chobi Mela in 2011; The Daily Star Celebrating Life Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012; the Janakantha Protibha Award in 1999; and in 2000, an honour as a language activist from the Bangladesh National Museum on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Language Movement. In 2009, he was awarded an honorary fellowship of the Bangla Academy. That same year, the Dhaka 400 Years Celebration Citizens' Committee honoured him as a language activist. In 1989, he was granted lifetime membership of the Bangladesh Photographic Society.

Amanul never married and spent his life moving between the homes of his siblings. In his later years, he lived at his elder brother's flat in the Aziz Co-operative Society in Shahbagh. During that time, he wrote in his diary: "Please do not arrange any formalities after my death. This is my request and my final wish. I wish to take refuge in the lap of nature." Amanul Huq passed away on April 3, 2013 at the age of 88. He was laid to rest at the Martyred Intellectuals' Cemetery in Mirpur. At his feet stands a krishnachura tree, and by his head a glowing lamp post—as if marking the sun and light he had always sought.

Throughout his life, Amanul Huq pursued creative photography with unwavering devotion. Through the lens of his camera, he observed society and the people of the country with deep attentiveness, creating the photographic series "Amar Desh." His images continue to speak on his behalf, long after his passing.

Shahadat Parvez is a photographer and researcher.

The article is translated by Samia Huda.



A RARE FATHER-SON MOMENT

In a rare sight in cricket, Afghan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi and his son, Hassan Eisakhil, featured for the same team in a Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match in Sylhet yesterday. In a touching moment, Eisakhil was handed his cap before the game as he made his BPL debut. Playing for Noakhali Express against Dhaka Capitals, he immediately stamped his authority with a 60-ball 92 while sharing a 53-run fourth-wicket stand with his father, who made 17 off 13 deliveries. The 41-year-old Nabi and his 19-year-old son, however, had played against each other in competitive cricket in July last year during the Shpageeza Cricket League (SCL), Afghanistan's premier T20 tournament.

PHOTO: STAR

When runs don't bring rewards

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Considering how events have unfolded for Tawhid Hridoy in recent times, the right-handed batter may well be wondering what he is doing wrong.

A closer look at the scorecards, match situations, and overall context suggests that the 25-year-old is probably not doing anything drastically amiss. Yet, he continues to find himself on the wrong side of the results.

Hridoy was the only Bangladesh middle-order batter who began the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with some semblance of form, having scored 493 runs in 22 international innings in 2025, albeit at a modest strike rate of 116.54. However, he has since blown hot and cold in the tournament -- and even when he has found his touch, the outcomes have stubbornly gone against him.

The latest example came yesterday in Sylhet, when his unbeaten 97 off 56 balls, after being promoted to open by Rangpur Riders, still proved insufficient as Rajshahi Warriors chased down a target of 179 with five balls and seven wickets to spare.

Hridoy was involved in a blistering 105-run fourth-wicket partnership with Khushdil Shah off just 50 balls, rescuing Rangpur from a

precarious 72 for three in the 12th over. Opening for the first time for his franchise, he raced to 36 from his first 20 balls, endured a sluggish middle phase -- including a phase of no boundaries in 35 deliveries by Rangpur -- before finishing strongly with 54 off his final 23 deliveries. Left stranded three runs short of a maiden T20 century, Hridoy could at least take solace in having lifted his side to a competitive total.

Ultimately, though, his effort was undone by half-centuries from Rajshahi's Muhammad Waseem and Najmul Hossain Shanto.

It was not the first time that Hridoy found himself on the losing side despite being the standout performer. In seven BPL innings this season, he has been dismissed for single digits three times, made 29 and 17 in two others, and on the only previous occasion he crossed fifty -- a 39-ball 53 -- Rangpur still lost, that time in a Super Over against Rajshahi.

The pattern extends to the international arena as well. In the first T20I against Ireland last November, Hridoy struck a career-best 83 not out from 50 balls, but Bangladesh were already reeling at 18 for four while chasing 182, and his innings merely reduced the margin of defeat.

For Hridoy, the runs continue to bring personal relief. For his teams, however, they have yet to deliver the one thing he craves most -- victory.



'I actually preferred Trav-ball over Bazball'

For any '90s cricket fan, former England pacer **Darren Gough** remains a figure of pure nostalgia. With a smooth, repeatable action that youngsters loved to imitate, the right-arm quick stood out among his contemporaries -- particularly for his success in the subcontinent and in Australia. Since retiring, Gough has taken on a variety of roles -- commentator, coach, administrator and television personality -- remaining a familiar presence in the game. This year, the 55-year-old is in Bangladesh as part of the commentary panel for the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). In Sylhet on Sunday, Gough spoke to **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** about Bangladesh's fast bowlers, Bazball, England's challenges and his own career. Excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): What is your impression of the current Bangladesh pacers?

Darren Gough (DG): Nahid Rana is the one who really took me by surprise with his pace, and I believe he is an unbelievable talent who can bowl over 150 kph. A bowler with that speed is a huge asset in all three formats if managed well. I have been impressed by Tanzid Hasan Sakib. Mustafizur Rahman remains one of the best T20 bowlers globally due to his variations, and Saifuddin has impressed

me too and he can bat as well. The competition for places in the Bangladesh side is very interesting right now.

DS: Have you seen much reverse swing in this tournament?

DG: Not a lot, but Ripon Mondol was clever under pressure and managed some reverse swing during a Super Over, especially



against left-handers. Hasan Mahmud is impressive too. Bangladesh are now in a phase similar to where India once were -- building a deep pool of fast bowlers. That makes you competitive anywhere, whether in New Zealand or South Africa.

DS: What is your assessment of England's recent Ashes performance?

DG: It was very disappointing. There was

belief this England team had a real chance. If Australia had all their bowlers fit, the series could easily have been 5-0. England's batting technique wasn't good enough on pitches where the ball moved. Only Joe Root, and to some extent Jacob Bethell, showed how sound technique allows you to score runs in Australia.

DS: What do you make of Bazball?

DG: I'm all for positive cricket, but I actually preferred "Trav-ball" -- Travis Head's style -- over Bazball. Positivity is great, but it must come with intelligence. England will always be judged by how they perform against India and Australia in live-Test series.

DS: You were very successful in the subcontinent. What was the key?

DG: It requires a big heart and variation. I swung the new ball both ways, and when it got old, I used reverse swing. My specific action allowed me to bowl it like a "flying saucer" by lowering my wrist and coming from a sideways angle. That skill got me many wickets in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

DS: You also enjoyed success in Australia. How did you handle the pressure?

DG: I played eight Tests in Australia and took about 42 [41] wickets, including a couple of five-wicket hauls and a hat-trick. My nickname was "Box Office Gough" because the bigger the crowd, the better I performed. If you perform with heart, the Australian public respects you, but if you

don't, they will "destroy" you.

DS: Who were the toughest batters you bowled to?

DG: My biggest regret is never playing a Test against India because of injuries. I wanted to bowl to Sachin Tendulkar at my peak. He, along with Brian Lara, Jacques Kallis, Ricky Ponting, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Yousuf, were outstanding. But the hardest to bowl to was Adam Gilchrist -- he could come in at seven and change the game immediately. Lance Klusener was also very tough to bowl against.

DS: Do you consider Joe Root England's greatest-ever player?

DG: Absolutely. Comparing eras is difficult, but there's no doubt Joe Root is England's greatest. Graham Gooch was exceptional, and Kevin Pietersen could have been up there if he hadn't lost key years of his career, but Root is the best.

DS: What prompted your transition from cricket to reality TV?

DG: People thought I had the right personality for it. I just wanted to test myself in everything. I've done the Tour de France, professional in Mexico, ski jumping, and cooking. I had danced in my life, ended up winning Come Dancing after 12 weeks of competition.

SHORT CORNER

PCB interested to host Bangladesh's T20 World Cup matches: reports

A report by Pakistani news outlet Geo News has claimed that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has expressed interest in hosting Bangladesh's matches in the ICC T20 World Cup 2026. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had earlier stated that it would not send the national team to India for the T20 World Cup due to safety and security concerns and formally requested the International Cricket Council (ICC) to relocate Bangladesh's matches away from India.

BFF plans grassroots events every month

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) on Sunday decided to organise grassroots football events every month this year to inspire young players across the country, alongside staging an expanded BFF Academy Cup involving around 300 football academies. The decisions were taken at the sixth meeting of the BFF Development Committee, with BFF vice-president and committee chairman Nasser Shahrear Zahedee presiding.

Rishad's Hobart first to reach playoffs

Rishad Hossain's Hobart Hurricanes became the first team in the running Big Bash League (BBL) to progress to the playoffs after their match against Sydney Sixers ended in a no result due to incessant rain in Sydney yesterday. Rishad, who is the tournament's most successful spinner right now with 11 wickets in nine games, did not get to bowl.

***Read the full stories on The Daily Star's website*

BFL's return to National Stadium uncertain

SPORTS REPORTER

The return of the country's top-tier football competition, the Bangladesh Football League (BFL), to the National Stadium has once again been delayed after the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) released the second-phase fixtures on Saturday without scheduling any league matches at the renovated venue.

The top-tier matches have not been held at the National Stadium for more than four years due to extensive renovation work costing Tk 158 crore. As a result, league fixtures were shifted outside Dhaka, depriving many supporters in the capital of the chance to watch top-flight football.

The renovation was completed in June last year, and the stadium has since hosted several events, including three Asian Cup qualifiers, preliminary-round matches of the AFC Challenge League, a tri-nation women's football tournament, two Latin Bangla Super Cup matches, and the semifinals and final of the Inter-University Football Tournament. Despite this, the BFF remains reluctant to bring the BFL back to the National Stadium, even though Abahani and Mohammedan -- the country's two biggest crowd-pullers -- have shown interest in using it as their home venue.

Ahead of the current season, Mohammedan formally applied to make the venue their home ground, while Abahani also verbally expressed similar interest. The BFF rejected

both requests, citing plans to plant new grass at the venue after the India-Bangladesh match on November 18, 2025.

However, no initiative has so far been taken to plant new grass. National Sports Council (NSC) assistant director (planning



and development) Md Nasir Uddin told The Daily Star on Sunday that the NSC has no such project in place and that the BFF has not submitted any proposal regarding grass replacement.

Although BFF president Tabith Awal recently told a Bengali daily that BFL matches

would return to the country's premier venue, if grass plantation was delayed.

Clubs across the league are keen for matches to return to Dhaka, citing financial strain, playing conditions and the need to maintain growing spectator interest. Most teams, from top to bottom, have struggled financially this season, with travel costs significantly increasing their expenses.

"It is very difficult for smaller teams to play outside Dhaka every week, as it costs around Tk 2 lakh per match," said Arambagh official Yaqub Ali. "If we can play even two matches in Dhaka, we could save Tk 4 lakh, which would help cover camp expenses by about Tk 25,000 per day. Unfortunately, the BFF has ignored our repeated appeals."

PWD SC manager Engineer Iftekharul Islam echoed the concern. "Shifting some BFL matches to the National Stadium would reduce the financial burden on smaller clubs. We have already spent more than Tk 2 lakh playing two matches in Cumilla," he said. "The ground there is also not up to standard, so matches at the National Stadium would improve the quality of play."

Mohammedan manager Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib reiterated his club's stance, saying, "There is no engagement at the National Stadium at the moment. The BFL can return to the home of football in a good environment and amid strong spectator interest."



Mohamed Salah was among the scorers as Egypt knocked reigning champions Ivory Coast out of the Africa Cup of Nations with a 3-2 win in the quarterfinals in Agadir on Saturday, setting up a semifinal clash with Senegal on Wednesday in Tangiers. Meanwhile, Nigeria beat Algeria 2-0, and they will be facing hosts Morocco in the other semifinal later on the same day in Rabat.

PHOTO: AFP



EC restores candidacy of 58 more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday reinstated the candidacy of 58 more aspirants, including Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna, clearing the way for them to contest the upcoming 13th general election.

On the second day of reviewing appeals against returning officers' decisions to reject nominations, the EC heard 71 appeals, of which 58 were granted, seven rejected, and six kept pending.

Manna had submitted nomination papers for Dhaka-18 and Bogura-2. Returning officers accepted the nomination for Dhaka-18 but rejected the Bogura-2 form, citing inconsistencies during scrutiny.

In response to his subsequent appeal, the EC declared his Bogura-2 nomination valid yesterday afternoon.

Independent candidate Md Mohiuddin from Munshiganj-3 also had his appeal cleared yesterday after being kept pending on the first day.

With 51 restorations on the first day, a total of 109 candidates have regained their candidacy in two days of hearings.

The EC rejected seven appeals yesterday, namely those

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Mahmudur Rahman



Battery-run rickshaws, seized during a drive on Bijoy Sarani, are being taken away on a truck yesterday afternoon. The rickshaw drivers chose to travel to the so-called “dumping station”, hoping to get their vehicles back. The photo was taken in the Mohammadpur Bus Stand area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Girl in ICU after stray bullet from Myanmar hits her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A 12-year-old Bangladeshi girl was injured by a stray bullet during a heavy fighting reportedly between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups across the Myanmar border, police said yesterday.

The clashes took place at Totar Dwip on the Myanmar side, opposite Whykong union of Cox's Bazar's Teknaf, from around 11:00pm on Saturday to 10:00am yesterday with continuous gunfire and explosions reported.

During the fighting, a stray bullet from across the border hit the girl.

Alok Biswas, additional superintendent of Cox's Bazar police, told The Daily Star that the injured girl was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

“There were initial reports that she died, but that is not correct,” he said, adding that she was shot in the ear.

Earlier in the day, Khokon Kanti Rudra, in-charge of Whykong police outpost, had said Hujaifa Afnan was killed by a bullet coming from Myanmar.

The girl, daughter of Mohammad Jasim, a resident of the Tesri Bridge area of Whykong, was reportedly playing in front of her house around 9:40am when she was hit by the bullet, the police official added.

In the evening, the girl's uncle Showkot said she was admitted to the ICU of CMCH.

After the news of the girl's injury spread, protesters blocked the Ukhiya-Teknaf highway for at least three hours in the morning. Later, members of army and Border Guard Bangladesh cleared the blockade.

Sirajul Mostafa, a member of ward-2 of Whykong

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Hujaifa Afnan

REFERENDUM BB orders banks to campaign for ‘yes’ vote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank has directed all banks to run campaigns supporting a ‘Yes’ vote in the upcoming referendum on the July Charter's constitutional provisions.

The directive was issued at a bankers' meeting held at the BB headquarters yesterday.

Chaired by BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur, the meeting was attended by a delegation from the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh (ABB), led by its chairman, Mashrur Arefin.

Nazma Mobarek, secretary of the Financial Institutions Division, also attended the meeting along with BB deputy governors, relevant executive directors, and directors.

The meeting discussed several issues, including the reduction of non-performing loans, BB's dollar purchases, and the upcoming referendum, which will be held on national election day, scheduled for February 12.

The referendum will comprise a set of questions for a ‘Yes/No’ vote.

“We have been asked to campaign for a ‘Yes’ vote. A letter has come from the Chief Adviser's Office instructing us to put up two banners in each branch to encourage people to take part in the referendum,” ABB Chairman Mashrur told The Daily Star over the phone.

At the meeting, they were told to do the

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Flee Venezuela ‘immediately’

US urges its citizens citing risks from armed militias; Maduro loyalists stage rally

AGENCIES

The US State Department on Saturday urged Americans in Venezuela to leave the country “immediately,” citing risks from armed militias searching vehicles for US citizens at roadblocks.

“The security situation in Venezuela remains fluid,” the department said in a security alert, one week after the country's leader Nicolas Maduro was captured by US forces in a lightning raid.

“As international flights have resumed, US citizens in Venezuela should leave the country immediately,” it said, warning of armed militias called colectivos searching cars for Americans or evidence of US support.

Several hundred supporters of Maduro staged protests in the capital Saturday as the interim government moved to revive ties with Washington and slowly released some prisoners.

Waving flags and placards with the face of the mustachioed ex-leader and his wife Cilia, around 1,000 protesters rallied in the west of Caracas and a few hundred in the eastern Petare district — far smaller than demonstrations Maduro's camp has mustered in the past.

Notably absent from the rallies

were top figures from the government, which has said it is reviving diplomatic contact with Washington and discussing possible cooperation on US President Donald Trump's oil demands, reports AFP.

- ▶ Trump signs order to protect US-held revenue from Venezuela oil
- ▶ Venezuelan govt courts US, gradually frees prisoners
- ▶ Maduro ‘doing well’ in US jail: son

Interim president Delcy Rodriguez instead attended an agricultural fair, where she vowed in televised comments she would “not rest for a minute until we have our president back.”

The other two headline powers in the government, Interior Minister and street enforcer Diosdado Cabello, and Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

MUSABBIR MURDER Top criminal's aide behind killing: DB

TOUSIF KAIUM

An aide to a top criminal in Dhaka's underworld allegedly masterminded the killing of Swetchhasebak Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabbir, according to Detective Branch (DB) officials.

Bilash, also known as Jahidul, who is currently in Malaysia, allegedly hired Md Bilal to carry out the murder, promising Tk 12-15 lakh and to bear all expenses if they were arrested.

Bilal then reportedly executed the plan with the help of two suspected shooters, Zinnat and Rahim, said two DB officials closely involved in the investigation.

So far, four people have been arrested in connection with the murder: Zinnat, 24; Abdul Kadir, 28; Md Reaz, 31; and Md Bilal.

Speaking at a press conference at the DMP Media Centre yesterday afternoon, DMP Additional Commissioner Shafiqul Islam said the DB conducted extensive

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AFTERMATH OF JAMAAT TIES NCP failing to bring back leaders who left

SHAMIMA RITA

Leaders, who recently resigned from NCP in protest against the party's alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami, are standing firm on their decision, rejecting recent overtures from the party leadership to bring them back into the fold.

While the NCP top brass claims to be in talks with the leaders, the latter have termed these efforts ineffective and stated that they would only consider returning if the party severs its ties with Jamaat.

As of yesterday, at least 15 top and middle-ranking leaders, including former senior joint member secretary Tasnim Jara and former joint convener Khaled Saifullah, have resigned, while six others withdrew their candidacies ahead of the upcoming national election.

Besides, Senior Joint Convener Samanta Sharmeen and Joint Member Secretary Nahida Sarwar Niva, who did not officially step down from the party, remain inactive in party activities following NCP's ties with Jamaat.

NCP Spokesperson Asif Mahmud told The Daily Star, “We are trying to bring the leaders back into the party and are talking to them.”

They did not leave the party merely out of disappointment, he said, adding that there were other underlying issues, which is why it would take time.

However, the leaders who left dismissed

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Hundreds of people use this rickety yet towering bamboo bridge linking Aftabnagar and Banasree in the capital each day to cross the Norai river. There is no other convenient and proper bridge between the two neighbourhoods over the river. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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তথ্য কপিকা-১১

গণভোট ও ত্রয়োদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন ২০২৬

“আপনি কি জুলাই জাতীয় সনদ (সংবিধান সংস্কার) বাস্তবায়ন আদেশ, ২০২৫ এবং জুলাই জাতীয় সনদে লিপিবদ্ধ সংবিধান সংস্কার সম্পর্কিত নিম্নলিখিত প্রস্তাবসমূহের প্রতি আপনার সম্মতি জ্ঞাপন করিতেছেন?;” (হ্যাঁ/না)

(ক) নির্বাচনকালীন তত্ত্বাবধায়ক সরকার, নির্বাচন কমিশন এবং অন্যান্য সাংবিধানিক প্রতিষ্ঠান জুলাই সনদে বর্ণিত প্রক্রিয়ার আলোকে গঠন করা হইবে।

(খ) আগামী জাতীয় সংসদ হইবে দুই কক্ষ বিশিষ্ট ও জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচনে দলগুলোর প্রাপ্ত ভোটের অনুপাতে ১০০ সদস্য বিশিষ্ট একটি উচ্চকক্ষ গঠিত হইবে এবং সংবিধান সংশোধন করিতে হইলে উচ্চকক্ষের সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ সদস্যের অনুমোদন দরকার হইবে।

(গ) সংসদে নারীর প্রতিনিধি বৃদ্ধি, বিরোধী দল হইতে ডেপুটি স্পীকার ও সংসদীয় কমিটির সভাপতি নির্বাচন, মৌলিক অধিকার, বিচার বিভাগের স্বাধীনতা, স্থানীয় সরকার, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর মেয়াদ, রাষ্ট্রপতির ক্ষমতাসহ তফসিলে বর্ণিত যে ৩০টি বিষয়ে জুলাই জাতীয় সনদে একমত হইয়াছে- সেগুলো বাস্তবায়নে আগামী সংসদ নির্বাচনে বিজয়ী রাজনৈতিক দলগুলো বাধ্য থাকিবে।

(ঘ) জুলাই জাতীয় সনদে বর্ণিত অপরাপার সংস্কার রাজনৈতিক দলগুলোর প্রতিশ্রুতি অনুসারে বাস্তবায়ন করা হইবে।

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ভোট প্রদানের জন্য হ্যাঁ অথবা না যেকোনো একটি ঘরে সিল দিন

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