

Old Dhaka gears up for Shakrain

RAKIB MADDER

Shakrain one of Old Dhaka's longest living traditions, is set to be celebrated today, with preparations gathering pace across the historic neighbourhoods of the capital.

Popularly recognised as the kite-flying festival, Shakrain has already transformed the narrow alleys, rooftops and markets of the old city.

By day, the sky is expected to fill with colourful kites, while from evening until midnight, the Buriganga riverbank areas will glow with fireworks and flying lanterns.

A visit to Sutrapur, Nawabpur, Dhupkhola, Shyambazar, Shankhari Bazar, Tantibazar, Lakshmibazar, Sadarghat, Gandaria, Lalbagh and Chawk Bazar reveals a distinctly festive mood.

and twelve-shot items, Kadam Phool, Tarabati, rockets and lanterns -- are available, though many traders sell them discreetly to avoid police scrutiny.

Seventh-grade student Taim, who came to buy kites, said Shakrain feels like Eid. "We wait the whole year for this day. I've bought many kites. It's going to be a lot of fun," he said.

Saim Ahmed, who travelled from Postogola, said he came mainly for his son. "We flew kites when we were young. Now it's their turn. I just want to make my child happy," he said.

Residents say Shakrain is marked by small family gatherings alongside kite flying. "We also arrange children's games in our area," said Shyam Narayan, a long-time resident of Old Dhaka.

Another resident, Mizanur Rahman, urged restraint during celebrations.



PHOTO: RAKIB MADDER

Kite trading is brisk, alongside preparations to decorate rooftops with bamboo frames, boxes and temporary canopies.

Shops are offering a wide range of locally made kites, including Chokhdar, Rokdar, Gorudar, Machlenja, Fitalenja, Chantara and box kites.

Shankhari Bazar remains a major hub, selling designs such as Chashmadar, Kautadar, Pankhiraj, Prajapati, Eagle, Bat, Love kites, Tekka and Maladar, along with several foreign-patterned varieties. Prices range from Tk 5 to Tk 25 for ordinary kites, while special designs sell for between Tk 100 and Tk 300.

Demand for spools and strings has also risen. Wooden, iron and Chabadi spools are priced between Tk 100 and Tk 1,000, while strings such as Dragon, Bhut and Bilai cost between Tk 50 and Tk 500.

Fireworks -- including five-shot

"There should be control over loud sound systems and risky fire activities. We want to celebrate peacefully with our families," he said.

Traders, however, say sales have been down. Many describe the ancestral business as slower than in previous years, with a comparatively subdued festive atmosphere. Still, they remain hopeful with the festival approaching.

"Sales are average, not like before, but wholesale buying is slightly better," said Dilip Nag, a shopkeeper at Pabitra Bhandar in Shankhari Bazar.

Historical records suggest Shakrain began in Old Dhaka around 1740 during the Mughal period, under Naib-e-Nazim Nawajesh Mohammad Khan. Over the centuries, it has evolved into one of the city's most cherished cultural festivals, celebrated not only in Bangladesh but also across parts of South and Southeast Asia.

Topsoil extraction threatens agriculture in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Topsoil, rich in organic matter and nutrients, is vital for agriculture. Yet large volumes of this valuable layer are being excavated from farmlands and diverted to brick kilns, particularly in Magura's Mohammadpur upazila.

According to local sources, farmers from all eight unions of the upazila are selling topsoil to meet the growing demand of brickfields, with little obstruction.

The extraction intensifies every year from December, coinciding with the peak brick production season.

Agricultural soil is preferred by kiln owners for producing higher-quality bricks. Through intermediaries, soil traders buy topsoil from farmers at low lump-sum rates, often under the pretext of land levelling, and resell it to kiln owners at much higher prices. For nearly four months, from December to March, the practice continues unabated.

Ignoring existing rules, excavators are used to cut soil, which is then transported by trolleys and trucks, damaging rural roads and local infrastructure. An estimated 18 brick kilns are operating in the upazila this season, with fertile cropland serving as their primary source of raw material.

Agricultural experts warn that the removal



of topsoil strips land of essential nutrients such as gypsum and zinc and disrupts beneficial microorganisms, leading to declining soil fertility and crop yields. Many farmers, due to a lack of awareness, are unknowingly selling away the productive capacity of their land.

Rabiul Islam Russell, a farmer from Raypasha village, said cutting soil from croplands invites long-term losses and urged greater awareness among farmers.

Mezbahul Islam, owner of Arab Bricks, said they purchase soil through contractors and claimed ignorance about how or where the soil

is sourced.

Upazila Agriculture Officer Piyush Roy warned, "Topsoil is the nutritional core of farmland. If it is removed, good yields cannot be expected from that land for at least the next 10 years. This could eventually lead to food shortages."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahnur Zaman said action is taken whenever reports of topsoil extraction are received, adding, "Protecting arable land requires not only enforcement of the law but, more importantly, raising awareness among farmers and the general public."

Police block July Oikya march to EC

Activists call for barring JP, 14-party alliance, NDF from polls



PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of activists under the banner of July Oikya was stopped by police yesterday while marching towards the Election Commission with several demands, including the cancellation of the candidacies of nominees from the Jatiya Party, the 14-party alliance and the National Democratic Front (NDF) ahead of the February 12 election.

July Oikya, an organisation that emerged after the July uprising, also demanded the removal from the administration of individuals who participated in the 2018 and 2024 elections.

The group further demanded ensuring security on election day, the recovery of illegal weapons, and the mandatory use of body-worn cameras on polling day.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Three killed in Dhaka-Barishal highway accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

Three people were killed and another was injured as a covered van collided with a battery-run three-wheeler on the Dhaka Barishal highway in Madaripur Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as: Kohinur, 35, and Taslima, 46, of Khamarbari area in Madaripur Sadar; and the van driver Nayan Hawladar, 22, of Panthapara area in Dasar upazila of the district.

The injured, Roni Khan, 33, is currently being treated in Madaripur Sadar Hospital in critical condition.



The incident occurred around 11:30am near Tantibazar in Mostafapur union when the van collided with the three-wheeler coming from opposite direction, leaving two dead on the spot, said Mamun Ar Rashid, officer-in-charge of Mostafapur Highway Police Station.

"Of the two other injured, one died after being taken to hospital. Legal steps are underway," he added.

Following the incident, agitated locals staged a protest by setting tyres on fire on the highway, halting traffic movement for nearly two hours, until police intervened and dispersed them.



গাজীপুর কৃষি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
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SALNA, GAZIPUR 1706, BANGLADESH, TELEPHONE: 02 99669523, FAX: 02 996695316, Web: www.gau.edu.bd

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GD- 99



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IN MEMORIAM



35th Death Anniversary of
Late Abul Qasem FCA (1919-1991)
Founder President (ICAB),
Former President (DCCI),
Founder, A. Qasem & Co., Chartered Accountants
In Fond Remembrance
Shakil, Farzana, Sohel, Jabeen, Sanjida, Mostaq, Sadaat, Sajid,
Navid, Sanjida Khan, Sadaaf, Omair, Ahnaf, Afraz, Kayan
&
All Partners, Directors, Staff and Students of A. Qasem & Co.



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গ্যাস ব্যবহারে সতর্কতা হোক এবং
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আর বিপদকে ডাকা একই বিষয়

Reference No.: 28.16.9100.034.86.003.26

Dated: 11 January, 2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have published through National e-GP portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Package No. & Date of Publishing	Name of the Work	Tender last Selling and Closing Date & Time
01.	Tender ID: 1209170 Package No: e-GP-EMM-07 Date of Publishing: 11.01.2026	Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 218 Kwp on-grid rooftop solar power plant at Head Office Building Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution System Limited (JGTDSL).	Last Selling: 25.01.2026, 14:00 Closing date & time: 25.01.2026, 15:00 Opening date & time: 25.01.2026, 15:00


The interested persons/firms may visit the website <https://www.eprocure.gov.bd> to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

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

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GD-95



NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/25-26-T06

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/ reputed organisations/ distributors/ business partners/ agent for supplying photocopier, desktop computer for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Detail of the items mentioned below:

Lot: 1- Core i5 desktop computer
Lot: 2- core i7 desktop computer
Lot: 3- 45 ppm photocopier
Lot: 4- 30 ppm photocopier

Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd., Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229** within the banking hour on all working days till **January 28, 2026** by paying non-refundable amount of taka 1,000.00 (one thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of "North South University" along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **January 29, 2026 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

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