



"I had a long, productive, and courteous telephone conversation with the President of the US... conducted in a framework of mutual respect."

Venezuela's new leader
Delcy Rodriguez

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SEAT-SHARING DEAL 179 for Jamaat, 30 for NCP; IAB not on board yet

MAMUNUR RASHID and RASHIDUL HASAN

Amid brewing tensions between Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) over seat sharing, the Jamaat-led 11-party electoral alliance yesterday announced single candidates for 253 constituencies.

The announcement came at a crowded press conference at the Institution of Diploma Engineers in Kakrail. A chair had been reserved for IAB Ameer and Chormonai Pir Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim, but neither he nor any representative showed up.

Though the banner at the conference read "consensus among the 11-party electoral alliance", IAB's absence pointed to rifts between it and Jamaat.

The combine set aside 47 seats for IAB and two other partners -- Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan and Jatiya Gonorantrik Party.

WHO ELSE GETS HOW MANY

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis: 20

Khelafat Majlis: 10

Liberal Democratic Party: 7

Amar Bangladesh Party: 3

Bangladesh Nezam-e-Islam Party: 2

Bangladesh Development Party: 2

47 seats left for Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan, Jatiya Gonorantrik Party, Islami Andolon Bangladesh

Seat-sharing deals must be settled by January 20, the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

At the press conference, which began at 8:40pm, Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher announced the seat shares in the presence of Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman and top leaders of other allied parties.

Jamaat has been allotted 179 seats, National Citizen Party 30,

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A man with a child in his arms hurries past a student blockade at the Science Lab intersection in the capital. Vehicular movement at one of Dhaka's busiest points ground to a halt as students of seven colleges continued their protest for the second consecutive day yesterday, demanding the promulgation of an ordinance for the proposed Dhaka Central University. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Immunity for July warriors okayed

Law adviser says gazette in 5-7 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved the draft "July Mass Uprising Protection and Liability Determination Ordinance 2026," granting indemnity to participants of the mass uprising of July-August 2024 for actions as part of political resistance during the movement.

"I had announced earlier that this was our commitment to the participants of the July mass uprising -- a commitment rooted in our determination to build a new Bangladesh,"

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said while briefing journalists at the Foreign Service Academy.

"As part of that commitment, the advisory council has approved the ordinance today," he added.

Asked whether the timeframe ends on August 5, Asif Nazrul clarified that since August has 31 days, the period covered by the ordinance runs from July 1 to August 31.

The approval came at the advisory council's weekly meeting chaired by Chief Adviser

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Players withdraw boycott, BPL to resume today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh withdrew its boycott late last night following a meeting with Bangladesh Cricket Board officials, opening the door for the Bangladesh Premier League to resume from today after a day of disruption triggered by a standoff between players and board.

"Keeping the greater interest of cricket in mind, we will resume playing tomorrow [today]," CWAB president Mohammad Mithun said at a joint press conference of CWAB and BCB yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Luxury retail spaces
are coming

UTTARA | BEGUM ROKEYA SARANI

ECB CIRCLE | BASHUNDHARA ROAD | LALBAGH



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Driver, two helpers held over rape on moving bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A woman was allegedly raped on a moving bus by its driver and his assistants early yesterday on the Dhaka-Tangail highway.

Bus driver Md Altaf, 25, and his helpers, Md Sagar, 24, and Md Rabbi, 21, were arrested in connection with the incident, said Ruhul Amin, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station.

Police said the woman boarded a Savar Paribahan bus from Radio Colony in Savar around 11:30pm on Wednesday to go to the Ashulia Police Station to file a GD against her husband.

Quoting the victim, the OC said after two passengers got off, she was alone on the bus. Taking advantage of the situation, the driver and his helpers snatched her gold jewellery, money, and mobile phone, and raped her.

Based on suspicion, highway police halted the vehicle on the Dhaka-Tangail highway in the Karatia underpass area of Tangail Sadar upazila, rescued the woman, and arrested the three around 12:10pm yesterday.

"In the primary investigation, we have found evidence of the incident," OC Ruhul told reporters. A rape case was filed against four people, including the arrestees, with Tangail Sadar Police Station, the OC said.



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and his daughter Deena Yunus pose for a photo at the state guesthouse Jamuna. Tarique's family made a courtesy call on Yunus yesterday evening.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

WEF report flags crime, illicit economy as biggest risks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Economic Forum has identified crime and illicit economic activity as the two most significant economic risks for Bangladesh over the next two years.

In its 21st edition of the Global Risks Report 2026, published on Wednesday, the WEF also identified geoeconomic confrontation, including the rising use of sanctions, tariffs, and tighter investment screening, as another major challenge for the country. This could disrupt trade flows and investment prospects, it said.

The report identified inflation as the third-biggest challenge, reflecting persistent price pressures that continue to weigh on households and businesses.

The WEF report, underpinned by the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS), also warned of risks related to economic downturns and stagflation, noting that slowing growth combined with elevated prices could pose a serious challenge for the economy.

Debt vulnerabilities were highlighted as well, spanning corporate, public, and household segments, which could amplify financial stress during periods of economic uncertainty.

This year's GRPS drew insights from more than 1,300 experts from academia, business, government, international organisations, and civil society.

Responses for GRPS 2025-2026 were collected between August 12 and September 22, 2025. The global GRPS data also incorporated findings from the WEF's Executive Opinion Survey, which gathered views from over 11,000 business leaders across 116 economies. This data identified the risks perceived

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179 for Jamaat, 30 for NCP; IAB

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis 20, Khelafat Majlis 10, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) seven, Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party three, while Bangladesh Nezam-e-Islam Party and Bangladesh Development Party have been allotted two seats each.

Which candidate will contest which seat was not mentioned, nor was any such list provided to journalists present.

In his opening remarks at the briefing, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Ameer Mamunul Haque said, "Under the one-box policy, whichever candidate is ultimately nominated for each seat on behalf of the 11 parties, we will call on all party leaders, activists, and the people of the country to work together in support of that candidate."

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said, "A number of political parties that stand for reforms, for freedom, and for a Bangladesh free of discrimination and corruption have come together on one platform. We have decided to participate collectively in the upcoming national election and referendum. This is therefore a historic moment and journey for us."

LDP President Oli Ahmed said, "You have seen the rule of the Awami League and the rule of the BNP. Now I ask you to witness a system based on

"We were the initiator of the one-box policy for the country's Islamist people and forces, meaning there will be single candidate for all the Islamist parties contesting the election. But the 11-party alliance is no longer remaining an Islamist alliance as other parties have been included."

He said Jamaat's top leadership was making one decision after another without consulting other partners in the alliance, which he described as humiliating.

"It seems they have adopted a 'go-alone' policy. Jamaat appears least concerned about taking the opinions of other alliance members. They are distributing seats to different parties as if they own all 300 constituencies.

"Why should we accept their authoritarian attitude just for the sake of some seats? We don't do politics just for seats."

Ataur said they had tried their best to remain in the alliance. "But Jamaat's authoritarian attitude left no environment for us to remain there."

He added that IAB would consult like-minded Islamist scholars and formally announce whether it would remain in the alliance or forge a new one.

Later last night, IAB said it would brief the media on the issue at its

around 1:30pm, saying that although some discomfort had emerged, the time had not yet come to make any final comments.

"Leaders were continuing multi-prong and multi-party talks. Once a position is reached where a final decision can be shared, Islami Andolan and the other parties will formally inform the nation," the statement read.

Around the same time, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman wrote on his verified Facebook page, "Recently, I have noticed that some people, in showing solidarity and sympathy towards Jamaat-e-Islami, have begun making undesirable and misleading comments and posts on social media about our brotherly organisation Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

"I humbly request you -- if you truly love Jamaat-e-Islami, please refrain from such undesirable activities."

Late last year, when the government and the Election Commission were discussing holding a national election in early February, Jamaat, IAB and eight other parties launched joint street programmes demanding the implementation of the July charter before the polls.

As the February election schedule was finalised, the parties moved towards a seat-sharing arrangement.

Players withdraw boycott, BPL to resume today

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in the night, CWAB had issued a press release, demanding BCB director M Najmul Islam to issue a public apology over his comments on Wednesday.

"We have informed the BCB that if he [Najmul] publicly apologises and the process regarding [removing] his directorship continues, we will be ready to return to cricket from Friday," the press release read.

However, sources at the BCB said that the board had not agreed to the conditions set by CWAB, and was mulling postponing BPL indefinitely if the players do not agree to play.

The BCB had another meeting with CWAB members, where BPL franchise owners were also present, after which the players agreed to withdraw their boycott while the board assured them it would carry on with its procedures against Najmul.

"A few unfortunate incidents have taken place over the past two days, which is why we were unable to hold

today's BPL matches," BCB director Iftekhar Rahman Mithu said at the press conference.

"The director who made the comments, he has been removed from his committee [finance committee]. We follow our constitution, and according to it, we have given him a show cause notice. He has been given 48 hours to respond, which will end at noon on the 17th. Then it will go to the disciplinary committee, as per the constitution and the process will continue.

"We tried to contact him throughout the day. We wanted to bring him here, but we couldn't reach him," he added.

CWAB president Mithun was hopeful that the board will carry on with its disciplinary procedure against Najmul.

"They have assured us that they will reach him and fulfill our demands as early as possible. They will complete our demands following the procedures as early as possible,"

he said.

The BCB has already released a revised schedule for the rest of the tournament. Matches scheduled to take place on Thursday will instead take place on Friday.

The matches originally scheduled for January 16 and 17 have been shifted by a day. The Eliminator and Qualifier 1, previously scheduled to be held on January 19, have been shifted to January 20.

Earlier on the day, the players did not turn up for their previously scheduled BPL matches in Dhaka, following through on their threats on Wednesday to boycott all cricket if Najmul is not removed from the board. On Wednesday, Najmul had told the media that players were not owed any compensation if Bangladesh did not participate in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, starting on February 7, arguing that the BCB has never sought refunds from cricketers after poor performances at global events.

Govt in many cases became hostage

FROM PAGE 12

power relations.

"We have had caretaker governments before. Those arrangements were also dismantled. The question is not whether reforms are necessary, but whether there is a social force capable of protecting them."

He added that reforms failed because citizens and stakeholders beyond politicians were not mobilised. "There was dialogue, but it was largely among political leaders. There was no national awakening, no broad-based participation of stakeholders."

Debapriya said these during a programme of Citizen Platform for SDGs at a city hotel yesterday.

At the programme, Toufiqul Islam Khan, additional director (research) at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), and CPD Distinguished Fellow Prof Mustafizur Rahman presented a reform package as part of the organisation's 10 national action programmes and 12 selected policy recommendations for the next government.

Universal minimum income, school meals, youth loans and a national health card headlined in the package.

The universal minimum income programme is aimed at reducing inequality and provide financial security. Under the plan, each eligible family would receive Tk 4,540 per month in cash assistance.

The rollout is proposed in three phases.

Initially, 28 lakh families in 11 districts would be covered, followed by 80 lakh families in 36 districts in the second phase, and 1.47 crore families across all 64 districts in the final phase.

Beneficiaries would be selected and reassessed every two years using a poverty scorecard.

The platform said the scheme would protect vulnerable populations from job insecurity, disasters and limited access to credit. The estimated annual cost is Tk 40,600 crore, equivalent to 0.73 percent of the GDP for the first 36 districts.

The platform also proposed midday meal scheme for government and MPO-affiliated schools, providing one nutritious meal per day to students. The programme would cover 1.18 crore primary and secondary school students.

The proposal aims to improve enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes, and reduce dropout rates, child labour and child marriage, particularly among girls. Annual implementation is estimated to cost Tk 8,288 crore, or 0.13 percent of the

GDP.

For youth, the platform suggested a youth credit card programme offering interest- and collateral-free loans of up to Tk 1 lakh per person. About 1 lakh young people aged 18-24 would benefit annually, enabling them to pursue education, skills training and job applications without financial barriers.

Implementation would require Tk 1,000 crore annually as a revolving fund, along with Tk 134 crore for service costs, amounting to 0.01 percent of the GDP.

A National Health Card programme was also proposed to provide families with medical coverage worth Tk 1 lakh per year. The programme would initially cover 61 lakh elderly families, ensuring access to emergency treatment for poor and vulnerable groups.

The estimated annual budget is Tk 61,000 crore, or 1 percent of the GDP, depending on usage.

For the agriculture and labour sectors, the platform proposed a Farmer Smart Card for 1.65 crore farming families, linking incentives to farmers' needs and reducing costs. The annual allocation is estimated at Tk 159 crore, or 0.002 percent of the GDP.

A National Labour Market Platform was also suggested to connect jobseekers, mainly youth, with employers in Bangladesh and abroad, with initial government funding of Tk 10 crore, or 0.0001 percent of the GDP.

Social and urban reform proposals include community-based childcare centres for working mothers, covering 24,000 children, and an integrated urban transport system to reduce congestion and unfair competition, benefiting low- and middle-income residents.

The platform also proposed digital and governance reforms, including an integrated tax system with automatic returns, e-payments and verification, as well as a national data platform linking citizen information to improve service delivery and programme monitoring.

The organisation emphasised that successful implementation would require structural reforms, digital transformation, anti-corruption measures, political commitment and interlinked data systems.

It estimated the overall funding need at about 2 percent of the GDP over one to two years, to be met through government-private partnerships, national budget allocations and foreign financing.

Rights activist Sultana Kamal, a member of the CPD board, highlighted the growing distance

between citizens and those in power. "This country is not owned only by those in government. It belongs to ordinary citizens," she said, adding that dignity must accompany rights.

"Every person should be able to live a peaceful and dignified life."

On the media's role, she stressed that journalists are the fourth pillar of democracy. "Without you, how will people's voices reach society?"

She called for freedom of expression and safety for journalists, saying the struggle would continue until the ideals of the Liberation War are fulfilled.

Former caretaker government adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury said structural reforms, transparency, and accountability are essential for meaningful change.

"If corruption is reduced by half, GDP could increase by four percent," she said, highlighting economic losses from corruption and violence against women.

She added that digital systems alone cannot ensure reform. "Digital systems lose meaning when middlemen control them."

Rasheda urged media engagement to track reforms and called for changes in political culture, bureaucracy and civil society.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, voiced concern over attacks on minority communities. "For months, we have seen attacks, killings, and vandalism of homes, businesses and religious institutions of minority communities, but no justice was served to the victims."

She criticised the government's limited response and called on journalists to follow up. "Ensuring citizens' security is a state responsibility, and the media has a key role in holding authorities accountable."

Prof Mustafizur emphasised the importance of planned development and parliamentary accountability. "Our resources are limited, and we must set priorities and implement them scientifically. Five-year plans are created, but they are often not implemented. Parliamentary accountability should ensure that every ministry reports regularly on what has been achieved and what gaps remain."

He added that strong administration and institutional capacity are key to effective implementation.

Asif Ibrahim, vice chairman of Newage Group of Industries, and Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, coordinator of Citizens' Platform for SDGs Bangladesh, also spoke at the event among others.



justice, good governance, free from extortion and corruption.

"This is where freedom fighters and the July fighters of 2024 have come together. Such a convergence has not happened anywhere else."

Asked if IAB's absence indicates that the alliance has broken, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur said, "The alliance has not broken; it still exists. One party did not agree for some reason. That does not mean the alliance has collapsed. In fact, this is not even an alliance -- it is an electoral unity."

Without naming IAB, he said, "One party was with us from the outset but is not seen here today. This is not a matter of rupture. They are having further internal discussions. We are in touch with them. They will convey their final decision. We hope they will remain with us."

Contacted by The Daily Star after the press conference, IAB Joint Secretary General and spokesperson Gazi Ataur Rahman said they did not join the press conference due to divisions and mistrust within the alliance.

central office at 3:00pm today.

Around 11:00am, top leaders of 10 parties met at the Jamaat's central office in Moghbazar to finalise the seat-sharing arrangements. IAB leaders were not present at the meeting.

In an effort to keep IAB in the fold, Mamunul Haque was tasked with holding talks with the IAB's top leadership.

Following the meeting, he expressed hope that the seat allocation could be announced with IAB on board, adding that he had already spoken to its leaders.

Nahid Islam said that although differences had emerged, they would be resolved soon. "Every effort will be made to keep this alliance intact. Even if there are disagreements, the alliance process will move forward."

He added that there would be no party candidates in any of the 300 constituencies, with all contenders contesting as alliance candidates. "Everyone will support everyone."

While the 10-party meeting was under way, IAB issued a statement

Two days before the nomination deadline, NCP and LDP joined the alliance. Around the same time, AB Party also joined, expanding it to an 11-party combine.

After the inclusion of the three new parties, tensions emerged between Jamaat and IAB over seat sharing.

IAB alleged that Jamaat brought in the three parties without consulting alliance partners. It also accused Jamaat of unilaterally promising 30 seats to NCP.

As a result, a sense of discontent, distrust and unease grew among leaders and activists of IAB and several other alliance partners.

Against this backdrop, Hamidur Rahman Azad, coordinator of the 11-party alliance and assistant secretary general of Jamaat, called a press conference on Wednesday to announce the final seat-sharing arrangement.

However, three hours later, the press conference was postponed. IAB again alleged that it had not been consulted in this regard.

DEMAND FOR CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

Dhaka grinds to halt as students block roads again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City dwellers suffered for a second consecutive day yesterday as students demanding the issuance of an ordinance for the proposed Dhaka Central University blocked the Science Lab and Technical intersections again.

The protests brought life in many parts of the capital to a standstill, particularly in areas surrounding the two key intersections, forcing commuters to abandon vehicles and walk long distances to reach their destinations.

Cars, buses and passengers remained stranded for hours despite police efforts to divert traffic through alternative routes.

Members of the Facebook group Traffic Alert posted warnings about blocked roads and shared photographs of severe gridlocks.

Witnesses said students of Dhaka College and Eden Mahila

College brought out a procession from their campuses and blocked the road at Science Lab around 1:00pm.

Around 1:30pm, a bus carrying students of Dhaka University arrived at the Science Lab intersection but was stopped by the protesters.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

An argument ensued between students on the bus and those blocking the road. About one and a half hours later, the college students allowed the DU bus to leave.

However, as the bus was

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pump machines and other equipment lie in a state of decay at the pump station in Hathirheel's Rampura area due to negligence and a lack of proper maintenance. The machines remain without any protective shed, leaving them exposed to the elements. These pumps are used to facilitate water drainage, particularly during the monsoon. The photo was taken yesterday.



Court orders further probe into Osman Hadi killing

Inqilab Moncho to hold nationwide protests today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to conduct further investigation into a case filed over the killing of Inqilab Moncho, spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jashita Islam passed the order after accepting a no-confidence petition, said a sub-inspector working at the court.

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US envoy vows to boost ties Presents credentials to president

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly-appointed US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent Christensen has said he looks forward to continuing to promote regional stability, economic growth and sovereignty of the two countries as he presented his credentials to President Mohammed Shahabuddin at Bangabhaban yesterday.



In a statement following the ceremony, Christensen said, "The United States is proud to call Bangladesh a friend. In over 50 years of partnership, we have worked together to promote regional stability, economic growth benefiting both our countries, and the sovereignty of our great nations. I look forward to continuing this work and further strengthening the US Bangladesh relationship."

Christensen previously served at the US embassy in Dhaka as a counselor for political and economic affairs between 2019 and 2021.

He formally joined the embassy as ambassador on January 12.

NATIONAL POLLS

BNP and Jamaat flag lack of level playing field

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two major political parties, the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, yesterday raised concerns over the absence of a level playing field ahead of the February 12 polls.

BNP election steering committee spokesperson Mahdi Amin alleged that the level playing field was being eroded in multiple ways, increasing the risk of a controversial election.

Speaking at a press briefing at the party's Gulshan office, Mahdi said people expected every political party to receive equal opportunity through a level playing field, but recent developments suggested otherwise.

Mahdi alleged that a particular political party was repeatedly exploiting religious sentiments to gain political advantage.

"For example, media reports have shown voters being made to swear on the Holy Quran to vote for a particular symbol. This is a direct violation of the electoral code of conduct," he said.

He also alleged that the same party was going door to door to collect people's national identity card numbers and bKash numbers, indicating dishonest intentions.

Raising concerns over unequal treatment, Mahdi said several political parties were openly seeking votes for their candidates and symbols through various programmes and online platforms.

Meanwhile, Jamaat assistant general secretary Hamidur Rahman Azad, after meeting Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin, said there was no level playing field.

"Electoral parity is not being maintained here. On one side, violations of the code of conduct are taking place, but no action is taken. On the other side, those who are not violating the code are being harassed with fines, notices and other measures. We told the commission this must stop," he said.

Hamidur said the government continued to make reassuring statements, but these were not reflected in practice.

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A step towards improving medical education quality

Dhaka, Suhrawardy medical colleges accredited for first time

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh has formally begun the accreditation process for medical education, with the Bangladesh Medical Education Accreditation Council (BMEAC) accrediting two government medical colleges for the first time to ensure quality education.

The statutory body has accredited the MBBS programmes of Dhaka Medical College and Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College after the institutions met BMEAC standards, officials said.

BMEAC sent letters to the two colleges on January 12 informing them of the decision, BMEAC Registrar Prof Humayun Kabir Talukder told The Daily Star yesterday, describing the move as a milestone in improving and standardising medical education in the country.

BMEAC will formally issue accreditation certificates to the colleges for a period of five years soon, said Prof Humayun, adding that they granted the accreditation following the standard set by the World Federation for Medical Education for medical education.

The development comes at a time when over 100 public and private medical colleges provide medical education in the country, but the quality of education at many institutions has been questioned due to shortages of manpower, infrastructure, equipment and other facilities.

Against this backdrop, the health

ministry has cut 572 seats in government and private medical colleges for the 2025-26 academic session, citing inadequate infrastructure, manpower, hospital facilities and other shortcomings.

The accreditation council was established in April 2024 under the Bangladesh Medical Education



Both colleges receive 5-year accreditation

Accreditation letters sent on Jan 12

Move aims to standardise, improve medical edn quality

There are 37 govt, 66 private medical colleges

Accreditation Act 2023 and was reconstituted in October following the change of government in August that year.

Prof Humayun said the council follows a rigorous process to grant accreditation to medical colleges.

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Neutrality of admin key to credible polls

Speakers tell discussion

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Maintaining the neutrality of the administration will be key to holding a peaceful and credible election, political analysts said at a dialogue yesterday.

They said there were past efforts to influence the administration for political purposes, which had direct consequences on elections, and such practices must stop.

The dialogue, titled "Peaceful Election and Democratic Future", was organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) at a city hotel.

Prof Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "The administration has been politicised for a long

The administration has been politicised for a long time. If the administration can perform its duties without fear of its actions affecting promotions or postings, it will be able to function neutrally.

PROF ROUNAQ JAHAN, CPD distinguished fellow

time. If the administration can perform its duties without fear of its actions affecting promotions or postings, it will be able to function neutrally."

All political parties, therefore, should express their commitment to this, she said.

The major challenges surrounding the election include security concerns, especially for minority groups and women, she added.

Minority communities are perceived as a vote bank of the Awami League, and there are now pressures on them to vote for certain parties, creating a dilemma for the community, she added.

She also said differences of opinion are inherent in a democracy and must be respected.

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JULY UPRISING CASES

ICT presses charges against 47 over killings in Farmgate, Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday pressed formal charges in two crimes against humanity cases over the killing of 14 people and the injury of dozens during the July uprising in Dhaka's Farmgate and Uttara areas, accusing 47 people.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 issued arrest warrants against the absconding accused and directed the authorities to execute the warrants and submit a report on January 21.

The three-member tribunal, chaired by Justice Md Golam Murtuza Mozumder, also ordered the production of nine accused currently in custody on the same date.

The accused include former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, former Awami League lawmaker from Uttara Mohammad Habib Hasan, former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman, joint commissioner Biplob Kumar Sarkar and former DMP Uttara division deputy commissioner Kazi Ashraful Azim.

In the case over the killing of three people — Golam Nafiz, Tahidul Islam and Ramiz Uddin Ahmed Rupa — and

the serious injury of four others in Farmgate and adjoining Tejgaon areas, the prosecution accused 22 AL activists and police personnel.

The prosecution disclosed the identities of eight accused: Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal; Habibur Rahman; Biplob Kumar Sarkar; additional deputy commissioners Hafiz Al Faruq, Rubaiyat Zaman and Sachin Moulik; former Tejgaon police station OC Mohammad Mohsin; and former DNCC councillor Faridur Rahman Khan Arin.

In the second case, over the killing of 11 people and the injury of dozens in Uttara, the prosecution pressed formal charges against 26 accused on two counts.

According to the first charge, on July 18, 2024, police members and armed AL activists opened fire on unarmed protesters on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and adjoining areas, killing at least seven people, including Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mughdho and Sajeeb Sarkar, and seriously injuring many others.

Mughdho, an MBA student of Bangladesh University of Professionals, was shot dead in Uttara's Sector 3 while helping injured protesters and distributing

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Defence seeks discharge of Joy, Palak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A state-appointed defence counsel yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that Sajeeb Wazed Joy was falsely implicated in a crimes against humanity case to prevent his return to the country.

During the charge hearing, defence lawyer Monjur Alam sought Joy's discharge, claiming the charges were baseless and that the prosecution had failed to submit any documentary evidence in support of the allegations.

"Since Joy is the son of a former prime minister, there is a possibility of his return to politics in Bangladesh in the future, and that is why he has been made an accused to tarnish his image," Monjur told journalists after the proceedings.

Joy, the son of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, served as her ICT adviser. He and former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak were named as accused in a case filed over alleged crimes against humanity committed during the July 2024 mass uprising.

The prosecution brought three charges against Joy and Palak, accusing them of inciting violent crackdowns on protesters, during which more than 1,400 people were killed and over 25,000 injured; ordering internet shutdowns to conceal the atrocities; and directing law enforcement agencies and ruling party cadres to open fire on demonstrators.

The defence lawyer said his client had been appointed as an honorary adviser and had no authority

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মোটরযানের এক্সেল লোড নিয়ন্ত্রণ সংক্রান্ত

জরুরী গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, অতিরিক্ত ওজন বহন সৃষ্ট মহাসড়কের ক্ষতিগ্রস্ততা ও সরকারী সম্পদ রক্ষার্থে সরকারী নীতিমালা এবং উর্ধ্বতন কর্তৃপক্ষের সদয় নির্দেশক্রমে ঢাকা(মিরপুর)- উত্তরা- পাটুরিয়া জাতীয় মহাসড়ক (এন-৫) এর ৪১তম কিয়মি এ অবস্থিত বাথুলী এক্সেল লোড কন্ট্রোল স্টেশনটি আগামী ২২ জানুয়ারী ২০২৬ খ্রিঃ হতে পরিচালনা করা হবে। এ লক্ষ্যে সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ কর্তৃক গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক উক্ত মহাসড়কে চলাচলকারী মোটরযানের অনুমোদিত সর্বোচ্চ নিম্নেবর্ণিত ওজনসীমা (যানবাহন ও মালামালসহ) মেনে চলার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	এক্সেল সংখ্যা	চাকার সংখ্যা	সর্বোচ্চ ওজনসীমা
০১	২ এক্সেল	৬ চাকা	২২ টন
০২	৩ এক্সেল	১০ চাকা	৩০ টন
০৩	৪ এক্সেল	১৪ চাকা	৪০ টন
০৪	৫ এক্সেল	১৮ চাকা	৪৭ টন
০৫	৬ এক্সেল	২২ চাকা	৪৯ টন
০৬	৭ এক্সেল	২৬ চাকা	৫২ টন

প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য যে, বর্ণিত ওজনসীমার অতিরিক্ত ওজন বহনকারী যানবাহনকে অনিবার্হ কোন কারণে উৎস ফেরত পাঠানো সম্ভব না হলে ২২ জানুয়ারী ২০২৬ খ্রিঃ হতে নিম্নোক্ত হারে জরিমানা আরোপ কার্যকর করা হবে:-

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- পরবর্তী প্রতিটন বা এর ভগ্নাংশের জন্য ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা

উপরোক্ত নির্দেশনা/ সিদ্ধান্ত বাস্তবায়নে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে সার্বিক সহযোগিতা প্রদানের জন্য বিনীত অনুরোধ করা হলো।

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সড়ক বিভাগ, মানিকগঞ্জ।

No legal bar to Pabna-1, 2 election on February 12: SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday ruled that there is no legal obstacle to holding elections in the Pabna-1 and Pabna-2 constituencies on February 12.

The polls in the two constituencies will be held according to the boundaries set out in the gazette issued by the Election Commission on September 4 last year following the delimitation.

Accordingly, the apex court said Santhia upazila will fall under the Pabna-1 constituency, while Sujanagar and Bera upazilas together will form the Pabna-2, court sources said.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, passed the order after hearing a leave-to-appeal petition against a High Court verdict that had declared illegal the EC gazette notification of September 4 last year, which had attached four unions and Bera municipality of Pabna-1 to Pabna-2.

The SC also stayed the HC verdict till disposal of the appeal against the judgement, sources at the court said.

Sathia will fall under Pabna-1 while Sujanagar, Bera upazilas under Pabna-2 constituency.

Barrister Muhammad Nazibur Rahman Momen, Jamaat-e-Islami candidate for Pabna-1, filed the leave to appeal petition on Monday, seeking an order directing the Election Commission to lift its stay on election activities in the two Pabna constituencies.

Barrister Imran Siddiq appeared for Nazibur Rahman during hearing of the leave to appeal petition yesterday.

On January 10, citing an Appellate Division order related to constituency delimitation for the 13th parliamentary election, the EC decided to stay election-related activities in Pabna-1 and Pabna-2 until further instructions.

Earlier, on January 5, the Appellate Division stayed the amended gazette notification issued by the EC on December 24 last year, which redefined the boundaries of the two constituencies. The stay order will remain in force until the hearing of the leave to appeal filed against the HC judgment, the SC had said.

Mohammed Mohsin passes away

CITY DESK

Mohammed Mohsin, a former ambassador, foreign secretary and assistant secretary general of the OIC, passed away yesterday, said a press release.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Juma prayers today.

From there he will be taken to Siddique Manzil, his ancestral home in Cumilla, for burial.

Mohsin is survived by his daughter, son, son-in-law and grandchildren, great grandchildren and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.



PHOTO: STAR

Kutukchhari bridge work drags on for 4 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The construction of the Kutukchhari bridge on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari regional highway has remained incomplete for more than four years despite two deadline extensions, causing severe hardship for commuters on the route.

The road is the only direct link for residents of Kutukchhari, Ghilachhari and Naniarchar upazilas of Rangamati, as well as Mohalchhari and Sadar upazilas of Khagrachhari, to reach Rangamati district town.

With the bridge still unfinished, locals, including patients, students and farmers, are being forced to use a dilapidated, pothole-ridden bypass road and an old, vulnerable Bailey bridge, often risking safety and enduring longer travel times.

A recent visit to the site found that only a couple of pillars have been built, while some rods lay on

the roadside. No other construction materials were visible and not a single worker was present.

Vehicles and pedestrians were seen taking turns to cross between the two ends using the bypass road and the old bridge.

According to Roads and Highways Department sources in



Rangamati, after the Kutukchhari Bailey bridge collapsed in January 2021, a decision was taken to construct a new 81-metre-long bridge.

In July 2022, two firms -- Messrs Sardar Enterprises and Messrs Rangamati Traders -- jointly began

the Tk 14.29 crore project. However, despite the original deadline ending in 2024, there was little progress.

The deadline was extended by one year to 2025, but with only about 45 percent of the work completed, it was extended again until March 2026.

"Transporting critical patients to hospitals or agricultural produce to markets has become extremely difficult due to the incomplete bridge," said Babudhan Chakma, a local resident.

"If the bridge were built promptly, it would have benefitted us all," said Jasim Uddin, a local CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver.

Representatives of the two firms could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts.

Sabuj Chakma, executive engineer of RHD in Rangamati, said a recommendation would be sent to higher authorities to cancel the contract if the work is not completed within the extended period.

Defence seeks discharge of Joy BNP

FROM PAGE 3

to make decisions. He also said Joy had no authority to issue any order or instruction to Palak.

When the tribunal observed that although Joy was an adviser, he did not take steps to prevent the crimes, the defence argued that he held no executive authority.

As the prosecution argued that the internet was shut down to conceal

the atrocities and that the highest number of protesters were killed in the three days following the shutdown, Palak, who was in the dock, said on August 2, during the movement, he had decided to step down in line with the students' demands.

He said he had spoken in favour of the protesters at a cabinet meeting and had informed the former PM of his decision to resign.

Palak also claimed that the internet had never been shut down and the international airport remained operational.

The tribunal chair then asked him to sit, saying it would hear him further when necessary.

Following the hearing, the tribunal fixed January 21 for passing an order on

whether charges would be framed in the case.

Meanwhile, the prosecution yesterday sought the highest punishment for all 16 accused after concluding its arguments before the International Crimes Tribunal-2 in a case filed over the killing of seven people, six of whom were later set on fire in Ashulia.

Defence arguments in that case will begin on Sunday.

FROM PAGE 3

He stressed that without ensuring administrative neutrality, a level playing field could not exist.

According to the schedule, election campaigning is supposed to begin on January 22.

"Campaigning should not be happening now. Yet in several areas, candidates, particularly from certain parties, are freely conducting election campaigns," he said, adding that his party activists were not electioneering.

He also called on the EC to ensure security for all party leaders and candidates and demanded the installation of CCTV cameras at polling centres.

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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প্রতি কপি ৮০ টাকা
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ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০
ফোন : ০১৮১৭-০৫৭৭৮০
০১৬২০-২৩৫৬৬১

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 16

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5:30	12:30	4:00	5:36	7:00
JAMAAT	6:05	1:15	4:15	5:40	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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BSc Engineering and BBA Programmes	Eligibility	Postgraduate Programmes in Engineering
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Sixty more aspirants get back candidacy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty more aspirants regained their candidacy yesterday as the Election Commission declared their nomination appeals valid.

The EC heard a total of 104 appeals on the sixth day of hearings against returning officers' decisions to reject nomination papers.

Of these, 29 were rejected, EC Director (Public Relations) Ruhul Amin Mollik said in a press release issued last night.

The commission also declared invalid five appeals filed against the validity of nomination papers. As a result, the candidacies in Pirojpur-1, Sunamganj-3, Jashore-4, Chattogram-14 and Chattogram-7 will remain valid.

Of the 104 appeals heard, 37 independent candidates regained their candidacy, while 17 independent aspirants lost theirs. The commission kept 10 appeals pending for further hearings for various reasons.

Over the last six days, the EC has heard a total of 484 appeals, approving 337 and rejecting 110.

The EC began hearing appeals earlier this month. The hearings, led by Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin along with four other commissioners, will continue daily until January 18.

As of yesterday, a total of 338 aspirants have regained their candidacy following the hearings.

In Pirojpur-1, Jamaat-e-Islami candidate Masud Saidi filed an appeal against BNP candidate Alamgir Hossain. The EC rejected the appeal and upheld Alamgir Hossain's candidacy.

Syndicate within EC selling NID data: CID

Over 3.5 lakh records accessed in a month; 2 EC staffers held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A syndicate within the Election Commission's National Identity Registration Wing has allegedly been selling citizens' personal data and earning several crores every month, according to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The CID arrested two EC staffers who are allegedly part of the nexus. They are: Al Amin, 39, a data-entry operator at the NID wing under the Director General of the NID Registration Wing; and Habibullah, 41, a computer operator and office assistant at the EC office in Gazaria, Munshiganj.

A team from the CID's Cyber Police Centre arrested Al Amin from Agargaon and Habibullah from the Chandrima area of Mohammadpur on Wednesday, CID officials said.

Briefing the media at CID headquarters yesterday, Deputy Inspector General Abul Basar Talukder said that 1,12,150 NID records were accessed within just one week, while 3,65,608 records were viewed over a 30-day period, citing an internal inquiry by the commission.

"If the data were sold at Tk 300 per record, the accused illegally earned around Tk 11 crore," the DIG said.

The official also said the arrestees, during initial questioning, admitted that they had accessed the NID's core server at the EC Secretariat using OTP transfers and sold citizens' personal data through various social media platforms.

Trump right about Zelensky stalling peace deal: Kremlin Warns Kyiv time running out in Ukraine war

AGENCIES

The Kremlin said yesterday that Russia agreed with US President Donald Trump that it was Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, not Russia, who was holding up a potential peace deal to end the war in Ukraine.

Trump's assessment in an interview with Reuters contrasted to that of European allies, who have consistently argued that Moscow has little interest in ending the fighting and wants to take as much territory as it can while seeking to stave off further Western sanctions, reports Reuters.

"I think he's ready to make a deal,"



A protester shields themselves as federal agents fire munitions in Minneapolis, Minnesota, US on Wednesday, amid rising tensions after a federal agent fatally shot a woman last week. President Trump has threatened to deploy the military as unrest roils Minnesota.

PHOTO: REUTERS



US bid to take Greenland ‘remains intact’

Says Danish PM after White House talks; Europe sends more troops to the Arctic island

AGENCIES

Denmark's prime minister said yesterday the US ambition to take control of Greenland remained "intact" and that there was still a fundamental disagreement between the countries, despite high-stakes White House talks.

"There is a fundamental disagreement, because the American ambition to take over Greenland remains intact. This is obviously a serious matter, and we are therefore continuing our efforts to prevent this scenario from becoming a reality," Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said in a statement.

European military personnel were due to begin arriving in Greenland yesterday, shortly after the White House talks between American, Danish and Greenlandic officials in Washington failed to resolve "fundamental



disagreement" over the mineral-rich, strategic Arctic island.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly vowed to take control of the autonomous Danish territory, arguing that it is vital for US security.

France, Sweden, Germany and Norway announced Wednesday that they would deploy military personnel as part of a reconnaissance mission to Greenland's capital Nuuk.

"Soldiers of Nato are expected to be more present in Greenland from today and in the coming days. It is expected that there will be more military flights and ships," Greenland's deputy prime minister Mute Egede told a news conference on Wednesday, adding they would be "training".

"The first French military personnel are already on their way. Others will follow," French President Emmanuel Macron said on X.

“France and the Europeans must continue to be present wherever their interests are threatened...”

French President Emmanuel Macron

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These are 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 contract to the PE's Support Desk (01768015538).

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৫৯৪(২)/১৫/০১/২৬

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

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৩, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০

বিজ্ঞপ্তি
অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬
স্থানঃ বাংলা একাডেমি প্রাঙ্গণ ও সোহরাওয়ার্দী উদ্যান

অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬-এ অংশগ্রহণ করতে আগ্রহী প্রকৃত প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে স্টলের আবেদনপত্র জমা দেওয়ার জন্য আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। আবেদনপত্র অনলাইনে www.ba21bookfair.com-এই ওয়েবসাইটে পূরণ করা যাবে। পুরোনো (২০২৫ সালের বইমেলায় অংশগ্রহণকারী) যেসব প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠান পূর্বের আকারের (১, ২, ৩ ও ৪ ইউনিটের স্টল বা প্যাভিলিয়ন) স্টল পেতে আগ্রহী তারা অনলাইনে ১৮.০১.২০২৬ থেকে ২৫.০১.২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত আবেদন করতে পারবে।

আবেদনপত্রের সঙ্গে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ, লেখকের সঙ্গে সম্পাদিত সর্বশেষ একটি চুক্তিপত্রের ১ম ও শেষ পাতা, লেখককে প্রদত্ত সম্মানির সাম্প্রতিক প্রমাণক, আর্কাইভস্ ও গ্রন্থাগার অধিদপ্তরে গ্রন্থ জমা প্রদানের রসিদ/প্রত্যয়নপত্র এবং অগ্নি-সাইক্লোন বিমার প্রমাণক আপলোড করতে হবে।

নতুন প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠান অথবা যেসব প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠান পূর্বের আকার থেকে বর্ধিত স্টল বা প্যাভিলিয়ন পেতে আগ্রহী সেসব প্রতিষ্ঠান বাংলা একাডেমি থেকে তথ্যফরম/আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ ও পূরণ করে উপর্যুক্ত প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদিসংবলিত আবেদন বইসহ (ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫-এর মধ্যে প্রকাশিত কমপক্ষে ৩০টি মানসম্মত বই) ২০.০১.২০২৬ থেকে ২৬.০১.২০২৬ তারিখ (ছুটির দিনসহ) সকাল ১০:০০টা থেকে সন্ধ্যা ৬:০০টার মধ্যে একাডেমির ড. মুহম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ ভবনের নিচতলায় অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষ থেকে সংগ্রহ ও জমা দেওয়া যাবে। বইয়ের মান ও অন্যান্য কাগজ/দলিল যাচাই শেষে স্টল বরাদ্দের ব্যাপারে বইমেলা পরিচালনা কমিটি সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করবে।

অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র জমা দিতে অপারগ প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ সরাসরি আবেদনপত্র জমা দিতে পারবে। অনলাইনে বা সরাসরি প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬ পরিচালনা কমিটি যাচাই-বাছাই করে ৩১.০১.২০২৬ তারিখ অনলাইনে প্রকাশ করবে। বরাদ্দপ্রাপ্ত স্টলের ভাড়া ব্যাংকে জমা দিয়ে জমার রসিদ ০১.০২.২০২৬ থেকে ০৯.০২.২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে আপলোড করতে হবে এবং ০১ (এক) কপি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামসহ একাডেমির ড. মুহম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ ভবনের নিচতলায় অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষ জমা দিতে হবে। যেসব প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্টল ভাড়া উপর্যুক্ত সময়ের মধ্যে জমা হবে না, সেসব প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম লটারির তালিকার বাইরে থাকবে। ভাড়া বাবদ প্রদেয় টাকা অগ্রাধী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-র যে কোনো অনলাইন শাখা থেকে অগ্রাধী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, বাংলা একাডেমি শাখার বাংলা একাডেমি অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা সঞ্চয়ী হিসাব নম্বর ০২০০০১৪০৪৯২৩১-এ জমা দিতে হবে। টাকা জমার রসিদে প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও অনলাইন রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর থাকা অপরিহার্য।

অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬-এর নীতিমালা ও নিয়মাবলি মেনে চলতে হবে। এই নীতিমালা ও নিয়মাবলি ওয়েবসাইট থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

ড. মোঃ সেলিম রেজা
সচিব, বাংলা একাডেমি
ও
সদস্য-সচিব
অমর একুশে বইমেলা ২০২৬ পরিচালনা কমিটি
বাংলা একাডেমি, ঢাকা-১০০০

GD-112

When crime becomes an economic risk

Time to restore stability as a fundamental economic imperative

As the World Economic Forum (WEF) warns of a coming “stormy” period for the global economy, Bangladesh is already living through a phase of turbulence. The country’s most serious business threats are now identified as “crime and illicit economic activity.” This is only logical. For when businesses fear lawlessness more than other challenges, it reflects a breakdown in the stability and predictability essential for investment, job creation, and economic recovery.

The WEF’s Global Risks Report 2026, based on responses from more than 1,300 experts and over 11,000 business leaders across 116 economies, paints a dismal global picture. Half of all respondents said they expect the world to enter a stormy phase, while only one percent foresee calm conditions. For countries like Bangladesh, many of these global risks are not distant possibilities; they are already unfolding on the ground.

One of the most serious global threats identified is geoeconomic confrontation, driven by the growing use of tariffs, sanctions, and trade restrictions as political weapons. As major powers escalate economic rivalry, smaller, trade-dependent countries like Bangladesh are increasingly caught in the crossfire. In line with previous forecasts, inflation also remains a severe risk for Bangladesh. Despite recent efforts by the central bank, high prices continue to squeeze households and businesses. Rising debt vulnerability adds another layer of concern. High levels of debt are reducing the country’s ability to absorb shocks.

Bangladesh’s challenges mirror those of its neighbours to some extent. Sri Lanka, for instance, is still recovering from its 2022 sovereign debt crisis, with inflation and public debt remaining its top risks. Nepal faces chronic instability, driven by weak public services and high unemployment. Across all three countries, the WEF report identifies a shared problem: citizens feel excluded from political decision-making and are losing hope for better livelihoods.

South Asia is particularly vulnerable to the rivalry between the United States and China. For countries seeking to remain non-aligned, the pressure is intensifying. The weakening of the World Trade Organization further leaves smaller economies with fewer safeguards in trade disputes. For Bangladesh, this poses a direct threat to the garment sector—the backbone of its economy. Any disruption to global trade flows could have severe consequences for exports, employment, and growth.

As the world moves towards what the WEF describes as a “multipolar or fragmented order,” the message for Bangladesh is stark. The era of easy growth driven by globalisation seems to be over. What lies ahead is a test of resilience: rebuilding trust in institutions, restoring law and order, and creating inclusive economic opportunities.

To weather the current spell of turbulence, Bangladesh’s next elected government must prioritise the restoration of domestic stability by treating law and order not just as a security issue, but also as an economic imperative. At the same time, the authorities must address the deep-seated inequality and lack of economic opportunity that drive societal polarisation, ensuring that economic reforms are inclusive enough to mitigate the grievances of excluded citizens.

Road blockades must not become a norm

People in Dhaka are paying the price for frequent street demos

The capital city has once again been brought to a standstill by a fresh round of blockades and street protests, with key intersections repeatedly shut down over the past couple of days. Students from the seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University blocked multiple roads demanding the promulgation of an ordinance for the proposed Dhaka Central University. At the same time, students of Tejgaon College took to the streets demanding justice for the killing of a fellow student. As vital intersections were occupied, traffic across large parts of the city was paralysed for hours at a stretch.

The consequences for the public were devastating. Buses failed to move on several routes, CNG-run auto-rickshaws were stuck in endless tailbacks, and thousands of commuters were forced to walk long distances after failing to find a ride. Parents struggled with exhausted children, hospital visits were delayed, and drivers lost precious working hours and income while sitting idle in traffic.

The crisis involving the seven colleges is not new. It dates back to 2017, when they were affiliated with Dhaka University without adequate preparation, resulting in prolonged academic and administrative complications. In that sense, the students’ grievances are understandable. However, the government has stated that a revised draft ordinance for Dhaka Central University has been sent for interministerial review and will soon be placed before the Advisory Council after legal vetting. This suggests that the process, however slow, is moving forward. Hence, resorting to blocking the roads is neither justified nor constructive.

It is also concerning that disruptive street demonstrations have become almost routine in post-uprising Bangladesh. Various groups staged protests with a wide range of demands, while the interim government was mostly unprepared to resolve these issues or handle the situations as it should have. Now that 17 months have passed since it assumed office, and with the national election less than a month away, the government must be better prepared and more decisive in dealing with such situations. We urge the government to urgently address the grievances of the protesting students, engage in dialogue where necessary, and provide clear assurances with a credible timeline for a solution. Protesters must also exercise restraint. Their right to protest must be balanced with the responsibility to safeguard public welfare.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Persian Gulf War begins

On this day in 1991, the Persian Gulf War, triggered by Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait in August 1990, began with a US-led air offensive against Iraq that continued until a ceasefire was declared on February 28.

Grievance, dialogue, and the search for political closure



A CLOSER LOOK

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TASNEEM TAYEB

Grievance is often spoken of as excess these days—too emotional, too resistant to pragmatism. In political life, it is frequently treated as something to be managed or simply waited out. Yet, grievance rarely persists because it is irrational. It persists because it has not found closure, because it has not been answered in a way that feels adequate. Grievance is not noise. It is unfinished political speech.

In moments of transition, this unfinished quality becomes especially visible. In Bangladesh, political change has a way of drawing unresolved grievances to the surface. Memory sharpens. Old injuries re-emerge. What was once muted becomes loud. This is neither accidental nor inherently destructive. Grievance, after all, is not merely complaint; it is lingering memory seeking relevance.

July 2024 marked such a moment for Bangladesh. What unfolded that month was not only a confrontation over power, but a rupture in how political voice was expressed and received. The streets did not merely register dissent; they revealed a deeper exhaustion with being unheard. Grievances that had long circulated in fragments—across campuses, institutions, in hushed conversations—suddenly acquired a collective register. For many, July became less an event than a reference point: a reminder that when dialogue is deferred too long, it does not disappear. It changes form.

What followed in the months after July was equally telling, and by then, the cost of waiting had already begun to show. Episodes of mob violence—directed at institutions, at symbols, and at times at one another—started to occur. These did not emerge in a political vacuum, nor were they simply moments of unthinking rage. They reflected something more unsettled: the thinning of mediated political conversation. Where dialogue receded, action rushed in.

Political theory offers an uncomfortable lens here. The philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin warned against monologic discourse—a mode of speech that allows no reply,

that assumes moral finality and treats disagreement not as difference but as bad faith. Monologue, in his formulation, does not merely silence other voices; it reorganises the world so that only one voice feels legitimate.

Unanswered grievance is particularly vulnerable to this narrowing. It begins as a call to be heard. Over time, if met only with deferral or dismissal, it hardens into certainty. The language of injury contracts into a single register.



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

Nuance begins to sound evasive. Alternatives feel suspect. Politics ceases to resemble conversation and begins to resemble performance, often theatrical and increasingly hollow.

Mob violence is one of the clearest symptoms of this shift. It emerges not when grievance is loud, but when it is trapped—when there are no institutions that can be trusted, no processes believed to respond, and no language that feels consequential. In such times, violence becomes not only destructive but also declarative, a way of being seen when other forms of visibility have ostensibly failed.

At this point, it is important to clarify that grievance does not curdle into coercion on its own. It does so when state or political actors

repeatedly fail to answer it; when deferral is mistaken for stability, and silence is treated as resolution. This is not always malicious. But there are consequences nonetheless.

Politics, like language, cannot survive monologue for long.

Bakhtin’s insistence on dialogism—the idea that meaning is produced between voices rather than imposed by one—offers a perspective that is both theoretical and practical. Dialogue does not require agreement. It requires the possibility of reply without dismissal. It requires institutions that absorb conflict rather than expel it, and a political culture that recognises disagreement as a condition of legitimacy rather than a threat to it.

For the next government in Bangladesh, this distinction will matter deeply. The task will not be



to suppress grievance or replace it with manufactured optimism. That rarely works. And even when it does, it does not last long. The task will be more nuanced and political: to create conditions in which grievance can be articulated without spilling into coercive action.

This is where restraint must be recognised not as weakness, but as political maturity.

Restraint does not mean silence. It means calibration. It means recognising that escalation may feel responsive—sometimes even necessary—when patience has already been stretched thin, but when rhetoric becomes the primary currency of politics, strategy thins. Negotiation loses legitimacy. Institutions begin to forfeit their authority. And it is here

Bangladesh must reclaim its digital and material commons



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BENZIR AHAMMED SHAWON

In the 18th century, the “enclosure movement” swept across Europe. Powerful landlords fenced off common lands, pastures and forests that communities had used collectively for generations. They were turned into private properties. This act of primitive accumulation forced independent farmers to become wage labourers, stripping them of their autonomy and concentrating wealth in the hands of a few. Today, in a rapidly shifting Bangladesh, a similar but invisible process is underway. The “land” being enclosed is not just soil, but human knowledge, experience and wisdom. The fences are not made of wood, but of proprietary algorithms and energy-hungry data centres. The risk for a country like Bangladesh is not just technological lag; it is the prospect of becoming a “digital colony”—a territory that provides the raw data and physical energy for someone else’s AI empire, while its own economy remains stunted.

To understand the stakes, one must recognise the mechanism of this colonisation. Scholars Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias describe this as the “double logic” of extraction. First, the data is extracted from us, often without meaningful consent, under the guise of “free services.” Second, this data is

transformed into private capital (such as AI models and predictive analytics) from which the original producers, the citizens, are excluded.

Take the digital landscape of Dhaka. In the past, a local driver or shopkeeper held “sovereign” knowledge of their neighbourhood’s traffic patterns or consumer demand. Today, that knowledge has been extracted and enclosed by global platforms. This creates a massive informational asymmetry. The platform now knows more than the driver or the passenger. It uses this data to set prices that extract maximum value from the rider while squeezing the worker.

The value generated by millions of interactions in Bangladesh does not stay here to build local infrastructure; it flows upwards to servers in the US or Europe. This mirrors the colonial patterns of the past: raw materials are exported and finished goods are imported. We get the app, but we lose the industry.

However, the enclosure is not just digital. As Thijs Van de Graaf, associate professor of international politics at Ghent University in Belgium, wrote in the December 2025 issue of *Finance & Development*, the rise of AI has triggered a global “resource race” that is anything but virtual. AI is often

portrayed as intangible, living in the “cloud,” but the reality is grounded in steel, silicon and, crucially, electricity.

Van de Graaf informs us that AI’s physical expansion creates a geopolitical trap, with data centre energy consumption now rivalling nuclear plants. Tech giants are targeting countries like Bangladesh for affordable resources. However, hosting foreign servers could strain

The true path to sovereignty is ‘data as a commons.’ Just as rivers are shared resources, critical national data must be treated as a collective asset, not foreign private property. Securing this through a national data trust enables local start-ups to build solutions tailored to our environment and to break reliance on biased Western AI. This ensures digital wealth is governed for the public benefit rather than extracted abroad.

our limited gas and water supplies, as the data would remain under foreign ownership. We risk exporting vital energy and data, receiving only carbon emissions and subscription fees in return, which is the harsh material reality of digital enclosure.

that closure becomes most elusive.

Closure cannot be declared. It has to be worked towards, collectively.

Political closure does not mean forgetting. It means answering. It is not achieved by settling the past once and for all, but by changing how the past is allowed to speak in the present—by widening the range of possible responses without erasing the original injury. Closure is not the disappearance of grievance, but its translation: from the language of injury into the language of outcome.

This translation depends on institutions that function as mediators rather than enforcers: courts that are trusted, administrative systems that respond, political channels that absorb dissent without immediately criminalising it. It depends on communication that is protected from spectacle. Back-channel dialogue matters here as a form of insulation. Quiet conversation allows positions to evolve without public spectacle. It creates space for movement rather than defence.

Equally important is the shaping of public expectations. Governments often underestimate how much reform fails not at the policy stage, but in the gap between what people are encouraged to expect and what politics can realistically deliver. Take the upcoming February election, for instance. So much expectation is being built around it, but practically speaking, how much can the outcomes deliver? When grievance is amplified without limits, outcomes have nowhere to land, except back on the streets.

Unresolved grievances demand attention precisely because they continue to shape present behaviour. There is also a need to recognise that attention does not require perpetual escalation. Sometimes it requires patience. Sometimes, it requires accepting that not every answer will arrive quickly or clearly as expected.

As Bangladesh approaches another political transition, the question is not whether grievance will be present. It will be. The question is whether the next government or power structure can sustain a genuinely dialogic political culture, one in which grievance does not have to shout, or strike, in order to be acknowledged, and dialogue does not have to apologise for existing.

That is what political maturity looks like: not the absence of grievance, but the restoration of meaningful dialogue.

From land to sea: Rethinking our future in a fragmented world



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TARIQ KARIM

The world today has changed the fundamental premises and contours of global politics from what was established and has guided international relations since the end of World War II. But are we ready for this dramatically changed world? Living in the present and planning for a better future requires some deep introspection of the past.

I was born at a time when the world was at war with itself, in a country in the grips of the worst famine in its recent recorded history. World War II had not yet ended.

After the end of the war, I grew up with the myth that the entire world had now emerged into a magical post-colonial “New World Order,” with rainbows lighting up the horizon of our future. It was many years later that the harsh process of demystification started sinking in. There was a growing realisation that, post-1945, former colonised peoples like me had actually become denizens of a post-colonial neo-Westphalian world disorder.

In 1971, Bangladesh wrested its independence at the height of the Cold War. In a sense, its birth was midwifed by the Cold War, and its politics also wet-nursed by it, leaving a lasting impact on its collective mindset and transforming us into a schizophrenic polity. However, the Cold War, at its height, also awakened and unleashed on the world a genie named Globalisation. This genie effectively telescoped time and space across our planetary domain, making them almost irrelevant.

The Cold War ended in the early 90s with the replacement of the earlier bipolar world by a unipolar world, with only one superpower that increasingly surveyed the rest of the world as its own playground, endeavouring like an Olympian god to fashion in his own image the global domain that it surveyed. It did not easily brook any challenge to what it viewed as its sole prerogative. However,



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

perhaps as an unintended consequence of its policies and actions, the world has also witnessed in the last 40 years the gradual rise of a China determined to build resilience for itself from within and positioning itself as a counter-balancing power now threatening unipolarity.

Now, we see yet another cold war waging around us. I see Europe fulminating, at the precipice of a likely continent-wide conflict. Our own region is even more sharply divided, with hostilities barely concealed. I see Bangladesh as a brittle walnut, squarely caught in the jaws of two nutcrackers: one regional, that is India and China; the other global, namely the Indo-Pacific narrative and the BRI counter-narrative. What should we

do then? Let us begin with a frank acknowledgement: while our world is more interconnected than ever before, it is also more fractured than ever, with divisions running deep and cutting across nations and communities. Social media, while connecting billions, often amplifies echo chambers that risk being as false as true, and simultaneously intensifies our sense of separation. Peoples

persevering in our efforts with endless patience. So, can we dare hope for a better tomorrow?

I do believe that the gates to our future do not proclaim on a forbidding billboard the dire warning to “abandon all hope, ye who enter here!” Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges, there are many signs of hope. Young people around the world are leading movements for climate action, social justice,

itself at the very heart of the two competing narratives: the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) and China’s Belt and Road (BRI) initiative. Why?

Through the Strait of Malacca, the Bay of Bengal links the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, amplifying its strategic value. Its blue water location connects West and South Asia with Southeast and East Asia. The interests of several major global powers also converge here, with military, economic, and strategic concerns. The region’s resources and shipping lanes are now crucial in the geopolitical calculus of these actors. The Bay of Bengal serves as a major route for global trade, handling about half the world’s container traffic and 33 percent of world trade. Its ports are vital for the economic interests of its surrounding countries and external powers.

In the vortex of the current global churning, Bangladesh is caught squarely between major powers, particularly the US, India, and China. Perhaps, being at the epicentre of this configuration, it still lacks self-awareness of its strategic importance or potential. Bangladesh’s foreign policy must continue to prioritise, first and foremost, its own national interests and its own overall societal development. Doing so will require positive engagement with all powers—whether small, medium, large, or super in scale. But while nurturing relations with all, it must abstain from the temptation of siding with any one power against any other.

As an emerging potential middle power itself, Bangladesh must work with other regional middle powers, endeavouring to form a fraternity with all its neighbours in South, Southeast, and East Asia, developing not only domestic self-reliance but also forming a collective regional autarky at the same time. It can, and must, play a seminal leadership role in regional diplomacy, working actively with its neighbours in its immediate west, north, and east towards realising the vision of a “Bay of Bengal Economic Cooperation Community.”

For success in this endeavour, Bangladesh must tread upon a razor-thin path of “strategic autonomy” that walks hand in hand with “active neutrality.” But it can aspire to do so only if its people first arrive at domestic consensus. If we, the people, desire change in the global order, that change must begin with us at home first.

Debunking the viral misinformation regarding second marriage



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is a columnist for The Daily Star. She can be reached at nawalnoshin1@gmail.com.

NOSHIN NAWAL

Somewhere between the headline and the comment section, Bangladeshi women were recently told a right had been snatched away. Apparently, overnight, the courts decided wives no longer mattered, consent had been cancelled, and patriarchy had received a fresh High Court seal of approval. Islam, of course, was dragged into the mess because no moral panic in this country is complete without a selective religious cameo. Except none of that actually happened. The law has been settled for decades. The problem lies in the careless spread of misinformation through selective reporting, truncated quotations, and headlines that prioritise virality over accuracy. What followed was not a debate about women’s rights or Islamic principles but a textbook example of how legal judgments are distorted when only the most provocative line is circulated.

The recent judgment of the High Court did not introduce a new rule, dilute existing safeguards, or re-engineer family law. It dismissed a writ petition and reaffirmed the operation of Section 6 of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961. That is the entirety of what happened, but the public was not told this in full. Instead, one fragment of the judgment was isolated, stripped of context, and circulated. “Wife’s consent not required” became the headline, while what is required, how decisions are made, and what consequences follow were quietly omitted. This is not a misunderstanding. It is a misrepresentation.

At the centre of the controversy is Section 6 of the law, a provision that regulates polygamy for Muslim men. Section 6 does not permit a man to remarry freely. It imposes a procedural barrier. A man who wishes to contract another marriage during the subsistence of an existing one must apply in writing to an Arbitration Council led by the concerned union parishad chairman, stating his reasons. The council, also comprising one representative nominated by the husband and one by the wife, must hear both parties and decide whether the proposed marriage is “necessary” and “just.” If a man bypasses this process and marries anyway, the consequences

are immediate and tangible. The marriage cannot be lawfully registered. The entire dower (*denmohor*) to the first wife becomes payable at once. Penal liability follows. This is not symbolic regulation. It is enforceable law.

The law has always required prior written permission from the Arbitration Council before a second marriage can be contracted. It has always imposed penalties if that process is bypassed, required notice to the existing wife and an opportunity for her to be heard. It has never

What the headlines did was focus obsessively on what the law does not require, while remaining conspicuously silent on what it does. There was little mention of the Arbitration Council, its composition, its decision-making role, or the consequences of marrying without permission. The judgment was not read as a whole; it was cherry-picked, sensationalised, and released into the wild.

framed her consent as a statutory prerequisite. The court did not newly discover this. It did not announce it as a reform. It simply restated the law as written. The writ petition asked the court to either strike down Section 6 or read into it a mandatory consent requirement. The court refused to do either. That refusal was reported as a rollback.

What the headlines did was focus obsessively on what the law does not require, while remaining conspicuously silent on what it does. There was little mention of the Arbitration Council, its composition, its decision-making role, or the consequences of marrying without permission. The judgment was not read as a whole; it was cherry-picked, sensationalised, and released into the wild. This style of reporting reshapes public perception. When readers are told only that consent is not required, they are led to believe that nothing stands in the way of a second marriage. The procedural safeguards disappear from view. The state’s regulatory role vanishes. The law is reduced. And it is not accidental. Outrage travels faster when complexity is removed.

However, what is particularly troubling is how the selective reporting erased women’s actual legal tools from the conversation. Bangladeshi family law recognises the enforceability of conditions in the *Nikah Nama* (Muslim marriage contract). A woman may stipulate restrictions on polygamy or reserve the right to divorce if her husband remarries. Courts enforce these clauses. They offer concrete protection. Yet, these protections rarely make it into viral posts.

In my conversation with Barrister Mariha Khan, advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, she explained that the judgment was never about sidelining women. It was about reaffirming where statutory authority lies. The Arbitration Council is the decision-making body. By circulating only the particular line, the actual regulatory structure was obscured, which left women feeling exposed rather than informed. This pattern of selective amplification has consequences. It undermines trust in institutions, creates panic without offering

remedies, and positions courts as adversaries rather than interpreters of law. Most damagingly, it denies women the information they require to protect themselves in real, practical ways. Misinformation disorients.

None of this is to argue that the law is sufficient or beyond critique. Section 6 remains vague. Arbitration Councils operate unevenly. Enforcement is inconsistent. These are legitimate issues that deserve sustained scrutiny. But critique must begin with accuracy. Reform cannot be built on a misreading of what the court actually said. By slipping one sentence out of a longer legal reasoning and presenting it as the whole story, some headlines replaced understanding with alarm. If there is a lesson here, it is not about polygamy, consent, or religion; it is about the cost of misinformation in a legal system where rights are procedural, contextual, and often misunderstood. Women are not protected by outrage triggered by half-truths; they are protected by full information, honest reporting, and the ability to distinguish between what the law says, what it does, and what it does not promise.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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TUESDAY’S ANSWERS

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Busy ‘lights, camera, action’ days for Dhallywood stars



VISUAL: ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

At the beginning of the new year, Dhallywood stars are spending a very busy time in front of the camera. Top actors and actresses are taking part in back-to-back film shootings at different locations in Bangladesh and abroad. From Shakib Khan to Apu Biswas, Siam Ahmed, Arifin Shuvoo, and Bidya Sinha Saha Mim—everyone is busy with their work. Let’s find out which star is shooting for which film and where the work is going on.

The news of Shakib Khan acting in the film *Prince* is not new. The latest update is that he is now in Sri Lanka for the shooting of the film. The movie is being directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud, and the shooting is currently taking place there. On the other hand, Siam Ahmed is shooting for the film *Rakkhosh*, directed by Mehedi Hassan Hridoy. The shooting is also going on in Sri Lanka. Siam said that the shooting is going very well and he hopes this film will bring something new to his career.

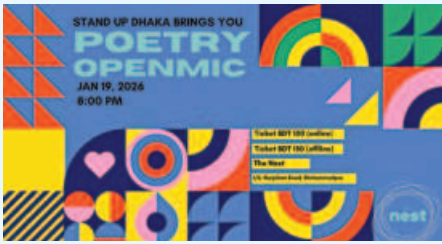
Apu Biswas and Shajal are acting together for the first time in the film *Durbar*, directed by Kamrul Hasan Fuad. Apu Biswas said that the work of *Durbar* is moving forward at a fast pace and the film will have many surprises. Shajal said that *Durbar* has a different story and a different kind of character. He believes the audience will like his pairing with Apu Biswas. Six-time National Film Award-winning actor Fazlur Rahman Babu is acting in a new film titled *Pressure Cooker*, directed by Raihan Rafi. He said that he is starting the year with a very good film that has a strong story and that he is enjoying the work. Puja Chery is currently shooting for the film *Dom* in Pabna. The film is being directed by Redoan Rony. Veteran actress Dolly Zahur is also in Pabna for the shooting. Besides, Chanchal Chowdhury has recently completed shooting there. Mosharraf Karim is acting in a new film titled *Bonolota Express*, directed by Tanim Noor. The film is based on the short novel *Kichukkhon* by renowned writer Humayun Ahmed. Chanchal Chowdhury is also acting in this film. Chanchal Chowdhury said that he is working on two new films at the same time, and the audience will see him in two very different characters. Azmeri Haque Badhan has also started the year with a new film. The name of her film is *Bonolota Express*. She said that she is acting in a very good story and a strong character, and she believes the audience will really like it.



‘Sultana’s Dream’ to premiere at STAR Cineplex today

The internationally acclaimed animated feature *Sultana’s Dream*, directed by Spanish filmmaker Isabel Herguera, will be released in Bangladesh today at STAR Cineplex. The film draws from Begum Rokeya’s feminist short story of the same name. It reimagines early 20th-century *Ladyland*, a utopia where women lead society through knowledge, science, and compassion. The film has premiered at major international festivals. Critics praised its visual craft and political voice. It blends hand-drawn animation with a lyrical narrative that links past and present feminist thought.

WHAT’S THE HAPS?



Poetry Open Mic

A new open-mic stage opens in Mohammadpur as poets and storytellers gather to share raw words and lived truths. From first-time voices to seasoned performers, the night invites language to breathe, stumble, and soar—turning a quiet corner of the city into a living page of sound and feeling. **DATE:** MONDAY | JANUARY 19, 2026 **TIME:** 8 PM ONWARDS **VENUE:** THE NEST, 1/6 NURJAHAN ROAD, MOHAMMADPUR

BTS announces massive world tour across 34 cities

BTS has announced a massive world tour, their first full global run in nearly four years, after a long global break. The tour begins April 9 at Goyang Sports Complex in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, following the release of their new album on March 20. The official poster dropped Tuesday night on Weverse. So far, 79 shows across 34 cities in North America, Europe, South America and Asia are confirmed. BTS last toured in 2022, ending *Permission to Dance on Stage* in Las Vegas. Since then, the group has stayed off the road. This tour marks a return for the group. North America starts April 25 in Florida. Europe follows in June–July. South America includes São Paulo and Buenos Aires.



NEWS

‘Over 3,400 dead in Iran’

FROM PAGE 12 has constituted the greatest threat to the Islamic republic since its inception in 1979. Rights groups say the crackdown by authorities, who exercise zero tolerance for dissent, has left at least 3,428 people dead. They also accuse the country’s theocratic leaders of using an internet blackout to cover up the brutality of their crackdown. In telephone talks yesterday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Saudi Arabian counterpart Faisal bin Farhan of the importance of “global condemnation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of regional countries”. He also reiterated that Iran would defend itself “against any foreign threat”. The developments came hours ahead of a UN Security Council meeting on Iran later yesterday, which was requested by the US. On Wednesday, Saudi Arabia informed Iran it would not allow its airspace or territory to be used to attack it, two sources close to the kingdom’s government told AFP. Up until Wednesday, the United States was threatening military action against Iran should it carry out the death penalty against people arrested over the protests. In an announcement at the White House, Trump said he had now received assurances from “very important sources on the other side” that executions would not go ahead. “They’ve said the killing has stopped

and the executions won’t take place -- there were supposed to be a lot of executions today and that the executions won’t take place -- and we’re going to find out,” Trump said. Asked by an AFP reporter in the Oval Office if US military action was now off the table, Trump, however, did not rule out possible US military action. “We’re going to watch it and see what the process is.” In separate comments, Trump told Reuters in an exclusive interview that Iranian opposition figure Reza Pahlavi “seems very nice” but expressed uncertainty over whether Pahlavi would be able to muster support within Iran to eventually take over. All eyes were on protester Erfan Soltani, 26, in prison in Karaj outside Tehran since his arrest, who is facing charges of propaganda against Iran’s Islamic system and acting against national security. Yesterday, the Iranian judiciary said Soltani has “not been sentenced to death” and if he is convicted, “the punishment, according to the law, will be imprisonment, as the death penalty does not exist for such charges”. Iran’s judiciary chief had vowed fast-track trials for those arrested, and prosecutors have said some detainees will face capital charges of “waging war against God”. State media reported hundreds of arrests and the detention of a foreign national for espionage, without giving details. In an interview with US network Fox News, Araghchi said there would be

“no hanging today or tomorrow”, while accusing US ally Israel of orchestrating violence in Iran, without providing evidence. Araghchi contends the protests devolved into widespread violence between January 7 and 10 because they were infiltrated by external “elements who had a plan to create a big number of killings in order to provoke President Trump to enter into this conflict and start a new war against Iran”. He said the Iranian government was “in full control” and reported an atmosphere of “calm” after what he called three days of “terrorist operation”. **Tarique, family call** FROM PAGE 1 Airport, he spoke with Prof Yunus over the phone while waiting at the VIP lounge. The two also briefly interacted on December 31 during the namaz-e-janaza of former prime minister Khaleda Zia at the Jatiya Sangsad complex, following her death a day earlier. Tarique Rahman was elected BNP chairman on January 9 through a unanimous decision of the party’s highest policymaking body, the National Standing Committee.

Khalilur, Taiyeb

FROM PAGE 12 This development, which came less than a month ahead of the February 12 national election, raised questions in the aviation industry. On August 26 last year, Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin was made chairman of Biman board while serving as adviser to the civil aviation ministry. At the time, many raised questions about his appointment as chairman of a company under his own ministry while holding the rank of a minister as an adviser, as it is tantamount to conflict of interest. The allegations, however, were rejected by the adviser. Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam told The Daily Star that he is surprised as the government included Khalilur, Taiyeb, and Akhtar as directors of the Biman board at the lag end of the interim government’s tenure. “It’s really very surprising why they were made directors. In my view, there might be several agenda of the interim government, including strengthening relations with Boeing, from which Biman is going to buy aircraft.” He also questioned how rational the appointment of EC Secretary Akhtar was at a time when he is busy with election-related activities.

BNP flags bulk deliveries of postal ballots

FROM PAGE 12 to the designated voters by the Bahrain postal service. The commission stressed that ballot secrecy was not compromised. Meanwhile, BNP spokesperson Mahdi Amin alleged that hundreds of ballots in Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia were delivered to workers linked to a particular party, reminding that organised voting is illegal. He also claimed that ballots are not being delivered to the designated voters. Mahdi also criticised the ballot design, noting that the BNP’s symbol was placed at the bottom, while rival symbols appeared in more easily identifiable positions. Election Commissioner Abdur Rahman Masud told The Daily Star that the commission had taken note of the BNP’s complaints. He said the symbols on the ballot were arranged alphabetically and that the matter would be reviewed. Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad called the complaints “lame excuses”. He also denied allegations that party activists abroad were collecting ballots, noting that Bahraini and Bangladeshi law prohibit party branches overseas. **POSTAL BALLOTING** On November 18, the EC launched

the “Postal Vote BD” app, allowing non-resident Bangladeshis in around 140 countries to register and vote. The CEC said about 1.3 crore Bangladeshis live abroad and described the initiative as a step toward ending their disenfranchisement. Between November 19 and January 5, a total of 767,141 expatriates from 121 countries registered digitally, including 204,836 women. Saudi Arabia recorded the highest number of registrations with 239,186 voters, followed by Malaysia (84,293) and Qatar (76,139). At the constituency level, Feni-3 topped the list with 16,124 registered expatriate voters, followed by Chattogram-15 (14,316) and Cumilla-10 (14,007). Postal ballots for the national election and constitutional referendum were dispatched by January 8. Ballot papers contain 118 symbols representing registered political parties and independent candidates. The Awami League’s boat symbol does not appear, as the party’s registration remains suspended. A “No” vote option is also included. Expatriate voters will be able to mark their choice after symbol allocation on January 21. Ballots must reach returning

officers by 4:30pm on polling day to be counted. EC officials said the process of dispatching and returning ballots takes between 16 and 28 days, depending on the country. On January 4, the EC warned voters against sharing photos or videos of postal ballots on social media, saying violators could face legal action, including the blocking of their National Identity Cards. The commission said ballot secrecy is both a constitutional right and a voter’s responsibility. While speaking to reporters, EC Secretary Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah yesterday insisted that no irregularities had occurred regarding the distribution of postal ballots. He said the EC has communicated with all Bangladeshi embassies and warned that “if even the slightest irregularity occurs with postal ballots, no one will be spared.” To tighten oversight, Sanaullah said Bahrain’s postal authorities will now hand over ballots only after checking the recipient’s CPR (Bahrain’s identity card), while in Oman, ballots will be delivered only after verifying the recipient’s passport. He also noted that in the Middle East and Malaysia, many expatriate voters live at the same address.

Jayasree Kabir passes away

FROM PAGE 12 Jayasree’s son, who lives and works in Singapore, was unreachable at the time and has consistently avoided media attention, in keeping with his mother’s long-standing preference for privacy. Born on June 22, 1952, Jayasree Kabir rose to prominence after winning the Miss Calcutta title in 1968. She made her film debut under acclaimed director Satyajit Ray in “Pratidwandi” (1969), a role widely regarded as an early milestone in her career and one that placed her firmly within the parallel cinema movement of the time. She went on to perform in more than 40 films in Kolkata, including “Picnic”, “Sabyasachi” and “Ashadharan”, working with leading actors of the era such as Uttam Kumar. Known for her restrained performances and elegant screen presence, she moved with ease between commercial cinema and more artistically driven films, earning sustained critical respect rather than mass stardom. She later moved to Bangladesh, where she formed a close personal and professional relationship with filmmaker Alamgir Kabir, one of

the country’s most prominent post-independence directors. She later married him, though the marriage eventually ended in divorce. Alamgir Kabir died in 1989. Jayasree’s filmography in Bangladesh includes “Shurjokonya”, “Shimana Periy”, “Rupali Shokotey”, “Mohona” and “Puroshkar”. Her appearance in the song “Bimurto Ei Ratri Amar” from “Shimana Periy” remains one of her most recognisable screen moments. During this period, she frequently worked opposite actor Bulbul Ahmed, forming a notable on-screen pairing. After leaving Bangladesh, she returned briefly to Kolkata and subsequently settled in London with her son. There, she largely withdrew from public life. She made occasional appearances at international film festivals, taught English at a school, undertook voice-over work for the BBC and Channel 4, and participated in cinema workshops. She also represented the films of Satyajit Ray at international events. Despite her reclusive lifestyle, she remained attentive to developments in cinema in both Dhaka and Kolkata.

With Jayasree Kabir’s passing, Bangla cinema loses an actor from one of its formative eras, remembered for her composure, quiet subtlety, and a highly selective body of work, as well as for her rare position straddling the cinematic traditions of Kolkata and Dhaka. **WEF report** FROM PAGE 2 as posing the most severe threat to individual countries over the next two years. The report said the global outlook remains uncertain, with half of experts expecting a turbulent or stormy global outlook, while only 1 percent anticipate calm, it said, adding that geoeconomic confrontation has emerged as the top global risk for 2026. Geoeconomic confrontation, the report said, is already spreading beyond tariffs. Governments appear to be losing confidence in the legal framework underpinning global trade. The World Trade Organisation’s dispute settlement system, critical for resolving trade disputes, has become increasingly marginalised. The number of cases brought to the WTO has fallen to around one-third of pre-2019 levels after its Appellate Body was disabled, the WEF report said.

Draft energy plan

FROM PAGE 12 The new masterplan ignored the regional power grid, especially the renewable energy-based power trade with the neighbouring countries and the upgrading of the current grid systems. The CPD recommended that the masterplan must shift its focus from coal and LNG to renewable energy and drop all discussion on false solutions in the name of advanced technology or future energy sources. The faulty and non-participatory master plan was prepared in haste just a month before the power transfer to a political government for a vested interest group, Moazzem said. “It will undermine the long-term carbon emissions process, will increase the use of fossil fuel and will hinder the expansion of renewable energy,” he said, while demanding postponement of the adoption of the master plan. Establishing renewable energy sources by greenwashing LNG and coal is not actually prioritising the traditional renewable sources and providing undue focus on LNG import. This echoes the same pattern and priorities observed in the previous masterplan, the CPD said.



Mobile phone traders bring out a procession in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday, demanding a postponement of the implementation of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system and the release of colleagues arrested over protests against the initiative.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



নেত্রকোণা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
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১ মাঘ ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ

তারিখ: ১৫ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নম্বর: ৩৭.০১.৭২০১.০০০.০১৪.১১.০০০৩.২৩.০১

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নেত্রকোণা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে বর্ণিত শর্তাদি পূরণ সাপেক্ষে আবেদনপত্র আদান করা যাবে:

ক্রম	পদের নাম ও গ্রেড	পদসংখ্যা	ক্রম	পদের নাম	পদসংখ্যা
১	সহযোগী অধ্যাপক (গ্রেড-৪) ইতিহাস ও প্রত্নতত্ত্ব বিভাগ- ১ জন আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ- ১ জন উন্নয়ন অধ্যয়ন বিভাগ- ১ জন হিসাব বিজ্ঞান বিভাগ-১ জন তড়িৎ ও ইলেকট্রনিক প্রকৌশল বিভাগ-১ জন	৫	৩	প্রভাষক (গ্রেড-১) ইতিহাস ও প্রত্নতত্ত্ব বিভাগ- ২ জন আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ- ২ জন উন্নয়ন অধ্যয়ন বিভাগ- ২ জন হিসাব বিজ্ঞান বিভাগ-২ জন তড়িৎ ও ইলেকট্রনিক প্রকৌশল বিভাগ-২ জন	১০
২	সহকারী অধ্যাপক (গ্রেড-৬) ইতিহাস ও প্রত্নতত্ত্ব বিভাগ- ১ জন আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ- ১ জন উন্নয়ন অধ্যয়ন বিভাগ- ১ জন হিসাব বিজ্ঞান বিভাগ-১ জন তড়িৎ ও ইলেকট্রনিক প্রকৌশল বিভাগ-১ জন	৫	৪	প্রভাষক (গ্রেড-২) সাধারণ শিক্ষা বিভাগ (GED) এর অধীন গণিত-১ জন পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান-১জন পরিসংখ্যান-১ জন	৩

ক্রম	পদের নাম ও গ্রেড	পদসংখ্যা	ক্রম	পদের নাম	পদসংখ্যা
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২	উপ-পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব) (গ্রেড ৫)	১	৫	অফিস সহায়ক (গ্রেড ২০)	৩
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মোট পদসংখ্যা ৩৮ জন

● আবেদনের তারিখ ১৬ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রি. থেকে ৩০ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ বিকাল ৪.০০ টা। ডাকযোগেপেশনশীল রেজিস্ট্রার পক্ষ, নেত্রকোণা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা-২৪০০ টিকানায় পৌঁছাতে হবে। বিষয়ে প্রাপ্ত আবেদন বিবেচনা করা হবে না।

● আবেদনের শর্তাবলিসহ বিজ্ঞপ্তির তথ্য ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://neu.ac.bd/recruitment-১৬>) পাওয়া যাবে। প্রার্থীকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটের লিংকে গিয়ে অনলাইন আবেদন ফরম অবশ্যই পূরণ করতে হবে। অনলাইনে যথাযথভাবে আবেদন ফরম পূরণ না হলে প্রার্থীকে "প্রবেশ পত্র" প্রেরণ করা হবে না।

● নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে ০২৯৯৭৭৩৫০১৮ (সকাল ১০.০০টা- বিকাল ৫.০০টা) ও jobs@neu.ac.bd সংযোগে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে।

ডাইস-চ্যান্সেলর মহোদয়ের অনুমোদনক্রমে-


১৫-০১-২০২৬
ড. মোহাম্মদ হাবিব-অর-রশিদ
রেজিস্ট্রার

GD- 119

Neutrality of admin

FROM PAGE 3
Illegitimising opposing views creates a sense of insecurity, she added.

Rounaq noted that ending discrimination was a key slogan of the July uprising, but it is no longer part of the current discourse.

She said it is essential that the youth continue to promote the values of equity in all spheres of society.

BEI President M Humayun Kabir said Bangladesh's governance system will not improve as long as political parties use the administration for political purposes.

If the DCs and SPs want, they can deliver fair polls, he said, stressing that political parties must send a clear message to the administration of non-interference.

BNP Joint Secretary Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal said there were numerous instances where the interim government failed to maintain law and order, allowing mob violence, repeated road blockades, and chaos.

He also alleged that Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus breached neutrality by recently saying that youths who formed a new party would become

ministers and MPs after the elections.

Nagorik Oikya Organisational Secretary Sakib Anwar questioned whether a peaceful election would be possible if the interim government acted as it did on the night when the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, and Chhayanaut were attacked.

"Was there any government in Bangladesh then? What will happen if the same situation arises on February 12?" he asked.

Sakib Anwar said political practices have not changed despite numerous reforms.

NCP Joint Secretary Foyzal Mohammad Shanto said the aspirations of the July uprising would fade if the next election is not held in a neutral manner.

"The influence of muscle and money must be prevented for a peaceful election," he said.

Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh Christian Brix Møller said Denmark expects the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh where all people enjoy equal rights.

Speakers also stressed the need for widespread awareness of the July Charter and referendum to prevent fascism in the future.

Court orders further probe

FROM PAGE 3

Earlier in the day, Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber filed the petition, rejecting the investigation report submitted by the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

In the petition, the complainant said the charge sheet omitted the main planners of the killing and showed negligence in collecting witness testimony and evidence. He also alleged that the investigator failed to properly use modern investigative methods and technology.

On December 12 last year, July frontliner Hadi, an independent aspirant for Dhaka 8, was shot in Dhaka's Paltan area. He died on December 18 while undergoing treatment in Singapore.

Abdullah Al Jaber filed an attempted murder case on December 14 with Paltan Model Police Station against Faisal Karim Masud and several unnamed individuals. The case was later converted into a murder case.

On January 6, Investigation Officer Faisal Ahmed, a DB inspector, submitted a charge sheet before the court, naming prime accused Faisal, four of his family members and 12 others.

Meanwhile, at a press conference at Madhur Canteen of Dhaka University yesterday, Inqilab Moncho announced protest marches and brief rallies across the country after Juma prayers

today, demanding justice for Hadi's killing.

Addressing the press conference, Jaber urged people to organise protest marches and short rallies in every district, upazila and divisional city, as well as at the union and village levels across the country.

The platform has been staging protests, blockades and rallies since December 26 last year, demanding justice. He also warned that the organisation will lay siege to the national parliament if the government fails to ensure a speedy trial.

A step towards

FROM PAGE 3

First, BMEAC developed a self-assessment report template for all medical colleges, based on standards set by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and relevant local legislation.

After a medical college submits its self-assessment report, a technical committee of the council reviews it. If the committee gives clearance, a team then physically visits the college.

Once the site-visit team submits its report, the council makes a final decision on accreditation assessing II criteria based on which the institutions will be judged, he said.

Regarding the two colleges, Prof Humayun said BMEAC shared their documents with the WFME for validation, and a WFME team visited Dhaka Medical College for a first-hand assessment.

He said the two colleges will be required to submit annual reports to BMEAC and renew their accreditation before the expiry of the five-year tenure. Six more public and

private medical colleges have submitted their self-assessment reports, and the council is taking the next steps, he said.

He also said BMEAC has received a positive response from the WFME regarding accreditation of the council itself and hopes the approval process will be completed soon.

Once BMEAC is accredited by the WFME, medical colleges accredited by it will be considered WFME accredited, he added.

Contacted, Prof Rubina Yasmin, additional director general (medical education) of the Directorate General of Medical Education, said students from accredited medical colleges will benefit in terms of higher studies and job opportunities abroad.

She added that accreditation would also attract more foreign students to study medical education in Bangladesh.

According to the 2025-26 admission circular, there are 5,100 seats in 37 government medical colleges and 6,001 seats in 66 private medical colleges.

Dhaka grinds to halt

FROM PAGE 3

departing the Science Lab intersection, another altercation broke out between the protesters and DU students. At that point, protesters attacked the bus, hurling bricks and stones and shattering its windows, witnesses said.

At least two students were injured in the incident.

"People are blocking roads wherever they please. The lives of ordinary people have become unbearable," said Ariful Islam, who was stuck in a traffic jam at Science Lab for three hours with his motorcycle.

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver said, "I have been stuck in the jam for around two and a half hours. How will I manage the daily deposit to the owner?"

Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police, said the college students left the road around 4:30pm, but DU students blocked the Nilkhet area in the evening, protesting the attack on their bus.

Meanwhile, students of Government Bangla College blocked the Technical intersection for about four hours from around 1:00pm with the same demand, bringing vehicular movement in the area to a complete halt,

said SM Jakaria, officer-in-charge of Darussalam Police Station.

On Wednesday, Dhaka witnessed severe traffic congestion for at least five hours due to protests and blockades at key points by students of the seven colleges and Tejgaon College, causing immense suffering for commuters throughout the day.

Responding to a question about repeated street blockades by students of the seven colleges, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said, "What can I say about road blockades? In the last 16 months, there have been around 2,000 street protests. After a mass uprising, public expectations rise sharply, but the sense of responsibility does not always rise at the same pace."

"Some people may think, 'This is our government; it will listen to whatever we say.' That may be true. However, while staging protests, we must consider the suffering caused to ordinary people. Today, a newspaper published a photograph of a man with a missing leg travelling a long distance on crutches. If we fail to uphold even this minimum sense of civic responsibility, what else can be done?" he added.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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নম্বরঃ ৩৭.০০.০০০০.০৬৪.০৯৯.০০৩.২৩.১২৬

তারিখঃ ০১ মাঘ ১৪৩২

১৫ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরের মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের পরিচালন বাজেটের আওতায় "বেসরকারি সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান ও এর আওতাধীন শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী এবং সরকারি ও বেসরকারি সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের অনুদান প্রদানের জন্য অনুসরণীয় নীতিমালা (সংশোধিত-২০২৫)" এর আলোকে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তে শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান, শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী ও ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের নিকট হতে আবেদন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে (নীতিমালা www.shed.gov.bd তে পাওয়া যাবে)।

(ক) দেশের সকল স্বীকৃতিপ্রাপ্ত বেসরকারি সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের (এম.পি.ও. ডুজ ও নন এম.পি.ও. ডুজ) মেরামত ও সংস্কার, আসবাবপত্র সংগ্রহ, পাঠাগার স্থাপন, খেলাধুলার সরঞ্জাম সংগ্রহ, প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিবন্ধিকাব্য করার লক্ষ্যে অনুদান প্রাপ্তির জন্য আবেদন করা যাবে। শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান বাছাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে অনগ্রসর এলাকার শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান অঞ্চল লেখাপড়ার মান ভালো এরূপ প্রতিষ্ঠান-কে অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হবে;

(খ) বেসরকারি সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের (এম.পি.ও. ডুজ ও নন এম.পি.ও. ডুজ) শিক্ষক কর্মচারীগণ তাদের দুরারোগ্য ব্যাধি ও দৈব দুর্ঘটনার জন্য অনুদানের আবেদন করতে পারবেন;

(গ) সরকারি ও বেসরকারি সাধারণ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীবৃন্দ দুরারোগ্য ব্যাধি, দৈব দুর্ঘটনা এবং শিক্ষা গ্রহণ কাজে ব্যয়ের জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবে। এ অনুদান প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে দুস্থ, প্রতিবন্ধী, তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ, অসহায়, রোগগ্রস্ত, গরীব, মেধাবী, অনগ্রসর সম্প্রদায়, অনগ্রসর এলাকার ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হবে;

(ঘ) শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনুকূলে অনুদান প্রাপ্তির জন্য স্ব স্ব শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রধান কর্তৃক আবেদন করতে হবে। মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পর্যায়ে শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী এবং ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ক্যাটাগরিতে অনুদান প্রাপ্তির ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধানের মাধ্যমে এবং স্নাতক/সমমান ও স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান/রেজিস্ট্রার এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে;

(ঙ) আবেদন করার জন্য শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান/রেজিস্ট্রার কর্তৃক মাইগভ প্রাটফর্মে রেজিস্ট্রেশন করতে হবে। রেজিস্ট্রেশনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রদত্ত মোবাইল নম্বরটি ব্যানবইসের সর্বশেষ বার্ষিক শিক্ষা জরিপ-২০২৫ এর তথ্যানুযায়ী প্রদান করতে হবে। রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন হলে প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান/রেজিস্ট্রার এর প্রোফাইল থেকে শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের EIIN নম্বর দিয়ে প্রোফাইল ভেরিফাই/যাচাই করতে হবে। প্রোফাইল সম্পন্ন করার পর মাইগভ এর হোম পেজ (<https://www.mygov.bd>) এ 'শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান/শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী/শিক্ষার্থীদের আর্থিক অনুদান' অংশে ক্লিক করলে সেবার তালিকা পাওয়া যাবে। সেবার তালিকা থেকে সেবা বাছাই করে প্রয়োজনীয় নির্দেশনা অনুসরণপূর্বক প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান/রেজিস্ট্রার এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে;

(চ) ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ থেকে ১৭ মার্চ ২০২৬ পর্যন্ত আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে। প্রাপ্ত আবেদনসমূহ জেলা পর্যায়ে গঠিত কমিটি যাচাই-বাছাই করে ১৮ মার্চ ২০২৬ থেকে ১৭ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ (বিকাল ৫ ঘটিকা অফিস চলাকালীন সময়) এর মধ্যে সচিব, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ ব্যবহার প্রেরণ করবে;

(ছ) শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে অনুদানের প্রয়োজনীয়তার বিষয়ে ম্যানেজিং কমিটি/গঠনিত বডি/উডেক কমিটি এর সভাপতি কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত এবং উপজেলা মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা অফিসার/থানা মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা অফিসার কর্তৃক প্রতিপাদিত প্রতায়নপত্র অবশ্যই সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

(জ) শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী ক্যাটাগরিতে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নম্বর প্রদানসহ জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি, সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রতায়নপত্র, চিকিৎসা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় ডাক্তারি সনদ এবং দৈব দুর্ঘটনার স্বপক্ষে সরকারি হাসপাতালের চিকিৎসক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রতায়ন ও চিকিৎসা সংক্রান্ত সনদ অবশ্যই সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

(ঝ) আবেদনের সাথে মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক (সাধারণ) পর্যায়ের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের ক্ষেত্রে জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ এবং প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রধান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রতায়নপত্র এবং স্নাতক/সমমান ও স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের ক্ষেত্রে বিভাগীয় প্রধান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রতায়নপত্র ও জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ/জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র অবশ্যই সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

(ঞ) শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দকৃত অর্থ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব ব্যাংক হিসাবে অনলাইন এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করা হবে। সুতরাং অনলাইন আবেদনকালে ব্যাংক হিসাবের তথ্য যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে উক্ত হিসাবের প্রমাণক হিসেবে MICR চেক বই এর ১টি চেক পাতার PDF কপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে; (ব্যাংক হিসাব অনলাইন না হলে এবং MICR চেক বই এর ১টি চেক পাতা আবেদনের সময় সংযুক্ত করা না হলে আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে);

(ট) শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী ও ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দকৃত অর্থ মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং (আবেদন ফরমে উল্লিখিত) এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করা হবে। সুতরাং অনলাইনে আবেদনকালে রেজিস্ট্রেশনকৃত (KYC আপডেটসহ) ব্যক্তিগত মোবাইল নম্বর প্রদান করতে হবে। এজেন্ট নম্বর বা মার্চেন্ট নম্বর গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়;

(ঠ) শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং শিক্ষক-কর্মচারী একবার এ সুবিধা ভোগ করতে পারবেন। ইতোপূর্বে এ খাতের আওতায় সুবিধা প্রাপ্ত হলে পুনরায় আবেদন করার জন্য যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবে না;

(ড) ছাত্র/ছাত্রী ক্যাটাগরিতে একজন শিক্ষার্থী তার শিক্ষা জীবনে ০৩ (তিন) বছর পরপর আবেদন করতে পারবে;

(ঢ) প্রতিবন্ধীতার ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট জেলা/উপজেলা সমাজসেবা অফিসার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত 'প্রতিবন্ধী সনদ' ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি হাসপাতালের চিকিৎসক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;

(ণ) অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বা আবেদনের হার্ডকপি গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়;

(ত) বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত আবেদনের শর্তাবলী অমান্যকারী/অসুদায় অবলম্বনকারীর বিরুদ্ধে কর্তৃপক্ষ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করতে পারবে।



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
"Construction of Rail-cum-Road Bridge Across the River Karnaphuli at Kalurghat Point" Project
Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
রেলপথ

Reference No. PD/Kalurghat Rail-cum-Road Bridge/Outsourcing/13

Date: 13/01/2026

e-Tender Notice (e-GP)

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

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Package No. & Description	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
01	1204307	NCS Outsourcing of Manpower	29 Jan-2026 10.00	29 Jan-2026 12.00

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
- The fees for the downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
- "Construction of Rail-cum-Road Bridge Across the River Karnaphuli at Kalurghat Point" Project authority reserve the right to accept any tender or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

এস (২৬) (১৪৪)


13.01.26
Md. Abul Kalam Chowdhury
Project Director
Construction of Rail-cum-Road Bridge Across the River Karnaphuli at Kalurghat Point
Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram

GD-113

MERA PEAK

Journey to the world's highest trekking summit



HOMAED ISHAQUE MOON is a mountaineer and triathlete

HOMAED ISHAQUE MOON

After a long silence, the Himalayas called me back -- an irresistible summons that only mountains possess. And I had to respond. My last journey there had been the Everest Three Passes Trek, a test that left its mark on both my body and mind. This time, the objective was Mera Peak -- 6,476 metres of ice and sky, the highest trekking peak in the world. I knew it would not be forgiving. The Himalayas never are.

My companion on this journey was Imtiaz Elahi -- an Ironman and Norseman athlete whose discipline once pushed me toward the starting line of an Ironman 70.3 in Malaysia. Walking beside him in the mountains felt natural. We shared a rhythm shaped by endurance, silence, and mutual respect. Long before the first step on the trail, preparation had already begun -- financial, mental, physical. At the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, we once spent an entire day learning how to pack a rucksack properly. Still, on departure day, I found myself repacking. It never goes right.

At first, the plan was simple -- just the two of us. Then Shahnaz, a dental surgeon with quiet resolve, joined the expedition. She, our guide Pasang, and I travelled by jeep from Kathmandu to Salleri, while Imtiaz bhai was to fly directly to Lukla. We left before dawn and reached Salleri by dusk. At 2,360 metres, the village felt familiar. Six years earlier, I had begun my Everest Three Passes trek from this very place. The mountains remember you, even when you think you've moved on.

That evening, we went for a short acclimatisation walk near a local school. I have watched countless Himalayan sunsets, yet each one feels like the first. The mountains blushed crimson, as if lit from within. Leaving comfort behind often feels like loss, but moments like this make it feel like privilege.

We had a tea session. Tea -- chiya, as the Nepalis call it -- is always refreshing, and momos taste inexplicably better in the mountains. Dinner was simple and filling. We turned in early, aware that the road ahead would demand much more.

The drive from Salleri to Surke the next day was pure chaos. For nearly ten hours, the jeep rattled and bounced, dust filling the air, time

losing its meaning. We were peanuts inside a tin. At twilight, during a brief stop, I looked up and froze. The sky had turned unreal -- layers of colour spilling into one another, impossible to describe, impossible to forget.



From Surke, we walked to Lukla in two hours along stone stairways that had once been dirt trails. Lukla Airport lay below us -- infamous, short, unforgiving. We watched planes take off and land against a backdrop of crystal clear Himalayan peaks. The following morning, we welcomed Imtiaz bhai. After breakfast, we set off again.

I carried with me two trekking poles from Bangladesh's first Mera Peak expedition in 2005, belonging to Shagor and Rifat bhai. Their attempt had failed. I carried the poles not as tools, but as memory.

The walk to Chutanga was gentle, though we moved slowly for acclimatisation. Forests thinned, trees gave way to alpine openness, and the mountains began revealing themselves layer by layer. At 3,020 metres, the sky felt closer. Reaching Chutanga, we took an evening walk, watched glacial streams rush downward, clouds brushing distant peaks. As darkness fell, the cold drove us inside.

Nights in the mountains are brutal -- cold, restless, unforgiving. Everything from

day, the trail became both more beautiful and more challenging, winding past glacial streams, massive boulders, and narrow rocky paths where falling rocks demanded constant vigilance. By the time we reached Thangnang at 4,350 metres, Kathmandu felt like a distant world. It had taken nine days to reach this point. Garlic soup, ginger-honey-lemon tea, and silence sustained us.

At sunset, the peaks outside the lodge turned crimson, and for a while nothing else seemed to matter. Under a sky thick with stars, we slept.

The following day, the rest day, passed gently. Friendship deepened in the thin air over slow walks, coffee, photographs, and stories shared. The summit matters but the journey more.

From Thangnang to Khare, snowfields replaced rock. Climbers returning from the summit passed us in bright jackets. Shahnaz moved swiftly ahead, a Bangladeshi flag fluttering from her pack. I walked easily, absorbed by the vast whiteness. Then something felt wrong. Imtiaz bhai, walking with the porter and guide, was behind us. After a wait, we saw the three.

He had slipped on ice and dislocated his shoulder. He had lain on

the slope in agony while many trekkers passed without stopping. Eventually, a European woman helped partially realign the joint. At a tea house, someone claiming to be a paramedic



spinal cord injury. Somehow, he kept walking, even moving ahead of us.

Less than an hour later, we reached Khare. After dropping our backpacks at the lodge, we headed to the hospital. Against all odds, an MBBS doctor was there. He examined Imtiaz bhai, administered pain relief, and successfully relocated the shoulder. The doctor advised five days of rest. But Imtiaz bhai, ever calm, said, "Two days will be enough. I'll go slowly."

On the rest day, Shahnaz and I climbed to 5,125 metres for acclimatisation. From above, Khare looked like a toy village. Helicopters buzzed below. The next day we were scheduled for High Camp, then a night summit attempt.

We reached High Camp after hours of relentless ascent. At 2:30am, we began the summit push.

Within minutes, my body betrayed me. Symptoms of hypothermia and high-altitude sickness forced me to stop. After assessing the situation, I made the hard call to turn back. In the mountains, survival depends on the right choice.

On November 19, at 6:15 a.m., Imtiaz bhai and Pasang stood on the summit of Mera Peak, followed closely by Tashi and Shahnaz.

Though I couldn't summit myself, as a team we did. By 9:30am, the team had descended. After a meal and rest, we began our return journey toward Khare.

Later, we flew by helicopter to Lukla -- seven minutes replacing four days of trekking, a small miracle after so much effort.

The mountains taught us again what they always do -- humility, judgment, and the courage to choose life over ego. That lesson, more than any summit, is what I carried home.

I extend my deepest gratitude to ESAD (Ex Shaheens Association Dhaka) for their support of this expedition, to my friends and well-wishers, and to our guides, Tashi and Pasang, who stood by us through every challenge.

pressed it further out, causing excruciating pain.

At this altitude, rescue feels theoretical, and evacuation by helicopter would be costly. Dr Shahnaz examined him. We tried to reposition the joint but failed. Time slipped away. Pasang said there was a hospital in Khare, still at least an hour away. With Imtiaz bhai in severe pain, the walk on that difficult trail felt impossible.

Somehow, Imtiaz bhai placed his injured arm over my shoulder. He couldn't lower it. Step by step, we climbed. His mental strength stunned me. After all, this was a man who had completed Ironman races after a



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PROVOKED INTO PROTEST?

BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul was seen looking clueless in the middle of the pitch in Mirpur yesterday as cricketers turned a no-show for BPL games in protest against remarks from a board director.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

EKUSH TAPADER

A handful of spectators waited in the stands, clinging to the hope that the Dhaka phase of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) would eventually begin yesterday. But as evening fell, security personnel of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) asked them to leave. What followed in the empty stadium was a light show, its flashes only underlining the darkness.

The BPL has long been no stranger to controversy, but never on this scale.

The escalation of tensions intensified since Wednesday night. At the Home of Cricket in Mirpur, BCB director M Najmul Islam made controversial remarks about the players. Within hours, the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) announced a hardline stance: players would not take the field unless Najmul stepped down.

Yesterday, the opening day of the final Dhaka phase, the players held firm. No team turned up. With no option left, the matches were called off. While the first game was scheduled for 1:00 pm, the players were holding a press conference at their team hotel, which

began at 2:30 pm.

It soon became clear that director Najmul's comments were only the trigger. What followed was an outpouring of long-simmering grievances.

Alongside all centrally contracted players, captains from all three formats -- Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mehidy Hasan Miraz and Liton Das -- were particularly vocal. Never before has the BCB found itself in such a public and total deadlock.

The roots of the crisis run deep: after last year's election -- boycotted by most organisers -- the new board led by Aminul Islam Bulbul soured ties with Dhaka clubs, leaving eight First Division teams withdrawn, dozens of players without livelihoods, and the Dhaka Premier League's future uncertain, with no solution yet from the board.

CWAB president Mithun said the players see little sincerity in resolving these issues, describing a culture of deflection and inertia. "One person says the other can't be reached," he said, adding that when it comes to solving players'

problems, "no one is available".

Shanto raised the unresolved harassment allegation involving women's cricketer Jahanara Alam. Although a committee was formed, its report has yet to be made public. He said everyone had hoped for a "swift and fair decision", but the delay had been deeply disappointing and had discouraged others from coming forward.

Liton highlighted poor facilities in women's cricket, while Shamsur Rahman Shuvo criticised the handling of fixing allegations. Ahead of this year's BPL, nine players were barred from the auction over suspected misconduct without evidence, yet allowed in other domestic leagues, creating confusion and stigma. The tournament itself has been mired in controversy: promised transparency and committee reports remain unpublished, its structure unstable, with a sixth team added before another franchise pulled out, forcing the BCB to take over.

All this has unfolded as the board remains locked in negotiations with the ICC over venue changes and its refusal to travel to India

for the upcoming World Cup. Ironically, Mustafizur Rahman -- whose "respect" the BCB has cited in its communications -- was present at the players' press conference, joining the protest after feeling his dignity had been undermined by the board director's remarks.

The uncertainty surrounding World Cup participation has also unsettled the squad. Only two days earlier, CWAB leaders had said security was the board's responsibility but that there was "no alternative" to playing the tournament.

The atmosphere is now suffocating. Despite repeated controversial remarks -- including Najmul earlier labelling former captain Tamim Iqbal an "Indian agent" -- no disciplinary action has been taken, nor has the BCB formally condemned the comments. The president has instead dismissed them as "personal opinions".

In this deadlock, Bangladesh cricket is bound to suffer. But beyond lost fixtures -- and the risk of broadcasters and sponsors backing away -- what unfolded yesterday cut deeper, forcing a reckoning with what Bangladesh cricket has been and what it now risks becoming.



Fencer Fatema's return adds shine to President Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

After recovering from a knee injury, 2019 South Asian Games gold medallist Fatema Mujib is set to return to competitive fencing when the President Cup Fencing Championships begin at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium in Paltan today.

Fatema, who won gold in the sabre event at the 7th National Fencing Championship in April last year, missed the July Revolution Fencing Championships in August after sustaining the injury during preparations for the SA Games. She later underwent surgery at the Combined Military Hospital and was advised by doctors to take a full four-month rest.

Her comeback is expected to add extra sparkle to the four-day tournament, which will feature around 250 fencers from 18 teams, including various districts, Bangladesh Army, Navy, Ansar and

VDP, Border Guard Bangladesh, private universities, and other educational institutions and clubs. Competitions will be held in individual and team foil, epee, and sabre events.

"Fatema is now fully fit to play following her four-month absence," said Bangladesh Fencing Federation president Kamal Islam.

"We are also working with other promising fencers to help them step up."

He added that Fatema has become a symbol of fencing in the country. "Many have taken up the sport after being inspired by her success at the SA Games."

The President Cup is also seen as a key preparatory event for next year's International Fencing Championships in Nepal and the Asian Fencing Championships in India in June.

Like the July Revolution Fencing Championships, Suzuki Motorbike Bangladesh is once again sponsoring the tournament, organisers confirmed at a press briefing.



Morocco's Achraf Hakimi celebrates with teammates after the Atlas Lions edged Nigeria 4-2 on penalties in the first Africa Cup of Nations semifinal, while Senegal's Sadio Mane consoles Egypt's Mohamed Salah after the second semifinal. Hosts Morocco will face Mane's Senegal in Monday's final after both teams survived tense last-four clashes on Wednesday, ending Salah's hopes of lifting the trophy once again. Senegal booked their place with a 78th-minute winner from Mane in a 1-0 victory over Egypt in Tangiers, with the forward later revealing it would be his final AFCON appearance.

PHOTO: AFP



TIGERS' T20 WC FATE 'ICC delegation likely to arrive soon'

SPORTS REPORTER

A delegation from the International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to visit Bangladesh to discuss the participation of the Bangladesh team in the ICC T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in India and Sri Lanka from February 7.

Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul shared the development while briefing the media at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

"According to the latest updates, Mr. Aminul Islam [BCB President Aminul Islam Bulbul] informed me that an ICC team is likely to come to Bangladesh for discussions. There is no chance of us changing our stance. We are eager to play in the World Cup, particularly in Sri Lanka, and I strongly believe that organising this is not impossible," the sports adviser said.

"We are in discussions, and a delegation is set to arrive, but the exact date has not been determined. We are in communication, but the time is not fixed," a BCB official said on condition of anonymity.

Last Tuesday, the BCB leadership held a video conference with the ICC. Following the meeting, the board reaffirmed its decision not to send the team to India, citing security concerns, and reiterated its request to relocate the team's matches outside India. The ICC asked the BCB to reconsider its stance, but the board remained firm.

Both the BCB and ICC, however, have agreed to continue discussions "to explore possible solutions."



'Quick play' pays off as Sabina shines

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after the men's team held a strong Indian side to a thrilling 4-4 draw, the women's side went a step further by kicking off their SAFF Futsal Championship campaign with an emphatic 3-1 victory over India in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

"I think the people in Bangladesh are happy with a victory over India. We still have five matches left. Everyone pray for us so that we can make the Bangladeshi people happier, which is our main target," said skipper Sabina Khatun, who broke the deadlock after playing neat one-two passes with Krishna.

The women in red and green looked the better side throughout, with Sabina once again scoring from a Krishna Rani pass in the first half.

Saeid Khodarahmi, coach of both the men's and women's futsal sides, explained why the girls had the upper hand against India. "My players were quick in play," the Iranian coach said.

After resumption, Matsushima Sumaya's strike took the game away from India, who found a consolation goal from Arya Dhanaji More in the latter part of the second half. The men's team will be in action again today against Maldives, while Sabina's troops are set to face Bhutan tomorrow.



Khalilur, Taiyeb, Akhtar land spots in Biman board

Expert says move ‘surprising’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed the national security adviser, a special assistant to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, and a senior secretary as directors of the state-run Biman Bangladesh Airlines. They are Khalilur Rahman, national security adviser and high representative for the Rohingya issue, Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser on ICT, and Akhtar Ahmed, senior secretary of the Election Commission. In a gazette notification on Wednesday, the civil aviation and tourism ministry said the appointments were made in the public interest and would take effect immediately.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



Three blue-cheeked bee-eaters huddled together on a cold winter morning on a tomato field in Rajshahi’s Godagari upazila, their fluffed feathers pressed close for warmth. Native to South Asia, the Middle East and parts of Central Asia, this migratory bird frequents open countryside, riverbanks and cultivated fields during the colder months. It feeds almost entirely on flying insects such as bees, wasps and dragonflies, caught with swift aerial sallies. The blue-cheeked bee-eater is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, though pesticide use and habitat disturbance remain ongoing threats.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

‘Over 3,400 dead in Iran’

Say rights groups; Trump to ‘watch situation’ as he says Iran ‘killing has stopped’

- ‘US sends aircraft carrier to ME from South China Sea’
- Iran FM says there would be ‘no hanging today or tomorrow’

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday vowed to defend itself against any foreign threat, after US President Donald Trump said he would “watch it and see” about military action over the crackdown on protesters. Iran’s judiciary said a protester who the United States and rights groups feared faced imminent execution would not be sentenced to death, after Trump had warned of strikes should people arrested for demonstrating be killed. The protests were sparked by economic grievances but evolved rapidly into a nationwide movement that

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



1952-2026

Jayasree Kabir passes away

BULBUL HASAN
Renowned film actress and former Miss Calcutta Jayasree Kabir passed away at a nursing home in Romford, Essex, in Greater London, on January 12. She was 73. The news of her death came to light two days later, when her nephew, Javed Mahmood, posted about it on his Facebook profile.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

BNP flags bulk deliveries of postal ballots

Says 200-300 being sent to same address

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission’s first-ever initiative to digitally register Bangladeshi expatriates and allow them to vote through postal ballots has sparked controversy, with the BNP raising concerns over the process. Over the past three days, two BNP delegations met Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin to express reservations about how the initiative is being carried out. After one such meeting, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said the party has “serious concerns” and questioned the role of officials overseeing the process.

Referring to social media videos, he alleged that batches of 200–300 ballots were being delivered to a single address, even though each postal ballot should have been sent individually to the designated voter. He also claimed that the process seemed to favour a particular party and demanded clarification on how ballots are being prepared, dispatched, and collected abroad. On Tuesday, a video showing 160 postal ballot envelopes in a room in Bahrain went viral. It was recorded while the envelopes were being sorted for distribution. Asked about the incident, EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said

the Bangladeshi ambassador in Bahrain was investigating and insisted that none of the envelopes had been opened. Bahrain postal authorities are also reviewing whether proper procedures were followed in delivering the ballots, he added. In a press release, the EC explained that on January 11, the Bahrain postal service contacted several expatriate voters to deliver the ballots. As they were at work, they requested postal officials hand over the envelopes to a colleague living in the same area. Later, 129 undelivered envelopes were returned to the embassy, which, the EC said, would be delivered individually

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Govt in many cases became hostage to ‘extremist group’

Says Debapriya; Citizen Platform for SDGs unveils reforms package for next govt

PLATFORM’S PROPOSALS

Tk 4,540 per month for eligible families under universal minimum income scheme

Midday meal for students in govt, MPO-affiliated schools

Tk 1 lakh per year medical coverage for families in need through National Health Card

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government in many cases became hostage to a “small and extremist group”, said CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya yesterday. “They spoke of new forces but, in the final analysis, in many cases ended up being held hostage to a small and extremist group. Because of this, they could not act properly. They could not ensure the safety of citizens. Now the question is, will they even be able to conduct the election impartially?” He added that reform efforts in Bangladesh have repeatedly failed because they focused on surface-level institutional changes while ignoring the need to organise social and economic forces capable of defending democracy. “Changing the superstructure alone cannot bring a new political settlement. Unless the forces that support democracy are organised and empowered, reforms will always be captured by vested interests and traditional politics.” Referring to past initiatives, Debapriya said political actors often prioritised constitutional and administrative changes without addressing deeper socioeconomic

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WE DEEPLY MOURN



The UAP family is deeply saddened by the death of **AL-HAJ MOHAMMAD MOHSIN, Amb** Honorable Member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Asia Pacific, former Ambassador & Foreign Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh, and former Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



University of Asia Pacific

Draft energy plan copying AL’s playbook: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has followed the wrong practices of the ousted Awami League government in preparing the master plan for the power and energy sector, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Preparing the masterplan should have had the involvement of local energy experts following research-based methods on decision-making, and it should have been done through an open and democratic process. “But nothing happened – it has become another bureaucracy-driven plan which doesn’t match the energy sector goals mentioned in other policy papers,” said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at CPD, at a press briefing titled Quick Reaction on Interim Government’s Energy and Power Sector Master Plan (2026–50). On January 7, Fouzul Kabir Khan, the adviser to the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources, submitted the draft plan to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. The ministry is yet to unveil the draft, saying it may be disclosed after Yunus’s signing. The newly proposed draft masterplan has failed to address, accommodate and answer the criticisms, concerns and questions raised in the previous Integrated Master Plan of 2023, said Helen Mashiyat Preoty, senior research associate at CPD, while presenting the keynote paper. The emergence of domestic coal, intensified LNG needs and reluctance towards renewable energy expansion raise serious concerns. “In no way should the existing version of the draft masterplan be approved without major revision. The draft version is no better than the previous one, and in some cases, it might prove to be more degrading,” she added. The CPD said the draft plan estimated the future power demand based solely on the GDP growth rate and set it at 59,351 megawatts for 2050. At present, local and imported natural gas dominates the fuel mix with a 45 percent share; in 2050, it will be brought down to 29 percent in 2050, while generation from coal would be doubled by then, the CPD said, quoting the draft plan. Though the plan will reduce electricity generation

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CITIZENS’ TRIBUTE

Citizens from all walks of life of Bangladesh are gathering at the South Plaza of the National Parliament building at 2:30 pm today (16 January) with a blend of respect and mourning. This civic gathering is being organized to pay profound respect to the contribution and life of the late former Prime Minister, invincible leader of the country Begum Khaleda Zia.

This mourning meeting will be presided over by former Chief Justice Syed J. R. Mudassir Husain. Eminent citizens of the country, irrespective of party affiliation, will participate to express their grief, respect as well as to cite their memories regarding various facets of the beloved state leader. Thus the civic gathering will stand as a resolute pledge of national unity and humane solidarity.

— Civil Society