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Shab-e-Barat on February 3

Muslims in Bangladesh will observe Shab-e-Barat on the night of February 3 as the Sha'ban moon was not sighted yesterday.

As the moon was not sighted, the month of Sha'ban will begin on January 21.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee held at the Islamic Foundation's Baitul Mukarram office in the evening, with Religious Affairs Ministry Secretary Kamal Uddin in the chair.

The announcement was made after analysing data collected from the district administrations, the Islamic Foundation, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and the Space Research and Remote Sensing Institute.

Shab-e-Barat is observed on the 15th night of the Arabic month of Sha'ban.

Muslims offer special prayers, recite the Holy Quran and take part in other religious rituals on Shab-e-Barat.



Ballot boxes are being dispatched to regional election offices in various districts across the country ahead of the February 12 national election, which is just weeks away. The photo was taken outside the Election Commission headquarters in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bias claims by rivals put EC

FROM PAGE 1

“The EC is under some pressure. Ensuring law and order during the campaign period will be a major challenge for us,” said one official.

The polls body is scheduled to meet with representatives of all political parties today to provide a detailed explanation of postal ballot procedures and the overall voting process.

JAMAAT BREACHING PRIVACY: BNP

Contacted yesterday, BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed said, “We are seeing in various cases that when a particular political party exerts pressure, the Election Commission appears to tilt. We are urging that this must not happen, so that no one can raise questions about the commission’s neutrality.”

He added, “Our expectation is that the Election Commission will act in a neutral manner. We want free and fair polls, so that no one can raise questions about this election.”

Earlier on Sunday, after meeting Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC office in Agargaon, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir alleged that key figures of various parties had begun campaigning ahead of the scheduled time in violation of the electoral code.

He claimed that sections of top EC officials, returning officers, assistant returning officers, superintendents of police and other officials in some constituencies were working in favour of “one party”.

He also accused the EC of engaging in questionable conduct on several issues, with the postal ballots for expatriate Bangladeshis being the most prominent and unresolved one.

Fakhru further alleged that Jamaat activists were collecting copies of national identity cards, bKash numbers and mobile numbers from households. “This breaches privacy and is a criminal offence,” he said.

He also claimed that in several Dhaka constituencies, a party had resorted to unethical tactics by transferring large numbers of voters from other parts of the country to ensure victory for its nominated candidates.

BNP MISLEADING VOTERS: JAMAAT

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General and head of its central publicity department Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said, “The point is that we are not seeing the kind of neutral behaviour we expect from the Election Commission. Within the commission itself, there are certain officials who seem to be leaning towards one particular party, giving them some advantage.”

Earlier, after meeting the chief adviser on Sunday, Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher said the party informed Prof Yunus that the conduct of some SPs and DCs at the field level appeared to be “biased”.

“We said we have no objection if anyone is given enhanced security or protocol. But as one of the major parties, the ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami must also be treated equally,” he said.

Taher also accused BNP activists of deceiving voters by distributing “so-called family cards and farmer cards door to door”.

EC BIASED: NCP

During the meeting with Yunus yesterday, NCP Convener Nahid Islam drew his attention to several election-related issues and urged the government to take a proactive role in ensuring a level playing field.

Following the meeting, NCP spokesperson and head of its election steering committee Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain told reporters that “one-sided and biased” behaviour from the EC to the field level officials “in the same manner as previous controversial elections” is creating doubts about the commission’s neutrality.

Protesting the show-cause notices issued to NCP leaders Nahid and Nasiruddin Patwari, Asif said the use of photographs in campaigning were referendum campaign materials, which are not identified as a violation or a punishable offence in the Representation of the People Order or the code of conduct.

He also alleged that candidates of other political parties across the country are openly using election symbols, party names and leaders’

photographs on posters, billboards and festoons, which are clear violations of the code of conduct.

“When campaigning was prohibited, the entire Dhaka city and the country were flooded with posters of a party chairperson returning home,” he said.

Asif further claimed that on Sunday, during the disposal of appeals, the commission legalised the candidacies of dual citizens in violation of several existing laws, including constitutional provisions and the RPO.

EC MUST ACT: EXPERTS

Election experts Abdul Alim and Jesmin Tuli said the commission should investigate specific allegations without any delay to remove confusion.

“But I haven’t heard that the Election Commission is conducting any inquiry or investigation into these allegations. If there are specific complaints, the commission should immediately state whether it has taken action, or whether the allegation is true or false. In that case, people would understand that it is indeed taking measures,” said Tuli, a former senior EC official.

Alim, also a political analyst, said parties usually make allegations of bias and violation of rules before polls to keep pressure on the authorities.

“However, we did not see allegations and counter-allegations being taken to the EC or the chief adviser, and simultaneous protests in front of the commission after the election schedule was announced under caretaker or interim governments in the past,” he said.

He warned that if the situation continues, especially with official campaigning set to begin in just two days, it will become increasingly difficult to control.

“That’s why the EC must investigate the allegations and take stern action. The findings must be shared with the public to show where wrongdoing has occurred,” he said.

Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmani Masud, when contacted yesterday, said the allegations of bias and the absence of a level playing field were part of political strategies.

“We are not biased towards anyone. We are committed to holding free, fair and acceptable elections,” he said.

Next govt must tackle poverty

FROM PAGE 1

centre stage in political manifestos ahead of the February election.

Economists argue that without a roadmap for redistributive justice and job creation, the widening economic divide threatens to undermine social stability.

Since the 1980s, Bangladesh has been a model for poverty reduction, but post-pandemic economic shocks and high inflation have reversed these gains.

According to new estimates by the Power and Participation Research Centre, the poverty rate climbed to 27.93 percent in mid-2025 from 18.7 percent in 2022.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), described the trend as “very worrying”.

While short-term financial support is necessary for vulnerable groups like Mahbubur’s family, it is not a cure. Sustainable reduction, he argued, requires job creation in trade, exports, and small businesses rather than temporary stopgaps.

The crisis is not limited to job losses; it also plagues the employed, driving skilled workers out of the formal sector.

Harun Or Rashid, who completed higher secondary education, abandoned his job as a security guard at a commercial bank because the Tk 12,000 monthly salary could not sustain his family of six, including his mother and three children.

Harun now drives a battery-run rickshaw in Dhaka’s Mugda and Motijheel areas, earning approximately Tk 30,000 per month. While the job switch has allowed him to survive, he lamented that he has no other option.

He added that he would be much happier if there were viable opportunities in the formal sector.

Harun’s dilemma reinforces the argument made by Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank’s Dhaka office, who emphasised that political parties must focus on the quality of employment.

Zahid Hussain warned that safety nets are not a sustainable long-term solution and that the next elected government must focus on job creation and wages.

This requires a clear outline for export diversification, as the economy remains dangerously over-reliant on

the apparel sector.

While the garment industry generates over \$40 billion annually, data from the Export Promotion Bureau reveals that no other sector fetches more than \$1 billion. Concurrently, the investment climate has cooled, with central bank data showing private sector credit growth slowed to 6.58 percent in November from 7.66 percent a year earlier.

To address the immediate liquidity crisis facing families like Harun’s and Mahbubur’s, Towfiqul Islam Khan, additional research director of the CPD, has proposed a “universal minimum income” scheme.

Towfiqul proposed a monthly cash support initiative for families living below the poverty line, designed to be rolled out in phases.

The government should initially

this expenditure is necessary to prevent vulnerable groups from falling further behind due to job insecurity and limited access to credit.

Mustafizur Rahman of CPD advocated for higher direct taxation to fund increased allocations for health, education, and social safety nets.

He warned that simply promising to reduce poverty would not suffice without a concrete plan, adding that tackling corruption is an economic imperative as poor governance directly exacerbates inequality.

Despite the consensus on necessary reforms, there is widespread scepticism regarding political will. Anu Muhammad, an economist and former chair of Jahangirnagar University’s economics department, observed that while manifestos often feature lofty rhetoric, implementation rarely follows.

EXPERT SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT GOVT

➤

Prioritise job creation with decent wages

➤

Introduce universal minimum income scheme

➤

Improve access to affordable credit for youth, the poor

➤

Reform labour market to protect informal workers

➤

Diversify exports beyond garment sector

➤

Strengthen governance, raise progressive taxation

➤

Stabilise prices, control inflation

US very excited

FROM PAGE 1

“The US is very excited about the upcoming national election. It is satisfied with the environment and believes Bangladesh is moving towards a good process...” he said while addressing a press briefing.

Humayun said the meeting discussed ways to improve Bangladesh-United States bilateral relations, particularly in trade and investment. He added, “The US would remain an important development partner for Bangladesh.”

Humayun also said Tarique and the US ambassador discussed the Rohingya issue.

“They discussed how the Rohingya issue could be resolved in the future through a multilateral process. The issue was described as a matter of national security and one of the top priorities, with emphasis on seeking multilateral support.”

The meeting also covered development cooperation, ways to strengthen bilateral relations, trade and investment, as well as vocational and technical education, he added.

Meanwhile, a delegation of European Union countries also met Tarique Rahman. The delegation was led by European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh Michael Miller.

Ambassadors of Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, and Italy were also present at the meeting.

Responding to a question regarding the EU meeting, Humayun said, “In the next election, people will

get the opportunity to vote after 17 years. Many ambassadors have never seen a democratic election. Through a transparent and accountable election, Bangladesh will come out of its dark past of the last 15 years and move towards a new horizon.”

Earlier, Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ajit Singh met Tarique Rahman and BNP leaders, where they discussed progress towards a peaceful and inclusive democratic transition through the upcoming election.

High Commissioner Singh underscored Canada’s desire to work with the interim government and the next elected government to build on the momentum created by economic, financial, judicial, and labour reforms, to deepen bilateral relations, and to create a better future for people in both countries.

Canada has been a longstanding advocate for free, fair, inclusive, and participatory elections in Bangladesh, said the High Commission on its official page.

In the last 12 days, Tarique met Swiss Ambassador Reto Renggli, Brazilian Ambassador Paulo Fernando Dias Feres, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma, Germany’s Ambassador Rüdiger Lotz, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Susan Riley, Pakistani High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider, and Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Yao Wen, among others.

Trump links threat

FROM PAGE 12

The Norwegian Nobel Committee annoyed Trump by awarding the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize not to him but to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado. She gave her medal last week to Trump during a White House meeting, though the Nobel Committee said the prize cannot be transferred, shared or revoked.

In his message, Trump also repeated his accusation that Denmark cannot protect Greenland from Russia or China.

“... and why do they have a ‘right of ownership’ anyway?” he wrote, adding: “The World is not secure unless we have Complete and Total Control of Greenland.”

Trump vowed on Saturday to implement a wave of increasing tariffs from February 1 on EU members Denmark, Sweden, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Finland, along with Britain and Norway, until the US is allowed to buy Greenland.

EU leaders will discuss options at an emergency summit in Brussels on Thursday. One option is a package of tariffs on 93 billion euros (\$108 billion) of US imports that could automatically kick in on February 6 after a six-month suspension.

Another option is the “Anti-Coercion Instrument” (ACI), which has never yet been used and which could limit access to public tenders, investments or banking activity or restrict trade in services, in which the US has a surplus with the bloc, including in digital services.

The EU said it was continuing to engage “at all levels” with the US but said the use of its ACI was not off the table.

Vote ‘yes’ to build a new Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

opportunity to establish democracy, justice, and human rights.

“Vote ‘Yes’ to build the state according to your expectations. By choosing ‘Yes,’ you open the door to creating a new Bangladesh. Cast your vote, encourage others to do the same, bring them to the polling stations, and help transform the country,” he said.

Prof Yunus explained that the referendum, scheduled for February 12 alongside the national election, is intended to secure public consent for the July Charter, a reform framework formulated with consensus from all political parties.

“To this end, several reforms have already been undertaken. For more profound and far-reaching reforms, we have formulated the July Charter based on the consensus of all political parties in the country,” Prof Yunus said.

He said a ‘Yes’ vote in the referendum means the government and the opposition will work together to form a caretaker government and an Election Commission.

A ‘Yes’ vote also means that the government won’t be able to amend the constitution at will, he added.

He said a person will not be able to serve as prime minister for more than a maximum of 10 years, and the judiciary will function independently.

“The representation of women in parliament will increase. An upper house will be formed in parliament to maintain a balance of power.”

Prof Yunus said a ‘Yes’ vote means people’s fundamental rights will be better protected; the state language, Bengali, will be constitutionally recognised, along with the languages of other ethnic groups.

“The president will not be able to pardon convicted criminals at will. All power will not be concentrated in the hands of the prime minister. There are several other important proposals included as well,” he explained, outlining why people should vote ‘Yes’ in the referendum.

Bid to stage 2008-style polls will fail

FROM PAGE 12

loan defaulters without taking action against them.

Referring to show-cause notices issued to him and NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari, he questioned the EC’s consistency.

He claimed that when BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman returned to Bangladesh, Dhaka city and areas across the country, including Gulshan and his constituency Dhaka-17, were plastered with posters bearing his image. “Will action be taken against them?” Nahid asked.

On Sunday, the Election Commission served show-cause

notices to NCP Convener Nahid Islam and Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari, contesting from Dhaka-11 and Dhaka-9 respectively, over alleged violations of the electoral code of conduct.

He said that during his referendum campaign, he used only his image without party symbols. “Yet the EC served us show-cause notices, indicating it has taken a stand against the referendum and discouraged campaigning,” he alleged.

Nahid further accused BNP leaders of exploiting the death of former prime minister and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia

to campaign under the guise of mourning meetings and blanket distribution, while the EC “looked the other way”.

“If there is a plan to make the election unfair, occupy polling stations, politicise the administration, or pressure the Election Commission, the people will not accept it. The youth of Bangladesh will not accept it,” he warned.

Nahid said they expected the Election Commission not to bow to pressure from any party or force, warning that if it did, they would be compelled to take a stand against such actions.



BNP senior leaders lay a wreath on the grave of party founder and late president Ziaur Rahman at Zia Uddin Park in the capital yesterday, marking his 90th birth anniversary

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL



Dhaka candidates already on the move

Official campaigning yet to begin, but many conducting voter outreach through various means

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE and SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Although the official window for election campaigning begins on January 22, aspirants for the upcoming 13th national election are already active on the ground, engaging in various forms of "mass contact" to woo voters.

According to the election schedule, polling will take place on February 12. Formal campaigning -- including the use of posters and digital projections -- is prohibited until electoral symbols are allocated on January 21.

However, candidates across Dhaka constituencies have already started moving to increase their exposure, using social gatherings, religious venues, and digital platforms.

Candidates are frequently visiting local markets, attending social events, and offering prayers at local mosques to meet and greet residents.

Small courtyard meetings (uthan boithak) and charity activities have also become common outreach methods.

In Dhaka-10, BNP candidate Sheikh Rabiul Alam was seen interacting with residents of Hazaribagh on January 10, discussing issues such as the ongoing gas crisis. He also attended a

Candidates are frequently visiting local markets, attending social events, and offering prayers at local mosques. Courtyard meetings and charity activities have also become common outreach methods.

commemorative programme for late BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a school in Dhanmondi on January 14.

In Dhaka-11, BNP's MA Quayum has been involved in charitable activities, distributing blankets among underprivileged people in Moddho Badda.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Politics must prioritise the people, not blame game

Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said politics must move beyond decades of blame and confrontation and instead focus on improving the lives of people and standing by them in times of need.

"Those of us who are in politics, who do we do it for? We do it for the people of this country. In short, in simple words, standing

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8



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Star ITIHAS ADDA Dreams of intellectual emancipation still unrealised: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The emancipation of the intellect -- a vision imagined by a group of Dhaka-based thinkers a century ago -- remains largely unfulfilled in present-day Bangladesh due to social elitism, intolerance, and a lack of moral integrity among the intellectual class.

Speakers made these remarks yesterday at the eighth episode of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, a history discussion series held at The Daily Star Centre.

The event marked the centenary of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj (Muslim Literary Society), founded in Dhaka on January 19, 1926.

Addressing the theme of the event, senior researcher Wakil Ahmed said the country has reached a point where people use their intellect to justify burning down the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

"That intellect dictates: if opinions do not match, burn it down. This is indeed a 'great emancipation', which in

reality means we have achieved nothing," he said.

He said the nation has failed to uphold the values nurtured by the intellectuals of 1926. "We have walked our own path. While the Sahitya Samaj was a social and cultural movement, the movements that followed in Bangladesh were largely political," he added.

"We rise like mercury when heated, reaching the peak in just 36 days. But then suddenly, the mercury drops to the bottom," Wakil Ahmed said.

He noted that while the nation can mount large political uprisings, it struggles to sustain cultural values. "We fight for freedom, we achieve it, but we cannot hold on to it," he said.

Referring to the present situation, Wakil Ahmed described it as more "disturbing" than the period the movement originally confronted. "Demonic forces are flexing their muscles everywhere, while human forces are defeated," he said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at the eighth edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, a history discussion series held at The Daily Star Centre.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A four-member delegation of the National Citizen Party, led by NCP Convener Nahid Islam, met Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Don't pay visa bond before interview

US embassy urges applicants

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US embassy yesterday urged visa applicants not to pay any bond in advance, warning that early payments neither guarantee visa approval nor ensure safety from fraud.

"Paying early does not guarantee you a visa, and third-party sites can be scams," the embassy said in a statement posted on its verified Facebook page.

It added that any payment made before a visa interview is non-refundable, while the bond will be returned only if the visa holder complies with its terms.

Empower urban govt to tackle Dhaka's woes

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of coordination among service-providing agencies and the limited authority of city mayors are among the key reasons behind the deteriorating condition of Dhaka and other cities across the country, urban experts and politicians said yesterday.

They stressed that forming a strong and empowered urban government is essential to effectively address city-level problems.

The speakers urged political parties to clearly outline plans for establishing an urban government and tackling urban challenges in their election manifestos.

They made the remarks at an urban dialogue titled "Manifesto to Save Dhaka," jointly organised by the Urban Development Journalists' Forum Bangladesh and Gulshan Society at a city hotel.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Mohammad Azaz said the authority of city corporations is largely limited to waste management and installing streetlights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create one city coordination body
- Expand city corporation powers
- Earmark share of traffic fines for city corporations
- Make agencies publish targets, quarterly progress

"Without a dedicated police force, eviction drives cannot be made sustainable," he said.

He said traffic law violation fines

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

TK 32CR GRAFT CASE Court frames charges against S Alam, PK Halder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday framed charges against S Alam Group Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam, former managing director of Reliance Finance Limited, PK Halder and 11 others in a Tk 32-crore graft case.

Judge Md Abdus Salam of the Special Judge's Court 9 of Dhaka passed the order, said a court staffer. The court also set February 8 to start recording the deposition of the witnesses, he added.

The other accused are S Alam Group Vice Chairman Abdus Samad, directors Mohammad Abdullah Hasan and Shahana Ferdous, former executive VP and head of risk management at Reliance Finance Rashedul Haque, former corporate

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

UTTARA ABDUCTION Bodyguard dies of his wounds Suspect remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A 57-year-old retired army personnel working as a bodyguard died two days after being attacked during an abduction in Dhaka's Uttara on January 16.

Police on Sunday arrested suspect Bachchu Mia in Chattogram's Chawkbazar in connection with the murder, according to the police forwarding report.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jashita Islam yesterday placed Bachchu on a three-day remand in connection with the murder of Mahub Alam. The attack took place on Road-12 in Sector-14 of Uttara. Mahub was critically injured and died while undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital two days later.

On January 17, Mahub's son Abdullah Ismay Azam filed an attempted murder case with Uttara West Police Station against six unnamed people, which was later converted into a murder case.

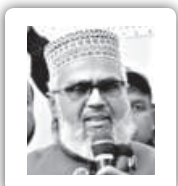
Police have yet to trace the abducted man or his family members.

Kamrul Islam, sub-inspector of Uttara West Police Station and the investigating officer, said last night, "We will interrogate the arrestee and try to get more information from him."

Kushtia Jamaat ameer dies while addressing rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Kushtia district Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Abul Hashem died while addressing a protest rally yesterday.



He was rushed to Mannan Heart Foundation, a private hospital in the district town, around 4:30pm, where doctors pronounced him dead.

Confirming the matter, district Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary Suja Uddin Joardar said, "I was standing right beside him while he was speaking. He collapsed in my hands."

Dr Shamim Ara Begum of Mannan Heart Foundation said the Jamaat leader was already dead when he was brought to the hospital.

Suja Uddin said the deceased's first namaz-e-janaza will be held at 9:00am today at Chadagara Eidgah ground in the town. The second janaza will be held in Mirpur upazila.

The rally and gathering were organised yesterday to protest alleged death threats against the Jamaat-nominated candidate for the Kushtia-3 (Sadar) constituency, Amir Hamza.



Battery-run auto-rickshaw owners and drivers block Rampura Road in Uttar Badda around 10:00am yesterday, demanding unhindered operation in the capital. The blockade continued till afternoon, causing severe gridlocks in the surrounding areas, inset.

PHOTO: STAR



Chilli growers in Rangpur cash in on higher prices

S DILIP ROY

Favourable weather conditions for chilli farming and increased market demand have boosted earnings for farmers in the Rangpur region this season.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), chillies have been cultivated on a total of 4,320 hectares across five districts of the Rangpur region – Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha and Nilphamari – during the current season.

Last year, chilli cultivation in the region covered 4,670 hectares. Although the cultivated area has decreased, farmers' incomes have risen due to higher yields and better market prices.

Farmers said the average cost of cultivating chillies per bigha ranges between Tk 35,000 and Tk 40,000. Each bigha produces around 60 to 70 maunds of chillies. At this time last



Gajerkuti village in Kurigram, said he cultivated chillies on one bigha of land, spending around Tk 38,000. He has already harvested and sold 20 maunds, earning Tk 60,000. He is currently harvesting and selling 40 to 50kgs of chillies from his field every day.

Anil Chandra Barman, 65, a farmer from Bhatibari village under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he expects to make a profit of Tk 2.5 lakh by cultivating chillies on two bighas of land. He has already sold chillies worth Tk 1.5 lakh.

Majedul Islam, 50, from Chowdhurani village in Rangpur, said he earned Tk 1.5 lakh last year by cultivating chillies on five bighas of land. This year, he hopes to make a profit of Tk

4 lakh from the same area.

Shah Jamal, a vegetable wholesaler at Rangpur municipal market, said last year, chillies had to be brought in from other regions. But this year, due to lower production in other parts of the country, chillies are being sent from the Rangpur region. As a result, local farmers are receiving double the price.

Sirajul Islam, additional director of the DAE (Rangpur), said chilli cultivation has been particularly high in the char areas along the Teesta, Dharla, Brahmaputra and Dudhkumar rivers.

Due to higher demand in local markets, farmers are receiving better prices compared to last year, he said.



year, chillies were sold at Tk 35 to Tk 40 per kg. This year, however, prices have increased to Tk 70 to Tk 80 per kg.

In retail markets, chillies are selling at Tk 100 to Tk 110 per kg.

Alfal Hossain, 58, a chilli farmer from

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY CASE

Charges pressed against Shamim Osman, 11 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League lawmaker AKM Shamim Osman phoned then bridges minister Obaidul Quader, saying he had taken up firearms after police sought his help, and asked Quader to inform the deposed prime minister not to be angered if photographs of him carrying weapons were published, the prosecution told International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim referred to and read out a transcript of part of the conversation while pressing formal charges in a crimes against humanity case against Shamim and 11 others, including his family members and relatives, over the alleged killing of 10 people and causing injuries to dozens of others during the 2024 mass uprising in Narayanganj.

Those include Shamim's son Imtihan Osman Ayan, also known as Ayan Osman; his nephew Azmeri Osman; Ayan's brother-in-law Minhaj Uddin Ahmed Diki; and Shamim's brother-in-law Tanvir Ahmed Titu.

The names of six others were not disclosed to the media. All the accused are

absconding.

The tribunal took cognisance of the charges after hearing the prosecution and issued arrest warrants against the accused, asking police to produce them before the court by January 26.

The prosecution brought three charges against the 12 accused.

According to Charge 1, on July 19, 2024, in several areas of Narayanganj, Shamim, in person and on his instructions, along with Ayan, Azmeri, Minhaj, Titu and others under his control, allegedly carried out attacks on unarmed protesters using firearms and sharp weapons. Six people, including six-year-old Riya Gope, were killed, and many others were critically injured.

Charge 2 says on July 21 in Fatullah, Shamim and his associates allegedly opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing two people and injuring many others.

Charge 3 says on August 5, the same accused allegedly carried out another armed attack in Chashara, killing two protesters and attempting to murder many others, offences punishable under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.



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স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.৬৫৮.১৮.০১৬.২৬.১১৮৫ তারিখঃ ১৮/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ) দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Package	Title of Works	Closing & Opening Date and Time
1194154	GMDDS: 2025-2026/09	Civil Maintenance Work of Ansar Barrack Building at Hasnabad 230/132kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka-South.	03 Feb 2026 at 12:30
1195031	GMDDS: 2025-2026/10	Grass & Jungle Cutting, GIS Room, Underground Cable Room, Drain Cleaning, Septic Tank & Overhead Water Reservoir Cleaning, Inspection Pit Cleaning & Glass Cleaning of GIS Room on Annual Basis at Shyampur 230/132kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka-South, Power Grid.	
1195210	GMDDS: 2025-2026/11	33kV Renovation Work at Munshiganj 132/33kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka-South, Power Grid.	08 Feb 2026 at 12:30
1195305	GMDDS: 2025-2026/12	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of IP Based camera Surveillance System at Munshiganj 132/33 kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka South, Power Grid.	
1199937	GMDDS: 2025-2026/13	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of IP Based camera Surveillance System at Sreenagar 132/33 kV Grid Substation under GMD, Dhaka South, Power Grid.	

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ মোস্তাফিজুর রহমান
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (অঃদাঃ) জিএমডি, ঢাকা (দক্ষিণ)

‘How can I contest the polls under a biased admin?’ Says Rumeen Farhana

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria



Independent candidate in Brahmanbaria-2 constituency, Barrister Rumeen Farhana, has raised questions about the neutrality and credibility of the local administration following the issuance of a show-cause notice against her over allegations of violating the electoral code of conduct.

Talking to local journalists at the Brahmanbaria Press Club yesterday afternoon, she questioned whether a level playing field exists in the ongoing electoral process.

She also accused the administration of bias. "I did not make any obscene gesture. I was referring to an obscene gesture previously made by the Ashuganj BNP general secretary," she said.

"How can I contest an election under an administration that is already biased?" she asked.

Referring to her rivals, she claimed that other candidates are holding gatherings under the guise of condolence meetings, using microphones and stages, slaughtering cattle, and making indecent remarks against her, yet no action is being taken against them.

Court frames charges

FROM PAGE 3

finance manager Nahida Runai, former SVP and credit committee member Kazi Ahmed Jamal, former deputy manager of corporate finance Jumaratul Banna, former managing director of Marine Vegetable Oils Ltd Zahir Ahmed, directors Tipu Sultan and Md Ishaq, and

AM Trading proprietor Md Abdullah Al Mamun.

During yesterday's hearing, Rashedul and Nahida Runai, who were brought to the courtroom from jail custody, pleaded not guilty after the judge read out the charges against them, said the prosecution.

INVITATION FOR TENDER of Outsourcing Cleaning Services

1	Name Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
2	Procuring Entity	icddr,b
3	Invitation for Tender	Services
4	Invitation Ref No	icddr,b/SCM/GoB/OTM/Pkg#PS-04/2025-26
5	Date	20-01-2026

KEY INFORMATION

6	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

7	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh and other sources
8	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9	Tender Package No.	PS-04/2025-26
10	Tender Package Name	Outsourcing Cleaning Services
11	Tender Publication Date	20-01-2026
12	Last Date of Selling Tender Document	09-02-2026
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	10-02-2026 03:00 PM
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	10-02-2026 03:30 PM
15	Name & Address of the office(s) - Selling Tender Document	Address: Finance Department, Main Building, Level-4, icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. Interested bidder is requested to deposit the price of each set Tender Document i.e. BDT 5,000/- to the Account Name: "icddr,b", Account No. 0200002442981, Agrani Bank Ltd., icddr,b Branch and submit original Customer Copy to Finance Department while collecting the Tender Document within the stipulated time. Please bring NID while collecting tender documents and participating in the pre-bid meeting and use north (IPH) gate.

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

- Receiving Tender Document	Supply Chain Management, Chiller Building (Ground Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
- Opening Tender Document	Supply Chain Management, Chiller Building (1st Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

16	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	FMS Meeting Room, Chiller Building (3rd Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 on January 27, 2026 from 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM.
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INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

17	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer (Details eligibility criteria are described in the tender schedule)	General Experience 7 years	Specific Experience 5 years	Annual Turn Over 10 Crore	Liquidity 2 Crore
18	Brief Description of Services	Outsourcing Cleaning Services			
19	Brief Description of Related Services	Cleaning and Related Services			
20	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	BDT=5,000/- per schedule (non-refundable)			
21	Pkg No	Identification of Schedule	Location	Tender Security (BDT)	Completion Time in Months
	Pkg-04: Outsourcing Cleaning Services	icddr,b 68 Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212		66,00,000/-	Service Contract for 2 (two) years

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mirza Muhammad Masud Rana
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Senior Manager, Supply Chain Management
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	02-22277001-10: 16340 Extn # 4405/4400 e-mail: tenderquery@icddr.org
26	This Tender Notice is available in icddr,b Website: www.icddr.org	
27	The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings.	

icddr,b
Senior Manager, Supply Chain Management
icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

Iran executions seemingly 'tool of state intimidation'

Says UN rights chief; Tehran to consider lifting internet ban; state TV hacked

AGENCIES

Iran appears to be using executions "as a tool of state intimidation", the United Nations said yesterday, as it denounced a jump in capital punishment globally in 2025.

The Islamic republic reportedly executed 1,500 people last year, UN rights chief Volker Turk said in a statement.

"The scale and pace of executions suggest a systematic use of capital punishment as a tool of state intimidation, with disproportionate impact on ethnic minorities and migrants," he warned.

The spike in executions in Iran -- which according to rights groups is the world's most prolific executioner after China -- had contributed to "an alarming increase" in the use of capital punishment worldwide last year, Turk said.

Meanwhile, Iran may lift its internet blackout in a few days, a senior parliament member said yesterday, after authorities shut communications while they used massive force to crush protests in the worst domestic unrest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.



In the latest sign of weakness in the authorities' control, state television appeared to be hacked late on Sunday, briefly showing speeches by US President Donald Trump and the exiled son of Iran's last shah calling on the public to revolt, reports Reuters.

Iran's streets have largely been quiet for a week since anti government protests that began in late December were put down in three days of mass violence.

An Iranian official told Reuters on condition of anonymity that the confirmed death toll was more than 5,000, including 500 members of the security forces, with some of the worst unrest taking place in ethnic Kurdish areas in the northwest. Western-based Iranian rights groups also say thousands were killed.



Members of the Spanish Civil Guard and other emergency personnel work beside one of the trains involved in a deadly derailment of two high-speed trains near Adamuz in Córdoba, Spain, yesterday. At least 39 people were killed in the collision.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia hits energy system in 5 regions of Ukraine

Kyiv air defence units shoot down 126 drones

REUTERS

Russia launched a barrage of drone strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure overnight yesterday, cutting off power in five regions across the country amid freezing temperatures and high demand, Ukrainian officials said.

The Ukrainian air force said that Russian troops had launched 145 drones. Air defence units shot down 126 of them, it said.

"As of this morning, consumers in Sumy, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv regions are without power," the energy ministry said in a statement. "Emergency repair work is underway if the



security situation allows."

In the southern Odesa region, energy and gas infrastructure was damaged, the regional governor said, adding that one person was hurt in the attack.

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, said its energy facility in Odesa was "substantially"

damaged, knocking out power for 30,800 households.

A local power grid company in northern Chernihiv region said that five important energy facilities were damaged, leaving tens of thousands of consumers without power.

Russia also hit Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv with missiles yesterday morning, significantly damaging a critical infrastructure facility, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said.

Moscow has stepped up a winter campaign of strikes on the Ukrainian energy system, including generation, electricity transmission and gas production facilities, amid freezing temperatures that complicate repair works.

91 BNP rebels still

FROM PAGE 12

Some have questioned whether the BNP can effectively enforce its own decisions at the grassroots level -- a concern that senior party leaders acknowledge but say is difficult to resolve overnight.

Syed Ehsanul Huda, chief of Bangladesh Jatiya Dal, dissolved his own party and joined the BNP. Nominated as a Kishoreganj-5 candidate, he said, "I am facing an extremely uncomfortable situation.... Many committees are not working with me. These issues should have been resolved much earlier by the BNP high command."

Fariduzzaman Farhad, chairman of the National People's Party also dissolved his party and joined the BNP. Contesting from Narail-2 now, he said a rebel candidate remains in the race in his constituency, which he described as deeply unfortunate. "Just allowing the use of the sheaf of paddy symbol is not enough. The central leadership should have arranged an understanding between me and the rebel candidate. The party should have been stricter."

Despite meetings with BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, who urged rebel candidates to withdraw, some are still contesting from seats given to allied candidates.

Expelled leader Saiful Alam Nirab is still contesting Dhaka-12, where the BNP has not fielded any candidate as allied Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque is vying for the seat.

In Munshiganj-3, the BNP nominated central leader Kamruzzaman Ratan, while district BNP Member-secretary Mohammad Mohiuddin is contesting as an independent candidate.

In Munshiganj-1, local leader Sheikh Md Abdullah received the party nomination, while two

rebel candidates -- district convener committee member Momin Ali and central Swechhasebak Dal leader Mir Sharafat Ali -- are contesting the seat.

In Patuakhali-3, the BNP did not field any candidate, as Gono Adhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque is contesting under the seat-sharing arrangement. However, a BNP rebel candidate remains in the race there.

Other constituencies where rebels are in the race include: Chattogram-14 and 16; Sylhet-5; Natore-1; Brahmanbaria-1 and 2; Mymensingh-1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11; Joypurhat-2; Madaripur-1; Habiganj-1; Narayanganj-2, 3 and 4; Gopalganj-2; Bagerhat-2; Jhalokathi-1; Chandpur-2; Tangail-1 and 2.

EXPULSIONS

The party has expelled at least 10 leaders for contesting against party nominees or working against officially backed candidates. Most of them remain in the race.

The central leadership has issued fresh instructions to district and upazila units to throw their weight behind nominated candidates and avoid engagement with campaigns of rebels.

As grassroots leaders were found supporting the rebel candidate in Patuakhali-3, two committees there were dissolved on Saturday.

ANOTHER SETBACK

Three BNP candidates have had their nominations rejected, leaving the party with no alternatives to those seats.

Affected candidates have already moved the courts, seeking restoration of their candidacies through appeals and writ petitions.

Legal teams are closely monitoring court proceedings, aware that unfavourable rulings could significantly weaken the party's electoral presence in certain regions.

Sust students

FROM PAGE 12

morning. They did not specify a time.

Speaking to this correspondent after the meeting, Sust VC Prof Dr AM Sarwaruddin Chowdhury said, "Since the day I joined the campus, I've been trying my best to hold the Sucusu polls. Even after the EC turned us down in a gazette notification, we convinced them and achieved a decision."

"However, we are unable to hold the elections due to the HC order following the student's writ. But we have already appealed and will do everything we can do legally to hold the elections as soon as possible."

An HC bench of Justice Fahmida Quader and Justice Md Ashif Hasan yesterday passed an order suspending the poll process for four weeks following the writ petition filed on Sunday by a Sucusu vice-president candidate.

Immediately after the order was issued, the Sust authorities filed a petition with the Appellate Division, challenging the HC order.

Students who had been protesting the petition since morning then announced they would continue their demonstrations demanding the polls. They confined the VC, pro-vice chancellor, treasurer, and other top officials inside the administrative building from

noon, locking its entrance.

After the emergency syndicate meeting, the university administration around 10:00pm initiated a meeting with a section of the protesting students at the administrative building's conference hall.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Mohammad Belayet Hossain, a senior lawyer for the university, said the Sust authorities have sought a stay on the HC order so that the elections could proceed, and that a chamber judge of the Appellate Division may hold a hearing today in this regard.

"The writ petition that led to the High Court staying the elections was not acceptable, as there was no nexus between the Sucusu election and the national parliamentary polls."

On Sunday, independent vice-president candidate Mominur Rashid Shuvo filed the petition, saying the Election Commission had earlier issued directives to halt all elections ahead of the national parliamentary polls, arguing that holding the Sucusu election under those directives was not legally valid.

Citing security concerns, the EC on January 12 circulated a notification ordering that no polls, including those of student unions, can be held

before the February 12 parliamentary election.

However, after repeated discussions with the Sust administration, the EC on January 15 issued another notification allowing the Sucusu polls.

Abu Saleh Md Nasim, a protesting student of the Bangla Department, said, "For one political party's wish, the election is deferred, foiling all our joy for the Sucusu polls after 28 years. The university administration was not interested in holding the polls, and it was our demand to hold them. But they are now creating obstructions."

Shibir-backed VP candidate Delwar Hossain Shishir said, "I would blame the administration for the failure. The polls were supposed to be held in December, but they intentionally deferred the date to January 20 and created this situation."

Students began protesting the petition yesterday morning in front of the administrative building, demanding that the elections be held as scheduled. Around 2:00pm, after the HC order, they marched towards the university's main gate and blocked the Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway.

The students removed the blockade and marched back

onto the campus around 6:00pm. They continued their protest in front of the administrative building.

Eight Sucusu election commissioners, who are part of the Jatiyatabadi Teachers' Forum, submitted their resignations to the VC following the protest.

At a press conference, Prof Dr Ashraf Uddin, president of the forum and head of the mathematics department, said they had resigned over anomalies surrounding the polls, adding that more than a hundred teachers would refrain from election duties.

In contrast, Jamaat-backed teachers' organisation University Teachers' Link said it would stand by the administration in holding the election and pursue any necessary legal action.

Dr Abul Mukid Mohammad Mukaddes, chief election commissioner for the Sucusu polls, said, "We have nothing to do with the High Court order, as the university authorities are legally doing what's necessary and have also called an emergency syndicate meeting over the issue."

"The duties of the commissioners are almost over, and the resignation of eight will not impact the election. We are awaiting the court and the administration's directions."

'Serial killer' held in Savar

FROM PAGE 12

and produced before a court with a prayer for 10 days' remand.

Dhaka Senior Judicial Magistrate Tajul Islam Sohag sent Samrat to jail after recording his confessional statement, said an assistant sub-inspector working at the court.

Details of the statement could not be known immediately till filing the report last night around 8:30pm.

Police said Samrat lived in Savar's Bank Colony area, but his permanent address is unknown.

Although Samrat is widely known as "mentally unwell" by locals, police said no such symptoms were found during

interrogation. "As he roams around like a vagabond, people assume he is mentally unwell. However, during interrogation, we did not find any signs or symptoms of that," the police official said.

Following earlier recoveries of bodies from the abandoned community centre, police intensified surveillance in the area, Arafatul said. With assistance from the municipality authorities, the building was cleaned, lighting improved, and CCTV cameras installed. Police also deployed regular patrols.

After the latest discovery of bodies, CCTV footage was reviewed, leading to the identification of a suspicious individual. A subsequent raid resulted in Samrat's detention, he added.

Police said five bodies have been recovered from the community centre over the past five months. Another victim, Asma Begum, 75, was found dead behind a tea stall adjacent to the Savar Model Mosque July 4, last year.

Except for Asma Begum, the other five victims remain unidentified, police said, adding that separate cases have been filed in connection with each incident.

Initially, police believed Asma Begum had died of natural causes and filed an unnatural death case. However, a post-mortem examination later revealed she had been strangled, prompting the filing of a murder case.

According to police, a body was recovered on August 29 last year from the second floor

of the community centre. The unidentified victim, believed to be around 30, was found in a decomposed state with his hands tied.

On October 11, the body of an unidentified woman, also aged around 30, was recovered from a second-floor bathroom with her throat slit. On December 19, another unidentified man, aged about 35, was found dead in the building.

On Sunday night, police recovered two more burnt bodies from the same building. "We believe one of the victims is a 13-year-old girl, while the other is estimated to be around 25. However, the gender of the latter could not be confirmed immediately," Arafatul said.



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A recipe for more migration fraud?

Migrants need accountability from existing recruiting agencies, not more of them

Migrant workers remitted a record \$33 billion last year, a vital cushion for a nation navigating political turbulence. Yet the machinery that sends them abroad remains largely broken, with prohibitive costs and middlemen who treat human beings as commodities. Against this backdrop, the interim government's decision to approve 252 new overseas recruiting agencies is baffling. This expansion pushes the total number of licensed recruiters to 2,646—the highest in South Asia—dwarfing India's 1,988 and Pakistan's 2,537. Clearly, it flies in the face of economic logic and expert advice as, just months ago, a government-commissioned white paper explicitly recommended a “reasonable” reduction in agencies to curb endemic fraud. To our surprise, the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry has done the opposite.

A senior secretary has reportedly argued that more agencies will break the stranglehold of powerful syndicates, and that even if each new firm sends just one worker, numbers will rise. This is based on a rosy assumption that more competition automatically leads to better behaviour. In reality, it merely fuels a race to the bottom: illicit costs permeate every layer of the labour market and ultimately trickle down to aspiring migrants, forcing them to pay a higher price than anyone else in the region.

The white paper's findings were quite damning. Over the past decade, it revealed, nearly one in five workers who paid advances failed to migrate at all, resulting in annual losses of roughly Tk 31,660 crore. That is why we stress that the system needs cleaning, not cluttering. The priority should be a rigorous audit to weed out unfit agencies, not the issuance of fresh licences that will stretch an already overstretched regulator to breaking point. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is drowning in complaints, with over 2,200 last year alone. Having to police more agencies would be almost impossible.

This decision comes as the global market for Bangladeshi labour is shrinking. Malaysia halted recruitment amid corruption allegations during the tenure of the Awami League government. The UAE has suspended visas, and traditional markets like Oman and Bahrain are largely closed. Even Saudi Arabia, the destination for 70 percent of migrants, is becoming less hospitable, with rising costs and fewer jobs. When legal routes narrow, the temptation for irregular migration grows. Already, Bangladeshis topped the list of irregular sea crossings to Europe last year.

The interim government has a mandate to dismantle prevailing syndicates, yet it appears to be replicating the mistakes of the past. Issuing licences is easy; ensuring that a village labourer is not bankrupted by a predatory broker is hard. The government seems to have chosen the easy part. But our migrant workers deserve better.

Going forward, we urge the authorities to enforce strict legal and ethical standards and negotiate bilateral agreements that eliminate middlemen altogether. Agencies with proven records of fraud must be stripped of their licences, and this clean-up must be paired with strengthening the BMET. Establishing a centralised, digital payment gateway for migration fees would also be a critical step in eliminating opaque cash transactions that fuel the syndicate system and drive up costs for the poorest workers.

Regulate battery-run rickshaws

Safeguard the interests of both drivers and passengers

Rickshaws—both pedal-driven and battery-powered—remain an indispensable part of Dhaka's urban mobility, especially for short trips. They provide livelihoods to hundreds of thousands and fill gaps left by inadequate public transport. A new study, however, shows that the largely unregulated nature of these rickshaws is creating serious problems for road safety, drivers' welfare, and the environment. According to the study, 97 percent of battery-powered rickshaws and nearly 86 percent of pedal rickshaws operate without registration, which is alarming.

The study shows that around 30 percent of passengers using battery-powered rickshaws have experienced accidents, compared to 18 percent for pedal rickshaws, with injuries being more severe in the former. Faster speeds, inexperienced drivers, and poorly built vehicles together make rickshaws risky on Dhaka's already crowded roads. The study has also found that battery-powered rickshaws are attracting younger and mostly new drivers, many of whom have no prior experience driving pedal rickshaws. While the battery-powered vehicles generate higher gross daily income, high rental fees and dependence on microfinance loans leave most drivers financially vulnerable. In fact, drivers who rent battery rickshaws often earn less than pedal rickshaw drivers, increasing the risk of debt and exploitation in this informal system.

However, from the passenger perspective, the appeal of battery-run rickshaws is understandable. Most trips in Dhaka are under two kilometres, and more than 80 percent of users prefer these rickshaws for their speed and lower cost. Although these vehicles are often blamed for traffic congestion, experts point out that congestion is mainly caused by poor traffic management, roadside encroachments, and a lack of proper investment, which have reduced average traffic speeds to near walking pace. Still, allowing millions of unregistered rickshaws to operate freely adds to the disorder on the roads and makes coordinated planning difficult. More importantly, convenience cannot come at the cost of safety and environmental health. Improper disposal and recycling of rickshaw batteries threaten soil, water, and even the food chain, a serious issue that demands attention.

The government must urgently act to regulate the battery-powered rickshaw sector. What is needed is a comprehensive framework that ensures mandatory registration, vehicle fitness standards, driver training, and strict enforcement of traffic and environmental rules. At the same time, regulation must be accompanied by broader employment strategies so that battery rickshaws are not treated as a default solution for unemployment. Rickshaws will continue to play a big role in Dhaka's transport ecosystem for the foreseeable future. Only through proper regulation can the interests of both drivers and the public be safeguarded.

What voters expect when parties speak of a ‘New Bangladesh’



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ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

Moreover, there is hardly any public or private project that can move forward without paying bribes or extortion money. According to the committee that prepared the “White Paper on the State of Bangladesh Economy,” during the 15 years of the Sheikh Hasina regime, of the Tk 7.20 lakh crore invested in development projects through the Annual Development Programme, an estimated Tk 1.61 lakh crore to Tk 2.80 lakh crore was lost to corruption, including political extortion, bribery, and inflated project costs. The report further estimates that between Tk

As the 13th national election approaches, calls for building a “New Bangladesh” have once again taken centre stage in political campaigning. The phrase appears regularly in speeches and rallies, accompanied by promises of good governance, an end to corruption, the restoration of democratic norms, equal rights for citizens, etc. Such commitments, however, are familiar to voters. Similar assurances have featured in election after election over the decades, only to fade once power changed hands. This long history of unfulfilled commitments has left many voters deeply sceptical.

Against this backdrop, it is important to focus on some key issues that ordinary Bangladeshis really expect the winning party or coalition to address if the promise of a “New Bangladesh” is to move beyond slogans and take on real meaning.

One of the most pressing expectations is decisive action against *chandabazi*, or extortion, and bribery. These practices affect almost every sector of society and have become a daily burden for citizens. Businesses of all kinds, from street hawkers to factory owners, from transport operators to developers and landowners, and from schools to public service offices, suffer badly from this system and are desperate for relief. Street vendors, for instance, face constant harassment and are forced to pay police, corporation officials, and political musclemen simply to keep their spot and avoid eviction or seizure of their goods. Those who resist often face threats, false cases, or unlawful detention. The Bangladesh Hawkers Federation claims that vendors on Dhaka's footpaths are extorted for around Tk 3,000 crore annually, which amounts to more than Tk 8 crore every day.

In the transport sector, almost every commercial vehicle, including trucks, buses, and minibuses, is routinely forced to pay extortion money to local political cadres. Markets, transport stands, and launch terminals operate under a so-called “token” system, which in reality is nothing more than organised extortion controlled by powerful syndicates. A report by Transparency International Bangladesh, published on March 5, 2024, revealed that private buses and minibuses alone pay nearly Tk 1,059 crore every year in extortion money.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

77,000 crore and Tk 98,000 crore were paid as bribes to government officials. Meanwhile, politicians and their associates received Tk 70,000 crore to Tk 1,40,000 crore through extortion and collusive payments. *Chandabazi* and bribery have long been major sources of public grievances, closely linked to political corruption and weak enforcement of the law, and citizens are demanding firm action to finally resolve them.

Another serious concern that has emerged in recent times is the sharp rise in mob violence, moral policing, and online abuse. While mob violence existed in the past, its scale and nature have changed significantly since August 2024, becoming a frequent

highlight the seriousness of the problem. In August 2025, two men were beaten to death in Sirajganj over alleged cattle theft. Hindu homes were vandalised in Rangpur in July 2025 following a Facebook post. In Lalmonirhat, a 70-year-old barber and his son were attacked in June 2025 following accusations of hurting religious sentiments. In Bhola, a man had his eyes gouged out by a mob in March 2025. In the same month, an Uber driver in Dhaka was beaten to death after being mistaken for a mugger.

Disturbing still is the rise of so-called “moral policing,” with groups of men harassing young girls and women over their clothing, lifestyle choices, or behaviour. At the same time,

As insecurity and uncertainty grow, citizens and businesses alike are left to bear their cumulative costs.

Therefore, restoring the rule of law and dismantling the entrenched systems of bribery and extortion must be central to any claim to build a “New Bangladesh.” Political parties must understand that without a credible commitment to curb mob violence, protect citizens from arbitrary intimidation, and enforce the law impartially, their slogans will remain hollow and public trust will continue to erode. The party or coalition that wins the upcoming election will be judged not by what it says about change, but by whether it finally demonstrates the political will to deliver it.

The paradox of Bangladesh's climate progress



Ashish Barua
is climate activist and
fundraising professional.

ASHISH BARUA

Bangladesh is once again featured prominently in the latest Climate Risk Index (CRI), a report widely cited by global media, policymakers, and international funders to assess countries' exposure to climate impacts. Over the years, Bangladesh's position in this index has shifted, improving in relation to other highly exposed countries. For many, this is read as a sign of progress: better preparedness, fewer deaths, stronger resilience.

But the more important question is not where Bangladesh ranks, but how that ranking is interpreted at a time when climate impacts are only deepening, not receding. The CRI, produced annually, measures climate-related losses based largely on extreme weather events, including fatalities and economic damage. By these indicators, Bangladesh has indeed made notable strides. Early warning systems, cyclone shelters, and disaster preparedness have significantly reduced mortality from sudden-onset events like cyclones and floods. This is a success story worth acknowledging. However, climate risk today is no longer defined only by sudden disasters.

The CRI captures what can be

counted easily: deaths, damages, and disasters that occur within a defined timeframe. What it does not capture fully are the slow-onset, compounding, and deeply structural impacts that define climate vulnerability.

Salinity intrusion is rendering farmlands unproductive in coastal districts. River erosion is displacing thousands every year, often permanently. Heat stress is undermining labour productivity and public health. Climate-induced migration is reshaping cities and social systems. Cultural loss, psychosocial stress, and the erosion of livelihoods rarely appear in global indices, but they are very real for affected communities.

Global indices like the CRI are increasingly used as proxies for need, readiness, or resilience. Countries that show “improvement” may be perceived as less urgent priorities for climate finance, even as adaptive limits are being reached and loss and damage accelerate. In other words, progress in disaster response can paradoxically mask growing vulnerability.

The situation is critical because climate finance is becoming increasingly scarce. Adaptation

funding remains inadequate, and most available support is offered as loans rather than grants, worsening the debt burden on vulnerable nations. While the landmark Loss and Damage Fund has finally opened for applications, its current resources are a mere fraction of the actual global need and its implementation remains a subject of intense political debate.

In this context, global assessments influence how decisions are made. Policymakers and funders look for signals: Which countries are “most at risk”? Which has “capacity”? Which are seen as “success stories”?

Bangladesh risks falling into a dangerous grey zone: no longer framed as an emergency, but not yet supported for the long-term structural losses it is facing.

This is particularly concerning because many of the impacts Bangladesh faces today are not easily reversible through adaptation alone.

Global indices do not exist in a vacuum. They rely heavily on national data systems, reporting mechanisms, and official statistics. What countries track, report, and prioritise inevitably shapes what becomes visible internationally.

In Bangladesh, while disaster losses are relatively well documented, slow-onset impacts, non-economic losses, and displacement-related costs remain undercounted. Informal economies, unpaid care work, and cultural losses rarely appear in national accounts—let alone global indices. This creates a feedback loop: what is not counted is not prioritised; what is not prioritised is not funded. As a result, global

assessments may reflect not only climate realities, but also institutional blind spots.

If indices like the CRI continue to dominate narratives of vulnerability without adequately capturing loss and damage, there is a real risk that funding gaps will widen precisely when needs are intensifying. Bangladesh may appear more “resilient” on paper, while communities face irreversible losses on the ground.

This is not an argument against the CRI. It is an argument for using it more carefully and complementing it with deeper, context-sensitive analysis. The Government of Bangladesh can play a critical role through strengthening national systems to track slow-onset loss, displacement, and non-economic impacts; integrating these into climate reporting; and ensuring that international narratives reflect lived realities. Civil society organisations, researchers, and local institutions are equally vital. They document what statistics overlook, amplify community voices, and challenge simplified narratives of success or failure.

At a global level, funders and policymakers must resist the temptation to treat rankings as shortcuts. Climate vulnerability is not a league table. It is dynamic, uneven, and deeply human. Bangladesh's shifting position in global indices should prompt deeper questions, not complacency. The real measure of progress will not be where the country ranks, but whether climate-vulnerable communities receive the support, justice, and resources they need as climate impacts continue to unfold.

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

SHAHADAT SHADHIN

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)

বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ

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তারিখঃ ১৯ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬

গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহ্বান


বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়ের বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগের আওতাধীন টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)-এর বাজেটের গবেষণা অনুদান খাতে বরাদ্দকৃত অর্থের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশে টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানির উন্নয়ন ও সম্প্রসারণ বিষয়ে প্রায়োগিক গবেষণা প্রস্তাব আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

গবেষণার ক্ষেত্র
নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি, বিকল্প জ্বালানি, জ্বালানি সংরক্ষণ ও দক্ষ ব্যবহার, Net Zero Carbon এবং Waste to Energy।

উদ্দেশ্য
বাংলাদেশের আর্থ-সামাজিক প্রেক্ষাপটে টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানির উন্নয়ন ও সম্প্রসারণে অবদান রাখা।

শর্তাবলি

- ১। গবেষক/গবেষণা দলের সদস্যদের বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক হতে হবে;
- ২। গবেষণাটি একক/দলীয় হতে পারে। দলীয় গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে দলে ন্যূনতম ০৩ (তিন) জন এবং সর্বোচ্চ ০৫ (পাঁচ) জন সদস্য রাখা যাবে;
- ৩। গবেষণা প্রস্তাবে Introduction, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Rationale of the Research, Objectives, Expected Outcomes, Scope of the Research, Methodology, Data Analysis, Economic Importance সুনির্দিষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ থাকতে হবে;
- ৪। গবেষণা প্রস্তাবের সময়াবদ্ধ কর্মপরিকল্পনা এবং খাত ও উপখাত উল্লেখসহ একটি যৌক্তিক বাজেট দাখিল করতে হবে;
- ৫। গবেষণা প্রস্তাবের সাথে গবেষকগণের পূর্ণাঙ্গ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত এবং অভিজ্ঞতা (যদি থাকে) দাখিল করতে হবে;
- ৬। চূড়ান্ত গবেষণা প্রতিবেদনসমূহ পর্যালোচনার উদ্দেশ্যে গবেষক/গবেষক দলসমূহ তার/তাদের অনুকূলে বরাদ্দকৃত অনুদানের অর্থ হতে স্রেডা'র তত্ত্বাবধানে এক বা একাধিক সেমিনার/কর্মশালা আয়োজন করবেন;
- ৭। চূড়ান্তভাবে মনোনীত প্রতিটি গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে সর্বোচ্চ অনুদানের পরিমাণ ৫,০০,০০০/- (পাঁচ লক্ষ) টাকা।
- ৮। চূড়ান্তভাবে মনোনীত গবেষক/গবেষক দলকে আবশ্যিকভাবে একটি ব্যাংক হিসাব খুলতে হবে এবং উক্ত ব্যাংক হিসাবে গবেষণা অনুদান প্রদান করা হবে;
- ৯। গবেষণার স্বত্ব থাকবে স্রেডা'র। তবে স্রেডা'র পূর্বানুমতিসাপেক্ষে গবেষণাপত্র দেশী ও বিদেশী স্বীকৃত জার্নালে প্রকাশ করা যাবে;
- ১০। গবেষণা অনুদান তিন কিস্তিতে প্রদান করা হবে;
- ১১। গবেষণার বিষয় নির্ধারণ, গবেষণা প্রস্তাব পর্যালোচনাপূর্বক প্রাথমিক বাছাই, গবেষণার মধ্যবর্তী ও চূড়ান্ত প্রতিবেদন পর্যালোচনা ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে প্রয়োজনীয়সংখ্যক সেমিনার/কর্মশালায় ব্যয় অর্থ বিভাগ কর্তৃক জারীকৃত বিধি-বিধান অনুযায়ী স্রেডা'র গবেষণা খাতের বরাদ্দ থেকে নির্বাহ করা হবে; অগ্রাধিকার গবেষক/গবেষকদলকে আগামী ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী বরাবর গবেষণা প্রস্তাব (হার্ডকপি) ও সফটকপি ইমেইলে (member.pr@sreda.gov.bd) দাখিল করতে হবে। গত ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে যারা গবেষণা প্রস্তাব দাখিল করেছেন, তাদের গবেষণা প্রস্তাব কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক মূল্যায়নের জন্য বিবেচিত হবে। একই বিষয়ে নতুনভাবে প্রস্তাব দাখিল করার প্রয়োজন নেই। তবে ইতোপূর্বে দাখিলকৃত প্রস্তাব সংশোধনপূর্বক নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে নতুনভাবে দাখিল করা যাবে।
- ১২। একই বিষয়ে কোন প্রস্তাব সরকারি, আধা সরকারি বা স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে দাখিল করা যাবে না অর্থাৎ দ্বৈততা পরিহার করতে হবে;
- ১৪। গবেষণা কার্যক্রম, মেয়াদ, বরাদ্দের পরিমাণ ও বরাদ্দপত্রে উল্লেখিত শর্তাদি কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে পরিবর্তিত হতে পারে;
- ১৫। গবেষণা কার্যক্রমের অগ্রগতি পর্যবেক্ষণ, মনিটরিং, আর্থিক সংশ্লেষ ও অন্যান্য বিষয়ে স্রেডা'র সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত মর্মে বিবেচিত হবে।


 ২২.০১.২০২৬
মোঃ জেহাদ উদ্দিন
 যুগ্মসচিব ও সদস্য (নীতি ও গবেষণা), স্রেডা

GD-133

Minus temperatures, challenging set, CHANCHAL PERSEVERES

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

National Film Award-winning actor Chanchal Chowdhury is currently working on three new films – *Dommm*, directed by Redoan Rony; *Bonolota Express*, directed by Tanim Noor; and *Shasti*, to be directed by Leesa Gazi.

Among the three, shooting for *Shasti*, which is based on Rabindranath Tagore's short story of the same name, is set to begin soon. While the actor has already completed most of the shooting for the other two projects.

Shasti, the recently announced film will cast Pori Moni, opposite Chanchal, marking the first collaboration between the two actors. Speaking about his co-star, he said, "Pori Moni is a good actress. She gave wonderful performances in *Swapnajaal* and *Gunin*, both directed by Giasuddin Selim. At the same time, she looks beautiful on screen, and we all know that audiences have always adored her."

He added that Pori Moni needs more meaningful roles and strong directors to truly showcase her potential. "If she gets good projects with good filmmakers, I believe that she can do exceptionally well."

This will be my first film with her. I truly hope it turns out to be something special," he said.

Adding to this the *Monnpura* actor suggested, "We need more literature-based films."

While the shooting for *Dommm* took place abroad, and recalling his shooting experience in Kazakhstan, Chowdhury said, "I had never shot in minus two or minus three degrees before. The hardship was incredible – everyone in the team suffered. At night, the cold became unbearable. And we



couldn't always wear winter clothes in every scene. After finishing each shot, we would rush back to the car to sit near the heater. We went through all this hardship for *Dommm*."

Talking further about the film, the actor described the film as a story rooted in intense struggle. "Afran Nisho has delivered an outstanding performance. Everyone has done their best in their own space."

He further noted that *Dommm* was made by a highly professional team. "Both Bangladeshi and Kazakh technicians worked together. The cinematographer was from Kazakhstan. Acting in such a story gave me immense satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment."

As the conversation moves to *Bonolota Express*, Chanchal informs that the film adapted from Humayun Ahmed's novel *Kichukhon* was filmed largely inside a train, adding a unique visual and narrative texture to the project.

"Besides the train we also had to use a helicopter. Essentially, it's a journey-based story, and it's going to be quite interesting to watch!"

On working with Humayun Ahmed's stories, he said, "His work pulls you in like a magnet. He was a true magician of storytelling. A wonderful screenplay has been developed from his novel. We shot with a large team, and actors like Mosharraf Karim and Badhan are also part of the film."

In addition to these projects, Chowdhury completed shooting for Raihan Rafi's *Andhar* quite some time ago, and the film is now awaiting release. "I believe it's going to be another strong piece of work," he said.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nidra Neha wraps up shooting for upcoming period film 'Kalo Biral'

Actress Nidra Neha has wrapped up shooting for her new film *Kalo Biral*, marking her latest screen appearance after a turbulent period in her career. Earlier, she was dropped from Raihan Rafi's *Taandob* after sharing the project news ahead of an official announcement, an episode that led her to publicly express frustration over industry practices before clarifying that she would continue acting selectively.

Directed and written by Sohrab Hossain Ullash, *Kalo Biral* is set against the backdrop of the 1980s and centres on a story of love, romance and emotion. The cast also includes Arifin Jilani, Magfurul Islam Bidyut and Rahim, among others. Neha plays a character named Debi. The film is currently in the editing stage and is expected to be released in theatres later this year.



'Minoti' showcases energetic chemistry between Dola and Muza

Singer Dola Rahman has teamed up with musician Muza for the new song *Minoti*, released on January 18, which is already drawing attention from music lovers. Rooted in Bangladeshi folk sensibilities and inspired by the depth of Raag Darbari, the song blends tradition with a contemporary soundscape. Dola's emotive and soulful vocals convey the yearning of a lover with sensitivity, while Muza's modern arrangement keeps the track accessible and engaging.

Minoti is written by Badhon, Muza and Dola Rahman, composed by Muza and Dola, mixed and mastered by R Cha, with sarangi by Shounak Debnath Wreck.

NEWS

645 incidents against minorities

FROM PAGE 12
committed to confronting crimes with transparency, accuracy, and resolve.

A yearlong review of official police records for January to December 2025 documented 645 incidents involving members of minority communities, compiled from verified first information reports, general diaries, charge sheets, and investigation updates nationwide.

"While every incident is a matter of concern, the data presents a clear and evidence-based picture: the overwhelming majority of cases were criminal in nature rather than communal, underscoring the complexity of law and order challenges and the importance of grounding public discussion in facts rather than fear or misinformation."

The further mentioned communal incidents primarily involved vandalism or desecration of religious sites and idols, along with a small number of other offences. In contrast, the majority of incidents affecting minority individuals or properties arose from criminal activity unrelated to religion, including neighbourhood disputes, land conflicts, political rivalries, theft, sexual violence, and

cases linked to prior personal enmity.

"This distinction is important. While all crimes are serious and demand accountability, the data demonstrates that most incidents involving minority victims were not driven by communal hostility but by broader criminal and social factors that affect citizens across religious and ethnic lines."

"Accurate classification helps prevent misinformation and supports more effective law enforcement responses," it added.

The report also documents significant police engagement. Hundreds of cases were formally registered, arrests were made in many incidents, and investigations are ongoing in others.

This reflects an institutional commitment to addressing crime and maintaining public order, particularly in sensitive cases involving religious sites or communal concerns, it added.

At the national level, Bangladesh continues to face serious law-and-order challenges. Each year, an estimated 3,000-3,500 people lose their lives to violent crime nationwide.

"This is not a number to be proud of. Every life lost is a tragedy, and

no society should be complacent in the face of such statistics. At the same time, these figures must be understood in context. Violent crime affects all communities, cutting across religion, ethnicity, and geography," the statement said.

Importantly, available indicators show that law and order in Bangladesh is improving steadily. Enhanced policing, better intelligence coordination, faster response times, and increased accountability have contributed to gradual but meaningful progress. The government and law-enforcement agencies remain committed to reducing crime further and ensuring equal protection under the law, it added.

"Bangladesh is a country of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and people of other beliefs, all of whom are citizens with equal rights. Ensuring safety and justice for every community is not only a constitutional obligation but a moral one. Protecting places of worship, preventing incitement, responding quickly to criminal acts, and distinguishing facts from rumour are essential to preserving social harmony," the statement said.

2024, by Firoz Khan, former general secretary of BNP's Mohora ward, accusing Chinmoy and others of disrespecting the national flag during a Hindu community rally in the city's New Market area on October 25.

After Chinmoy was sent to jail, his supporters blocked a prison van and staged protests demanding his release. Police action to disperse the crowd led to clashes involving Chinmoy's supporters, police, and a group of lawyers.

Police lodged three cases over vandalism, attacks on police, and obstruction of official duties, naming 79 individuals and around 1,400 unidentified persons.

Alif's father filed a murder case against 31 people, while his brother Khan-e-Alam lodged another case accusing 115 individuals, including 70 lawyers.

In the charge sheet, police said the killing occurred following instigation and provocation by Chinmoy.

ICT verdict

FROM PAGE 2
Police commissioner Habibur Rahman; joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty; former additional deputy commissioner Sha Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam and former assistant commissioner of Ramna zone Mohammad Imrul; former Shahbagh Police Station inspector (operations) Arshad Hossain; and constables Sujon Hossain, Imaz Hossain and Nasirul Islam. Of them, Arshad, Sujon, Imaz and Nasirul are in custody, while the rest are absconding.

According to the prosecution, Habibur, along with Sudip, Akhtarul, Imrul and Arshad, bore command responsibility and they were involved in a joint criminal enterprise, accused of incitement, abetment, and complicity.

Constables Sujon, Imaz, and Nasirul allegedly used rifles to shoot protesters in Chankharpu and adjacent areas, causing deaths to the six people on August 5, 2024. The victims were Shahriar Khan Anas, Sheikh Mahdi Hasan Junayed, Mohammad Yakub, Rakib Hawlader, Ismamul Haque, and Manik Mia.

On December 24 last year, the ICT-1 set January 20 for delivering the judgment in the Chankharpu murder case.

The investigation agency submitted its probe report to the Chief Prosecutor's Office on April 20 last year, and the tribunal took cognisance of the charges on May 25. On July 14, charges were framed, and the trial began on August 10 with the prosecution's opening statements.

Rab member killed

FROM PAGE 1
spread across the area following the attack. Debunking the rumour, Chattogram Range Deputy Inspector General Ahsan Habib Palash said, "We don't know anything about shooting. As far as we know, the Rab team was beaten by local thugs."

A Facebook video showed people attacking two minibuses, with the vehicles attempting to flee the scene.

Due to its remote, hilly terrain, Jungle Salimpur has become a safe haven for criminals.

The area spans about 3,100 acres on the northern side of the Link Road, opposite Asian University for Women, around two kilometres west of Bayezid Bostami in Chattogram city. Although administratively under Sitakunda, it lies largely within the city limits, bordered by Hathazari upazila to the east and Bayezid thana to the south.

8,780 polling centres

FROM PAGE 12
25,000 body-worn cameras at the "most important" and "important" centres.

The decisions were taken at a law and order advisory council meeting held at the home ministry yesterday.

"We are working in an integrated manner to prioritise maximum security to hold the election in a free, fair, neutral, peaceful, acceptable and festive manner," said the adviser.

Addressing the media, he said CCTV cameras would be installed at every polling centre and necessary preparations are underway.

Drones will also be deployed, with a total of 418 drones to be used by different agencies: 200 by the army, 16 by the navy, 100 by the Border Guard Bangladesh, 50 by the Bangladesh Police, 20 by the Coast Guard, 16 by Rab and 16 by the Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Force.

Dog squads will be used by various forces to support security and protection measures, he added.

An election law and order coordination cell will be formed with representatives from police, Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP), the armed forces, BGB, Coast Guard and Rab.

A special team under the emergency service number 999 will also be formed and linked to the coordination cell.

The team will forward election-related complaints and information directly to the home ministry and area-based coordination cells for swift action.

Home ministry officials described the "Election Security App-2026", developed by the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre as a key tool for maintaining law and order during the polls.

For hard-to-reach polling centres, the Bangladesh Air Force will provide helicopters to transport ballots, election materials, and officials and staff assigned to election duty.

Separate security arrangements will be ensured for polling centres in metropolitan, non-metropolitan and remote areas, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts, according to a home ministry circular.

Outside metropolitan areas, each general polling station will have two armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander. Important stations will have three armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander.

In metropolitan areas, general stations will have three armed police

members and three Ansar personnel, while important stations will have four armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other remote areas, each general station will have two armed police members and three Ansar personnel, while important stations will have three armed police members and three Ansar personnel, including one armed section commander. Every presiding officer in these areas will also be provided with one armed Ansar member for personal security.

In addition, every polling station nationwide will have 10 Ansar personnel – four women and six men – equipped with sticks to help maintain order.

Security deployment at centres will be calibrated to sensitivity, with police and Ansar and VDP supported by the armed forces, BGB, Coast Guard and Rab at vulnerable centres, in coordination with district- and upazila-level law and order coordination cells, Jahangir said.

Authorities also directed law enforcers to intensify the recovery of illegal arms, arrest criminals, conduct intelligence-based area operations and run checkpoint drives during the election period.

Home ministry data showed that Devil Hunt Phase-2, launched on December 13, 2025, led to the arrest of 19,854 people as of January 17, 2026.

Separately, the interim government has ordered all firearms licence holders to deposit their weapons at the nearest police station by January 31.

The directive was issued in a home ministry notification on Sunday, which said the carrying and display of firearms would be prohibited until February 15.

The restriction will not apply to firearms allocated under existing policy for politically important persons and parliamentary candidates. Law enforcers are also exempt from the directive.

For candidates, the ban will not apply where nomination papers have been lawfully submitted to the Election Commission and accepted, or for an armed retainer authorised for the candidate.

On December 14, the government issued policy guidelines on granting firearms licences and appointing retainers for politically important individuals and candidates. Under the policy, licences and retainers will be approved after scrutiny by district magistrates and intelligence agencies.

Don't pay visa

FROM PAGE 3
Starting January 21, Bangladeshi citizens approved for a B1/B2 (business or tourist) US visa will be required to pay a bond of up to \$15,000. The requirement will not apply to those holding a valid B1/B2 visa issued before that date. Earlier this month, the administration of US President Donald Trump added 25 more countries, including Bangladesh, to a list of nations whose citizens may be required to post bonds of up to \$15,000 to enter the United States, Reuters reported on January 6, citing the US State Department website.

According to the website, citizens or nationals travelling on passports issued by any of the listed countries, if otherwise eligible for a B1/B2 visa, must post a bond of \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000. The amount will be determined at the time of the visa interview. Applicants must agree to the bond terms and make payments through the US Treasury Department's official online platform, Pay.gov, the state department said.

The bond requirement is intended to deter visitors from overstaying visas issued for tourism or business purposes.

2018 NAT'L POLLS
ACC to sue Ranga over 'Tk 1.7cr bribe'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has found evidence that former state minister and Jatiya Party's former secretary general Mashiur Rahman Ranga accepted a bribe of Tk 1.7 crore in exchange for facilitating a candidacy in the 2018 national election.

The anti-graft watchdog has decided to file a case against Ranga and former Kurigram-2 MP Panir Uddin Ahmed over the bribery allegation. The money was allegedly received from Panir to create an opportunity for him to contest the election.

ACC Director General Md Akhtar Hossain yesterday said the decision to file the case was taken at the commission's headquarters.

According to sources familiar with the investigation report, Ranga accepted Tk 1.7 crore as a bribe from Panir despite having no business relationship with him.

The investigation further revealed that Panir is the proprietor of M/s Jalil Biri Factory and Haque Special, a transport business. On October 30, 2018, Tk 20 lakh was transferred from his special account at Islami Bank Bangladesh's Kurigram branch to Ranga's account at the bank's Rangpur branch.



Leaders and activists of Jatiyatatabadi Chhatra Dal continued their sit-in outside the Election Commission headquarters in Agargaon yesterday, protesting the EC's "biased and controversial" role ahead of the national election slated for February 12. They eventually postponed the agitation in the evening after meeting the EC, which assured them it would look into their demands.

PHOTO: STAR

Politics must

FROM PAGE 3
beside the people is the highest form of politics," he said while virtually addressing a programme in Jashore where BNP provided financial assistance to a three-year-old girl, Afia, who was born with albinism.

Tarique said true politics is about serving people and easing their suffering, not just criticising rival parties from public platforms.

He said political work should also mean standing by people during natural disasters like floods, storms and cyclones, as well as during personal and social crises.

"Going to people and standing beside them in their hardship is the real politics," he said.

Tarique said there are many Afias in Bangladesh and many helpless mothers like her mother, and that people must think about them.

"As we stand beside Afia today, we want to stand beside every helpless person in the country," he said.

He said BNP plans to introduce Family Card and Farmers' Card to support poor families and farmers.

Dreams of intellectual Empower urban govt to tackle

FROM PAGE 3
He pointed to growing intolerance, citing attacks on Bauls, Ahmadiyyas, and shrines, as well as the persecution of minorities.

"We are in a civilisational crisis. There is no one to show us the path," he said, calling for fearless figures like Begum Rokeya and Abul Hussain to rise again and stand against injustice.

Journalist and researcher Kazal Rashid Shahin identified "social elitism" as a major obstacle to the movement's success.

He criticised contemporary intellectuals for practising culture in "ivory towers" rather than engaging with the masses.

"You cannot free the intellect from a high tower," he said.

He, however, described the movement as a distinct "Bangladesh Renaissance" that shaped Bengali Muslim identity and eventually led to the Liberation War.

Researcher Morshed Shafiul Hasan highlighted the moral integrity of the movement's leaders, which he said is largely absent today.

He cited Abul Hussain, a guiding figure of the movement, who once resigned from Dhaka University in protest against a "Muslim quota" in recruitment, despite

being a beneficiary of it.

"He believed the quota insulted true merit," Shafiul Hasan said.

"He resigned the very next day after apologising to Dhaka's Nawab family under social pressure. We will not find such an example of intellectual honesty in today's politics," he added.

Joining virtually from the US, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty spoke about the ethical stance of Kazi Abdul Odud, another key figure of the movement.

He said Odud believed that "the strongest man is he who stands most alone, in the minority of one."

Dipesh Chakrabarty noted that these thinkers avoided extremism, preferred balanced criticism of religion, and prioritised "prem" (love) as the everyday welfare of ordinary people.

Earlier, The Daily Star journalist Shamsuddoza Sajen delivered the welcome address, drawing parallels between the 1920s and Bangladesh's post-August 5 reality.

"The tension that the Sahitya Samaj sought to resolve -- between progressive thought and reactionary forces -- exists in a much larger form today," he said.

The event was moderated by The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz.

FROM PAGE 3
collected in the DNCC area amount to around Tk 19 to 22 crore every month.

"Not a single taka of this fine goes to the city corporation; the entire amount goes directly to the central treasury. Yet, the city corporation has to spend hundreds of crores of taka on traffic signals and infrastructure development," he said.

BNP Chairperson's Adviser Abdus Salam said there is currently no effective coordination among Rajuk, city corporations and other

service-providing agencies.

"Over the past 17 years, state institutions have been destroyed. To recover from this situation, a strong and elected government is necessary," Abdus said.

Jamaat-e-Islami candidate for Dhaka-17, Dr SM Khaleduzzaman, said Dhaka has become nearly unliveable due to mismanagement and wrong political decisions.

"We will give the highest priority to restoring Dhaka's environment and seek the support of city

dwellers," he said.

Senior Joint Convener of the National Citizen Party, Ariful Islam Adib, said multiple agencies including city corporations, Rajuk, Wasa and Desco operate in the city, but there is a severe lack of coordination among them.

"An integrated government system is necessary to address this matter," Ariful said.

The keynote paper was presented by Sadat Omar, president of Gulshan Society.

Teesta Mega Plan

FROM PAGE 4
Rizwana said two key studies are currently underway, one technical to assess whether the feasibility study is fully accurate and effective, and the other financial to determine whether the large investment will be sustainable for the Chinese government.

Rizwana and the Chinese ambassador inspected erosion-affected areas adjacent to the Kaunia Bridge. Senior officials of the Bangladesh Water Development Board and the local administration were

also present.

During the visit, they toured both banks of the Teesta River by boat and spoke with erosion-affected residents along the riverbanks.

Yao Wen said the visit would help shape future plans and expressed hope that implementation of the Teesta Mega Plan would begin very soon. He also said there was no geopolitical pressure regarding the project and reaffirmed China's commitment to completing the ongoing technical evaluation quickly.

Dhaka candidates already on

FROM PAGE 3
His supporters have also been carrying out organisational activities to maintain a presence in the area.

"Since formal campaigning has not started, we are organising party programmes without violating the code of conduct," Abdul Kader Babu, convener of Badda Thana BNP, told The Daily Star.

He added that the candidate is maintaining personal contact with locals through social events.

Jamaat-e-Islami candidates are also maintaining a busy schedule through religious, organisational, and social

outreach.

Saiful Alam Khan Milon, contesting from Dhaka-12, addressed a student-youth rally in Moghbazar on January 17.

Meanwhile, Jamaat candidate for Dhaka-10, Advocate Jasim Uddin Sarkar, has been focusing on mosque-based outreach in Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, and Green Road areas.

National Citizen Party (NCP) candidate for Dhaka-8, Nasiruddin Patwary, has adopted a "dawn-to-dusk" approach, starting his day with Fajr prayers at different mosques in Shajahanpur, Arambagh, and Malibagh to meet local residents.

"I am currently focusing on introducing myself to voters and discussing issues like anti-corruption and resisting foreign (Indian) hegemony," Nasiruddin told The Daily Star.

He said he is also campaigning for the "Yes" vote in the referendum, which will be held alongside the election.

participating in various social programmes as part of their preparation for the polls.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission remains strict regarding the code of conduct. Several candidates have already been served show-cause notices for alleged violations.

On Sunday, the EC issued show-cause notices to NCP Convener Nahid Islam (Dhaka-11) and Nasiruddin Patwary.


In response, the NCP claimed that they did not promote their electoral symbol -- "Shapla Koli" (water lily bud) -- but were campaigning only for the "Yes" vote in the referendum, which they argue does not violate election rules.

Regarding the issue, Omar Faruq, coordinator of Nahid Islam's election management committee, told The Daily Star, "That was a campaign for 'Yes' in the referendum."

He said since Nahid is contesting as part of a 10-party alliance, coordination with other parties is currently underway.

"We are holding coordination meetings with Jamaat leaders at the ward and thana levels. A joint committee will be formed soon, and it will decide the roadmap for the campaign," he said.

According to the EC, formal campaigning will run from January 22 until 7:30am on February 10. Candidates are prohibited from using wall posters and must follow specific guidelines for leaflets and banners, which may only include photos of the candidate and their party chief.



Sonali Bank PLC
Establishment and Engineering Division
Engineering Department
Head Office, Dhaka
Phone: +8802-223351050
Email: dgmeed@sonalibank.com.bd

e-GP Tender Notice (OTM)


e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Additional Chief Engineer, Establishment & Engineering Division, Sonali Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka for the procurement of following works:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Tender publication date & time	Last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender closing/ opening date & time
1.	1214426	Electrical remodeling works, Air-Cooler supply & Installation works at (1) Credit Administration Division, (2) Estate Management Division, (3) Loan Recovery Cell of Head Office at 3rd Floor, Sonali Bank PLC, Wage Earners Corporate Branch Building, Dilkusha, Dhaka (Re-Tender).	21 Jan, 2026 12:00	05 Feb, 2026 12:00	05 Feb, 2026 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/HelpDesk.jsp>).

GD-134

Sd/-
Md. Abul Bashar
Additional Chief Engineer



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)
প্রধান কার্যালয়
মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-২৩/২০২৬

তারিখঃ ০১ মাঘ, ১৪৩২
১৫ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি (BSC)-এর সদস্যভুক্ত ০৩টি ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে ২০২২ সালভিত্তিক 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/সহকারী ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/এসিস্ট্যান্ট মেইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ার' (৯ম গ্রেড) (Job ID-10207) এর ৬৫টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে MCQ ও লিখিত পরীক্ষার সময়সূচি, content, প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ের তত্ত্বাবধানে ০৩টি ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে সমন্বিতভাবে 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/সহকারী ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/এসিস্ট্যান্ট মেইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ার' (৯ম গ্রেড) (Job ID- 10207) পদে যোগ্য বিবেচিত প্রার্থীদের এক সেশনে প্রিলিমিনারি (MCQ) ও লিখিত পরীক্ষা আগামী ২৪/০১/২০২৬ তারিখ, শনিবার (দুপুর ০২.০০টা-০৫.০০টা; ৩ ঘণ্টা ব্যাপী) অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। প্রিলিমিনারি (MCQ Test) ও লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রশ্নপত্রের Content ও নম্বর বিভাজন এবং কেন্দ্র সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) এ আপলোড করা হয়েছে।

ডিসিপিংঃ ৪৮/২০২৬-২০৫
তারিখঃ ১৮/০১/২০২৬

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

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

জিডি-১৩০



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board

Directorate of Purchase
1 No. Abdul Gani Road
Biddul Bhuvan
(12th Floor), Dhaka
Phone No. 02-22338081
E-mail: dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
01.	1214431	EE-GRF-01-Fy-25/26	27.11.000 0.304.26.1 24.26 Date: 18/01/2026	Supply of 33 KV 800 ACR	15-Mar 2026 16.00	16-Mar 2026 14.00	16-Mar 2026 14.00

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). For more details please contract to the PE's Support Desk (01768595879).

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৬০৮(২)/১৯/০১/২৬



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

GD-135

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 20



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:40 7:00

JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:44 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

The hidden potential of Bangladesh’s “attention” market

The cross-currency vehicle in digital media

NOMIROTA SARKER

Bangladesh is often discussed in terms of labour, manufacturing, and remittances. Yet an equally powerful economic resource remains largely invisible in policy discussions and investment theses: attention.

Every day, tens of millions of Bangladeshis spend hours on YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, mobile games, and messaging platforms. Measured in time, engagement, and cultural influence, this attention is already being bought and sold. The issue is not whether Bangladesh has an attention market - it is that we have failed to recognise it as one.

Attention as an economic asset

In modern digital economies, attention functions like a raw commodity. Platforms monetise it through advertising. Creators convert it into income. Brands transform it into demand. Unlike physical exports, attention requires no ports, no shipping containers, and no inventory. It scales instantly and travels frictionlessly across borders.

Bangladesh holds three structural advantages in this market: a large, young population, high mobile internet penetration, and cultural fluency with short-form, social-first content. Yet, attention generated in Bangladesh is rarely captured at its full value locally. Instead, it is exported, often unintentionally, through global platforms that settle earnings in foreign currencies.

The undervalued attention economy

On a per-user basis, Bangladeshi attention is among the cheapest in the world. CPMs are low, brand budgets are constrained, and local advertising sophistication remains limited. From a global perspective, this makes Bangladesh a high-volume, low-cost attention pool. This mispricing creates arbitrage.

A Bangladeshi creator earning views locally may be paid in USD by YouTube. A D2C brand can acquire domestic attention cheaply and convert it into sales from diaspora customers abroad. A freelancer builds an audience on LinkedIn or X and translates credibility into foreign contracts. The attention originates locally. The value is realised globally.

Digital media as a cross-currency vehicle

Digital media platforms function as currency exchangers. They convert: Bangladeshi time into foreign ad revenue, local cultural relevance into global reach,



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

and low-cost attention into high-value outcomes.

This explains why many digital-native businesses - from content studios to niche D2C brands - are more export-oriented than traditional SMEs, even when they appear domestic. Some of Bangladesh's most successful "fashion" or "lifestyle" brands are, in practice, content companies first. Brands such as Gorur Ghash and Get The Juice have demonstrated how sustained storytelling builds both audience and demand.

In effect, Bangladesh is exporting attention much like it exports labour, except this export requires no visas, factories, or intermediaries. Waiting for only large manufacturers to go global is a strategic blind spot.

Creators, brands, and the silent export economy

Thousands of Bangladeshis already operate within this system. There are creators monetising global platforms with foreign payouts, agencies running campaigns for overseas clients, brands using social media to reach diaspora markets, and founders building English-language audiences before local scale. Yet, none of this activity is formally

classified as an export sector. There are no dashboards tracking attention flows, no incentives linked to monetised reach, and no policy language that treats attention as an economic input.

As a result, this economy grows quietly, despite being one of the most capital-efficient growth engines available to the country. Ghorerbazar's emergence as a trusted food brand for Bangladeshi expatriates in the US, UK, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE illustrates this clearly: a Bangladeshi-global brand built through attention before logistics.

Why investors and policymakers miss it

Traditional economic frameworks struggle to price attention. It does not appear cleanly in trade balances. It does not always move through banks in predictable ways. It is fragmented across platforms and individuals rather than concentrated in large firms. But ignoring it has consequences.

Countries that recognise attention early invest in creators, media infrastructure, and digital storytelling capacity. Countries that do not become raw attention suppliers - exporting value without capturing the upside. Bangladesh

risks falling into the latter category unless the narrative shifts.

A strategic reframe

If attention were treated as an exportable resource, several changes would follow. Creators would be recognised as micro-exporters, and digital media businesses would qualify for export incentives. Furthermore, reach, engagement, and audience data would be tracked alongside revenue. Capital would also flow earlier into audience-first ventures. Most importantly, young Bangladeshis would learn that attention is not merely consumption. It is production.

The opportunity in plain sight

Bangladesh does not lack opportunity. It lacks recognition of where value is already being created. The attention market is not speculative. It is operational, global, and expanding. Digital media is its cross-currency vehicle, converting local engagement into foreign value every day.

The question is no longer whether Bangladesh has an attention economy. The question is whether we will continue exporting it unconsciously - or choose to build, own, and scale it deliberately.

The Gen-Z guide to managing your manager

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Managing a manager used to sound like an act of rebellion. However, today it has become a quiet professional necessity. Our workplace reality is defined by shifting expectations, hybrid structures, and managers who are often navigating pressures that flow down faster than clarity flows up. In this environment, managing up becomes less about corporate politics and more about building a functional ecosystem where communication is clear, decisions are consistent, and work does not collapse under avoidable confusion. This guide explores how emerging professionals can construct that dynamic deliberately, respectfully, and strategically, without compromising authenticity or emotional boundaries.

Understanding your manager's operating system

Every manager operates through a unique set of rhythms, preferences, and behavioural patterns that essentially form their internal operating system. Identifying this system requires consistent observation rather than guesswork. How a manager responds under pressure, the manner in which they process information, the speed at which they make decisions, and the communication channels they instinctively rely on reveal the architecture of their professional style. Mapping these patterns allows young employees to position their work in a way that complements managerial expectations rather than colliding with them. This is not imitation or appeasement; rather, an analytical exercise in workplace compatibility, enabling smoother exchanges and reduced friction in decision-making.

Establishing clear expectations on both ends Ambiguity is one of the most common sources of workplace inefficiency, and younger professionals often inherit its consequences. Proactively clarifying expectations offers a structural safeguard against such confusion. It transforms vague directives into actionable goals and protects both parties from misinterpretation. This process involves ensuring a shared understanding of what constitutes success, what standards define the quality of output, and how timelines or priorities align within broader organisational demands. When expectations are formalised through conversation rather than inferred through assumption, the working relationship becomes more predictable, more equitable, and significantly more productive.

Practising transparent upward

communication

Transparency is often misconstrued as oversharing, but its real significance lies in maintaining a steady flow of information that enables smoother operations. Managers function more effectively when they are not caught off guard and when their teams communicate progress or barriers in a timely, structured manner. Practising upward transparency means translating one's workflow into clear, coherent updates that focus on progress, constraints, and dependencies without unnecessary narrative. This style of communication builds trust, reduces micromanagement, and positions the employee as someone who approaches work with consistency and accountability.



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

In an increasingly fast-paced professional environment, such clarity becomes the cornerstone of a high-functioning partnership.

Protecting your time, capacity, and mental sanity

One of the greatest challenges for Gen Z employees is balancing ambition with bandwidth. Managing a manager effectively often requires articulating the reality of available capacity while still demonstrating commitment to collective goals. Protecting one's time does not signify resistance but rather a disciplined approach to prioritisation. Communicating competing tasks, renegotiating timelines when new responsibilities emerge, and ensuring that workloads are aligned with feasible expectations cultivates a healthier workflow. This practice not only prevents burnout but also signals to the manager that decisions are being made thoughtfully and responsibly. Time, when

treated as a finite resource, becomes an essential component of managerial management.

Recognising and responding to managerial stress patterns

Stress alters behaviour, and our managers are not exempt from this fundamental truth. A manager's stress responses, whether manifested through heightened urgency, decreased communication, or increased scrutiny, can unintentionally shape the working environment. Understanding these behavioural shifts allows young employees to adapt with precision rather than frustration. Responding appropriately, through clearer summaries, more structured updates, or steadier communication rhythms, stabilises the workflow and prevents escalation. This is not emotional labour in the personal sense; it is strategic regulation of a professional relationship. When a manager's stress patterns are acknowledged and addressed thoughtfully, the team environment becomes sturdier and more resilient.

Delivering feedback with professional diplomacy

Offering upward feedback requires delicacy, especially in environments where hierarchies are strongly felt. The goal is not confrontation but refinement by framing observations in a way that foregrounds alignment rather than criticism. This involves discussing inconsistencies or recurring challenges through descriptive language, focusing on consequences rather than intentions, and positioning feedback as part of a shared attempt to improve collaboration. When feedback is delivered in a measured, non-reactive tone, managers often respond with greater openness. Over time, this contributes to a culture of mutual respect, where adjustments are seen as collaborative rather than adversarial.

Ultimately, managing your manager is less about control and more about coherence. It is about aligning intentions, information, and expectations so that work can move forward without unnecessary friction. For Gen Z professionals, this skill marks a shift from passive compliance to active participation in shaping healthy workplace systems. When practised thoughtfully, managing up becomes an act of professional maturity, one that protects clarity, preserves capacity, and reinforces mutual respect. In a world where hierarchies are flatter but pressures are heavier, those who can stabilise the flow between themselves and their managers are actually the ones thriving at work.

ChatGPT plans to test ads on its platform

NEXT STEP DESK

OpenAI has announced plans to begin testing advertising in ChatGPT, limited to adult users. In an official blog post, the company said ads would be tested in the US in the coming weeks for logged-in adult users on its free tier and its low-cost subscription, ChatGPT Go. Higher-priced plans, including Pro, Business, and Enterprise subscriptions, will remain free of advertising.

According to OpenAI, the move comes as the company rolls out ChatGPT Go more widely. The US\$8 a month plan, which launched in 171 countries, is now being made available in the US and other remaining markets. The company said the tier offers expanded access to features such as messaging, image generation,



file uploads, and memory, while ads are intended to reduce usage limits for free users and lower the barrier to entry for those unwilling or unable to pay.

OpenAI also mentioned that advertising would not influence the responses ChatGPT provides. Ads will be displayed separately from answers, clearly labelled, and shown only when there is a relevant sponsored product or service linked to the user's current conversation. The initial tests are expected to place ads at the bottom of responses. Furthermore, user conversations would not be shared with advertisers and that personal data would not be sold. Users will be able to turn off ad personalisation and clear the data used for advertising at any time. The first ad formats are expected to be tested over the coming months.

Musk demands \$134 billion from OpenAI and Microsoft

NEXT STEP DESK

Elon Musk is seeking up to \$134 billion in damages from OpenAI and Microsoft, claiming he is owed the "wrongful gains" they earned from his early involvement with the AI company.

In a federal court filing on Friday, Musk stated OpenAI gained between \$65.5 billion and \$109.4 billion from his contributions as a co-founder, while Microsoft gained between \$13.3 billion and \$25.1 billion. His lawyer, Steven Molo, said, "Without Elon Musk, there'd be no OpenAI," citing his seed funding and guidance, as per a recent report by Reuters.

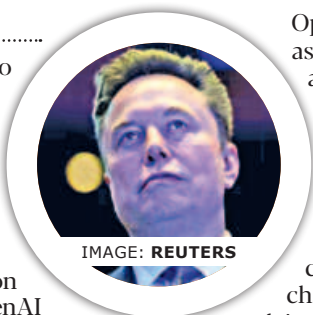


IMAGE: REUTERS

OpenAI dismissed the demand as "unserious" and part of a "harassment campaign" by Musk, who left the company in 2018 and now runs a competitor, xAI, states the Reuters report, adding that Microsoft did not immediately comment. Both companies challenged the damages claim in a separate filing, calling the financial analysis "made up" and "implausible".

Musk's lawsuit alleges OpenAI violated its original non-profit mission. A judge has ruled the case will go to a jury trial, expected to begin in April, further adds the report.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

iDE Bangladesh

- Officer, Program Quality



Deadline: January 21

Eligibility:

🔗 Master's degree in any subject from a reputed university. Economics/ Statistics/ Public health/ Anthropology/ Development Studies will get preference.

Minimum experience: 3-4 years

SAJIDA Foundation

- City Manager



Deadline: January 24

Eligibility:

🔗 Advanced university degree in: public health/ nutrition, social sciences, health policy and/or management, environmental health sciences, socio-medical studies, or another relevant technical field.

Minimum experience: 5 years

Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd.



- Officer/ Sr. Officer, Production

Deadline: January 25

Eligibility:

🔗 B. Pharm/ M. Pharm in Pharmacy from any reputed university, with experience of serving in the pharmaceutical industry.

Minimum experience: 4 years

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



It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.

-- Theodore Roosevelt

Star power influx as BPL enters business end

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 is set for a glamorous surge as it enters its knockout phase today, with franchises racing to strengthen their squads through high-profile international signings as the title race intensifies.

Sylhet Titans, who finished fourth in the league stage with 10 points from 10 matches, received a major boost ahead of their eliminator against Rangpur Riders in Mirpur after securing the services of English wicketkeeper-batter Sam Billings, who joined the squad yesterday.

His availability, Sylhet said in a press release, adds “experience and tactical depth” at a time when “clarity, composure and execution matter most”.

Billings, who recently represented Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League, follows the signing of English pacer Chris Woakes for the knockout stages, further strengthening Sylhet’s overseas contingent already boasting the likes of Moeen Ali, Ethan Brooks and Salman Irshad.

“We’ve got a great team, a lot of bases covered,” Brooks told reporters, adding that confidence is high as the side looks to get the job done.

Meanwhile, league leaders Rajshahi Warriors, up against Chattogram Royals in the first qualifier today, are eyeing what could be the biggest signing of the tournament, with New Zealand batter Kane



Williamson a potential late addition.

Williamson, currently with Durban’s Super Giants in the SA20, may join depending on Durban’s elimination and Rajshahi’s progress in the BPL.

“We’re looking for a middle-order batter, and Williamson fits perfectly,” a Rajshahi official told The Daily Star, adding that they hope to have him for at least one match.

New Zealand all-rounder James Neesham, who has extended his contract with Rajshahi for the full season, also sounded optimistic.

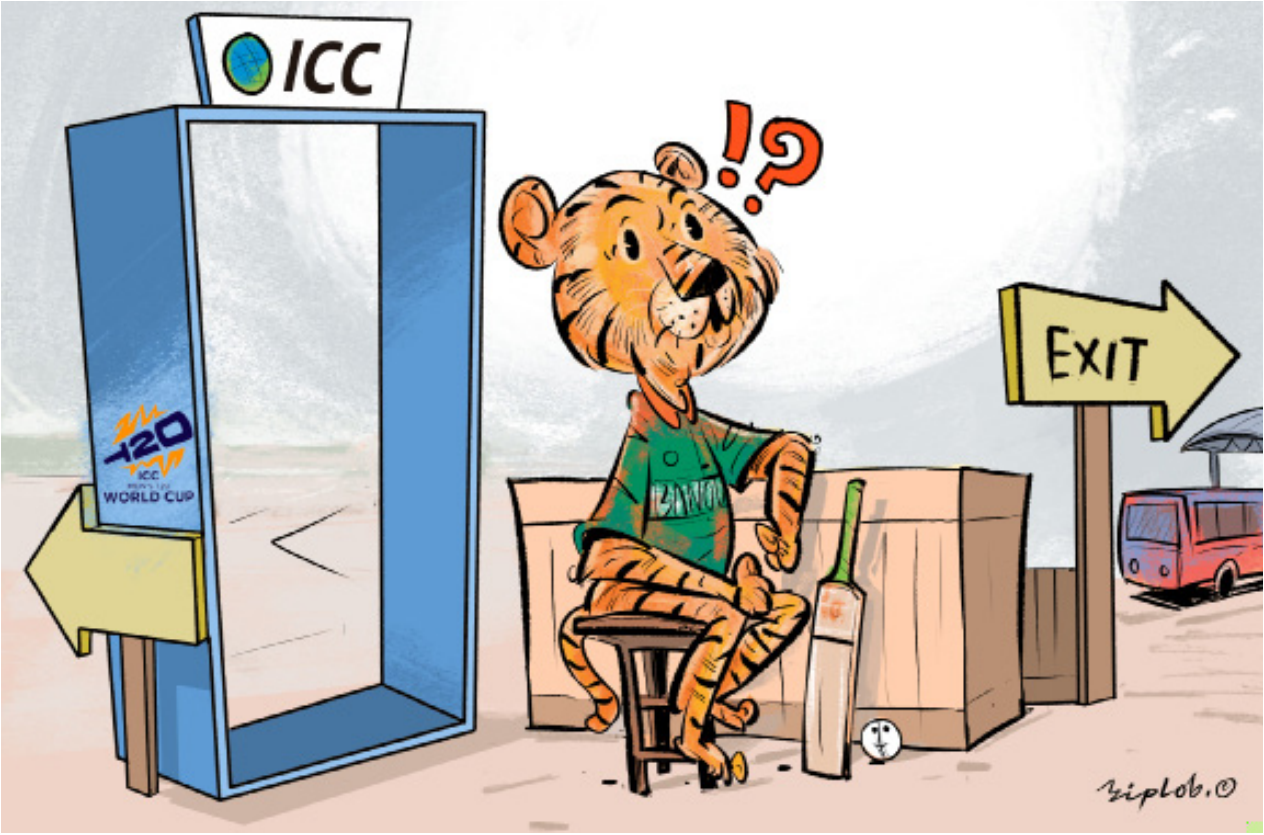
“We speak pretty regularly and have spoken in the last few days about him coming over for the back end of the competition,” Neesham said.

“He is still involved with the SA20 currently, so a couple of results have to eventuate for that to happen, but fingers crossed we can get him into Bangladesh.”

Apart from Neesham, Rajshahi’s squad currently includes Sahibzada Farhan, Ryan Burl, Binura Fernando, Hussain Talat, Sandeep Lamichhane and Jahandad Khan.

Meanwhile, officials from Rangpur and Chattogram confirmed they are not planning to bring in any new foreign players for the playoffs and will rely on their existing squads for today’s matches.

As the BPL enters its most decisive stretch, the stakes are rising. With international names flying in and finals dreams on the line, the business end of the tournament promises drama, flair and high-octane cricket – exactly what the competition was meant to offer.



Three weeks, many narratives

Which truth will finally be revealed?

ASHEAQ-UL-ALAM

A little over three weeks into the talks between the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the International Cricket Council (ICC) regarding the former’s request to relocate Bangladesh’s T20 World Cup matches from India, where do both parties stand?

The answer to this question depends on whom you’re asking.

Yesterday, the BCB refuted reports from Monday, which claimed the ICC has set a deadline of January 21 for the board to decide whether it would send the team to India for the marquee event, also co-hosted by Sri Lanka.

“They [ICC delegation] told us that they will inform the ICC about the issues and will let us know about the decision later on. In regard to these talks, they haven’t mentioned a specific date or when they will let us know,” BCB media committee chairman Amzad Hossain told the media in a press briefing yesterday.

Earlier, after the meeting between BCB officials and an ICC delegation, the board had claimed in its official statement that the idea of swapping Bangladesh from Group C to B, in place of Ireland – scheduled to play their group matches in Sri Lanka – was floated in the meeting.

However, that very day, a Cricket Ireland official was quoted on media that it has received reassurance from ICC that they would not be swapped from their group.

This butting of differing narratives has been a constant ever since the BCB

sent a letter to the ICC, requesting relocation on January 4.

Soon after Bangladesh’s request, some Indian media outlets claimed that the ICC was redrafting the tournament schedule. Later, the same outlets reported that the ICC had taken a hardline stance, setting a deadline for the BCB and preparing to announce Scotland as a replacement.

Throughout this period, the ICC has remained tight-lipped, offering no formal response, while the BCB has issued multiple press releases and briefed the media to clarify its position – staying firm on its initial decision of not sending the team to India due to security reasons.

Beyond the noise of claims and counter-claims, the broader issue is how the ICC has historically dealt with such impasses.

The BCB requesting reallocation with a little over a month before the tournament, beginning February 7, put the ICC in a tough spot, but not an unfamiliar one.

Just like Bangladesh, Australia and India have also refused to send their teams for an ICC event, and the situations were handled very differently by the ICC.

When Cricket Australia announced it won’t compete in the 2016 U19 World Cup in Bangladesh due to security threat and government directive just three weeks before the tournament began, the ICC named Ireland as replacement that very day.

Whereas when Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced it

would not send its team to Pakistan for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy in November 2024, demanding to play its matches in a neutral venue, the ICC proceeded by arranging multiple meetings with both parties, trying to broker a deal.

Eventually, it introduced a hybrid model for all ICC events hosted in either India or Pakistan till 2028. Under this arrangement, neither team would play matches in the other country for a total of four ICC events.

There are two key differences between Bangladesh and India’s refusals. The BCCI had pulled out months ahead of the tournament, while Bangladesh did it after the tournament schedule was announced.

However, in India’s case, the ICC brought in another country as hosts and also agreed to carry on with this cumbersome arrangement for future ICC events.

Courtesy of that arrangement, Sri Lanka emerged as a co-host for the upcoming T20 World Cup, where Bangladesh want to play their matches.

Switching Bangladesh to a different group would undoubtedly disrupt the preparations of other teams, but those same teams had no qualms in bearing the brunt of extra travel in ICC events to meet India’s demands.

With time running out, how ICC eventually handles this situation would either go down as another avenue for case study when measuring the imbalance that exists in the cricketing world or set a new example in this regard.



U-19s look to bounce back

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19s will face New Zealand in their second Group B match of the ICC U-19 World Cup on Tuesday at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, hoping to recover from their opening defeat to India and learn from a tactical error.

Bangladesh were well placed in their chase of India’s 238 before rain intervened. Set a revised target of 165 in 29 overs, they were 90 for 2 in 17.2 overs but collapsed after the rain break, losing eight wickets for 40 runs to suffer an 18-run defeat under the DLS method.

“We have worked out how we lost the last match and we have talked to the players. However demoralised they were, I feel they are energised now. They will fight and we have hope,” team manager Ehsanul Haque told The Daily Star.

Ehsanul further admitted that Bangladesh misjudged the DLS situation after play resumed, batting slowly and allowing the required run rate to rise.

Rain has disrupted training sessions and is also forecast to affect Tuesday’s match, which is scheduled to begin at 1:30pm Bangladesh time. Despite the uncertainty, the team management remains confident in the squad’s ability and hopes the players will apply the lessons learned to avoid repeating mistakes as the tournament progresses.

Djokovic hits Melbourne ton

AGENCIES



Novak Djokovic began his hunt for a record 25th Grand Slam title with his 100th victory at the Australian Open by taming Spain’s 71st-ranked Pedro Martinez 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena on Monday.

Doubts had been raised about Djokovic’s preparedness for the major he has won a record 10 times after the 38-year-old skipped the Adelaide tune-up event and cut short practice on Sunday, but he had no trouble sealing a flawless straight-sets victory against Pedro.

The win also means Djokovic has reached a century of match wins in three of the four Grand Slams, with 95 at the US Open.

“What can I say? I like the sound of it – centurion is pretty nice, it’s a nice feeling to be a centurion,” Djokovic said as a montage of his greatest Melbourne moments on Rod Laver Arena played out on the big screen.

“I’m blessed to be playing at this level and another win here tonight is a dream come true.”

While the spotlight has largely swung toward reigning Melbourne champion Jannik Sinner and world number one Carlos Alcaraz, Djokovic reminded the duo of his threat with some sublime tennis yesterday.

“It’s definitely my favourite court, a court that has given me so much,” added Djokovic, who will next take on Italian qualifier Francesco Maestrelli.



AGONY, ECSTASY AND A CHAOTIC FINAL

Senegal clinched their second AFCON title in three editions, but a 1-0 victory over hosts Morocco came only after unprecedented chaos in Rabat on Sunday. The final exploded into drama when Senegal players staged a walk-off protest after a controversial injury-time penalty was awarded to Morocco following a VAR check. FIFA President Gianni Infantino slammed the “unacceptable” scenes, while CAF promised “appropriate action” against those responsible for the 20-minute delay and fan violence. Order was only restored when Sadio Mane, playing his final AFCON game, persuaded his teammates to return. Edouard Mendy subsequently saved tournament top-scorer Brahim Diaz’s weak Panenka attempt from the spot, sending the game to extra time. Pape Gueye eventually struck the winner as the Lions celebrated. It was heartbreak for Morocco, who saw their 50-year wait for a second continental crown continue despite playing on home soil.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

Inter host Arsenal tonight

STAR SPORTS DESK

Matchday seven of the UEFA Champions League league phase sets the stage for a series of decisive encounters as Europe’s elite push for direct qualification to the last 16.

The standout fixture of the round comes at the San Siro on Tuesday when Inter Milan host Arsenal for the second season in a row in a clash loaded with history and high stakes. Arsenal have not won away to an Italian side in the Champions League since their victory over AC Milan in March 2008, failing to register a win in their subsequent five visits (DI L4) and drawing a blank in all of them.

Inter, however, were beaten at home by an English opponent in their most recent Champions League outing, going down 1-0 to Liverpool on Matchday 6.

The Nerazzurri can nonetheless take confidence from their overall record against the Gunners, having won three of their four previous Champions League meetings. Six points and five places separate the two sides in the league-phase standings, with Inter aiming to avoid an unwanted club first – three consecutive Champions League

defeats – after successive losses to Atletico Madrid and Liverpool.

Arsenal arrive in Milan as league-phase leaders and the only team with a 100 percent record so far, eager to seal a top-eight finish ahead of the final round of fixtures on January 28.

The match also pits two of the competition’s most resolute defences against each other, with Inter conceding just four goals – a tally only bettered by Arsenal’s solitary goal allowed.





Sust students free VC, others after 14 hours

Demo for Sucsu polls may resume today

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, *Sylhet*

Students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology have postponed their protests against the High Court order that suspended the Sucsu and hall union polls slated for today.

They announced the postponement of their sit-in in front of the administrative building around 1:15am.

The students also unlocked the administrative building where the vice chancellor, pro-vice chancellor, treasurer, and other high officials had been confined since noon.

However, they asked the VC not to leave Sylhet until the Sucsu election is held and to complete all the necessary processes to hold the polls as soon as possible.

The students said they will resume their demonstrations in Golchattera area on the campus from this

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology block the Sylhet-Sunamganj highway yesterday afternoon as part of their demonstrations against a High Court order that suspended the Sucsu and hall union polls slated for today. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

645 incidents against minorities, 71 communal

Govt says about 2025

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday said 645 incidents involving members of minority communities occurred between January and December last year, and that only 71 of those were communal in nature.

The 71 incidents include 38 instances of temple vandalism, one temple theft, eight temple arsons, one murder, and 23 other types of incidents like threats to break idols, inflammatory Facebook posts, and damage to worship pavilions.

In connection with these 71 incidents, 50 cases have been filed so far, and at least 50 persons have been arrested, the Chief Adviser's Office said in a Facebook post, citing official police records.

The 574 other incidents deemed non-communal in the post include 51 neighbourhood disputes, 23 land-related disputes, 106 thefts, 26 prior enmities, 172 unnatural deaths, 58 rapes, and 138 other incidents like abduction, extortion and intimidation.

At least 544 cases, including 154 related to unnatural deaths, were filed, and 498 persons were arrested in the incidents, it added.

According to the statement, Bangladesh remains

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

91 BNP rebels still in race across 45 seats

Expulsions fail to clear field; allies worried

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

With rebel BNP candidates refusing to bow out in more than four dozen constituencies, the party finds itself in an increasingly tricky spot.

Sources say BNP high-ups are still negotiating with those contesting the polls in defiance of central directives and expulsion warnings.

Today is the deadline for candidacy withdrawal.

According to party insiders, 91 rebels remain active across more than 45 constituencies.

Many former or current local leaders who have been denied party tickets are running as independents, splitting local units and also weakening campaign coordination in several key constituencies.

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "We tried to persuade the rebels and those holding party posts to withdraw from the race. Most of them have, while many were expelled for disobeying party instructions. We will certainly honor the commitments we have made to our allied parties."

Withdrawals were announced in Brahmanbaria-1 and 6, Sunamganj-5, Barishal-3, Bhola-1, and Rajshahi-6.

Meanwhile, at least six BNP rebels are contesting in constituencies allocated to alliance partners under a seat-sharing agreement.

The entry of BNP leaders into constituencies already allotted for alliance partners has sparked tensions and raised fears of vote splits and potential losses.

After resigning from Gono Odhikar Parishad, Rashed Khan joined the BNP and is contesting the Jhenaidah-4 seat as the party's nominee.

He said, "A rebel candidate is contesting in the same constituency... The candidate was asked to come to the Gulshan office but he did not respond. This is highly inappropriate."

Rashed expressed hope that the BNP would address the issue with a firm hand.

Alliance leaders have also privately conveyed their frustrations to the BNP, warning that failure to rein in rebels could be seen as a breach of trust.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

'Serial killer' held in Savar

Suspect tells cops he killed 6 people in 7 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Savar*

A man has been arrested in connection with six murders committed over the past seven months in Savar, including five killings inside an abandoned community centre, police said.

The suspect, Mashiur Rahman Samrat, 40, was detained from Mukti Mor area on Sunday after police analysed CCTV footage following the recovery of two burnt bodies from the Savar Municipal Community Centre, said Arafatul Islam, additional superintendent of police (crime, operations and traffic-north) of Dhaka.

During preliminary interrogation, Samrat confessed to involvement in all six murders, including the latest double killing, Arafatul said, adding that the motive could not be known immediately.

Samrat was later shown arrested in the double murder case filed by police



Samrat

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

8,780 polling centres 'most vulnerable'

Identifies govt, rolls out election security plan involving drones, dogs, bodycams

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MUNTAKIM SAAD

With the 13th national election and referendum approaching, the interim government has placed the most vulnerable polling centres under heightened security, tightened controls on firearms and ordered law enforcers to take swift legal action against anyone attempting to disrupt the vote.

Of the country's 42,761 polling centres, 8,780 have been categorised as "most important", 16,548 as "important" and 17,433 as general centres. Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said they were describing the vulnerable centres as important ones. "Important means those that are risky from a security standpoint," he told the media yesterday.

Meanwhile, a total of 8.97 lakh members of law enforcement agencies, including security forces, will be deployed for seven days from February 8 to maintain law and order.

As part of the measures, police will use

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

LAW ENFORCERS TO BE DEPLOYED	
Army	100,000
Navy	5,000
Air Force	3,730
Police	149,443
Ansar	576,314
BGB	37,453
Coast Guard	3,585
Rab	7,700
Fire Service	13,390
SOURCE: HOME MINISTRY	

Bid to stage 2008-style polls will fail: Nahid

NCP meets CA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam has cautioned that any bid to stage a national election resembling the 2008 polls would fail, insisting that the upcoming election must be conducted in line with the 1991 model.

Speaking at a press conference after meeting the chief adviser at Jamuna yesterday, Nahid said his party would not allow an "engineered" election.

"There is no doubt about the election if a fair environment is ensured. But if there is a plan to engineer it, such a plan will fail and be resisted."

"We want to contest the election in the field, but the Election Commission should not force us onto the streets."

Nahid alleged that under pressure from the BNP, the EC has legitimised dual citizenship holders and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4
PHOTO ON PAGE 3

ALIF MURDER

Chinmoy, 38 others indicted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday framed charges against 39 accused, including former Iskcon leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, in a case filed over the killing of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif outside the court premises in November 2024.

All 23 arrestees, including Chinmoy, were present at the courtroom.

Judge Md Jahidul Haque of the Chattogram Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal also set February 2 for recording the complainant's statement.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Raihanul Wazed Chowdhury, also the complainant's lawyer, told The Daily Star, "The court framed charges against Chinmoy under sections 302 and 109 of the Penal Code and brought charges against 22 others under sections 147, 148, 149, 302/34."

Abdus Sattar, president of Chattogram District Bar Association, said Chinmoy was represented by Dhaka

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Former Iskcon leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari being taken to the courtroom from the prison van under tight security, as a Chattogram court yesterday framed charges against Chinmoy and 38 other accused in the lawyer Saiful Islam Alif murder case. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Humam recalls torture before tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Humam Quader Chowdhury, a victim of enforced disappearance, yesterday testified as the first prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case involving enforced disappearances, recounting his seven-month ordeal in secret detention at the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC), popularly known as "Aynaghar."

LOG ON TO WWW.THEDAILYSTAR.NET FOR THE FULL STORY.

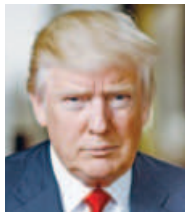
CONTROL OF GREENLAND

Trump links threat to Nobel snub

REUTERS, *Oslo*

US President Donald Trump linked his drive to take control of Greenland to his failure to win the Nobel Peace Prize, saying he no longer thought "purely of Peace" as the row over the island yesterday threatened to reignite a trade war with Europe.

In a written message to Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre that was seen by Reuters, Trump said: "Considering your Country decided not to give me the Nobel Peace Prize for having stopped 8 Wars PLUS, I no longer feel an obligation to think purely of Peace, although it will always be predominant, but can now think about what is good and proper for the United States of America."



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

অভ্যাস পরিবর্তন করুন, হর্ন বাজানো বন্ধ করুন

অযথা হর্ন বাজানো শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ

শব্দদূষণ (নিয়ন্ত্রণ) বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ মেনে চলুন

দেশজুড়ে জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন ও পরিবেশ দূষণ বিষয়ক সচেতনতামূলক প্রচারাভিযান প্রকল্প

পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়