



'State scripted last 3 polls'

Inquiry commission says sections in admin, police, EC, intelligence agencies implemented the plans

KEY FINDINGS	KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of the electoral process in last three polls shifted from the EC to the admin Widespread fraud included fake votes, ballot stuffing and manipulated turnout figures Intelligence agencies, parts of the armed forces were used to shape outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the probe to include the 2008 election and take legal action Bar intelligence agencies from election and party registration activities Establish independent delimitation and investigation mechanisms

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and BAHARAM KHAN

The last three national elections were orchestrated at the highest levels of the state, with segments of the administration, police, Election Commission, and intelligence agencies mobilised to implement the plans, the inquiry commission on those polls said.

In a report submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday, the National Election (2014, 2018, 2024) Investigation Commission also noted that during those elections, control of the electoral process moved away from the EC to the administration.

"The administration, not the Election Commission, became the driving force behind election management," said the commission, which investigated allegations of corruption, irregularities, and criminal activities during those polls.

It recommended widening the probe to include the 2008 election and urged legal action against those found responsible.

The five-member commission, led by Justice Shamim Hasnain, handed over the report to Prof Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the afternoon.

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POUSH SANKRANTI TOMORROW... Farmers are busy reaping golden Aman paddy from fields across the country as preparations for Poush Sankranti -- the traditional harvest festival celebrated on the last day of the Bangla month of Poush. Tomorrow morning, villages will awaken to the scent of freshly made pitha, and by afternoon fairs will come alive with music, laughter, and festive cheer. The photo was taken at Khejurtala Beel in Batiaghata upazila, Khulna. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

ICC yet to respond to BCB's letter Board clarifies adviser's remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday clarified that the International Cricket Council is yet to formally respond to its second letter seeking relocation of Bangladesh's matches in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup from India, following some comments from the Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul about an ICC communication earlier in the day.



"The correspondence SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Iran ready for war, open to dialogue

Claims protest under control; pro-regime rallies held nationwide after Trump's threats; Turkey warns against intervention

AGENCIES

Iranian officials said yesterday the country is prepared for war but also open to dialogue with the United States, as President Donald Trump continues his threats to intervene amid a violent government-led crackdown on protesters.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Iran is keeping communications open with the US.

"The communication channel between

our Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and the US special envoy (Steve Witkoff) is open, and messages are exchanged whenever necessary."

Contacts also remain open through traditional intermediary Switzerland, he added.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said the situation in Iran is "under control" with "many terrorist operatives" arrested.

He told foreign diplomats in a televised meeting that "confessions will be released soon" and said there is "substantial evidence of

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Dhaka's interest in joining Gaza ISF conditional Says govt; muted reactions from political parties

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has said Bangladesh's interest in joining the proposed International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for Gaza hinges on several principles, including that the force be temporary and operate under a clear United Nations Security Council mandate.

"We recognise the significance of the UN Security Council decision to establish the ISF and understand that

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The Daily Star

Myanmar made lives of the Rohingyas a nightmare

The Gambia tells ICJ in genocide case

REUTERS, The Hague

Gambia yesterday told judges at the United Nations' top court that Myanmar targeted minority Muslim Rohingyas for destruction and made their lives a nightmare in a landmark case accusing Myanmar of genocide.

It is the first genocide case the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is hearing in full in more than a decade. The outcome will have repercussions beyond Myanmar, likely affecting South Africa's genocide case at the ICJ against Israel over the war in Gaza.

Myanmar has denied genocide. In total, the hearings at the ICJ will span three weeks. Gambia's Minister of Justice Dawda Jallow told ICJ judges the Rohingyas were simple people with dreams of living in peace and dignity. "They have been targeted for destruction," he said.

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The National Election (2014, 2018, 2024) Investigation Commission handing over its probe report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Jamaat holds views-exchange meeting with retired army officers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said there is no alternative to sincerely respecting the army, as it has helped the people of the country hold their heads high.

He made the remarks at a views exchange meeting with retired armed forces members at the capital's Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre yesterday evening.

Jamaat organised the event titled "In Recognition of Service and Sacrifice: A Salute to Our Distinguished Veterans" in honour of the former armed forces members.

Speaking as the chief guest, Shafiqur said, "There are some mismatches in our culture. For some reasons, a lack of confidence is sometimes visible. For example, our defence ministry remains in the hands of the state's chief executive. He already has lots of responsibilities, he has to supervise all the ministries and acts as their guardian. If such-and-such a ministry remains under him, how will he individually ensure its due rights?"

"Instead, what is the problem if we bring in potential people from among those who are experienced and who have served the nation by

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'State scripted last 3 polls'

FROM PAGE 1

After receiving it, the chief adviser said, "We had heard about vote rigging, we knew some of it. But the way the entire process was shamelessly distorted, the system twisted and crushed, and a verdict written on paper as they pleased... this [report] must be placed before the nation. A full record must be kept."

Adding that the entire nation was punished in the name of elections organised with people's money, he said, adding, "The people of this country looked on helplessly. They could do nothing."

"To give the people some relief, the faces of all those involved must be brought to light. We must know who did it, how they did it. And we must ensure that such election theft never happens again."

Other members of the commission, formed on June 25 last year, are Shamim Al Mamun, former additional secretary; Kazi Mahfuzul Haque (Supan), associate professor of law at Dhaka University; lawyer Tajriyaan Akram Hussain; and election expert Abdul Alim.

The report said that in 2014, elections in 153 constituencies were uncontested, while the remaining 147 were staged as "competitive" but were entirely arranged and pre-planned. "This arrangement was made at the highest level of the state to keep the Awami League in power," it said.

As the 2014 election was widely criticised globally as an uncontested one, the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League adopted a mission to make the 2018 election appear "competitive". The BNP and other opposition parties failed to grasp the far-reaching nature of this plan and participated in the polls.

According to the commission's estimates, the 2018 polls saw overnight ballot stamping in 80 percent of voting centres to secure the Awami League's victory.

"Within the administration, there was a form of dishonest competition to ensure the party's win, resulting in voter turnout figures exceeding 100 percent in some centres."

In 2024, as the BNP and other opposition parties did not participate, dummy candidates were fielded as a deceptive tactic to project competition in the election.

Since several thousand officials and employees were involved in irregularities across the three elections, and the time allocated to the inquiry commission was insufficient, it was not possible to identify all individuals

or determine their specific roles, the report said.

At a press conference yesterday evening, chief of the commission Justice Shamim Hasnain said the master plan for the three elections was drawn up immediately after the 2008 polls.

The caretaker government system was formally abolished in 2011 through the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, as part of a broader, long-term strategy. The ruling party viewed the system as a major obstacle to retaining power at will, he added.

"It [ruling party] selectively appointed loyal individuals while forming the Election Commission. The commission did not exercise independent judgment but followed bureaucratic guidance during elections."

"Many capable BCS officers were available, but they were sidelined, and only a few loyal officers were assigned electoral duties."

LESS TIME, INSUFFICIENT INFO
The report said that considering the scope of the investigation, the commission would have required at least a full year to complete its work. "Given the four-month time limit, it was not possible to conduct the investigation as extensively as planned."

Meanwhile, a lack of necessary information also hindered the process.

After the 2014 parliamentary election, the EC Secretariat was moved from the Planning Commission campus to its own building in Agargaon, during which most 2014 election documents and related records were destroyed.

Additionally, due to weak documentation practices within the EC, not all information and documents required for the probe were available.

Since many people involved in the election process, including candidates, were absconding after the July uprising, it was also not possible to hold hearings with them.

"For the institutionalisation of democracy, it is necessary to conduct a detailed inquiry into the irregularities of the 2014, 2018, and 2024 national elections, including the ninth parliamentary election of 2008, and to take legal action against those responsible," the report said.

ACTS THAT MARRIED THE POLLS
The inquiry committee identified a series of actions that undermined electoral integrity, including the abolition of the caretaker government system and the use of selected parts of state intelligence agencies and the armed forces in shaping electoral strategies.

Other actions included restricting media workers from entering polling centres and filing false cases to harass opposition candidates and activists, many of whom were arrested, subjected to enforced disappearances under false, non-bailable charges, intimidated, or lured into withdrawing their candidacy.

The commission also noted widespread electoral fraud, including casting fake votes, using the executive branch to manipulate results, pre-filling ballot boxes, altering voter turnout figures, and destroying election-related documents and data after voting.

Voters were intimidated, and attempts were made to create splits within opposition alliances.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The commission recommended the formation of a new law for the appointment of election commissioners and cautioned that while a permanent Election Investigation Commission may be formed, it must not undermine the independence of the Election Commission.

It called for an independent and separate delimitation commission with full authority over boundary demarcation, and said parties registered before the 2014 and 2018 polls must be re-examined for transparency.

"Laws must be amended to keep intelligence agencies away from party registration activities. Legal provisions must prevent courts from halting registration processes."

"Intelligence agencies must be barred from involvement in election activities, though the Election Commission may seek their assistance strictly for security purposes, if necessary."

It added, "It is essential to bring transparency to the activities of all intelligence agencies so that they cannot be used in the future as instruments for retaining state power."

The report further said that no officer from the administration cadre should be appointed on deputation to the EC Secretariat. Returning and assistant returning officers should primarily be appointed from the commission's own officials. If insufficient, appointments may be made from other cadres, including the administration.

Journalists with valid Election Commission cards should be allowed direct entry into polling centres without additional permission, it said, adding that they may collect information, take photos, and record videos without permission, though they cannot film inside voting booths unless irregularities occur.

ICC yet to respond to BCB's letter

FROM PAGE 1

cited today [yesterday] by the Adviser for the Ministry of Youth and Sports was in reference to an internal communication between the BCB and the ICC's Security Department related to threat assessments for the Bangladesh team ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," the BCB said in a press release sent in the evening.

"This does not constitute a formal response from the ICC to the BCB's request for the relocation of Bangladesh's matches outside India," it further read.

Earlier in the afternoon, sports adviser Asif Nazrul spoke to the media after a visit to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), where he referenced a letter from the ICC security team that he said supports Bangladesh's decision not to send its national team to India for the tournament, which begins on February 7.

"There is no new development. We have sent two letters. After sending the letters, we are waiting for the ICC's response. There is one matter I need to inform you all. The ICC security team has sent a letter, which pointed

out three factors that will escalate the security threat to the Bangladesh team," Asif Nazrul said.

"The first is if Mustafizur [Rahman] is included in the Bangladesh team. The second is if Bangladesh supporters walk around wearing the national team's jersey. And the third is the closer the election gets, the higher the security threat would be for the Bangladesh team."

"This statement of the ICC security team has proven beyond any doubt that the situation in India is not at all suitable for the Bangladesh cricket team to play the T20 World Cup over there. If the ICC expects us to form a team without our best bowler, our supporters won't be able to wear the Bangladesh jersey, and that we will postpone the elections in Bangladesh for cricket, then there cannot be a more absurd, unrealistic, and unreasonable expectation than this," he added.

The adviser then reiterated his earlier demand to the ICC to relocate Bangladesh's matches to Sri Lanka, the co-host of the event.

"We believe that the prevailing communal situation and the anti-

Bangladesh atmosphere in India, especially the continuous anti-Bangladesh campaign that has been going on for the last 16 months, have made it impossible for Bangladesh to play cricket in India.

"If the ICC is truly a global organisation and does not blindly follow India's directives, they should provide us the opportunity to play our T20 World Cup matches in Sri Lanka. We will not bow down from this stance."

Prior to the BCB's official clarification, Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Azad Majumder on social media said that the letter cited by Asif Nazrul was actually "an inter-departmental note on threat assessments ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup in India", not an official ICC response.

The Daily Star sent an email to ICC senior media manager Rajshekhhar Rao for clarification, but did not get a response. Earlier on Thursday, the BCB had sent a second letter to the ICC outlining its security concerns about sending the Bangladesh contingent to India, as the ICC had asked it to do in response to the board's first letter seeking relocation.

Iran ready for war, open to dialogue

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foreign involvement."

Iranian authorities held mass nationwide rallies yesterday to regain control of the streets. Thousands of people filled the capital's Eghelab (Revolution) Square, brandishing the national flag as prayers were read for victims of what the government has termed "riots", state TV showed.

Addressing the crowds, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Iran is fighting a "four-front war", listing economic war, psychological war, "military war" with the US and Israel and "today a war against terrorists", referring to the protests.

Flanked by the slogans "Death to Israel, Death to America" in Persian, he vowed the Iranian military would teach Trump "an unforgettable lesson" if Iran were attacked.

Araqchi said Iran was ready for both war and talks after repeated threats from Washington to intervene militarily over the crackdown on protests, which activists fear has left at least hundreds dead.

The Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights (IHR) said yesterday it had confirmed 648 people killed during the protests, including nine minors, and thousands more injuries, but warned

the death toll was likely much higher -- "according to some estimates more than 6,000", it said.

IHR added that the internet shutdown made it "extremely difficult to independently verify these reports".

It said an estimated 10,000 people had also been arrested.

Trump said on Sunday evening the US may meet Iranian officials, and he was in contact with Iran's opposition while piling pressure on its leadership.

Turkey, meanwhile, has warned that any foreign intervention in neighbouring Iran would deepen crises in both the country and the wider region, and it called for US and Iranian negotiations to resolve existing problems.

Russia yesterday condemned what it called attempts by "foreign powers" to interfere in Iran.

Trump is due to meet with senior advisers today to discuss options for Iran, a US official told Reuters. The Wall Street Journal reported that the options included military strikes, using secret cyber weapons, widening sanctions and providing online help to anti-government sources.

Despite the massive scale of the anti-regime protests, there are no signs of splits in the Shia clerical leadership, military or security forces,

and demonstrators have no clear central leadership. The opposition is fragmented.

In verified video footage, Iranians gathered at the Kahrizak Forensic Centre in Tehran on Sunday, standing over rows of dark body bags.

The ambassadors of Britain, Italy, Germany and France in Tehran were summoned to the foreign ministry, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported yesterday, and asked to relay to their governments Tehran's request to withdraw their support for the protests.

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola has banned all diplomatic staff and any other representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran from all European Parliament premises, she said on social media X.

Araqchi said yesterday that a total of 53 mosques and 180 ambulances had been set on fire since the protests erupted, adding that "no Iranian would attack a mosque".

CCIV footage from inside Tehran's Abuzar Mosque showed a dozen people, most wearing face masks, ransacking the structure, throwing books onto the ground and destroying furniture last week. Reuters verified the timestamp and location. State media reported that the mosque was set on fire on January 9.



Bodies lie in body bags on the ground as people stand amid the scene outside Kahrizak Forensic Medical Centre in Tehran, Iran, in this screen capture from a video obtained from social media.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Dhaka's interest in joining Gaza

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some Muslim countries are interested in participating in the force. We are also carefully considering the matter," Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said.

He made the remarks yesterday in a written response to The Daily Star's queries, sent on Sunday. The newspaper sought clarification on why the interim government was considering participation in the ISF just weeks ahead of the election, the nature of Bangladesh's possible role, and whether the foreign policy implications had been duly assessed.

Shafiqul said that as the world's third-largest Muslim-majority nation, Bangladesh has consistently condemned Israeli genocide in Gaza and called for its immediate end, along with the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territory.

He noted that the UN Security Council on November 17, 2025, adopted Resolution 2803, which, among other provisions, approved the establishment of an ISF for Gaza. He added that all Muslim country members of the Security Council voted in favour of the resolution, while several Arab and Muslim states jointly recommended its adoption.

Bangladesh, he said, recognises the importance of the Security Council's decision and is assessing its position in that context.

On January 9, National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, during a meeting with US officials in Washington, DC, expressed

Bangladesh's interest in principle to "be part of the international stabilisation force" to be deployed in Gaza.

In response, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker said Washington was willing to work with Bangladesh on the issue.

Shafiqul yesterday said, "As one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping forces and an ardent supporter of the Palestinian cause, Bangladesh's interest in participating in the ISF is contingent on the fulfillment of a number of principles."

"These include, among others, that the ISF should be temporary and operate under a clear UN Security Council mandate; that there must be permanent ceasefire and complete withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza; and that the responsibilities for Gaza will be transferred to the Palestinians," he said.

Bangladesh, he added, remains steadfast in its support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

Political reactions to the government's position were mixed.

BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said he did not want to comment on the issue at this stage. Another BNP leader, requesting anonymity, said, "The interim government could have avoided taking any such decision on sensitive matters when the election is only a month away."

Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said any decision must be transparent, well explained to the public, and taken strictly in the national interest.

"People will not accept anything beyond this," he told The Daily Star, adding that the party would issue a formal statement after internal discussions.

Sultan Muhammad Zakaria, head of the National Citizen Party's international relations cell, supported the government's stance, saying, "I think the government's interest to be part of the International Stabilisation Force is right. We want stability in Gaza at the earliest."

Ending the war and restoring law and order were prerequisites for peace in Gaza, he said, adding that Palestine is a friend of Bangladesh and any effort to support its cause should be welcomed.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Solidarity Committee, Bangladesh on Sunday condemned the interim government's interest in joining the proposed ISF and demanded an immediate reversal of the position.

In a statement, Prof Md Harun-or-Rashid, member secretary of the committee, said the ISF's primary role would be to disarm freedom fighters in Gaza under the guise of ensuring Israel's security, effectively dismantling the Palestinian resistance.

He said it was unfortunate that the national security adviser expressed Bangladesh's interest in participating in the ISF during his meeting with US officials.

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Prime suspect in Banasree murder arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab has arrested the prime suspect in the murder of school student Fatema Akter Nili, who was found dead at her home in Dhaka's Banasree area.

The arrestee, Md Milon Mallick, 28, an employee at a hotel owned by Nili's father, allegedly killed the 18-year-old for rejecting his advances.

Lt Col Fayezul Arefin, commanding officer of Rab-3, shared the developments at a press briefing at the Rab Media Centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday.

Milon was arrested from Baro Singa in Bagerhat Sadar on Sunday night, he said.

Nili was murdered at her home, Pritom Villa, on January 10.

According to Rab, her parents and brother were away in Habiganj, leaving Milon responsible for delivering food. CCTV footage shows him entering the house at 1:36pm, leaving briefly with Nili's sister, who went to the gym, then re-entering alone at 2:25pm and departing at 2:43pm.

Regarding the motive, the Rab official said Milon had been making advances on the victim for some time. The night before the murder, he made a similar proposal while delivering dinner, when Nili scolded him.

Milon went to the house the next day, carrying a nylon rope. "When Nili refused his advances once again, he tried to strangle her with the rope. During the struggle, as Nili tried to scream, Milon grabbed a kitchen machete [boti] and slit her throat."

Milon would be handed over to the police, said Rab. Nili's father, Md Sajib, has filed a murder case with Khilgaon Police Station.



A myna dips its beak into the cut part of a date palm tree to sip sap on a cold Poush morning. The photo was taken in Patang village of Barishal Sadar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Law and order yet to reach satisfactory level

Says Mirza Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government has failed to recover looted arms and that the law and order situation has not improved to a satisfactory level.

He made the remarks while talking to journalists at his residence in the Kalibari area of Thakurgaon town, responding to a question about countrywide violence, killings, and the recovery of looted weapons.

"We are deeply concerned about the issue. We consider it a failure of the government that it has not been able to recover the arms. And so far, I do not think the law and order situation has improved in any significant way," he said.

On Bangladesh's decision not to go to India to participate in the T20 World Cup, Fakhrul said, "International politics is involved with cricket, and the dignity of our country is also related. India has undoubtedly humiliated one of our cricketers. We agree with the decision taken by the board."



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REACHING OUT TO FEMALE VOTERS BNP pledges 'Family Card' and jobs to empower women

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

With the general election knocking at the door, the BNP is seeking to attract female voters by pledging to introduce a "Family Card" that would provide women with cash assistance and essential items.

If elected, the party also plans to create more jobs for women, improve safety in public transport, and expand access to maternal and neonatal healthcare.

Senior BNP leaders said the commitments are part of the party's election manifesto and its 31-point reform outline, which places women's empowerment at the centre of governance and development.

According to Election Commission data, of the total 12,76,95,183 voters, 6,28,79,042 are women.



Senior leaders also acknowledged that outreach to female voters at the grassroots had been weak in the past, prompting the party to take new initiatives ahead of the election.

Under the proposed Family Card scheme, women cardholders would receive monthly financial assistance of Tk 2,000-2,500 or essential food items such as rice, pulses, cooking oil and salt.

The programme would initially

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Newly-appointed US envoy in city

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed US Ambassador-designate to Bangladesh Brent Christensen said he looks forward to strengthening ties between the United States and Bangladesh to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

The comment came shortly after he and his wife, Deanne Dao, arrived in Dhaka yesterday evening. Officials from the foreign ministry and the US Embassy welcomed them at Dhaka airport.

"It is an honor for me to serve the United States as the 19th Ambassador to Bangladesh. I look forward to strengthening the ties between our two countries to advance peace and prosperity in the region. My wife and I are thrilled to return to a country that holds many fond memories for us," Ambassador Brent T Christensen said, according to a statement of the US Embassy Dhaka.

Diplomatic sources said Christensen will present his credentials to President Mohammed Shahabuddin on January 15, after which he will formally assume office.

The post of US ambassador to Bangladesh had remained vacant for more than one and a half years following the resignation of former ambassador Peter Haas in mid-June 2024.



Waste removed from a drain lies piled on a footpath beside the Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon link road in Dhaka, while the concrete slabs meant to cover the sewer remain open. The situation has persisted for over a week, forcing pedestrians onto the road and posing a constant risk of falling into the drain. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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13TH NATIONAL ELECTION

'Only 4.24% of candidates women'

Women's Political Rights Forum says parties must be held accountable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties must be held accountable for failing to nominate at least five percent women candidates in the upcoming national election despite pledging to do so under the July National Charter, said the Women's Political Rights Forum (FWPR) yesterday.

Of the 2,568 candidates contesting the election, only 109 are women – just 4.24 percent of the total. Among them, 72 women were nominated by political parties, while 37 are running as independents, the rights organisation said at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The forum noted that no political party nominated more

Only 109 women contesting out of 2,568 candidates

Parties nominated 72 women; 37 independents

No party nominated more than 10 women candidates

30 of 51 parties did not nominate single woman

BNP nominated 10 women out of 328

Jamaat nominated no women out of 276

NCP nominated 3 women out of 44

than 10 women candidates, highlighting the largely symbolic nature of gender

inclusion in electoral politics.

"Even parties born out of mass uprisings, where women played a strong role, have shown a frustrating example of including women," said Sadaf Saaz of Naripokkho.

The forum urged political parties to treat women's nomination as a constitutional obligation rather than a token gesture and called for structural reforms to integrate women into leadership roles and ensure a gender-responsive political system.

It said women's political participation remains heavily dependent on reserved seats, limiting their legitimacy, leadership opportunities and influence in decision-making.

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Charges framed against Salman and Anisul

Trial starts Feb 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-I yesterday set February 10 for the start of the trial in a crimes against humanity case against deposed prime minister's adviser Salman F Rahman and former law minister Anisul Huq.

The three-member tribunal fixed the date after framing five charges against the two.

The tribunal, headed by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, framed the charges after rejecting discharge petitions filed by the defence. Tribunal member Justice Shofiqul Alam Mahmood read out the charges.

While framing the charges, the tribunal said it found sufficient grounds to proceed against the accused after examining the formal charge and the evidence on record.

CHARGES

According to Charge 1, Salman and Anisul, acting through the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, the former home minister and leaders of the 14-party alliance, ordered, abetted and incited crimes against humanity during the July uprising.

Charge 2 alleges that the accused conspired to suppress the protests by imposing curfews and

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Over 5 lakh Ansar-VDP members to be deployed for polls

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday advised members of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) to discharge their duties with honesty, sincerity and professionalism to ensure that the 13th national election is held in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

He made the remarks as the chief guest at the passing-out parade of the 41st BCS (Ansar) cadre officers, upazila Ansar-VDP trainers and trainers-in-training, and the 26th and 27th batches of Ansar Battalion trainees at the Bangladesh Ansar and VDP Academy in Shafipur, Gazipur.

The home adviser said 5,55,958 Ansar-VDP members would be deployed at 42,766 polling centres across the country, with 13 members assigned to each centre.

Of the 13, each centre will have three armed members, six unarmed male members and four unarmed female members, he said.

As part of additional security arrangements, one of the three armed members at each centre will remain on duty round the clock with the presiding officer during the election period, he added.

Ten muggers sentenced to life term for killing cop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced 10 muggers to life term imprisonment for killing a constable of the Chattogram Metropolitan Police 12 years ago.

Chattogram Divisional Special Court Judge Mizanur Rahman delivered the verdict after examining all records and testimonies, court sources said.

Among the convicts, Tapan Chandra Sarkar, Arsal alias Rasel, and Md Babul are behind bars while Md Javed, Nurul Alam, Sumon Molla, Harun-ur-Rashid, Mintu Das, Faruq alias Bullet Faruq, and Md Sohel are on the run.

According to the case statement, the muggers stabbed police constable Abdul Kaium to death while he was chasing them in the port city's Batali Hill area on November 3, 2013.

Three other police constables – Ariful Islam, Sahabuddin and Salauddin – were also injured in the incident.

Following the incident, police filed a case with Khulshi Police Station accusing 11 people.



Nazrul Islam casts his net in the Bhairab River to catch local species such as bialah, dagri and shrimp to meet his family's food needs. He sells the surplus at local markets for extra income. The photo was taken at Shiromoni Cable Kheyaghat in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

3 killed, 10 hurt as train hits pickup van in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three jute mill workers, including two brothers, were killed and 10 others injured when a train hit a pickup van carrying workers in Faridpur's Boalmari upazila yesterday.

The accident occurred around 3:00pm at an unguarded level crossing in the Sotashi area of Boalmari municipality on the Kalukhali-Bhatiapara rail line.

The deceased are brothers Md Jabbar Molla and Md Musa Molla of Bilkairail village in Moyna union, and Jahanara Begum, wife of Abul Kalam of the same village. All three were workers at Janata Jute Mill.

The injured were admitted to local hospitals.

According to railway police and local sources, a pickup van carrying around 15 workers was heading towards the Boalmari upazila headquarters after finishing work at Janata Jute Mill in the Dobra area of Satair union.

As the vehicle crossed the unguarded Sotashi level crossing, a local passenger train travelling from Kalukhali to Bhatiapara collided with it, killing three workers on the spot.

Mizanur Rahman, officer in charge of Rajbari Railway Police Station, said he had been informed that a local train hit a pickup van at the unguarded Sotashi crossing while travelling from Kalukhali to Bhatiapara.

He said legal proceedings were under way.

Boalmari UNO SM Rakibul Hasan and Boalmari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Anwar Hossain also visited the scene, he said.

Locals suffer as bridge work stalled for 9 months

JAYDUL ISLAM, Netrakona

Residents are facing severe hardship as construction of the 52-metre-long Kaunai Bridge in Barhatta upazila of Netrakona has remained suspended for nearly nine months.

The road is the only vital route connecting the Barhatta upazila headquarters with Netrakona district town, with around 8,000 to 10,000 people using it daily.

According to sources at the local LGED office, the estimated cost of the bridge is Tk 4.30 crore. Construction began on September 12, 2024, and the project was awarded to a joint venture contractor, Pritom Enterprise and Golam Ershadur Rahman JB.

However, although work stopped in March last year, it has not yet resumed.

As an alternative, the contractor built a temporary bamboo bridge, but it collapsed within two to three months. Currently, as the riverbed has dried up, locals are commuting underneath with auto-rickshaws and motorcycles.

Raihan Quaraishi, a resident of Choygaon village, said, "There are several schools and madrasas on both sides of this road. Students have to cross this river every day. The suffering is even greater for patients and elderly people. Accidents often occur while travelling by auto-rickshaw."

Barhatta upazila Engineer Md Abdul Baten said the contractor had been served a notice to complete the work within the stipulated time. "There is a shortage of some equipment on the contractor's side. They have informed us that they will collect the equipment and complete the

other areas has increased costs several times. Work was also suspended during the monsoon season. Construction will resume very soon."

Netrakona LGED Senior Engineer Md Rafikul Islam said, "We are monitoring the situation to ensure that the contractor



work quickly. We are conducting regular supervision," he said.

One of the owners of the contracting firm, Md Jewel Ahmed Khan, said, "All sand quarries in Netrakona have been shut down by the government, creating a serious sand crisis. Bringing sand from

does not carry out standard work. They have been instructed to complete the project according to proper rules. They informed us that some machinery needs to be brought from Chattogram, which is why the work has been delayed somewhat."

Noakhali Science & Technology University Noakhali-3814. Office of The Director, Planning, Development & Works. e-Tender Notice. Memo No-NSTU/DPDW/25/459/6128. Date: 11-01-2026. This is to notify all concern that the following tender has been published through e-GP Portal.

2 bodies recovered from river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police recovered the bodies of two men from the Atrai River near Lakkhitala bridge in Chirirbandar upazila in Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased were wearing trousers, black shirts and jackets, said police.

Md Mahamudun Nabi, officer in charge of Chirirbandar Police Station, told The Daily Star that several locals who went for fishing, spotted the bodies floating in the river around 10:30am and informed the police.

The OC said they were trying to identify the deceased and determine the cause of death.

EASTERN REFINERY PLC. (A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation) North Patenga, Chattogram. e-Tender Notice. Ref: ERL/IT/e-GP-01/2026, 02/2026. Date: 11 January 2026. e-Tenders have been invited in the national e-GP System portal for procurement of the goods as stated below.

Office of the Project Director Further Development of the University of Dhaka Project, University of Dhaka Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh. e-Tender Notice. প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয় ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিকর্তার উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ. ই মেইল: pd.further@du.ac.bd

খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, খুলনা. INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR 1x TUG BOAT-2 (NB-787) HULL CONSTRUCTION WORK. EOI-নবি- ১৯/৪৩৮/২৫-২৬ ১২ জানুয়ারী ২০২৬

Janata Bank PLC. Head Office IT Procurement, Security, Compliance and Maintenance Department 110, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. e-Tender are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

Israeli drone strike kills three in Gaza

AGENCIES

Three Palestinians have been killed in the southern Gaza Strip in Israel's latest violation of October's ceasefire in its genocidal war on the besieged enclave, according to sources in Gaza.

An Israeli quadcopter drone struck down three Palestinians in Khan Younis yesterday, the sources told Al Jazeera. A Palestinian woman was also wounded by Israeli gunfire in al-Batn al-Sameen area. The attacks came after Israeli army forces carried out air strikes and shelling across several parts of the enclave yesterday.

The three people killed were identified as Wissam Abdullah Salem al-Amour, Mahmoud Subhi Breika and Atef Samir al-Bayouk, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

The Israeli army has killed more than 71,400 people, mostly women and children, and injured over 171,000 in its war, which began in October 2023.



Federal agents spray pepper at a protester holding a sign during an immigration enforcement operation outside the Whipple Building, an ICE facility in Minneapolis, Minnesota, US on Sunday. Hundreds more federal agents were heading to Minneapolis, the US homeland security chief said.

PHOTO: AFP



'I know the pain'

Ex-refugee takes over as UNHCR chief

AFP, Kakuma

Barham Salih has known torture and the wrenching loss of exile. Four decades after his own ordeal, he has taken the helm of the UN refugee agency as it grapples with a funding shortfall and ever-rising needs.

A former Iraqi president, Salih, 65, became the first former head of state to run the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) at the start of the year.

"It is a profound moral and legal responsibility," Salih told AFP during his first trip in the new role -- to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. "I know the pain of losing a home, losing your friends," he said.

The Kakuma refugee camp, which Salih visited on Sunday, is east Africa's second largest, hosting roughly 300,000 people from South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and Burundi. It has been in place since 1992.

US will have Greenland 'one way or the other'

Says Trump, warns Russia, China would 'take over' if Washington didn't act; Nato working on 'next steps' to boost Arctic security

AFP, Aboard Air Force One

President Donald Trump said Sunday the United States would take Greenland "one way or the other," warning that Russia and China would "take over" if Washington didn't act.

Trump says controlling the mineral-rich Danish territory is crucial for US national security given increased Russian and Chinese military activity in the Arctic.

"If we don't take Greenland, Russia or China will, and I'm not letting that happen," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One, despite neither country laying claim to the vast island.

Trump said he would be open to making a deal with the Danish self-governing territory "but one way or the other, we're going to have Greenland."

Denmark and other European allies have voiced shock at Trump's threats over the island, which plays a strategic role between North America and the Arctic, and where the United States has had a military base since World War II.

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Sunday said her country faces a "decisive moment" in its diplomatic battle with the US over Greenland.

A Danish colony until 1953,



Greenland gained home rule 26 years later and is contemplating eventually loosening its ties with Denmark.

The vast majority of its population and political parties have said they do not want to be under US control and insist Greenlanders must decide their own future -- a viewpoint continuously challenged by Trump.

"Greenland should make the deal, because Greenland does not want to see Russia or China take over," Trump warned, as he

mocked its defenses.

"You know what their defense is, two dog sleds," he said, while Russia and China have "destroyers and submarines all over the place."

Trump waved off the comment saying: "If it affects Nato, it affects Nato. But you know, (Greenland) need us much more than we need them."

Nato chief Mark Rutte said yesterday the alliance was working on ways to bolster Arctic security, as Europe scrambles to deflect Trump's interest in taking over Greenland.

DEADLY CYCLONE Lanka seeks Chinese aid to rebuild key infrastructure

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka asked China to help rebuild key infrastructure damaged by Cyclone Ditwah, which killed at least 641 people and caused extensive damage, the island's foreign minister said yesterday.

Vijitha Herath said he made the request during talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, who stopped in Colombo yesterday after visiting Tanzania and Lesotho.

"I particularly requested the assistance of the Chinese government in infrastructure development, including the reconstruction of identified roads, railways, and bridges that were affected," Herath said. He added that Wang had "assured his personal intervention" to assist Sri Lanka's recovery from the deadly cyclone, which struck in November.

The two sides also discussed advancing cooperation in trade, investment and tourism, Herath said. Sri Lanka's request for Chinese assistance came three weeks after India pledged \$450 million in humanitarian aid for cyclone recovery.

11-party chiefs to meet today to seal the deal

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, seven to the Khelafat Majlis, four to the LDP, three to the AB Party and two to the BDP.

As IAB wants more seats, Jamaat has held several meetings with IAB in the last few days and in the end, after assessing popularity and qualifications, Jamaat may give IAB a few more seats, sources in Jamaat and IAB said.

When the NCP joined the seat-sharing talks, its leaders said they were assured of 30 seats. Although there were discussions about a slight reduction, Jamaat sources indicated the NCP is still likely to receive 30.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, led by Mamunul Haque, had demanded 25 to 30 seats. Jamaat initially discussed offering 13, but sources now say the party may settle on 15.

Jamaat may allocate four to seven seats to the LDP.

LDP President Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed will not contest the election, though his son, presidium member Omar Faruk, plans to run

from Chattogram-14.

The AB Party is expected to get three seats, with Chairman Mujibur Rahman Manju contesting from Feni-2 and General Secretary Asaduzzaman Bhuiyan (Fuad) from Barishal-3.

The BDP may receive two seats, with Chairman AKM Anwarul contesting from Mymensingh-9 and Secretary General Nizamul Haque Naeem from Bhola-3.

Smaller parties such as Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Nizam-e-Islam Party and JAGPA may each get one or two seats.

Amid discussions on seat sharing, Jamaat submitted nomination papers in 276 constituencies and IAB in 268. NCP filed in 47 seats, AB Party in 53, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis in 94, Khelafat Majlis in 68, LDP in 24, Khelafat Andolon in 11, Nizam-e-Islam Party in six, JAGPA in three and BDP in two.

The parties have to finalise the agreement on seat sharing before January 20 -- the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers.

Jamaat holds

FROM PAGE 2

taking an oath to sacrifice their lives?"

The Jamaat leader added that there must be a space for accountability for the chief adviser, the prime minister, and the president as well. "This is a matter of mutual checks and balances, and that must remain in place."

"We will manage all the ministries within the country. But it is these forces that will protect the country's borders. If the borders remain intact, the internal functions will remain in order. If the borders are not secure, internal functions will fall into disarray."

According to him, those who run the state machinery and those entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding the country must have a clear and to-the-point understanding. "Even a small gap here could harm the country."

CCTV CAMERA

At the meeting, the Jamaat chief said, "Even today, I sat with the chief of the European Union observation team. I told him that we want to see this election as an iconic moment -- just as our chief adviser and the Election Commission have said."

"And if we truly want to see it that way, then we must secure every polling booth. For that, we need

to set up CCTV cameras in every booth. We have been making this demand from the very beginning. But we see the government and the Election Commission remain reluctant."

The people will vote for whom they like. But it is the responsibility of the government and the EC to ensure an environment in which people can cast their votes. So far, that has not happened.

Shafiqur said, "We do not want to see any 'understanding-based' election. There will be no understanding with any authority. The understanding will be directly between political parties and the voters -- no one else."

Maj Gen (retd) Mahbul-ul-Alam and retired army officer Hasinur Rahman also spoke at the programme. Jamaat's Dhaka-16 candidate Abdul Baten delivered the welcome address.

Col (retd) Md Zakaria Hossain conducted the event. Among others, Abdul Halim, assistant secretary general of Jamaat; Ehsanul Mahub Zubayer head of the party's publicity and media department, and central executive council member Mobarak Hossain were present.

Around 350 to 400 former armed forces members attended the event.

Local govt gets more at cost

FROM PAGE 12

Several projects needed new project directors after the incumbents went missing in action or were removed over corruption allegations.

The government is implementing 100 percent of government procurement through the e-GP system.

"This is largely an issue of experience. There was some hesitation, and that is why it is taking time."

But the system has increased competition among contractors, he said.

On average, tenders elicit seven to eight bids, up from two or three previously.

Besides, the system improved project implementation as project directors have to submit progress and evaluation reports every six months and an independent evaluation of projects during implementation.

The policies adopted in the current ADP should be maintained by future governments to preserve the improved quality of development spending, Mahmud said.

"However, if improving quality leads to an overall contraction in development expenditure, that defeats

the purpose. We want both better quality and a larger ADP size."

He termed inflation as another reason behind the reduced ADP size.

To curb inflation, the Bangladesh Bank has kept the policy rate high, resulting in higher interest rates and lower investment.

Some projects have been deliberately slowed down to allow decisions by an elected government, he said, citing the Payra deep-sea port project as an example.

"We have adopted a cautious approach in some cases. We felt certain issues should be resolved by the next elected government."

The adviser also referred to the metro rail projects, saying several new metro rail projects have attracted financing interest from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, but decisions on those have been left for the next government.

"If all lines are started at once, it would require extensive road excavation across Dhaka and create multiple complexities. We have documented our observations, and the next government will consider

them." Political instability has also contributed to the situation.

"But a smaller ADP does not necessarily mean an economic slowdown. The slowdown is happening because political uncertainty has discouraged investment. If investment were taking place, even a smaller ADP would not be a problem. Increased investment would have created more employment."

The only major positive development is a significant rise in remittance inflows compared to the past.

"So even though ADP spending has fallen, remittances have increased."

He acknowledged that allocations for the education and health sectors have declined but said they are expected to increase from now on.

Explaining the background, he said that since the late 1990s, the education and health sectors largely depended on sector-wide programmes financed by foreign loans and grants.

Donors jointly supported the sectors -- led by the WB in health and

the ADB in education -- along with some domestic financing.

"Over time, foreign assistance declined, but adequate attention was not paid to the fact that projects could come to a halt once donor funding ended."

The ministries were not sufficiently prepared to transition from aid-dependent, sector-wide programmes to domestically financed and domestically planned projects.

As a result, funding for many health projects actually ran out as early as January last year, even though staff continued to work.

"Projects such as family planning and rural health centres formally ended, but doctors, nurses, equipment and family planning materials remained in place."

The ministry failed to identify the issue in time, creating a severe funding gap.

"We must move away from excessive dependence on foreign-funded projects. Full self-reliance may not be possible immediately, but this transition is necessary."

Myanmar

FROM PAGE 2

"Myanmar has denied them their dream, in fact it turned their lives into a nightmare subjecting them to the most horrific violence and destruction one could imagine," according to Jallow.

The predominantly Muslim West African country of Gambia filed the case at the ICJ - also known as the World Court - in 2019, accusing Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya, a mainly Muslim minority in the remote western Rakhine state.

Speaking in The Hague before the hearings, Rohingya victims said they want the long-awaited court case to deliver justice.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's main pro-military party yesterday claimed victory in the parliamentary seat of sidelined democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi in elections being derided as a ploy to prolong junta rule.

The junta says the current month-long vote -- which has its final phase scheduled for January 25 -- will return power to the people.

With Suu Kyi still held in seclusion and her hugely popular party dissolved, democracy advocates say the vote has been rigged by a crackdown on dissent and a ballot stacked with military allies.



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board

Directorate of Purchase
Bidyat Bhavan (13th Floor)
1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
www.bpd.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
1	1211493	PG-03 FY 25-26	27.11. 0000.304. 26.308.26	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 1300kWp Grid Tied Rooftop Solar PV Net Metering System at Ghorasal Power Station, Palash, Narshingdi, Bangladesh on turnkey basis.	01.02.2026 13.00	01.02.2026 14.00	01.02.2026 14.00

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

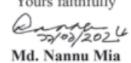
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

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

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

For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01717713020).

Thanking you

Yours faithfully

Md. Nannu Mia
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BPDB, Dhaka
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GD-92

New school year begins with a lesson in disorder

Govt must stick to textbook distribution deadline, discipline extra-charging schools

January is a stressful month for students and parents. It is the time when the promise of a fresh academic year often collides with a shortage of books and extortionate admission fees. As of January 11 this year, some three crore secondary textbooks—roughly 10 percent of the total required—had yet to reach the classrooms. The shortage is most acute in classes 7 and 8, where a new curriculum has rendered older, second-hand books obsolete, according to a *Prothom Alo* report. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) officials claim deliveries will be complete “within a few days,” a phrase that can mean anything from a week to several weeks. Printing is reportedly close to finishing, and the binding and inspection remain undone. For NCTB, however, the inability to move books from press to pupil has been a persistent failure.

If the book shortage is a failure of supply, the inflated fee is a failure of oversight. Technically, the government caps admission fees for state-subsidised schools. According to the admission policy for the current academic year, the maximum admission fee for MPO-listed educational institutions in the Dhaka metropolitan area is Tk 5,000. For partially MPO-listed institutions, the limit is Tk 8,000, while for the English version, it is Tk 10,000. In practice, these rules are often treated as mere suggestions. A report by *Samakal* describes the fee frenzy as “extreme anarchy.” Institutions appear to be tacking on “development charges,” “session fees,” and other vaguely defined fees to extract sums far beyond the legal limits. Parents at a Dhaka-based school complained that they faced bills of Tk 40,000 for nursery admission—eight times the regulated cap. At another school with 28,000 students, total admission fees are estimated to have amounted to crores of taka.

The authorities appear to be acting as silent spectators. When confronted with evidence of extra fees at a government primary school in Mohamadpur, the local education officer offered the passive defence of waiting for a “written complaint” before acting. This regulatory inertia leaves the middle class squeezed. Parents are desperate to secure spots in perceived “good” schools to guarantee their children’s future, giving these institutions monopolistic pricing power they are all too happy to exploit.

It’s an irony that the government promises free textbooks to democratise education but fails to deliver them in time. Simultaneously, it mandates affordable tuition, yet refuses to police the price. Students and parents are thus left in a costly limbo. To restore credibility, the government must first meet its own January 15 deadline for book distribution. Beyond that, it must confront the fee anarchy. If top schools insist on charging premium rates, they must be forced to justify them through transparent, standardised financial reporting. Breaking the pricing power of these institutions requires the government to firmly enforce its own rules, ensuring that the academic year does not begin with a lesson in disorder.

Stop illegal sand mining from Padma

Govt must enforce court orders, dismantle syndicates

We are concerned by the illegal sand extraction along the Padma River in Kushtia, which has persisted despite a High Court ban and repeated government restrictions. Reportedly, large-scale dredging continues in the district’s Daulatpur and Bheramara upazilas guarded by armed gangs and allegedly backed by certain political and business quarters. These activities have put vast stretches of riverside farmland, residential homes, and protective embankments at risk.

According to a *Banik Barta* report, multiple dredging machines are extracting sand day and night at various points in Daulatpur and Bheramara, altering the river’s natural course there and increasing the risk of erosion. In several areas, fertile croplands have already been swallowed by the river, while others have been rendered unusable. Thousands of families in Philipnagar and Moricha unions have reportedly lost homesteads and cultivable land over the years. Violence linked to sand mining has also increased, including a recent shooting incident that left a local resident injured. Moreover, sand extraction is occurring dangerously close to the protective embankments, weakening their foundations and raising the risk of flooding. The entire situation is deeply worrying and demands urgent government intervention.

Unfortunately, Kushtia is not the only region facing this threat. A 2023 study by the River and Delta Research Centre found illegal sand extraction at 132 unauthorised sites across 77 rivers in the country, including major waterways such as the Padma, Jamuna, Meghna, Brahmaputra, and Surma. Local political figures were, and remain, involved in many of these operations. Influential business groups are also reportedly involved in some cases.

Experts warn that riverbed sand acts as a natural shield against strong currents, helping prevent erosion and supporting aquatic ecosystems. Unplanned and excessive dredging at specific points destabilises the entire river system, disrupts fish breeding habitats, and can permanently alter a river’s course. As experts caution, if illegal extraction continues, not only Kushtia but also other downstream regions such as Pabna may face widespread agricultural loss and displacement.

We urge the government to take concrete measures in this regard. Occasional drives against illegal sand mining will not suffice. The local administration, police, and the Kushtia Water Development Board must coordinate effectively to curb this environmentally destructive practice. Allegations of collusion, whether involving the local administration or river police, must also be investigated properly. Most importantly, the High Court’s directive in this regard must be enforced without exception. Sand should be extracted only from authorised sites, and those involved in illegal mining must be held accountable.

Three economic priorities for the upcoming political government

MACRO MIRROR



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

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The upcoming parliamentary election, scheduled for February 12, is of exceptional political and economic significance for Bangladesh. For many years, elections failed to serve as genuine instruments of democratic choice. The lack of meaningful opposition participation, allegations of vote manipulation, and ritualistic voting practices weakened democratic institutions and entrenched an increasingly authoritarian system. A generation of young citizens grew up without getting to exercise their right to vote, leading to political disengagement, erosion of public accountability, and a collapse of trust in state institutions. The election, therefore, offers a historic opportunity to restore democratic legitimacy, rebuild public confidence, and reset the relationship between citizens and the state.

However, restoring electoral credibility alone will not be sufficient. The next government will inherit an economy under severe strain after years of policy complacency, institutional erosion, and weak macroeconomic management.

In recent years, Bangladesh’s economic momentum has weakened. Growth has slowed, inflation has remained stubbornly high, and the banking sector continues to struggle under the weight of rising non-performing loans. Low private and foreign investment, inefficient public investment, rising public debt, declining real wages, and weak employment generation are placing a lasting strain on the economy.

Against this challenging backdrop, the newly elected government will inherit a daunting reform agenda aimed at restoring economic discipline, strengthening governance, and delivering better outcomes for ordinary citizens. The list of priorities is long and complex. However, three urgent and interconnected issues stand out and require immediate, decisive attention. These will shape not only the direction of economic recovery, but also the credibility and effectiveness of the new administration.

First, controlling inflation must be the new government’s top economic priority. Over the past several years, the country has experienced persistently high inflation, driven mainly by rising food and energy prices. As food accounts for more than half of household expenditure for low-income

families, rising prices have significantly reduced purchasing power and increased financial pressure across income groups. Wage growth has lagged inflation, leading to declining real incomes and eroding household savings, while middle-income families have reduced spending on education, healthcare and nutrition.

High inflation also weakens overall



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

economic performance. It creates uncertainty for businesses, discourages long-term investment, puts pressure on the exchange rate, and undermines confidence in economic management. Once inflation expectations become entrenched, restoring price stability becomes more difficult and costly.

Inflationary pressures reflect both global shocks and domestic policy weaknesses. While higher global commodity prices raised import costs, exchange rate controls delayed adjustment and encouraged speculation. Energy prices were kept below cost for years and then adjusted sharply, raising production costs. Heavy government borrowing from the banking system added demand pressures, while weak competition, poor storage facilities and inadequate transport infrastructure constrained food supply.

The next government must adopt a comprehensive and credible anti-inflation strategy. Bangladesh Bank should be granted clear operational independence to prioritise price stability, supported by a transparent interest rate framework aligned with economic conditions. Fiscal discipline must be restored by reducing reliance on bank borrowing and strengthening

revenue mobilisation, so that monetary policy can operate effectively and inflationary pressures are contained.

Food market reforms should focus on strengthening competition, dismantling syndicates and hoarding, improving storage and transport infrastructure, and raising agricultural productivity. Energy pricing should follow a predictable, rules-based adjustment mechanism to avoid abrupt shocks. A transparent, automatic pricing formula, linked to global fuel prices and exchange rate movements, would allow gradual adjustments, reduce fiscal risks from subsidies, and provide greater certainty for households and businesses.

Second, private investment is essential to restoring growth, productivity, and job creation.

Infrastructure development must prioritise efficiency and reliability over scale alone. Persistent weaknesses in power supply, ports, customs, and logistics continue to drive up business costs and undermine export competitiveness. Without modern infrastructure and predictable regulation, the country will struggle to integrate into global value chains and diversify its economy.

Third comes job creation. Bangladesh stands at a demographic crossroads. Around two million young people enter the labour force each year, yet employment growth has lagged far behind. Youth unemployment is more than twice the national average, and most new jobs are informal, with low productivity. Educated unemployment is rising, exposing a growing mismatch between education and labour market needs. This is not only an economic failure but also a social and political risk.

Job creation depends on restoring macroeconomic stability and reviving investment. High inflation erodes real wages, weakens consumer demand, and discourages hiring. Low private investment limits firm expansion and the formation of new enterprises. A stable macroeconomic environment, predictable policies, and a business-friendly regulatory regime are therefore essential foundations for employment growth.

Targeted labour market reforms are equally critical. Education and training must align with industry demand, with a major expansion of well-funded technical and vocational programmes. SMEs, the main source of employment globally, need easier access to finance, stronger market linkages, and simplified regulations. A focused SME growth strategy can rapidly create large numbers of jobs.

If employment opportunities grow, the gains will be transformative: higher incomes, lower poverty, stronger domestic demand, a broader tax base, and greater social cohesion.

The upcoming election is not only about who governs Bangladesh but also about how it is governed. Democracy must be matched by economic discipline, leadership and accountability. If the new government governs with courage and responsibility, the country can begin a new chapter of stability, opportunity and trust.

A comprehensive reform agenda

Gender balance at work depends on women’s power in politics



Farah Kabir
is country director at ActionAid Bangladesh.

FARAH KABIR

Across the world, women are underrepresented. Globally, fewer than one in four parliamentarians are women. In many Asia-Pacific countries, including Bangladesh, systemic barriers continue to limit women’s political participation. Social norms, structural bias, and unequal access to political networks constrain both candidacy and success. Yet, without women’s meaningful representation in politics and decision-making spaces, gender balance at work is not possible. Upcoming elections highlight this critical juncture: unless parties actively support women candidates, workplace policies that enable equality will remain underdeveloped and inequitable.

It is a direct correlation. Women in Bangladesh face barriers in entering formal employment, remaining in workplaces, and advancing to leadership. Many are concentrated in informal, low-paid, and insecure jobs, often exiting the labour market due to lack of childcare, unsafe commuting, or rigid working arrangements. These

workplace realities are shaped by political choices—decisions about budget allocation, labour laws, social protection, and urban safety—made predominantly by male leadership.

The unequal burden of unpaid care work offers a clear illustration. Across the Asia-Pacific, women perform several times more unpaid domestic and care work than men, limiting their ability to sustain careers. Without political advocacy and legislation, unpaid care remains invisible, rarely funded or supported, and workplaces continue to be designed around uninterrupted, male career trajectories.

Countries with stronger female political representation demonstrate the transformative potential of inclusive governance. In Vietnam, women hold around 31 percent of National Assembly seats, which coincides with investment in social services, labour protections, and education, enabling greater female workforce participation. Globally, Rwanda, where women hold over

60 percent of parliamentary seats, illustrates how women legislators can drive policies on healthcare, social protection, and gender-based violence, creating environments where women can engage in formal work. Similarly, the Nordic countries achieved gender-balanced workplaces after securing near-equal political representation, which enabled universal childcare, paid parental leave, and flexible working norms.

For Bangladesh, the message is clear: encouraging and supporting women candidates is not a matter of tokenism; it is a prerequisite for equitable workplaces. When women can shape policy, budget priorities, and legislation, workplaces become safer, more flexible, and more supportive of women’s careers. Political exclusion, on the other hand, perpetuates male-centric policies that leave women’s labour undervalued, unsafe, and precarious.

Women must have genuine influence in decision-making processes. This includes the ability to set agendas, allocate resources, and challenge entrenched norms. Parties and institutions must create pathways for rural and working-class women and women with disabilities to participate meaningfully, ensuring that labour policies reflect the realities of the workforce.

Workplace safety further underscores the stakes. Sexual harassment and abuse remain pervasive barriers to women’s

participation. Robust safeguarding laws and enforcement mechanisms require political commitment. Without women in political and oversight roles, these protections are weak or absent, driving women out of leadership pipelines and formal employment.

Gender balance is not only a women’s issue. It is a governance issue, a democratic issue, and an economic imperative. Offices, factories, and public institutions mirror the political environment in which they operate. Achieving workplace gender balance requires women at the top: equality at work cannot be delivered solely from the bottom up.

As Bangladesh approaches elections and considers political reform, promoting women’s candidacy and meaningful participation must be a priority. Without women in decision-making spaces, workplace policies will continue to reflect male experiences and priorities. With women empowered to shape political outcomes, workplaces can be redesigned to ensure dignity, safety, and opportunity for all.

Across the Asia-Pacific and globally, from Vietnam to Rwanda, from the Nordic countries to local communities, experience shows a simple truth: women in politics create the conditions for women at work. Ensuring women can contest, win, and influence policy is not just a political imperative; it is the foundation upon which equitable workplaces are built.

A new chief justice at a crucial crossroads



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 Sajfar Rahman and Associates in Dhaka.

KHAN KHALID ADNAN

When the new chief justice (CJ) took oath on December 28, 2025, he did so at a moment of acute constitutional importance. Bangladesh is navigating a fragile democratic transition under an interim government, following landmark judicial decisions that revived the constitutional provision for a caretaker government during elections. Promises of judicial independence that have long existed on paper are now being tested against institutional reality. Public expectations are, therefore, high that the newly sworn-in CJ will uphold the rule of law, steering the courts through reforms that are long overdue.

The chief justice comes to the office with formidable credentials and a reputation for integrity. Educated at Dhaka University, where he obtained both his LLB and LLM, and later in the UK with a master's degree in international law, he has served on the bench for more than two decades. Appointed to the High Court Division in 2003 and elevated to the Appellate Division in 2024, he has earned respect for legal rigour and restraint. Notably, despite his seniority and qualifications, he was overlooked for elevation during the previous regime and rose only after the political changeover, strengthening the perception that his appointment is grounded in merit rather than patronage.

That perception is reinforced by his judicial record. Earlier in 2025, he authored a strongly worded verdict criticising what he described as a "troubling trend" of judicial bias in favour of the executive, warning that such conduct was incompatible with constitutional governance. In open court, he has spoken with unusual candour about the historical marginalisation of the judiciary, observing that successive law ministers have shown disregard for judicial independence once in power. Such remarks are rare in Bangladesh's judicial culture and have enhanced his credibility as a judge willing to speak truth to power. Upon assuming office, he issued firm directions to lower court judges to deliver judgments without delay and

maintain professional discipline, signalling zero tolerance for corruption or complacency.

One of the most immediate challenges before the CJ is translating a historic structural reform into tangible institutional change. In November 2025, Bangladesh

constitutional aspiration into an operational reality. But symbolism alone will not suffice. The secretariat must evolve into an effective administrative backbone capable of improving efficiency, accountability and professionalism within the courts.

The new chief justice now effectively oversees this nascent institution. That responsibility requires clear administrative rules, adequate resources, and resistance to bureaucratic inertia. It also requires vigilance against future executive encroachment, particularly since the ordinance established that the secretariat must still be ratified by the next parliament to become permanent law. The CJ must, therefore, demonstrate its practical value through measurable improvements. If it fails to deliver, the reform risks being dismissed as cosmetic.

Appointment Council chaired by the CJ. He now sits at the centre of the appointment process, with significant influence over who ascends to the bench. This offers an opportunity to rebuild public confidence by prioritising competence, integrity and independence.

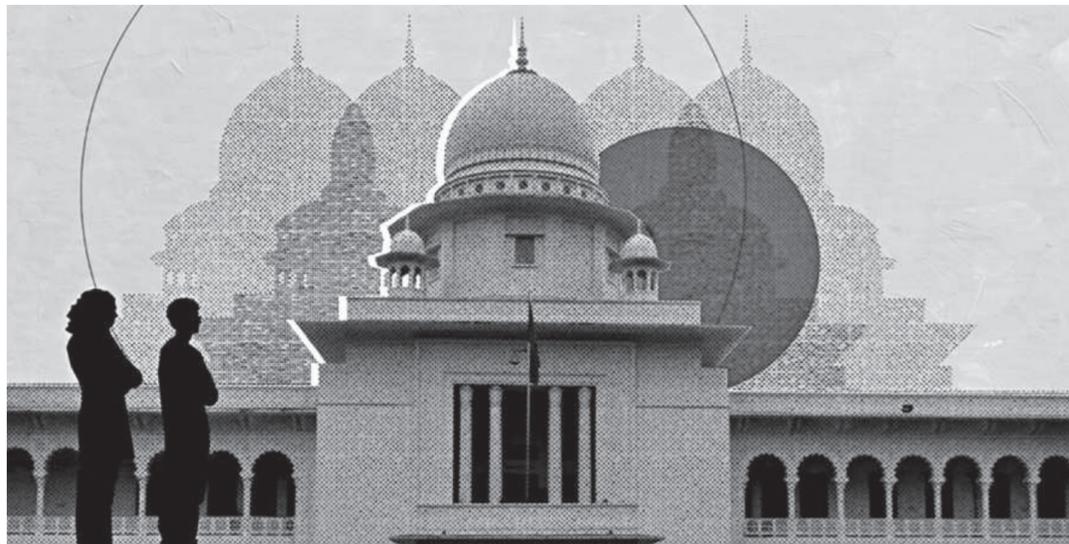
The council has already recommended several appointments to both the Appellate Division and High Court, easing long-standing vacancies. However, the ordinance has also attracted criticism regarding the structure of the process, including the use of inflexible age criteria, as well as the concentration of decision-making authority within a limited institutional framework. These concerns do not negate the reform but underline the importance of transparent and principled implementation. The CJ's conduct

unseen in years, restoring the caretaker government provisions removed in 2011, reaffirming judicial control over lower court administration, and addressing questions of judicial accountability. These decisions have served to reposition the judiciary as an active constitutional guardian, while also exposing it to political controversy. The CJ was part of the benches that made these decisions, reinforcing expectations that he would continue to defend constitutional principles even when doing so invited resistance.

Further challenges lie ahead as Bangladesh transitions towards an elected government. Disputes over electoral processes, accountability for past abuses, freedom of expression, and the rule of law will test judicial independence and restraint. Although the interim authorities have withdrawn thousands of politically motivated cases, deeper structural injustices remain unresolved. The CJ must ensure that courts remain forums for impartial adjudication rather than instruments of political retribution or protection. His repeated emphasis that the judiciary must never be politicised now demands institutional follow-through.

Perhaps the most daunting task confronting the new chief justice is the overwhelming backlog of cases. By the end of 2025, more than 46 lakh cases were pending nationwide. The country's judge-population ratio remains among the lowest in the region, compounding delays caused by procedural inefficiencies and weak case management. The CJ has already emphasised discipline, timely judgments, and full utilisation of court hours. These measures are necessary, but not sufficient. Sustainable progress will require credible appointments, expanded judicial capacity, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and effective use of technology. The Supreme Court Secretariat can play a central coordinating role, but success will depend on consistent leadership.

The new CJ begins his tenure with rare momentum. Structural reforms, judicial assertiveness, and public goodwill have converged in a way few of his predecessors experienced. But expectations can be unforgiving. His legacy will be measured by the delivery of outcomes long desired by the nation: a judiciary that is independent in fact, transparent in appointments, efficient in administration, and capable of delivering justice within a reasonable time. At this crucial crossroads, Bangladesh needs judicial leadership equal to the moment.



FILE VISUAL: STAR

established a separate Supreme Court Secretariat, ending decades of executive control over judicial administration. Widely described as a milestone in the separation of powers, the reform places responsibility for postings, promotions, discipline and administration of the lower judiciary under the authority of the Supreme Court rather than the law ministry. This has the potential to transform judicial independence from a

If it succeeds, it may become one of the most enduring institutional changes in the judiciary's history.

Equally consequential is the Supreme Court Judges' Appointment Ordinance, 2025. For decades, appointments to the higher judiciary were criticised for opacity and political influence. The new ordinance seeks to introduce a merit-based and structured process by establishing a Supreme Judicial

as chair will therefore be decisive. By ensuring openness and resisting informal influence, he can help turn a contested reform into a credible and lasting framework for judicial appointments.

Beyond internal reform, the new CJ must guide the judiciary through sensitive constitutional and public interest disputes. In recent months, the Supreme Court has demonstrated an assertiveness

Why the fate of Venezuela matters to us all



Anu Muhammad
is a former professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Earlier last week, the Trump administration carried out a military assault on Venezuela, abducting President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, and taking them to New York. There, a series of cases was filed against them, and a judicial farce is being staged in the name of justice. The spectacle of attacking the capital of a sovereign country and forcibly removing its elected president has stunned the world. It offers a chilling glimpse into the kind of global disorder we are living in. Donald Trump's statements in this context sound less like those of a head of state and more like the threats of a neighbourhood bully. He shows no respect for independent countries or elected governments, not even for the citizens of his own country.

The citizens of the United States are grappling with deep and widening crises. Tens of millions have no health insurance, hunger is rising, and many are forced to rely on food stamps to survive. Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of the top one percent, and inequality continues to grow. This top one percent—closely tied to oil companies, banking, and the military-industrial complex—controls nearly 90 percent of the economy. The Trump administration consistently acts in its own interests, while bearing no real responsibility towards the remaining 99 percent of the population. It is precisely to protect the interests of this small but powerful oil-and-arms-linked segment that the attack on Venezuela has been launched.

The conflict between the US and Venezuela dates back to the late 1990s, beginning with the election of Hugo Chávez as president. Before that, power in Venezuela alternated between two parties, both loyal to Washington. As a result, US companies exercised near-total control over Venezuela's oil resources. The vast revenues generated from oil helped a wealthy elite population grow wealthier. This elite group became the main pillar of US imperial influence in the country. Both multinational oil corporations

and Venezuela's domestic elites found themselves in trouble when Hugo Chávez began taking steps to establish national control over oil resources. He started the Bolivarian Revolution. In 2002, an attempt was made to overthrow him through a military coup and install an alleged puppet government. After Chávez was detained, mass resistance erupted. This was an alleged US-backed project that collapsed, and Chávez was subsequently freed, returning to power stronger than before.

Under the leadership of Chávez, oil revenues were channelled into education, healthcare, and broader public welfare, while millions of poor Venezuelans found

The conflict between the US and Venezuela dates back to the late 1990s, beginning with the election of Hugo Chávez as president. Before that, power in Venezuela alternated between two parties, both loyal to Washington. As a result, US companies exercised near-total control over Venezuela's oil resources. The vast revenues generated from oil helped a wealthy elite population grow wealthier.

a path towards a more dignified life. This trajectory suffered a major setback with Chávez's death. The Bolivarian Revolution was then carried forward by Nicolás Maduro. Time and again, attempts were made to remove him. Military threats were escalated in neighbouring countries. Having failed on other fronts, the US has now resorted to the disgraceful act of invading a sovereign nation and abducting its president and his wife.

However, the question of Nicolás Maduro being an autocrat and Venezuela

being devoid of democracy cannot be ignored, especially since he is widely seen by opponents within his country as well as by foreign governments as having illegitimately won Venezuela's 2024 election.

The US accuses Maduro of running a "narco-terrorist" regime, a claim he denies, and no credible evidence has been presented either. However, he has frequently been accused of repressing



The US accuses Maduro of running a "narco-terrorist" regime, a claim he denies, and no credible evidence has been presented either.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

opposition groups and silencing dissent in Venezuela, at times with the use of violence. The danger of speaking out against Maduro is still very real within Venezuela, as the National Assembly—which is dominated by Maduro loyalists—passed a law a few weeks ago declaring anyone who expresses support for US naval blockades a "traitor," reports BBC.

Nonetheless, for the US, attacking weaker states, carrying out massacres, and assassinating national leaders is nothing new. Since the end of World War II in 1945, the US has led the capitalist world, relying on aggression, mass violence, occupation, and intimidation to expand imperial dominance. Iraq was torn apart during the presidency of George H.W. Bush. Libya met a similar fate under Barack Obama. Earlier administrations carried out interventions across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. More than a million people were killed in Vietnam, and similar atrocities occurred in Indonesia. Chile offers another stark example where an elected president, Salvador Allende, was overthrown in a US-backed military coup and died fighting. What followed was a decade of brutal rule under General Augusto Pinochet, marked by killings, disappearances, and torture.

On the other hand, some of the world's most notorious dictators have flourished under US protection, looting national wealth and unleashing brutal repression

on their people. Whenever countries have attempted to chart an independent economic and political path outside the US imperial orbit, they have been attacked under one pretext or another. This pattern has persisted across successive US administrations, but under Donald Trump, it has reached an extreme.

A convicted Honduran drug lord was recently released from a US prison to counter anti-imperialist leftist forces

in that country. In Ecuador, too, drug traffickers and smugglers have been granted various forms of protection and benefits. María Corina Machado, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, has openly stated that US companies stand to make enormous profits from Venezuela's resources, and that if she comes to power, all such opportunities will be handed over to them. If global drug networks, aggression, and mass killings were to be put on trial, US leaders would be the first to face justice. Donald Trump should be prosecuted for war crimes, the escalation of violence, abductions, and sowing chaos across multiple countries. Instead, the Trump administration is putting Maduro on trial, thereby pushing the entire world towards greater disorder.

What is particularly alarming is that the United Nations has become an ineffective institution. At moments when decisive action was required, it failed. The European Union, too, appears spineless, reduced to a subordinate of the US. Yet there is a source of hope: across the world, countless people have taken to the streets in protest. This popular resistance remains our greatest hope today. It matters for Bangladesh as well, where hegemonic forces are also laying their traps. This is a global struggle, and it demands that all of us remain alert, informed, and actively engaged.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Guinness of "Star Wars"
5 From Havana, say
10 Fancy auto
11 Sung dramas
13 Molecule part
14 Morphine, for one
15 Constantly changing
17 Sewing aid
18 Like amphitheatres
19 Director DuVernay
20 Mo. hours
21 Atkins of country music
22 Secret supply
25 Selected
26 Dull pain
27 That woman
28 Sgt., e.g.
29 Least decorated
33 Gumshoe
34 Capsize
35 Choice
37 Cap for de Gaulle
38 Go hungry
39 Lake near Buffalo
- DOWN**
41 Cockpit guesses
1 San Antonio mission
2 Illuminated
3 Ham it up
4 Southwestern people
5 "Settle down!"
6 Top
7 "— Mir Bist Du Schön"
8 Plains people
9 Indigenous group
12 Capitol group
16 Headquarters
21 Southeastern people
22 Epic poem divisions
23 Believes
24 Southeastern people
25 Bloke
27 Small piano
29 Kitchen appliance
30 Tennis star Chris
31 Old photo tint
32 Attempts
36 Fury



SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

S	L	A	L	O	M		H	E	N	S
P	A	G	O	D	A		A	L	O	E
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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR
OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

★ GOLDEN GLOBES
WINNERS LIST ★

Film Categories:

Best Motion Picture — Drama: *Hamnet*

Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy: *One Battle After Another*

Best Motion Picture — Non-English Language: *The Secret Agent*

Best Motion Picture — Animated: *KPop Demon Hunters*

Cinematic and Box Office Achievement: Sinners

Best Director — Motion Picture: Paul Thomas Anderson, *One Battle After Another*

Best Screenplay — Motion Picture: Paul Thomas Anderson, *One Battle After Another*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture — Drama: Wagner Moura, *The Secret Agent*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy: Timothée Chalamet, *Marty Supreme*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy: Rose Byrne, *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in any Motion Picture: Stellan Skarsgård, *Sentimental Value*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in any Motion Picture: Teyana Taylor, *One Battle After Another*

Best Original Score — Motion Picture (not televised): Ludwig Göransson, *Sinners*

Best Original Song — Motion Picture: Golden, *KPop Demon*

Hunters — Joong Gyu Kwak, Yu Han Lee, Hee Dong Nam, Jeong Hoon Seo, Park Hong Jun, Kim Eun-jae (EJAE), Mark Sonnenblick

TV categories Best Television Series — Musical or Comedy: *The Studio*

Best Television Series — Drama: *The Pitt*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Drama: Noah Wyle, *The Pitt*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Drama: Rhea Seehorn, *Pluribus*

Best Limited Series, Anthology Series or Television Motion Picture: *Adolescence*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy: Seth Rogen, *The Studio*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy: Jean Smart, *Hacks*

Best Performance by a Supporting Actor in a Television Series: Owen Cooper, *Adolescence*

Best Performance by a Supporting Actress in a Television Series: Erin Doherty, *Adolescence*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television: Stephen Graham, *Adolescence*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television: Michelle Williams, *Dying for Sex*

Best Stand-Up Comedian on Television: Ricky Gervais; *Mortality*

Special awards Best Podcast: *Good Hang With Amy Poehler*

Cecil B. DeMille Award: Helen Mirren

Carol Burnett Award: Sarah Jessica Parker



Defining moment for Audrey Nuna and EJAE



Team 'Hamnet' pose with their Golden Globe



The 'One Battle After Another' team celebrates their Golden Globe win

GOLDEN GLOBES 2026

'One Battle After Another', 'Hamnet' emerge as big winners

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The Golden Globes have long been treated as an unreliable predictor of Oscar success, but Sunday night's ceremony nonetheless clarified which films and performances are beginning to separate themselves from the pack.

Hosted by returning comedian Nikki Glaser at the Beverly Hilton, the 83rd Golden Globe Awards unfolded less as a spectacle and more as a recalibration point in an increasingly crowded awards season. Several victories reinforced existing momentum, while others influenced the conversation heading into Academy Award voting.

This year, Timothée Chalamet emerged as one of the night's principal beneficiaries, winning Best Actor in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy for *Marty Supreme*. The actor noted that he had left the Globes in previous years without a win. "I'd be lying if I didn't say those moments made this moment that much sweeter," he said. The win places him ahead of several key rivals, including Leonardo DiCaprio, who was nominated for *One Battle After Another*. That film, however, maintained its dominance elsewhere, securing Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy alongside directing and screenplay awards for Paul Thomas Anderson.

In the drama category, *Hamnet* claimed Best Motion Picture, while Jessie Buckley's win for Best Actress further strengthened her standing as a leading contender this season. "This was such an extraordinary set to be part of, telling the story of probably the most famous Brit who ever lived and we had a Chinese director, a lot of Irish and a mostly



Timothée Chalamet poses with the Golden Globe trophy



Rose Byrne celebrates Best Actress win



Wagner Moura accepts Best Actor

Polish crew," she said. Acting prizes for Rose Byrne (*If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*) and Wagner Moura (*The Secret Agent*), as well as supporting awards for Teyana Taylor and Stellan Skarsgård, highlighted the Golden Globes' continued impact on performance-led Oscar campaigns.

In the film categories, the animated musical *KPop Demon Hunters* emerged as one of the night's major winners, winning Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song for *Golden*, led by songwriter EJAE alongside Mark Sonnenblick and Lee Hee-joon.

The ceremony also delivered a headline-making cross-cultural moment as Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Lalisa Manobal appeared together as presenters in Beverly Hills, drawing cheers as they walked on stage hand in hand before announcing the winner for Best Actor in a Television Series — Drama.

Television awards pointed to a more decisive outcome. *The Pitt* and *The Studio* took major series honours, but Netflix's *Adolescence* dominated the acting categories, collecting four awards and emerging as the evening's most decorated show.

The ceremony also reflected broader shifts within the industry. The introduction of a Best Podcast category signalled the Globes' attempt to recognise changing forms of storytelling, while honorary awards for Helen Mirren and Sarah Jessica Parker offered continuity amid transition.

Golden Globe wins rarely determine Oscar outcomes outright. But this year's results have narrowed the field, clarified frontrunners and, at least for now, set the terms of the race ahead.

NEWS

Two Ansar

FROM PAGE 12
the 10-storey hospital, leaving her husband on the ground floor.

The Ansar members threatened the woman and raped her. Later, the victim disclosed the incident to her husband, who was on the ground floor. The two later went to Manikganj Sadar Police Station and lodged a complaint.

Upon receiving the complaint, police went to the spot and called all the Ansar members on duty to the police station. When the victim identified Shahadat and Sayeed, they were detained, the SP said.

Kamruzzaman, commandant of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party in Manikganj, told The Daily Star, "The two Ansar members are in police custody. They have been suspended."

A two-member committee, led by upazila Ansar and VDP officer Shamima Akter, has been formed to investigate the incident.

Mohammad Bahauddin, superintendent of the 250-bed General Hospital in Manikganj, said the victim was undergoing treatment.

Kram Hossain, officer in charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station, said the process for filing a case was underway.

Suspect

FROM PAGE 12
Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jashita Islam granted police a seven-day remand of Rahim's two brothers — Mohammad Billal and Abdul Kadir — and their associate Mohammad Reaz after they were produced before the court, another court staffer said.

No defence lawyer was present during the remand hearing. When the judge asked about the motive behind the murder, one of the brothers claimed ignorance of the incident.

According to the case documents, Billal coordinated the killing, Rahim shot Musabbir dead, and Kadir assisted in carrying out the crime.

Musabbir, 44, a former general secretary of the Svecchhasebak Dal's Dhaka North City unit, was shot dead in an alley near Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue on January 7. Masud, general secretary of the Tejgaon Van Workers' Union, was critically injured in the same attack.

The following day, Musabbir's wife, Suraiya Begum, filed a murder case with Tejgaon Police Station against four to five unidentified individuals.

EC restores candidacy

FROM PAGE 12
applied to the US to cancel his citizenship on December 28 last year. The EC then asked whether his citizenship cancellation application was granted.

The Jamaat candidate placed his application before the EC and said that it takes six to eight months to get a response from the authority. In reply, the EC declared his candidacy invalid.

The EC kept pending the appeal of Sherpur-2 (Nokla-Nalitabari) BNP candidate Md Fahim Chowdhury's nomination till 16 January over dual citizenship issue.

During the hearing, Fahim said he had Australian citizenship, which he applied to cancel on December 26 last year, and his application was accepted on January 6 this year.

On January 3, the EC declared invalid the nomination of AHMKaium (Hasnat Kaium), an independent candidate from Kishorganj-5 (Nikli-Bajitpur), as his application lacks at least 1 percent voters' signatures.

The EC yesterday restored his candidacy after hearing.

After the hearing, Kaium told reporters that during the initial verification it was reported that six out of 10 voters could not be found, but later investigations revealed the voters were too frightened to identify themselves that they have signed.

After an appeal, two voters appeared before the commission, which verified their statements, accepted his appeal, and allowed him to contest, he said.

Of yesterday's 71 appeal hearings, one challenged the acceptance of

the nomination in Kishorganj-5, filed by independent candidate and Bajitpur upazila BNP President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Ikbal. The EC rejected his appeal, ruling that his affidavit was incomplete.

Four appeals that remain pending with the EC are: Tangail-5 Ganosanghati Andolan candidate Fatema Akhtar, Dhaka-17 Bangladesh Labour Party contender Muhammad Rashedul Haque, Chattogram-5 independent candidate Mohammad Imam Uddin Riyad.

In Meherpur-1, National Citizen Party aspirant Md Sohel Rana regained his candidacy. Earlier, his nomination was cancelled over affidavit discrepancy.

In Natore-2, National People's Party candidate GAA Mubin's nomination was cancelled as he did not meet eligibility requirements related to government service.

In Chattogram-11, Gono Odhikar Parishad candidate Muhammad Nezam Uddin's nomination was cancelled due to a loan default of Tk 97,991.

In Feni-2, nomination of independent candidate Md Ismail was declared invalid as he failed to secure the mandatory one percent of voter support.

In Chattogram-5, the appeal of independent candidate Shakila Farzana was declared "not pressed".

Of the 2,568 nomination papers submitted for the 13th general election, returning officers initially accepted 1,842 and rejected 723 during scrutiny.

A total of 645 appeals were filed with the EC against the returning officers' decisions.

and was provided medication based on medical documents. "When his condition turned critical, he was taken to hospital to ensure better treatment," he said.

Chaki's death has cast a pall over Pabna's cultural circles.

"Proloy Chaki was a cultural activist and singer beyond his political identity. We cannot accept his death in this manner. It is a great loss for Pabna's cultural sector," said Bhaskar Chowdhury, secretary of the Pabna Sammilito Shangkritik Jote.

Gopal Sanyal, former president of Pabna Drama Circle, now based in the United States, demanded a proper investigation into Chaki's death in a Facebook post.

Man loses leg to landmine

FROM PAGE 12
Later, he was shifted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Local student leader Saiful Islam Shakil said that stray bullets crossed into Bangladesh amid clashes on the Myanmar side on Sunday, leaving several people, including a child, injured.

"Due to security concerns, no one has gone to the fish farms since Sunday. When people resumed work on Monday, thinking the situation had calmed, the tragic incident occurred."

Whykong Police Outpost in-charge Khokon Kanti Rudra said a youth lost his left leg while working at the fish farms near the Naf River area. "We are looking into the matter."

Attempts to contact officials of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were unsuccessful, as they did not receive phone calls.

Protesting the incident, locals again blocked the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Road yesterday.

The day before, a bullet fired from Myanmar hit a house in the Techchi Bridge area of Whykong union, injuring a child named Huzaifa Afnan, 12. Rumours of her death sparked tension in the area, prompting locals to block the road.

Later, it was confirmed that Huzaifa was alive and had been admitted to the ICU of Chattogram Medical College Hospital. Her uncle Mohammad Shawkat said her condition remains critical.

Doctors conducted a CT scan late Sunday night and later performed surgery. However, they were unable to remove the bullet, he said.

Shawkat said doctors told the family that the child's condition is extremely critical and that the bullet is lodged inside the head. Attempting to remove it at this stage could be life-threatening.

In December 2024, the Arakan Army claimed to have taken control of almost the entire 271 kilometres of the Bangladesh-Myanmar border in Rakhine State. Since then, tension and security risks have been rising along the Teknaf border.

For the last few days, the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups have been engaged in fierce fighting across the border of Teknaf.

Govt gave in to anti-reform

FROM PAGE 12
In its overall observations, TIB said that there is no clear strategy for selecting sectors or institutions for reform.

There is no explanation why many nationally important sectors, such as education, agriculture and privately-owned businesses, were left out.

No operational plan was developed to implement the reform commission reports without a public vote.

"At no stage was the importance of identifying and countering reform-resistant forces understood. As a result of surrendering to these forces, many important recommendations were cancelled, and several anti-reform decisions were made. Even the July Charter was violated without justification, setting a negative precedent. Consequently, less important or partial reforms were sometimes implemented."

No visible progress has been made in implementing the urgent, actionable recommendations of the reform commissions, except for a few exceptions.

On the other hand, there is no action plan for implementing recommendations of commissions on media, health, women, labour, local government or the economic white paper, TIB said.

TIB said that except for rare cases such as the separation of the judiciary and the NGO foreign fund ordinance, reform efforts were derailed by influential anti-reform bureaucrats.

"In ordinances on the Anti-Corruption Commission, Police Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Cyber Security, Personal Data Protection, and National Data Management, the interim government allowed the bureaucracy and those in power to continue centralised and unaccountable authority rather than prioritising national interest," the TIB said.

In the overall observation, it was said that the drafting of ordinances has destroyed the vision of an independent police commission.

"Many provisions in the showpiece ordinance allow retired administrative and police officials to continue misusing power. In reality, this ordinance will become an institution that protects the misuse of police authority."

The National Human Rights Commission ordinance could have been considered an international standard law if the drafting process involved national and international stakeholders and if it was free of uncontrollable bureaucratic control.

The organisation acknowledged some positive and timely provisions in the Cyber Security, Personal Data Protection and National Data Management ordinances, but still, the opportunity for authoritarian, surveillance-based governance remains.

Urgent, actionable recommendations of the Anti-Corruption Commission reforms were ignored.

"Without involving stakeholders, the government deliberately removed recommendations to ensure the Commission's independence and accountability. Even though the top authorities of the Anti-Corruption Commission did not disagree, and there was no note of dissent from political parties in the July Charter, these important recommendations were omitted."

Based on observations over the past one and a half years, Iftekharuzzaman said that although authority existed under the Advisory Council or Cabinet, operational decisions were not actually made there.

"Which document would be signed, which decision would be implemented, and which clause or date would be included or removed was determined by a few powerful individuals or groups within the state machinery."

These groups not only protect their own group interests but also political interests and sometimes even the interests of political opponents.

Using the Anti-Corruption Commission ordinance as an example, he said there is no clear strategic commitment to make the agency effective.

"If the commission became even slightly effective, it would create direct pressure on political and institutional corruption," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman alleged that forces involved in political and administrative corruption oppose control and accountability and obstruct reforms.

"A part of the administration has more influence behind the scenes than the advisory or ministerial authorities," he said.

As a member of the National Consensus Commission, Iftekharuzzaman shared his experience, saying that in the early stages of forming the reform commission, there was an opportunity to discuss with top authorities.

He strongly believes that ordinary people, civil society activists and political parties all want reform.

"There are also opposing forces. However, there was no clear initiative to map, analyse and resist these adversaries. Whether intentionally or due to incapacity, these important questions were avoided, and the current reality reflects the failure of the reform efforts," he added.



Farmers harvest early varieties of onions beside the Belpukur Bypass Road in Puthia upazila of Rajshahi yesterday. Farmers have cultivated onions extensively this season and are selling the vegetable at high prices in hopes of better returns.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Only 4.24% of candidates

FROM PAGE 3
Although the Constitution guarantees equal rights, women continue to be sidelined in direct parliamentary representation, it added.

Under the Representation of the People Order (RPO), political parties are required to reserve at least 33 percent of positions in central and party committees for women. However, most major parties have failed to meet this requirement. The Election Commission has extended the deadline for compliance by 2030, but non-compliance persists, with parties often citing a lack of qualified female leaders.

The FWPR described the situation as a self-perpetuating crisis, where the failure to empower women continues to reinforce the status quo.

The July National Charter 2025 mandates that political parties nominate at least five percent women candidates in parliamentary elections, with a long-term goal of increasing the figure to 33 percent.

However, EC data shows that 30 of the 51 parties contesting the election did not nominate a single woman.

According to EC data, BNP submitted 328 nomination forms, of which only 10 were

women — just 3.02 percent. Jamaat-e-Islami submitted 276 nominations but did not nominate any women, despite claiming 40 percent female representation in its party committees.

In contrast, Jatiya Party (GM Kader) and BASAD (Marxist) each nominated nine women candidates. Smaller parties such as JASAD, Ganosamhati Andolon, and AB Party also nominated women candidates. Together, these parties nominated around 35-40 women, accounting for about 32 percent of all women candidates.

However, the National Citizen Party (NCP), which emerged from mass movements, nominated only three women out of its 44 candidates.

The forum said it would continue monitoring women's political participation and advocate for reforms to ensure women's voices are represented in national politics.

The FWPR comprises Khubdhho Nari Samaj, Gono Shakkhorota Abhijan, Durbar Network Foundation, Nagarik Coalition, Nari Udyog Kendra, Nari Grantha Prabartana, Nari Sanghati, Naripokkho, Narir Daake Rajniti, Feminist Alliance of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Nari Mukti Kendra and Voice for Reform.

ACC sets up

FROM PAGE 4
Under the operational framework, team members will remain attached to the ACC wing under which they are formed. The team leader will act as the controlling officer and will be responsible for preparing the annual confidential reports (ACR) of team members.

Each team will also have one constable or support staffer with typing skills. All ongoing investigation files will be brought under the special teams. However, comparatively low-priority cases will be transferred to ACC officials who are not part of these teams.

Members of the 15 teams will not be assigned to any other task force, except for ongoing joint investigation teams. Those already serving in joint teams will continue until completion of their high-profile assignments.

The ACC director general or director will supervise ongoing investigations. Individual investigations will not be assigned separately to team members.

The teams will regularly update the commission on the progress of cases in their custody and will brief it after every weekly meeting.

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 13

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

Law and order yet

FROM PAGE 3
However, he added that minor issues should ideally be resolved through discussions.

Responding to a question about improving relations with India, the BNP leader said Bangladesh would seek to pursue its demands while maintaining mutual respect between the two countries.

"If we can conduct ourselves diplomatically with them, their unfriendly attitude towards us will diminish," he said.

On the Teesta water-sharing issue, Fakhrul said BNP remains committed to resolving the problem. "We will engage in discussions with India regarding the Teesta, Padma, and other shared rivers to secure a fair share of water resources," he added.

Charges framed

FROM PAGE 3
directing law enforcers and party cadres to use lethal weapons, resulting in the killing of Sifat Howlader and serious injuries to many others on July 20, 2024.

Charge 3 states that Salman and Anisul ordered and facilitated lethal attacks in the Mirpur-10 area, killing Akhtaruzzaman and injuring numerous protesters.

Charge 4 alleges that at their instigation, coordinated attacks on August 4, 2024, killed at least 12 people and injured

Over 5 lakh

FROM PAGE 3

He also said 1,191 Ansar Battalion striking force teams would be deployed nationwide. Each team will consist of 10 members, bringing the total to 11,910, which he said would make the overall election security arrangement more structured and effective.

Earlier, the home adviser inspected the parade, took the salute and distributed awards among four trainees selected as the best in four categories.

The best trainees were Assistant Director Shamim Reza of the 41st BCS Ansar cadre, upazila trainer Sohanur Rahman Russel, Sepoy Md Selim Shahriar of the 26th Ansar Battalion batch and Sepoy Md Maruf Rana of the 27th batch.

A total of 3,237 trainees completed the passing-out parade, the highest number in Ansar history. The trainees included 15 officers of the 41st BCS Ansar cadre, 88 upazila trainers and trainers-in-training, 1,010 members of the 26th Ansar Battalion batch and 2,124 members of the 27th batch.

BNP pledges 'Family Card'

FROM PAGE 3

cover 50 lakh women across the country, focusing on low-income households, female-headed families, and economically vulnerable women, the party said.

Meanwhile, to improve safety and mobility, the BNP pledged to introduce dedicated bus services for women in cities and on key transport routes.

In the health sector, the party pledged to recruit around one lakh new health workers nationwide, with 80 percent being women.

BNP leaders said this would help address shortages in frontline healthcare while creating jobs for women, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

The party also said upazila health complexes would be strengthened to provide full maternal care, including safe childbirth, as well as comprehensive newborn and child healthcare.

"Maternal and child health outcomes depend heavily on access to timely and quality services at the local level," a BNP health policy adviser said.

"Strengthening upazila facilities will reduce pressure on tertiary hospitals and save lives."

The BNP also pledged targeted employment programmes for uneducated rural women and homemakers, focusing on skills training and income generation.

Proposed training areas include handicrafts, cottage industries, small businesses, computer literacy and digital skills.

Participants would receive microcredit on easy terms and equipment support to start or expand income-generating activities.

"These programmes are designed to bring women into the economy on their own terms," a BNP official said. "Not everyone can migrate to cities or take up factory work. Localised skills and small enterprises can transform household economies."

In its 31-point outline, the BNP committed to programmes aimed at empowering women and ensuring their effective participation in national development.

The party also pledged to work towards increasing women's representation in local government bodies.

BNP Standing Committee member Selima Rahman said, "These plans are not promises made just to get women's votes but are meant to empower them. Women must be made self-reliant through employment. If women at the grassroots level can be made self-reliant through family cards, their dignity in society will also increase."

"If the people elect us in the upcoming election, we will implement these plans," she added.

Responding to a question, she said supporters of political parties often mislead female voters in various ways. "We do not want to counter this with misinformation. We will explain what is correct and what is not."

BNP leaders said the pledges have been printed in leaflets and distributed door to door since the official campaign began.

Senior leaders also acknowledged that outreach to female voters at the grassroots had been weak in the past, prompting the party to take new initiatives ahead of the election, said party insiders.

Journo Mir Bashir Uddin Jewel passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Munshiganj Press Club President Mir Bashir Uddin Jewel passed away at the age of 52 early yesterday.

He breathed his last around 1:30am while undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) in Dhaka after suffering a cardiac arrest, said family members. Jewel was serving as the Munshiganj district correspondent of Maasranga Television and The Daily Ittefaq.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
Plot -F-4/B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Memo No: 57.03.0000.051.07.956.25-133 Date: 12 January, 2026

e-Tender Notice No: 09/2025-26

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Package Description	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing/Opening Date and Time
1212987 (Re-Tender)	CP-GD-38	Supply and installation of Hospital Furniture for Nursing and Midwifery Labs	28-Jan-2026 17:00	29-Jan-2026 15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders 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 mandatory.

The fees for the e-Tender Document Price have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to 5:00 PM of one day before the Closing Date.

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

12.01.2026
Mir Zahid Hasan
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
ASSET Project
Telephone: 880-02-41024953
E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd

GD-91

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026, POUH 29, 1432 BS
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) EDGE Project, Department of ICT
Santosh, Tangail-1902

Invitation for Tender

01 Ministry/Division	ICT
02 Agency/Organization	Dept. of Information & Communication Technology, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University Santosh, Tangail-1902.
03 Procurement entity name	Co-Ordinator EDGE Project, ICT Department
04 Invitation for	Procurement of Supply of Training KIT
05 Invitation Ref. No.	EDGE-MBSTU/ICT/Proc/OTM(01)/2025-26
06 Date	13.01.2026

KEY INFORMATION

07 Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National)
-----------------------	----------------------------------

FUNDING INFORMATION

08 Budget and source of fund	Revenue Budget
09 Tender name	Procurement of Supply of Training KIT for EDGE Project, ICT Department

	Date	Time
10 Tender publication date	13.01.2026	
11 Tender collection date	13.01.2026	10:00am
12 Tender pre-bid meeting	N/A	
13 Tender last selling date	24.01.2026	
14 Tender closing date & time	25.01.2026	02:00pm
15 Opening date and time	25.01.2026	02:30pm

16 Name & address of the office selling tender document	EDGE Project Office, ICT Department, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Santosh, Tangail.
Receiving tender document	do
Opening tender document	do

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

17 Eligibility of tenderer	1) Tenderer will have legal, financial, professional capability to deliver and install the tendered items (as per PPR-2025) and have 03 (Three) years' experience in the relevant field. ii) The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Goods of at least One (1) contract successfully completed within last 03(Three) years, with a value of at least Tk. 30 (Thirty) lakh.
18 Brief description of related services	As per schedule
19 Brief description of related services	As per schedule
20 Price of tender document (Tk.)	1,000.00
21 Tender security amount (Tk.)	50,000.00
22 Name of official inviting tender	Co-Ordinator, EDGE Project, ICT Department, MBSTU
23 Designation of official inviting tender	Co-Ordinator
24 Address of official inviting tender	EDGE Project Office, ICT Department, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Santosh, Tangail.
25 Contact details of official inviting	Phone No. 01817429260
26 The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	

GD-83

12.01.2026
Co-Ordinator EDGE Project, Dept. of ICT, MBSTU

Dhaka South City Corporation
Zone-5 (Sayedabad)
www.dhakasouthcity.gov.bd

Ref No. 46.207.000.21.16.0002. 2026

Dated: 11/01/2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Zone-5, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website from 12/01/2026 at 22.00pm.

Sl No.	Tender ID, Ref No. & Package No.	Name of works	Last selling date and time	Tender closing date & time
1	Tender ID-1207438 e-GP/DSCC/Z-05/25-26/PR	Repairing works of damaged road due to recent heavy rainfall under Zone-5, DSCC	26-Jan-2026 12:00	27-Jan-2026 12:00
2	Tender ID-1209836 e-GP/DSCC/Z-05/25-26/Cutting/Group-KA	Repairing works of road cutting done by different organizations under Engineering Division Zone-05 of DSCC(Group-Ka)	26-Jan-2026 12:00	27-Jan-2026 12:00
3	Tender ID-1209837 e-GP/DSCC/Z-05/25-26/Cutting/Group-KHA	Repairing works of road cutting done by different organizations under Engineering Division Zone-05 of DSCC (Group-Kha)	26-Jan-2026 12:00	27-Jan-2026 12:00

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, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

11/01/2026
Md. Lutfor Fakir
Executive Engineer
Zone-5 (Sayedabad)
Dhaka South City Corporation

GD-88

Why some good leaders stop getting better

The 'near enemies' of leadership behaviours

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

'Far enemy' and 'near enemy' are concepts that come from Buddhist psychology and can be very useful in self-development. The idea behind this is that virtues have enemies. A far enemy is the obvious opposite of a virtue. For example, the far enemy of compassion is cruelty, inflicting, or causing suffering. In contrast, a near enemy is something that impersonates the virtue in question but subtly undermines it and is a hidden obstacle to growth. For compassion, its near enemy is pity, as it involves sorrow for someone's suffering but from a position of looking down upon them. Far enemies are loud and near enemies whisper.

Usually, these concepts are used for cultivating virtues such as kindness, connection, joy, etc., but can also be very useful in unpacking development feedback that we receive from our bosses as part of year-end processes. Let's explore a few common feedback tropes through the lens of these teachings.

Empathy

The far enemy of empathy is dismissiveness - bypassing emotions in favour of logic or simplicity. Its near enemy is sympathy without accountability. When you are sympathetic towards someone's issue, but fall short on actually providing them with the support to navigate the issue, individuals only feel partially heard.

Strategic thinking

The far enemy of strategic thinking is short-term focus - driven by urgency rather than long-term vision. Its near enemy is over-analysis & over-thinking. These lead to chasing perfection while delaying decision-making. Another variant could be using complex frameworks or narratives to portray strategy without actually making any clear choices or trade-offs.

Humility

Humility's far enemy is arrogance - inflated



ILLUSTRATION: MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

ego and sense of self-worth. On the contrary, its near enemy is performative openness. This happens when someone declares themselves open to learning, while concealing intellectual superiority and not actually being open to learn.

Empowering teams

Micromanaging, or excessive control of every aspect of a workstream, is the far enemy of empowerment. Its subtler near enemy is supporting without passing over authority. This would look like delegating tasks to your team, but not exactly transferring decision-making authority at the right levels.

Deep listening

Interrupting is the far enemy of deep listening. It clearly demonstrates a lack of interest from someone who has already pre-decided the final takeaway. On the other side, its near enemy is passive listening. Passive listeners nod and agree, and patiently wait for their turn to respond,

rather than soaking in or retaining the information.

Accepting feedback

The far enemy of accepting feedback is defensiveness. It's when you receive critical feedback, and your first instinct is to justify or dismiss it altogether. The more complex near enemy is intellectualising feedback. It is a psychological defence mechanism to create emotional distance from the feedback by overindexing on logic and facts.

Why near enemies need attention

The development of many high-performing employees plateaus not because of the easy-to-detect far enemies, but because of near enemies masquerading as progress. Far enemies are usually corrected early, while near enemies are sometimes even mistaken as improvements in the short term, and often rewarded. Near enemies and their detriments become visible when employees rise up the rungs into senior roles. At this stage, it becomes harder to accept or work

on feedback. Moreover, the impact of these shortcomings gets further scaled as senior employees are rightly positioned to cause tangible damage in the decision quality and culture of an organisation.

How to use this concept

When you receive development feedback that you trust and genuinely want to work on, ask yourself if your plan is actually going to tackle the issue at the core, or if you are simply choosing an easier and more comfortable route that delivers short-term gains but barely scratches the surface of the feedback. If you really believe that working on a development area will be good for your development, pay attention to its near enemies.

Syeda Adiba Arif is the Head of Talent at BAT Bangladesh. She completed her Bachelor's in Business Administration from IBA, University of Dhaka, and her Master's in Data Science & Analytics from East West University.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Ltd. 
- Microbiologist

Deadline: January 15

Eligibility:

Postgraduation/ graduation in Microbiology from a top-tier institution.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

BRAC 

- District Manager, BRAC Health Programme (BHP)

Deadline: January 17

Eligibility:

Bachelor's degree in any discipline from any reputed university.

Minimum experience: 4 years

icddr,b 

- Population Health Research Specialist

Deadline: January 20

Eligibility:

Master's degree in Statistics/ Demography/ Social Statistics/ Epidemiology/ Health Economics/ Public Health/ Social science discipline with quantitative coursework/modules, and a strong academic record.

Minimum experience: 8 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



Gen-Z guide to choosing your first career direction

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Gen Z enters the workforce carrying ambition, curiosity, and a quiet awareness of reality. We grew up hearing "follow your passion" while mentally calculating coffee budgets, phone upgrades, and whether life will ever feel financially breathable. The pressure to choose a career that sounds impressive, feels meaningful, and leads somewhere stable often turns the first job into a personal referendum. The truth, however, is less dramatic and more practical. Your first career move functions best as a starting point, not a life summary. It is a test run, and treating it like one changes everything.

This is not a calling; it is a test run

Early career decisions feel heavy because they get framed as permanent. A better approach is to treat the first job as a learning environment with a clear purpose. Instead of asking whether a role feels perfect, ask what it teaches over the next 12 to 18 months. What skills will you practice repeatedly? What kind of problems will you learn to solve? Who will you observe up close? This is where the idea of a trial horizon matters.

Commit long enough to build competence and short enough to reassess with confidence. Define success before starting, because it can mean different things for different people: ranging from skill growth, industry understanding, or clarity about preferences. All of those outcomes are valid. Early rigidity backfires because careers evolve faster than plans. Industries shift. Roles blur. People change their minds. The smartest early moves keep multiple paths open instead of narrowing everything too soon. Your first job is a prototype. Document what you learn. Notice what energises you and what drains you.

Choose skills that travel over titles that impress

Job titles look impressive until the industry changes. Skills, on the other hand, compound quietly. When evaluating a role, ignore the branding for a moment and focus on the work itself. Ask whether the job helps you get better at thinking clearly, communicating ideas, building things, analysing information, or making decisions. These are skills that travel across companies and sectors.

Be cautious of roles that offer prestige without ownership. If you spend most of your time coordinating, forwarding, or executing without understanding why decisions are made, growth slows down. Skill-light roles often feel busy but leave little behind. This does not mean ignoring money or stability. Financial reality matters. Not everyone can afford high-risk choices, and pretending otherwise helps no one. The goal is balance.

Prioritise roles that offer learning density within practical constraints. A stable job that teaches transferable skills often beats a glamorous one that teaches none. By the end of your first year, you should be able to articulate what you are better at than before. If you cannot answer that clearly, the title did not matter as

much as it seemed.

Curiosity works best with structure

As Gen-Z, we are curious by nature, but also overwhelmed by options. However, curiosity becomes productive only when paired with structure. Career experimentation is most effective when intentional, measurable, and manageable. You can design experiments through side projects, short courses, internal



ILLUSTRATION: MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

rotations, freelance work, or volunteering. Each experiment should have a clear purpose, a defined timeline, and criteria for success. Without these parameters, curiosity may create noise rather than clarity.

Time-boxing experiments allow you to generate actionable insights. Define what you want to learn, how long the experiment will last, and what outcome will indicate progress. Exploration often feels unsettling, especially when peers appear to have settled. The idea is to think of experimentation as intentional skill-building rather than indecision. Every low-risk experiment generates data, strengthens your judgment, and increases confidence.

Your career makes sense even when strangers feel confused

Comparison can add unnecessary pressure. LinkedIn timelines, peer milestones, and family expectations create noise that makes early careers feel confusing or off-track. Careers function best as personal systems rather than public performances. Observe how your skills, interests, and leverage evolve. Publicly share simple, clear explanations that highlight key achievements without overexplaining or seeking validation.

Maintaining a distinction between identity and career strengthens flexibility. Your self-worth exists outside of job titles and company logos. Career changes, pivots, or experiments feel natural and intentional when you maintain a

grounded sense of self. Your career will continue to evolve regardless of outside perspectives. As long as it moves you forward, builds skills, and aligns with your values, it holds value and purpose even when others do not fully understand the path you are taking.

Understand the difference between growth and just being busy

Being active or exhausted does not automatically

Andreessen Horowitz raises over \$15 bln funding

NEXT STEP DESK

Venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz (a16z) has raised more than \$15 billion across five new investment funds, according to a recent announcement.

The new funds include \$6.75 billion for a growth fund to scale startups, \$1.7 billion for an AI infrastructure fund, and \$1.12 billion for a fund focused on national interests like defence and supply chain, states a report by Reuters on the matter. The fundraising comes less than two years after the firm's last major haul of \$7.2 billion in April 2024.

The successful raise highlights how large, established venture firms continue to attract capital despite a broader slowdown in VC fundraising, suggests the report. Industry data



Ben Horowitz, co-founder and General Partner, Andreessen Horowitz.

shows new commitments to VC funds dropped significantly last year, reaching the lowest number of new funds in a decade.

The firm, which currently manages over \$90 billion in assets, was previously reported to be seeking a roughly \$20 billion megafund for AI investments. It is known for early investments in companies like Facebook, Instagram, and Coinbase.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ MIKE BLAKE

BTCL reduces .bd domain price

NEXT STEP DESK

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) has recently announced a reduction in the registration and renewal fees for two categories of .bd domain names.

According to a press statement issued in Dhaka on January 11, 2026, the price cut applies to .bd third-level domains and .bd second-level domains, both with names longer than two characters. The company said fees for these categories have been reduced by 36%.

The revised prices, charged per domain per year, are as follows: For 'bd

Third-Level Domain' (for example, abc.com.bd), registration fee reduced from BDT 1,100 to BDT 700, with renewal fee reduced from BDT 1,600 to BDT 1,020. Meanwhile, for 'bd Second-Level Domain' (for example, abc.bd), registration fee reduced from BDT 2,000 to BDT 1,280, with renewal fee reduced from BDT 2,500 to BDT 1,600.

Value-added tax (VAT) will apply at the prescribed rate, and that registrations will be governed by existing regulations set by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), along with tariff decisions approved by BTCL authorities, states the press release.



IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES



What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1
Big Bash League
Melbourne Stars vs
Adelaide Strikers
Live from 2:15 pm

STAR SPORTS 2
SA20
Pretoria Capitals vs
MI Cape Town
Live from 9:30 pm

'Cricket now a religion in Nepal'

Cricket in Nepal is growing rapidly, with leg spinner **Sandeep Lamichhane** at the forefront. A regular for the national team and familiar in global franchise leagues, Lamichhane first caught attention in Bangladesh during the 2016 U-19 World Cup and later featured in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with Sylhet Sixers in 2019. Now back in Bangladesh with Rajshahi Warriors for BPL's 12th edition, the 25-year-old spoke to *The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan* about Nepalese cricket, leg-spin nuances, and expectations ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup. The excerpts follow:

DS: Why the long gap before returning to Bangladesh?

SL: I think the Bangladesh Cricket Board or the BPL invited me after a long time. I was also busy with various franchise leagues and international games for Nepal, so sometimes the schedules just don't match. I am happy that the proposal finally came from a BPL franchise and that I am here now.

DS: Changes in the BPL since 2019?

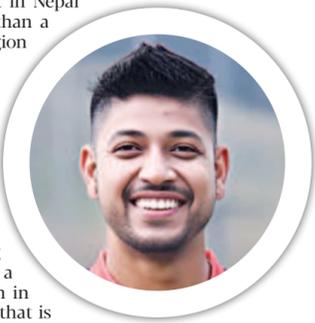
SL: I don't see a massive difference because the passion and respect for cricket here remain the same.

DS: How do Nepali fans view the BPL?

SL: It is a blessing to have fans who live their dreams through us. Cricket in Nepal has become more than a sport; it is like a religion now.

DS: How is the Nepal Premier League impacting cricket in Nepal?

SL: Having our own league is a huge thing for us. It has evolved quickly... Playing under floodlights in a jam-packed stadium in Nepal was a dream that is now coming true.



DS: How important is adding new variations as a leg-spinner in the modern game?

SL: Cricket has changed over the years and often favours batters now with smaller boundaries and good wickets. While analysts show your videos to the opposition, we also use analysts to find the weaknesses of the batters.

DS: How do you cope after conceding big runs?

SL: Leg-spinners need to be brave. You shouldn't doubt your skills or think about negative aspects; instead, focus on getting a wicket to turn the game in your favour.

DS: Thoughts on Nepal's near-misses in the last T20 World Cup?

SL: It was absolutely disappointing... whether you lose by one run or a hundred, a loss is a loss. However, we made a statement that Nepal cricket is here and has potential.

DS: There is talk that some venues might shift in the upcoming T20 World Cup, such as Bangladesh's games moving to Sri Lanka. Are you okay with that, as you are in the same group?

SL: It's a big challenge, but it is not in our control. We will play wherever the venue is set -- Mumbai, Delhi, Dubai, or Sri Lanka. I would actually be happy to play a Nepal versus Bangladesh game in Nepal if we could host it. We have to respect and understand whatever the schedule the ICC has made.

DS: Advice for Bangladesh leg-spinner Rishad Hossain in the Big Bash League?

SL: He is playing for Hobart [Hurricanes], which is the same team I played for [two seasons], so it's a nice connection... My advice would be to keep enjoying the game and the Australian weather.



Rajshahi Warriors pacer **Ripon Mondol** claimed a hat-trick to set up a seven-wicket victory over Dhaka Capitals, bringing the Sylhet leg of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) to a close yesterday. The 22-year-old right-arm quick became the 11th player to register a hat-trick in BPL history and the third bowler to achieve the feat this season, after Mehedi Hasan Rana and Mritunjay Chowdhury. [Inset] Meanwhile, Sylhet Titans batter Parvez Hossain Emon struck his third half-century to guide his side to a comfortable six-wicket win over Rangpur Riders, after which the teams took laps around the ground, applauding the Sylhet fans. The league resumes with the Dhaka leg from January 15, with Sylhet, Chattogram Royals, and Rajshahi already ensuring playoff spots.

PHOTO: WALTON



Barca lift first trophy of the season

A frenetic tie that ebbed and flowed, records being shattered, a first trophy of the season for one side and renewed doubts over the future of the losing team's coach -- Sunday's Spanish Super Cup Clasico in Jeddah, edged 3-2 by Barcelona against Real Madrid, had everything.

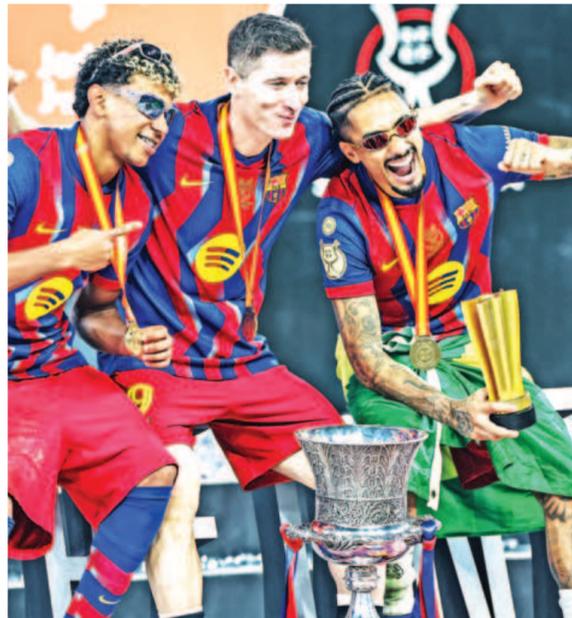


PHOTO: AFP

Raphinha was the hero as Barcelona secured the first trophy of the season, scoring twice, while Robert Lewandowski also found the net. Raphinha has now scored seven times in last six games against Real.

Barcelona took the lead through Raphinha, but a frantic end to the first half produced three goals in stoppage time. Real winger Vinicius Junior levelled with a brilliant individual effort, Lewandowski restored Barca's lead, before Gonzalo Garcia struck to make it 2-2 for Los Blancos. Raphinha then netted the winner in the second half.

The victory saw Barcelona lift the Spanish Super Cup for a record-extending 16th time and retain the trophy for the first time in eight years.

It was also the fourth trophy for Hansi Flick as Barcelona coach, following last season's LaLiga, Copa del Rey and Spanish Super Cup triumphs.

The defeat ended Real Madrid's four-match winning run and reignited doubts over the future of coach Xabi Alonso, which had first surfaced during the club's turbulent spell late in 2025.

The last four winners of the Spanish Super Cup have gone on to claim LaLiga.

Following father's footsteps, expat paddler Zaiyan eyes national spot

ANISUR RAHMAN

The ongoing 40th National Table Tennis Championships have attracted players across age groups, from seven to 70, including children of organisers, umpires, corporate officials, students and seasonal players. But among the hundreds competing, one story stands out: 17-year-old expatriate paddler Zaiyan Mahdeen, who travelled from the United Arab Emirates to fulfil a dream his father once lived -- playing at Bangladesh's national championships.

The son of former national-level paddler Shamim Waheed, Zaiyan grew up around his father's billiards and table tennis academy in Abu Dhabi. He is representing Bangladesh Biman in this edition of the tournament, having earlier competed for Bangladesh at the WTT Youth Championship in Egypt with special approval from Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation general secretary Captain Masood Ahmed.

"I always wanted to play in the national championships, where my father once competed," Zaiyan told *The Daily Star* yesterday. "Bangladesh Biman gave me this opportunity, and I'm really enjoying the experience. Playing here means facing new players with different styles."

Currently a Grade 12 student, Zaiyan competed



in the U-19 singles and doubles events, winning a few matches before being knocked out in the round of 32 by national age-group players. He also featured in the men's singles.

"I play for a club in Abu Dhabi and travel regularly across the UAE for tournaments," he said. "I've had both wins and losses, and I've won a few events there."

Zaiyan now dreams of earning a place in the Bangladesh senior team. "Every player wants to reach a certain level. I train one to two hours every day, and I hope I can represent Bangladesh in the future," he said.

His parents, Shamim Waheed and Natasha Waheed, are accompanying him at the championships. Shamim, who represented Jashore district several times in the early 1990s, said his passion for the sport never faded, even after moving to the UAE in 2009.

"When I first enrolled my son in an academy, they couldn't even teach him the basics," Shamim said. "So, I decided to start one myself."

In 2019, he launched Legends Billiards and Table Tennis Hall, combining table tennis, billiards, snooker and a cafe. A certified ITTF Level 1 coach, he now trains 26 students from different countries.

"I brought Zaiyan to Bangladesh so he could feel what it means to play the national championships," Shamim said. "If he wants to chase this dream, we will support him fully."

Enjoying captaincy, not thinking about quitting: Joty

The Bangladesh team are set to depart today for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers in Nepal, starting on January 18. Captain **Nigar Sultana Joty** spoke about the team's preparation, plans to address Powerplay struggles, her wicketkeeping duties, and her future as skipper in an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi*. The excerpts are as follows:

DS: How have domestic competitions shaped the team's preparation for the World Cup Qualifiers?

NSJ: We played the National Cricket League (NCL) and Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) in T20 formats, and players were selected based on their performances in these tournaments. After our camp for the qualifiers, we also played two practice matches. The preparation camp was short, but everyone's intent looked different, especially as they played on good wickets in the BCL. The intensity of their shot-making shows that everyone is in good rhythm.

DS: Is there scope for experimentation in a tournament where the team could play seven matches?

NSJ: Before a World Cup, we should use this platform for whatever experience, experiments, or team combinations we need to try. Some players are very good at



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

power-hitting and have performed impressively. They are being given opportunities so that they can start from their comfort zones. In global qualifiers, apart from two or three teams, the rest are average, so there will be good chances to experiment and observe players.

DS: How do you view the squad?

NSJ: An uncapped opener, Juairiya Ferdous, has been picked. She did very well in the NCL, although she could not do as well in the BCL. Still, she has a lot of potential that the selectors and players noticed during tournaments and practice matches.

Her ability to use power and her intent are different from everyone else. [Dilara Akter] Dola has also been added. We have often seen that we lack runs or power in the top order, which makes us suffer, so the team has been organised to strengthen the batting.

DS: Are you going to share wicketkeeping duties with Juairiya, and do you see her opening the innings?

NSJ: If she plays, you will likely see her opening. As for wicketkeeping, it depends on the management. When I play domestic cricket, I

try to keep wickets very rarely so that other domestic keepers can get noticed. I have no problem with that [sharing wicketkeeping duties], and I enjoy fielding a lot. Whatever is asked of me in the interest of the team, I will do it.

DS: Is it easier to captain as a wicketkeeper or as a fielder?

NSJ: Both feel the same to me. Whether you are changing a bowler or a fielder, your position does not really affect it. However, there is an advantage in keeping: communication with the bowlers is much better. You can understand the line and length or what the batter is doing far more clearly from behind the stumps.

DS: Do you have any thoughts on your captaincy stint beyond the T20 World Cup?

NSJ: It will depend entirely on the board. If they feel the team is not improving under me, then that will be their decision. But I am enjoying the captaincy and am not thinking about quitting at the moment.



Michael Olise struck twice and set a new Bundesliga assist record as Bayern Munich ran riot in an 8-1 demolition of Wolfsburg on Sunday to move 11 points clear at the top of the table. The Bavarians were ruthless on their return from the winter break, benefiting from two Wolfsburg own goals while Harry Kane, Luis Diaz, Leon Goretzka and Raphael Guerreiro also found the net. Olise also provided two assists, taking his tally to 25 in 50 league appearances, the most by any player in their first half-century of Bundesliga games.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Man loses leg to landmine near Teknaf border 12-yr-old shot in head still in ICU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A 28-year-old man was critically injured in a landmine explosion along the Teknaf border yesterday morning — a day after a 12-year-old girl was hit by a stray bullet fired from across the Myanmar border.

Md Hanif, from the Lombabil area in Whykong union, lost his left leg in the blast.

Locals said the incident occurred around 10:00am. Hanif was working at a fish farm near Shahjahan Island when a sudden explosion took place on the bank of the Naf River.

He was thrown into the river following the blast and was later rescued by fishermen. His left leg was severed in the explosion, they said.

According to locals, the mine was planted along the border area by the Arakan Army, an armed insurgent group active in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Hanif was initially taken to MSF Hospital in Kutupalong, Ukhiya.

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The army has set up checkpoints as part of beefing up security in the capital ahead of the February 12 polls. The photo was taken at Karwan Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Govt gave in to anti-reform forces' Says TIB on ordinances issued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has raised questions about eight ordinances enacted by the interim government as part of the reform initiatives.

The anti-graft watchdog yesterday presented its observations on the Anti Corruption Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, Police Commission Ordinance, National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, Public Audit Ordinance, Revenue Policy and Revenue Administration Ordinance, Cyber Security Ordinance, Personal Data Protection Ordinance and National Data Management Ordinance.

Except for a few cases, most ordinances were drafted unilaterally without involving stakeholders. In some cases, draft ordinances were published on websites for a short period for show, avoiding accountability.

"Certain stakeholders were neglected and even subjected to propaganda. The government failed to set examples of expected transparency and proactive disclosure while making laws and decisions affecting public interest," the TIB said in its observation.

Almost all initiatives taken in the name of reform have lost focus during implementation by the interim government, said TIB Executive Director Ittekkharuzzaman at a press conference titled "Reluctance of the Interim Government in Designing Reforms" held at its office in Dhaka.

"The critical question is why this surrender happened and where the real weakness lies," he said, adding that he did not have a definitive answer as he is not part of the government's internal decision-making process.

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REVISED ADP BUDGET Local govt gets more at cost of health, education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has increased the allocation for the local government sector in the revised annual development programme (ADP) by diverting resources from the education and health sectors.

In the revised ADP for this fiscal year — that was approved yesterday by the National Economic Council — the overall allocation was trimmed by 12.5 percent to Tk 208,935 crore.

The health sector's allocation was slashed by about 74 percent from the original allocation of Tk 18,148 crore. The education sector's

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The local government sector's allocation was increased by 12 percent from Tk 13,472 crore.

However, the local government division got the highest allocation of Tk 37,534 crore — including the social safety facilities and other community aids through city corporations, pourashova and unions — in the revised ADP.

Local government got priority, focusing on local poverty alleviation, roads and bridges, which were in very poor condition, Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud told reporters after the meeting.

He blamed the political instability, absence of project directors, new government purchase method, high interest rate and low foreign investment for the low ADP implementation.

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Musician, AL leader Proloy Chaki dies in jail custody Family alleges neglect

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Proloy Chaki, a Pabna Awami League leader and a noted musician, died in hospital while in jail custody on Sunday night. He was 60.

Chaki, who had been suffering from multiple ailments, suffered a cardiac arrest in Pabna jail and was taken to Pabna General Hospital on Friday, said jail Superintendent Md Omar Faruk.

As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, where he died at around 9:00pm on Sunday.

His body will be handed over to the family after completion of legal formalities, Faruk said yesterday.

Family members and well-wishers alleged negligence and inadequate medical treatment during his incarceration, claiming these led to his death.

Chaki, a renowned singer of the 1990s, was a music director, teacher and cultural organiser. He served as cultural affairs secretary of the Pabna district AL and as secretary of Shree Shree Ram Krishna Shebashrom, Pabna.

He was arrested from his Dilalpur residence in Pabna town on December 16 last year and later shown arrested in a case

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SEAT-SHARING 11-party chiefs to meet today to seal the deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chiefs of the Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance are expected to meet today to finalise the seat-sharing deal for the February 12 parliamentary election.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair told The Daily Star that the liaison committee will place proposals before the alliance leaders, who are likely to settle the arrangement.

"We hope to inform the media about the seat-sharing deal through a press conference within a day or two," he said.

An Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) leader said their Ameer, Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim, has instructed all party candidates to attend a meeting in Dhaka.

"The Ameer will announce who has secured nominations from the alliance and instruct others to withdraw," the leader said on condition of anonymity.

Following the uprising, Jamaat, IAB, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Nizam-e-Islam Party, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) and Bangladesh Development Party (BDP) launched joint programmes pressing for a level playing field and elections under the July National Charter.

The eight parties later formed an electoral alliance to field single candidates in all 300 constituencies based on seat sharing.

Later, the National Citizen Party (NCP), Liberal Democratic Party and AB Party joined the alliance, turning it into an 11-party coalition.

According to multiple sources, Jamaat wants to keep around 190 to 200 seats for itself and negotiate with other parties for the remaining seats.

Through internal surveys, Jamaat has identified about 170 to 175 constituencies where it believes it has a strong chance of winning. In addition, Jamaat wants to field candidates in around 20 more seats, where, according to the party, the alliance has failed to field strong contenders.

According to the latest information from insiders, Jamaat has agreed to give 40 seats to IAB, 30 seats to NCP, 12 to 15 seats to

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EC restores candidacy of 41 more Jamaat's Ctg-9 nominee declared disqualified over dual citizenship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the February 12 election, 41 more aspirants regained their candidacy, including Kishorganj-5 independent candidate AHM Kaitum, as the Election Commission yesterday declared their nominations valid.

On the third day of reviewing appeals against returning officers' decisions to reject nominations, the EC heard 71 appeals, of which 41 were declared legal, said EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed in the afternoon.

He said 25 appeals were said to be invalid, four were kept pending, and one was not heard (Pabna-2).

The EC began its hearing on January 10 and would continue it until January 18. As of the third day, it completed the hearings of 197 appeals, and kept 13 pending.

The commission declared the nomination of Chatogram-9 Jamaat-e-Islami candidate AKM Fazlul Haque invalid over dual citizenship issues as he had US citizenship.

During the hearing, Fazlul said he



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MUSABBIR MURDER Suspect makes confessional statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alleged shooter Mohammad Zinnat yesterday gave a confessional statement before a magistrate, admitting his role in the killing of Swechhchasebak Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabbir in Dhaka's Tejgaon area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sarah Farzana Haque recorded Zinnat's statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure after he was produced before her chamber, a court staffer said.

According to an investigator, Zinnat opened fire during the attack, injuring Musabbir's companion Abu Sufian Bepari Masud. Zinnat's assigned role was to ensure a safe escape for the main shooter, Mohammad Rahim, the investigator added, citing Zinnat's statement.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Additional

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Pedestrians put their lives at risk while crossing Rampura road. Due to the long distances between footbridges in the capital's Rampura-Banasree area, people are compelled to cross the street in this manner. The photo was taken in front of the BTV Bhaban.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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Two Ansar members held for raping woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A woman was allegedly raped by two Ansar members at the 250-bed General Hospital in Manikganj early yesterday.

The Ansar members have been detained, said Mohammad Sarwar Alam, superintendent of Manikganj police.

Quoting the victim and her husband, the SP said the two from Narayanganj was going to the house of his relative in Manikganj Sadar upazila on their own battery-run rickshaw-van. When they reached the Manikganj bus stand area around 2:00am, three-wheeler ran out of charge.

The police official added that they went to the hospital for their safety and took shelter in front of its main gate. Then, Ansar members — Shahadat Hossain and Abu Sayeed — who were on duty there, assured them of their cooperation and took them inside the hospital. They took the victim to the second floor of