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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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With the Awami League barred



from contesting the 13th parliamentary election, political analysts say the February 12 polls are shaping up primarily as a contest between the BNP and Jamaat-led alliances.

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PHOTO:  
COURTESY OF IOM



## Political somersault, thy name is art

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Having won his first election on an Awami League (Malek faction) ticket from Faridpur-1 in 1979, Zafar changed parties seven times in 11 elections during a career that spans 46 years.

The 81-year-old is set to run in the upcoming election under the Nationalist Democratic Front, a coalition of seven parties.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



কারিগরি শিক্ষা নিলে  
দেশ বিদেশে কর্ম মেলে

সরকারী কার্যকারী কার্যকলারী  
সরকারী কার্যকারী

বিনামূলে কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ

একটাই লক্ষ্য, হতে হবে দক্ষ  
কর্মে হব মুক্ত

সরকার দেশের কর্তৃক যুবজনগোষ্ঠীকে সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে দক্ষ জনশক্তিতে কল্পনার এবং মর্যাদাপূর্ণ কর্মজীবনে প্রবেশে  
সহায়তা রাখে শিক্ষা মানবিক সম্পদের কারিগরি ও মানবো শিক্ষা বিভাগের অধীনে কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিকার্তার কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নার্থীন  
ASSET প্রকরণের আওতায় দেশব্যাপী ১৭৪টি সরকারি-বেসরকারি কারিগরি শিক্ষা ও প্রশিক্ষণ প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে সংক্ষিপ্ত প্রশিক্ষণ  
প্রদান করছে। বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় যোগাতা কাঠামো (BNQF) অনুসৰী পরিচিহ্নিত এই প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে মোট ২,০৩,০০০ জনকে  
হাতে-কলমে দক্ষ হিসেবে গড়ে তোলা হবে। ইতোমধ্যে ১,৩৩,৬৩৭ জনকে বিভিন্ন অকৃপেশন/বিষয়ে প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হয়েছে,  
যাদের বড় অংশ দেশ-বিদেশে মর্যাদাসম্পন্ন কর্মে নিয়োজিত হয়েছেন।

সুবিধাসমূহ:

- সম্পূর্ণ বিনা খরচে ৪৩টি অকৃপেশন/বিষয়ে সংক্ষিপ্ত কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।
- ১৮-৪৫ বয়সী যে কেউ এ প্রশিক্ষণ নিতে পারবেন।
- সংক্ষিপ্ত ও প্রশিক্ষণের মেয়াদ ৩ মাস বা ৩৬০ দফ্তা।
- সাধারণ প্রশিক্ষণার্থীদের প্রত্যেককে কম্পিউটেটে হওয়া  
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ন্যূনোষ্ঠীয়াদেরকে ২,০০০ টাকা ভাতা দেয়া হয়।
- যাতায়াত ভাতা হিসেবে কম্পিউটেট হওয়া সাপেক্ষে  
প্রত্যেককে দৈনিক ১০০ টাকা প্রদান করা হয়।
- ভর্তির ক্ষেত্রে মহিলা ও অন্যসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে অ্যাডিকার  
দেয়া হয়।
- প্রশিক্ষণ শেষে NSDA-এর মাধ্যমে সরকারি সার্টিফিকেট  
প্রদান করা হয়।

মুক্ত প্রশিক্ষণে  
ভর্তি চলছে!

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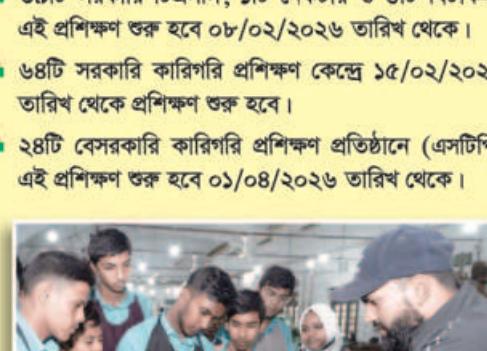
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প্রতিষ্ঠান

## POLICY DIALOGUE

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BNP rolls out plans

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We must  
choose the  
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Fakhrul says

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"We must choose the liberal path," he said while addressing a discussion at the Institution of Diploma Engineers in the capital.

Calling on Jamaat-e-Islami to practise what he termed "straightforward politics," Fakhrul urged the party to refrain from using religion to mislead voters.

"If you choose the path of politics, walk it with honesty. To mislead people by claiming that a vote cast for a particular symbol will secure a ticket to heaven raises troubling questions about hypocrisy," he said.

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### IMMORTAL MEMORY WITH DEEPEST LOVE



MAHABUB ALAM MRIDUL  
(1997-2021)  
Director, Walton Group

Today, 21 January is the fifth death anniversary of Mr. Mahabub Alam Mridul, the Honorable Director of Walton Group. On this day in 2021, at the tender age of only 24, he left us for his heavenly abode. With his sudden demise, we have lost a promising young entrepreneur. It was his dream to work on new innovations in the development of the automobile industry and devote himself to the welfare of the country and the people.

We pray from the bottom of our hearts that his departed soul be granted jannah where it finds eternal peace, amin.



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**22**  
DAYS TO  
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সরকারী কার্যকারী কার্যকলারী

বিনামূলে কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ

একটাই লক্ষ্য, হতে হবে দক্ষ  
কর্মে হব মুক্ত

মর্যাদাপূর্ণ কর্মজীবনে প্রেরণে  
সহায়তার লক্ষ্যে শিক্ষা মানবাধীনের কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিকারের কার্যকলারীয়ের মাধ্যমে সক্রিয় প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করছে। বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় যোগাতা কাঠামো (BNQF) অনুমোদিত এই প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে মোট ২,০০,০০০ জনকে হাতে-কলমে দক্ষ হিসেবে গড়ে তোলা হবে। ইতোমধ্যে ১,৩৩,৬৩৭ জনকে বিভিন্ন অকৃপেশন/বিষয়ে প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হয়েছে, যাদের বড় অংশ দেশ-বিদেশে মর্যাদাসম্পন্ন কর্মে নিয়োজিত হয়েছেন।

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- ভর্তি ক্ষেত্রে মহিলা ও অন্যসর জনগোষ্ঠীকে অ্যাডিকার দেয়া হয়।
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"If you choose the path of politics, walk it with honesty. To mislead people by claiming that a vote cast for a particular symbol will secure a ticket to heaven raises troubling questions about hypocrisy," he said.

Fakhrul alleged that the BNP is facing

## IMMORTAL MEMORY WITH DEEPEST LOVE



MAHABUB ALAM MRIDUL  
(1997-2021)  
Director, Walton Group

Today, 21 January is the fifth death anniversary of Mr. Mahabub Alam Mridul, the Honorable Director of Walton Group. On this day in 2021, at the tender age of only 24, he left us for his heavenly abode. With his sudden demise, we have lost a promising young entrepreneur. It was his dream to work on new innovations in the development of the automobile industry and devote himself to the welfare of the country and the people.

We pray from the bottom of our hearts that his departed soul be granted jannah where it finds eternal peace, ameen.





## Prioritise CHT Peace

FROM PAGE 4  
It called for a clear action plan to implement the accord, along with five specific demands, including preparing a time-bound action plan for rapid and proper implementation of the accord, democratising the CHT Regional Council and the three hill district councils according to the accord, and ensuring indigenous participation in mainstream economic growth and sustainable development programs.

The movement urged political parties to take these recommendations seriously and include them in their election manifestos, emphasising that the upcoming election presents an opportunity to strengthen democracy and inclusivity in the country.

## US deports 36 more

FROM PAGE 4  
Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration and Youth Platform, said that after arrival at Dhaka airport, returnees received transport and emergency support from BRAC with the help of the expatriates' welfare desk and aviation security.

Shariful added that agencies sending these workers and those involved in the permission process should be held accountable.

In 2025, 1,320 Bangladeshis went to Brazil with BMET approval, including 951 from Noakhali. It is believed that many tried to enter the US through Mexico.

Shariful urged the government to be more careful before allowing workers to go to Brazil.

After Donald Trump began his second term as US president, actions against illegal immigrants intensified, resulting in citizens of Bangladesh and other countries being sent



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

## 500 shelters

FROM PAGE 3  
Primarily, the fire is suspected to have originated from a cooking stove in a kitchen, he said.

Fire incidents have been recurring in Rohingya camps in recent months, raising concerns over safety and fire prevention there. On December 26 last year, a hospital at Camp-4 was destroyed by fire, while around 10 shelters were gutted in a blaze at the Kutupalong camp the previous night.

## Witness recounts

FROM PAGE 4  
In his opening statement earlier in the day, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said the brutality of the Rampura killings was comparable to March 25, 1971, adding that state forces opened fire on citizens without provocation using arms bought with taxpayers' money.

Meanwhile, the same tribunal deferred to January 26 the delivery of its verdict in a case over the killing of six people in the capital's Chankharpul area during the 2024 mass uprising.

Several parents of the victims gathered at the ITC-1 premises, hoping to witness justice for their sons. Grieving mothers and fathers arrived early, some supported by relatives. Speaking to The Daily Star, they said they had come to see whether the law would finally acknowledge their loss.

In another development, the verdict is set to be announced any day in a crimes against humanity case linked to the killing of seven people during the July uprising of 2024 in Ashulia, as arguments from both the prosecution and defence concluded yesterday.

## Recover looted weapons before polls: Yunus

FROM PAGE 3  
government approved 11 proposals, including the creation of four new police stations.

According to a presswing statement from the chief adviser, the government approved the creation of two administrative units under the finance ministry -- the Revenue Policy Division and the Revenue Management Division -- to make revenue collection more transparent, accountable and efficient.

The meeting also approved merging the Health Services Division and the Health Education and Family Welfare Division into a single Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Satkhira district was upgraded from a "B" category district to an "A"

category district due to its environmental heritage, tourism and economic potential, the press secretary said.

Approval was also given to create four new police stations by splitting existing areas: Purbachal North in Gazipur district, Purbachal South in Narayanganj district, Matarbari in Cox's Bazar district, and Raypur in Narsingdi district.

At the press briefing, Shafiqul said the Dhaka Metropolitan Police currently operates a large force with 50 police stations.

He said yesterday's meeting discussed whether the DMP could be divided into separate units such as "DMP North" and "DMP South," but no final decision was taken.

## Ensure access

FROM PAGE 3  
country's constitutional and electoral framework.

He said, despite the increasingly limited timeframe, necessary steps could still be taken to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities before the February 12 election.

Presenting the policy analysis, disability specialist and lead author Nusrat Jarin said several government laws reflect a lack of recognition of human diversity by portraying persons with disabilities as incapable.

She said the participation of voters with disabilities is often treated as optional and called for legal mechanisms to make such participation mandatory.

The analysis noted that while some formal legal provisions exist, additional reforms are needed to clearly recognise persons with disabilities as rights-holders in political and electoral processes.

The report outlined medium- and long-term reform proposals, including amending the Representation of the

People Order 1972 to align it with the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act and Article 29 of the UN Convention.

It recommended incorporating accessibility standards into all electoral rules and regulations and ensuring regular data collection and monitoring to strengthen accountability.

Lucky Akter, executive director of Dhaka DPO-D, said the EC holds the key to organising an inclusive election and that several steps could still be taken before the polls to improve inclusion.

Bappi Sarkar, a young freelancer and associate coordinator of B-Scan, said the government has yet to establish clear procedures regarding assistants for voters with severe disabilities, which could create complications at polling centres.

The report placed particular emphasis on targeted voter information and education materials, improvements to polling day infrastructure, clear guidelines on assisted voting procedures, and better transport services for voters with disabilities.

The report outlined medium- and long-term reform proposals, including amending the Representation of the

## BNP, Jamaat clash

FROM PAGE 2  
door, asking families to vote for them.

"They have campaigned in this area and this building several times before. We even hung a notice board at the entrance stating Political discussions and campaigning are forbidden here, but they ignored it," he said.

Several local BNP leaders alleged that Jamaat activists, while campaigning, were asking for residents' mobile numbers and National Identity cards.

Witnesses said a heated exchange ensued between the two groups. At one point, female Jamaat activists took shelter in the building's garage.

The situation eventually cooled down, and both groups left the spot.

However, a second round of clashes erupted shortly before Maghrib prayers.

Local BNP leaders alleged that Jamaat activists surrounded some BNP members in front of the Mubarak Mosque, accusing them of "confining" Jamaat workers inside the building.

The Jamaat activists reportedly beat and chased the BNP men.

Shariful Islam Milton, former general secretary

of Kafrul Thana Jubo Dal, said, "Jamaat came with 100-150 people in front of the mosque and chased our men. Hearing this, we gathered about 1,000-1,500 people."

Locals said BNP activists gathered in the alleys around the mosque and chanted anti-Jamaat slogans. Many activists from both sides entered the mosque, but witnesses confirmed that no confrontation took place inside the prayer hall.

Shortly after, police and army personnel arrived at the scene and brought the situation inside and outside the mosque under control. Milton claimed that six BNP activists were injured in the clash, with three receiving hospital treatment.

"I heard there was a lot of pushing and shoving between the two groups. I am not yet aware if anyone was injured."

South Pirerbagh is located inside the Dhaka-15 constituency, where Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman is contesting against BNP candidate Shafiqul Islam Khan Milton.

## Commit to energy sector

FROM PAGE 3

Kazi Sajjad Zahir Chandan, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said, "Thousands of crores of taka have been looted from the power sector."

He alleged that foreign companies have repeatedly been favoured over public interest. He called for a government that prioritises people's needs and commits to protecting energy resources for public benefit.

Razequzzaman Ratan, joint general secretary of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, said, "We are stuck with old projects that nobody wanted, which cost a lot but produce little."

Navid Nowroz Shah, joint chief convenor of the National Citizen Party, said, "Our energy sector must prioritise the needs of ordinary citizens and ensure fairness, transparency and

sustainability."

Readus Salchen Jawad, central council member at Network for People's Action, called for a just energy transition that protects both people and the environment.

Ashraful Alam, joint secretary general of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, said the government must ensure that energy transition meets people's needs with zero tolerance for corruption, adding that a successful energy policy would lead to a prosperous Bangladesh with fair energy and resource distribution.

Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor at The Daily Star, called for a just and inclusive energy transition, saying the current energy system places a heavy financial and environmental burden on the country.

"We are paying billions of



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GD-145

Memo No. 46.02.00.6165.000.14.001.26.66

Date: 19-01-2026

## e-Tender Notice No. 05/2025-2026

e-Tender is invited under in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works under Muktagacha Upazila, Dist: Mymensingh.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No. and name of scheme	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time	Procurement method
01	1212745 (Re-Tender)	e-Tender/PEDP4/MYM/MUK/2025-26/W15A.02228 1) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Podur Bari under PEDP4. 2) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Rogunathpur under PEDP4.	28-01-2026 12.00pm	28-01-2026 14.00	OTM
02	1215684	e-Tender/PEDP4/MYM/MUK/2025-2026/W14-3804 Construction of Boundary Wall & Gate of Taratty Gouripara GPS under PEDP4.	01-02-2026 12.00pm	01-02-2026 14.00	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

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

Md. Rabiul Islam  
Upazila Engineer  
Muktagacha, Mymensingh  
muktagacha@lged.gov.bd

GD-141

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer

Muktagacha, Mymensingh

[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No. 46.02.00.6165.000.14.001.26.66

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Md. Rabiul Islam  
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Muktagacha, Mymensingh  
muktagacha@lged.gov.bd

GD-141

# INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 21, 2026

MAGH 7, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

## 'No going back' on Greenland

Says Trump sharing leaked texts, AI mock-ups; EU vows 'unflinching' response

REUTERS, Davos

US President Donald Trump said yesterday there was "no going back" on his goal to control Greenland, refusing to rule out taking the Arctic island by force and rounding on allies as European leaders struggled to respond.

Trump's ambition - spelled out in social media posts and mock-up AI images - to wrest sovereignty over Greenland



Israeli machinery demolishes a structure at the UNRWA headquarters in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem yesterday. Israeli forces have ordered dozens of Palestinian families in the southern Gaza Strip to leave their homes in the first forced evacuation since October's ceasefire.

PHOTO: AFP

## Asean won't certify Myanmar election Says Malaysia FM

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

from fellow Nato member Denmark has threatened to blow apart the alliance that has underpinned Western security for decades.

It has also threatened to reignite a trade war with Europe that rattled markets and companies for months last year, though Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent pushed back against what he called "hysteria" over Greenland.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen yesterday vowed an "unflinching" response to Donald Trump's threats over Greenland. Europe "must respond" to any trade war, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told her parliament.

In a low turnout, voters cast their ballots in the second stage of the polls earlier this month, with junta-allied Union Solidarity and Development Party leading after securing 88 percent of the lower house seats contested over the first phase.

Speaking in parliament, Minister Mohamad Hasan said Asean had rejected a request from Myanmar to send poll observers during annual leaders' summit last year, though some individual member states had decided to do so on their own.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Power Division  
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka  
Admin-3 Section  
[www.powerdivision.gov.bd](http://www.powerdivision.gov.bd)

No. 27.00.0000.043.07.042.25-56

Date: 20.01.2026

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Sl No.	Tender ID	Description	Tender publish date	Tender closing date
1	1199081 GR-07	Procurement of Computer and accessories	20.01.2026	02-Feb-2026 16:10

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted through National e-GP Portal. No hard copy will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through any registered branch of enlisted banks. Further information and guidelines are available on the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Md. Abubakker Siddique  
Senior Assistant Secretary  
Power Division  
Ph: 02223390024  
E-mail: [admin-3@pd.gov.bd](mailto:admin-3@pd.gov.bd)

GD-146



খুলনা কৃষি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

অস্থায়ী অফিসিশন ৩২৭, যাশোর রোড, উত্তর মুজগুলি, খালিশপুর, খুলনা-১৯০০

Memo No. 37.01.4703.057.44.025.26.63

Date: 19/01/2026

### e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Ref./Package No.	Description	Online tender notice publication date	Online tender closing date
1	1216401	37.01.4703.057.44.025.26.59; Date: 19/01/2026	Supply and Printing of Student Handbook, Slip Pad and Diary	21-Jan-2026	03-Feb-2026

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

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Eng. S. M. Moniruzzaman  
Chief Engineer  
Engineering Division  
Khulna Agricultural University  
Khulna

GD-148

## AR Rahman's 'communal' claim

FROM PAGE 12  
been a communal thing also."

Filmmaker Anil V Kumar Kailas wrote a detailed note defending Rahman, stating, "Calling a globally respected artiste a 'disgrace', questioning his faith, mocking his recent works, and reducing his lived experience to a 'victim card' is not criticism. It's hate speech presented as opinion."

On the other hand, Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen criticised the composer, saying, "AR Rahman is a Muslim and extraordinarily famous in India. Yet, he claims he is not given work in Bollywood because he is a Muslim."

The controversy deepened when Rahman called his recent film "Chhaava", which portrays Mughal ruler Aurangzeb, a "divisive" project. The remark added fuel to the fire, with critics accusing him of playing the victim card.

Several prominent figures came out in support of the legendary composer. Director Imtiaz Ali said Rahman's comments may have been "misinterpreted or taken out of context".

Lyricist Varun Grover strongly backed Rahman on social media, saying, "The greatest living composer of the last three decades got attacked and abused even by people within the industry for stating an opinion in the politest, mildest manner, that too based on his lived experience."

DMK MP Kanimozi also voiced her support, saying, "I stand with AR Rahman. The deliberate targeting of a musician whose art transcends religion, language and identity, and the shocking silence of those in authority in India is deeply disturbing."

Actor Paresh Rawal shared Rahman's clarification video, writing, "We love you sir. You are our pride."

Composer Shankar Mahadevan offered a nuanced perspective, saying, "The person who creates the music is one. The person who decides what's going to happen to this music is a totally another team. The destiny of your musical product lies with a non-

musical person."

Rahman's comments triggered intense backlash on social media, particularly from Hindu right-wing voices, forcing him to issue a clarification in a video posted on Instagram three days ago, he said, "I understand that intentions can sometimes be misunderstood, but my purpose has always been to uplift, honour and serve through music."

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## World cannot revert to 'law of the jungle'

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng warns at Davos

AFP, Davos

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng warned yesterday that the world must not revert to the "law of the jungle", speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos as Washington steps up its bid to take Greenland.

"A select few countries should not have privileges based on self-interest, and the world cannot revert to the law of the jungle where the strong prey on the weak," he said in a speech which came as US President Donald Trump pushes his increasingly assertive America First agenda, and demands Nato ally Denmark to cede Greenland to him.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday he prefers "respect to bullies" and "rule of law to brutality"

UN chief Antonio Guterres has cancelled his participation in the summit after coming down with a "bad cold", a spokesman said. Nato is facing the biggest crisis in its history over Trump's threats, and the time for "flattering" the US leader is over, former alliance chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen told AFP.

"It's not only a crisis for Nato, it's a crisis for the transatlantic community at large...", he said in the interview from the WEF.

gathering of global elites about his bid to seize Greenland. "I agreed to a meeting of the various parties in Davos, Switzerland," Trump posted on Truth Social platform.

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"It's not only a crisis for Nato, it's a crisis for the transatlantic community at large...", he said in the interview from the WEF.

"We demand that at least 1 percent of the national budget be allocated for the protection and welfare of migrant workers," she said, stressing the need for a 10-year national migration vision to address problems systematically.

"People from any part of Bangladesh should be able to register digitally at local centres," he said.

Shariful also stressed the need for strengthening welfare services abroad, including proper staffing and budgets for embassies, and supporting migrants after they return home.

Migrants should receive real services while staying abroad, not just promises. Returnees need reintegration support and investment opportunities without harassment."

Contacted, Fakhrul Islam, former joint secretary of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), highlighted issues related to labour markets, middlemen, and remittances.

"Many traditional labour markets, such as Malaysia, Dubai, Oman, and Bahrain, are now closed or limited. Political parties must work to reopen these markets and explore new ones in Asia and Europe."

Regarding the remittance, he stated that legal channels with proper incentives could increase annual earnings up to \$40 billion.

"We always talk about how many people go abroad, but we do not ensure quality migration. Sending skilled workers could increase remittance and reduce migrant suffering."

জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমির দাপ্তরিক কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য অফিস টেক্সামোরি প্রযোগ সরবরাহ করে আসছে। আগ্রহী প্রক্রিয়া সরবরাহকারী উক্ত প্রযোজনে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারেন। বিস্তারিত তথ্য ও অংশগ্রহণের জন্য [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) ওয়েবসাইটে লগইন ও যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমির দাপ্তরিক কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য অফিস টেক্সামোরি প্রযোগ সরবরাহ করে আসছে। আগ্রহী প্রক্রিয়া সরবরাহকারী উক্ত প্রযোজনে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারেন। বিস্তারিত তথ্য ও অংশগ্রহণের জন্য [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) ওয়েবসাইটে লগইন ও যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

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## Bias allegations risk eroding public trust

EC must enforce the rules decisively and impartially

The allegations of administrative bias and the absence of a level playing field, as raised by three major political parties, are deeply concerning as these cast a shadow over the neutrality of the Election Commission. Such claims risk eroding public confidence in the electoral process as a whole and may discourage voters from turning up at polling centres on February 12. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that these allegations could also be part of the strategies of competing parties, aimed at pre-empting what they fear could be a lenient approach by the commission towards their opponents.

These allegations first surfaced on social media, where videos showed postal ballots being handled in bulk by groups of people in some Middle Eastern countries, despite the ballots being intended for delivery to individual voters. The postal ballots themselves have also sparked controversy for displaying only electoral symbols, without the names of candidates or parties. The Election Commission's decision to take these complaints into cognisance and seek resolution through dialogue with all political parties is a welcome step, though it should have been taken earlier.

Other allegations are even more troubling. Reports of campaign workers collecting voters' personal information, including mobile financial transaction identifiers such as bKash numbers, raise serious concerns. In addition, the conduct of some superintendents of police (SPs) and deputy commissioners (DCs) at the field level has been questioned, with accusations of bias towards certain candidates or parties. Notably, all three major parties—BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and NCP—have been trading accusations and counter-accusations, in some cases against the same election officials. Some observers view this as a positive sign, suggesting that when every party claims to be aggrieved, none is receiving undue favour from the officiating "umpire." Nevertheless, the EC and its functionaries are expected to uphold the highest standards of neutrality and fairness.

It must be said that the recent appointment of a senior election official to the board of directors of Biman Bangladesh Airlines—interpreted by critics as the government rewarding loyalists—did not help EC's image or credibility. It is therefore imperative that the EC doubles down on enforcing the electoral code of conduct strictly and evenly. There have been numerous reports of violations by political parties and individual candidates even before the start of the official campaign period, including the display of posters and festoons, the use of digital boards to convey thinly veiled campaign messages, the holding of rallies and public meetings under the guise of socio-cultural events, the exploitation of religious gatherings to promote individual candidates by seeking prayers and blessings, etc. Many of these actions constitute clear breaches of the commission's guidelines. However, its failure to address them promptly has been notable.

According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, 73 incidents across 27 districts have resulted in show-cause notices, cautions, and in some cases, financial penalties for violations of the code of conduct. It is incumbent upon the political parties to cooperate fully with the EC and refrain from both rule-breaking and unfounded allegations of bias. The EC, too, must act decisively and transparently to demonstrate that it remains a credible guarantor of electoral fairness.

## Data do not provide safety assurance

Meaningful actions needed to improve law and order situation

Outlining the current state of law and order in the country, the interim government recently assured that the situation is "improving steadily," pointing to policy engagement, police action, and official data. However, events unfolding across the country suggest a more troubling reality on the ground—criminals appear increasingly emboldened, and people still do not trust the police or security forces to protect them. The recent killing of a Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) officer in Sitakunda is another indicator of this breakdown. When even law enforcement officers are targeted so brazenly, how are citizens supposed to feel safe? Criminals do not act this way unless they believe the state's response will be weak or delayed.

The government's own figures acknowledge that an estimated 3,000 to 3,500 people lose their lives to violent crime each year. In January, there have been several killings cutting across geography, profession, and political affiliation. The statement from the interim has tried to contextualise violence against minorities, demonstrating that most incidents are criminal rather than communal—out of 645 incidents involving members of minority communities from 2025, "only" 71 of those were communal in nature. While this data matters, the distinction offers little comfort to victims. Whether driven by communal hatred, political rivalry, land disputes, or personal enmity, the outcome is the same. Where lives are lost, communities live in fear, which makes it difficult to maintain faith in the justice delivery system.

Besides, many people these days rely less on law enforcement and instead resort to mob "justice." Meanwhile, several violent crimes have been committed by criminals with little fear of retaliation. Against such backdrop, selective case numbers or statistics alone cannot assure people that the law and order situation is improving. Rather, they need the assurance to feel safe while walking home at night, running a business, reporting a crime, or resolving disputes without violence. That basic sense of safety feels increasingly out of reach now.

We urge the government to stop minimising the current crisis and to acknowledge that law and order has deteriorated and public confidence has been badly shaken. Restoring law and order must be an emergency priority, rather than a communications challenge to be managed. This requires visible, sustained, and proactive policing, swift and impartial investigations, public accountability for failures; and clear consequences for perpetrators, regardless of who they are or whom they are connected to. Just as importantly, the state must seek partnership with communities by listening to their fears, encouraging reporting, and rebuilding trust. This is particularly crucial ahead of the national election.

Without real acknowledgment and decisive action, the gap between official optimism and reality will continue to widen, leaving space for further violence, vigilantism, and fear. Restoring safety begins with telling the truth, and acting on it.

## GLOBAL RISKS IN 2026

# What Bangladesh and the Global South face



### MACRO MIRROR

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### FAHMIDA KATUN

The Global Risks Report 2026, published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), presents some of the stark realities of the world today. The report, published ahead of the WEF's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, assesses the threats countries will face in the immediate, short- and long-term. Based on a Perception Survey of more than 1,300 experts and leaders from government, business, academia, and civil society, and the Executive Opinion Survey of 11,000 business leaders from 116 countries, this report provides multi-stakeholder insights into the likelihood of various global risks and their impacts.

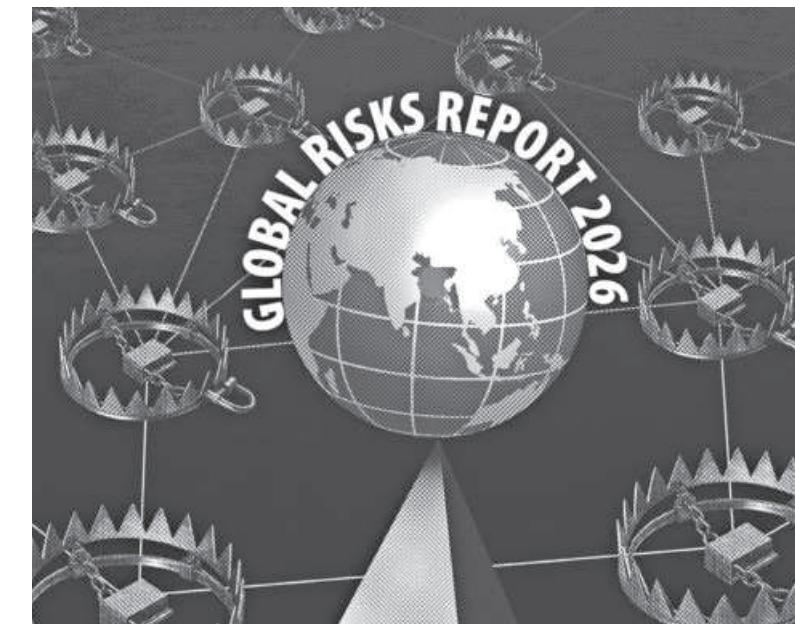
The report suggests the world is facing an "age of competition." Multilateral frameworks for cooperation are weakening as major powers increasingly prioritise national strategies and leverage economic tools as instruments of power, thereby reducing mutual trust. Experts mentioned uncertainty as a greater threat than any single threat. Half of the respondents feel the outlook over the next two years is turbulent, and 57 percent expect it to remain so over the next decade. In fact, geo-economic confrontation has emerged as the top global risk, most likely to trigger a major crisis in 2026, replacing armed conflict and climate shocks at the top of the risk rankings. Created through the strategic use of economic tools—trade restrictions, tariff impositions, investment controls, currency policies, and supply chain limits—to gain a competitive advantage over other countries, geo-economic confrontation is now being used as a "weapon" in geopolitical rivalry.

This reordering of global priorities reflects a structural shift in which economic policy is no longer driven solely by efficiency and mutual benefits, but by a strategic power equation. Competition for supply chains, critical technologies, access to resources, and industrial leadership is intensifying. Economic statecraft is rapidly replacing traditional security confrontation as a key area for global competition.

In the short-term risk rankings, geo-economic confrontation is followed by state-based armed conflict, extreme weather events, and then by societal

polarisation and misinformation and disinformation. Rising inequality, erosion of human rights, cyber insecurity and adverse outcomes of artificial intelligence (AI) are other important risks the report mentions.

Over the long term, in the next decade, environmental risks, including extreme weather events, biodiversity loss, and critical shifts in Earth systems, top the ranking. This



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

indicates that while geopolitical and economic confrontation dominate the immediate horizon, the existential threats of climate change and ecological collapse remain unresolved and severe.

The implications of the Global Risks Report 2026 are particularly crucial for Bangladesh and the Global South, because they have typically limited financial, institutional and strategic strengths to absorb systemic shocks. They are disproportionately exposed to climate impacts, more dependent on external trade and investment, and often lack diplomatic leverage to navigate geo-economic rivalries.

In an era where economic policy is itself a battlefield, countries that are deeply integrated into global trade and investment but lack the scale to influence the rules face heightened

when rapid digital adoption outpaces regulatory frameworks. Therefore, the Global South will need to manage internal development challenges while navigating an increasingly competitive and fragmented external environment, with rising barriers to cooperation.

Bangladesh is an export-oriented economy integrated into global supply chains, particularly in the ready-made garments (RMG) sector, and is dependent on external demand, remittances, and foreign investment. Geo-economic fragmentation threatens preferential market access, raises compliance costs, and disrupts the very trade relationships that have driven decades of growth.

Besides, Bangladesh is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. With low-lying geography, dense coastal populations, and frequent cyclones, the country faces

chronic exposure to flooding, sea-level rise, heatwaves, and salinity intrusion. Extreme weather events, identified as the top long-term risk in the WEF report, are the lived reality in Bangladesh and will continue to stress infrastructure, agriculture, water systems, and the urban environment.

Bangladesh is also highly sensitive to social and technological risk factors. The rising prominence of misinformation, cyber insecurity, and inequality in global risk rankings mirrors challenges in Bangladesh, where rapid digital adoption, urbanisation, and demographic change coexist with persistent inequity and governance gaps.

Among the top five risks identified by the Executive Opinion Survey, "crime and illicit economic activity" is ranked as the most serious risk for Bangladesh, followed by geo-economic confrontation, inflation, economic downturn and rising debt. These five risks highlight the growing pressure on the country's economic and institutional foundations. Illicit financial flows, smuggling, cybercrime, and money laundering weaken governance and reduce public revenue. Intensifying global trade and technology rivalries expose Bangladesh to supply chain disruptions and market uncertainty. Persistent inflation erodes purchasing power. Slower growth threatens employment and poverty reduction. Rising public debt further constrains fiscal space and limits the government's ability to respond to future shocks.

To curb illicit economic activity, Bangladesh must strengthen law enforcement, financial intelligence, and regulatory oversight. A credible anti-inflation strategy should be pursued through close coordination between fiscal and monetary policy, so that government spending, borrowing and taxation do not undermine price stability. Prudent budget management, disciplined deficit financing, and effective interest rate policy must work together to anchor inflation expectations, stabilise the exchange rate and protect household purchasing power.

Export diversification, investment-friendly reforms, and proactive trade diplomacy can reduce geo-economic vulnerabilities by lowering dependence on a few markets and products. A broader export base, easier business regulations, and stronger trade partnerships can help Bangladesh withstand global shocks, maintain market access, and attract stable long-term investment. Prudent debt management, better revenue mobilisation, and stronger institutions are critical to achieve macroeconomic stability and sustain long-term development.

## US visa suspension: Green card pending, hope expired



### MIND THE GAP

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### NOSHIN NAWAL

The United States has announced that it is suspending immigrant visa processing for Bangladeshis. Not forever, it insists. Just for now. A pause. A reassessment. A temporary inconvenience. Much like when your phone freezes mid update and politely informs you not to turn it off, even though your entire life is currently stuck behind a spinning wheel. This pause applies only to immigrant visas—the permanent kind—Involving families, futures, and the radical idea of living in the same country as your spouse. Non-immigrant visas remain unaffected. Students are still welcome. Tourists can still queue for selfies. Temporary workers can still fill labour shortages, provided they remember to leave quietly afterwards. Permanence, however, has been flagged for further thought. This distinctive policy reflects a global shift.

The justification offered—a concern about misuse and welfare dependency—is familiar and carefully vague. These phrases float around immigration policy like incense, creating the impression of seriousness without the burden of evidence. Bangladeshis, it turns out, are suddenly a welfare risk. What is being paused here is not a process. It is a set of assumptions people were encouraged to build their lives around. Immigrant

visas are not impulse purchases. They involve years of paperwork, background checks, interviews, and waiting that require both patience and money. Many of the people affected are not applicants at the beginning of the queue—they have already been approved, and their lives are already halfway packed. Their children already know which country they are moving to, just not when.

This is where the pause stops being administrative and starts being borderline cruel. Legally, the United States can do this. Immigration law gives the executive sweeping discretion. Courts have repeatedly affirmed that no foreign national has a right to a visa, no matter how many conditions they satisfy. Approval does not equal issuance. Expectation does not equal entitlement. The law is clear. And that clarity is precisely the issue here. Because in almost every other area of public administration, inducing reliance matters. If a state sets criteria, approves compliance, and leads individuals to believe an outcome will follow, abruptly withdrawing that outcome demands justification in line with doctrines on legitimate expectation, procedural fairness, and proportionality. Immigration law, however, is the exception that swallows

the rule. It exists in a moral vacuum, and so families are told to wait. Again.

The most revealing aspect of the pause is who it does not affect. Temporary mobility remains welcome. You may come for a few years and study, work, spend, contribute and be useful. What raises concern is permanence, which means roots leading to rights or political presence. And political presence means people who stop being grateful and start being equal.

America, it seems, is comfortable with Bangladeshi labour but not with Bangladeshi families. There is also an uncomfortable racial logic that nobody wants to say out loud. Pauses are rarely framed as discrimination. They are framed as neutral administrative action. But neutrality does not mean evenly distributed harm. When entire categories of people are restricted while others move freely, policy becomes a mirror of fear rather than fact. Bangladeshis are not assessed as individuals in this process. They are assessed as probabilities. Overstayers. Dependents. Risks. Never mind that the same countries eagerly recruit Bangladeshi doctors during health crises and celebrate diversity at conferences. The enthusiasm cools when diversity asks for permanence.

Timing makes this worse. Children risk ageing out of eligibility. Spouses remain separated indefinitely. Parents wait through illnesses and birthdays, and funerals are attended over video calls. A pause with no end date is not neutral when life continues to move forward.

Back in Bangladesh, the American Dream is still being sold aggressively.

Coaching centres advertise pathways. Consultants promise a strategy. Families repeat advice to do things properly, follow the rules, and trust the process. Nobody mentions that immigration systems are not queues. They are gates. And gates open and close based on domestic politics that migrants have no influence over.

This pause also exposes a deeper hypocrisy. Bangladesh is routinely advised to improve governance, reduce migration pressure, and build opportunities at home. At the same time, when Bangladeshis attempt to migrate legally, through formal channels, following every rule, the system reminds them that legality does not guarantee welcome. It only guarantees compliance.

So, where does this leave Bangladeshi families, whose loved ones in the US completed all the immigration procedures? They are floating in a space where plans exist, but timelines do not. The pause may lift. Or it may quietly extend. Or it may be replaced by another review with a new name and the same effect. Until then, families will adapt, because adaptation is what we do best. Expectations will be lowered. Timelines will be redrawn. Children will be taught resilience instead of hope.

As America reassesses the application, like it always does, Bangladeshi families will survive. We always have. But let us stop pretending this is a neutral policy or harmless administration. This is power, exercised politely, legally, and without accountability, over people who did exactly what they were told. The real lesson here is not about visas. It is about trust.

# After 2026 election, Dhaka must set out clear India, China, and US policies



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ASIF BIN ALI

Bangladesh often seems to treat foreign policy as subject to seasonal political moods. If one government is branded "India-friendly," another "China-leaning," then a third is cast as "Washington's favourite." In reality, Dhaka engages all three powers every day—on trade, loans, borders, security, climate, migration, the Bay of Bengal, etc. But it does so without a clearly stated hierarchy of interests and without a stable policy framework that survives elections and domestic political manoeuvring. This is a major weakness of Bangladesh's foreign policy. Moreover, political actors often use foreign policy as a weapon in partisan storytelling for a domestic audience. So India becomes a symbol, not a relationship. China becomes a chequebook, not a strategy. The United States becomes either a saviour or a conspirator, depending on who is speaking and who is under pressure.

After the 2026 election, the future elected government should do something basic but long overdue: set out three clear country policies—towards India, China, and the US—and ensure they enjoy broad political consensus and commitment so that they do not change regardless of the change in power. These policies should not be about ideological alignments or public relations exercises; they should instead serve as enduring principles that signal to the bureaucracy and the public what Bangladesh wants, what it will not trade away, and what it will prioritise when interests collide.

Why do clear country policies matter? Small and mid-sized states survive by being predictable abroad and disciplined at home. Geography already imposes certain permanent facts. India surrounds Bangladesh on three sides and shapes its river system, border economy, and security environment. China is the largest source of global manufacturing power and a major provider of capital for infrastructure. The US and the Western market system remain central to Bangladesh's exports, finance, and technology ecosystem. You can dislike these facts, but you cannot vote them out.

Yet relationships with these countries were often viewed as if they were personal friendships between leaders, short-term transactions, or exercises in emergency diplomacy, rather than

as long-term statecraft anchored in clearly articulated national interests and institutional continuity. This approach produces negative outcomes, frequently converting routine bargaining into narratives of national prestige. A water-sharing negotiation, a port decision, a visa issue, or a defence procurement discussion becomes a test of patriotism. Such framing undermines, rather than strengthens, a strategic foreign policy approach.

Over the decades, Bangladesh has produced some important diplomatic achievements. The 1996 Ganges water treaty, for instance, showed how tough geography can still be negotiated. The maritime boundary settlements with Myanmar and India expanded our legal certainty in the Bay of Bengal and strengthened Bangladesh's blue-economy claims. The 2015 land boundary settlement with India improved the lives of people in the enclaves. These are not Awami League or BNP moments; they are Bangladesh's achievements. But when they are treated as partisan trophies, the country weakens its future negotiating position.

One of the most persistent myths in Dhaka is that closeness to one power requires hostility to another. If you are "with" India, you must be "against" China. If you work with China, you must be suspicious of America. This may sound like common sense, and the geopolitics around them may also seem to suggest it, but it is really a lazy shortcut often favoured by Bangladesh's political and civil classes. They confuse alignment with engagement. Bangladesh already practises issue-based engagement. It relies on the US and EU markets for export earnings. It relies on Gulf states for labour markets and remittances. China and other Asian partners provide large-scale financing and industrial inputs, while neighbouring India is critical for border security and stability, transit geography, and river politics. This is not a choice between lovers or adversaries. It is a portfolio. The missing piece is strategy.

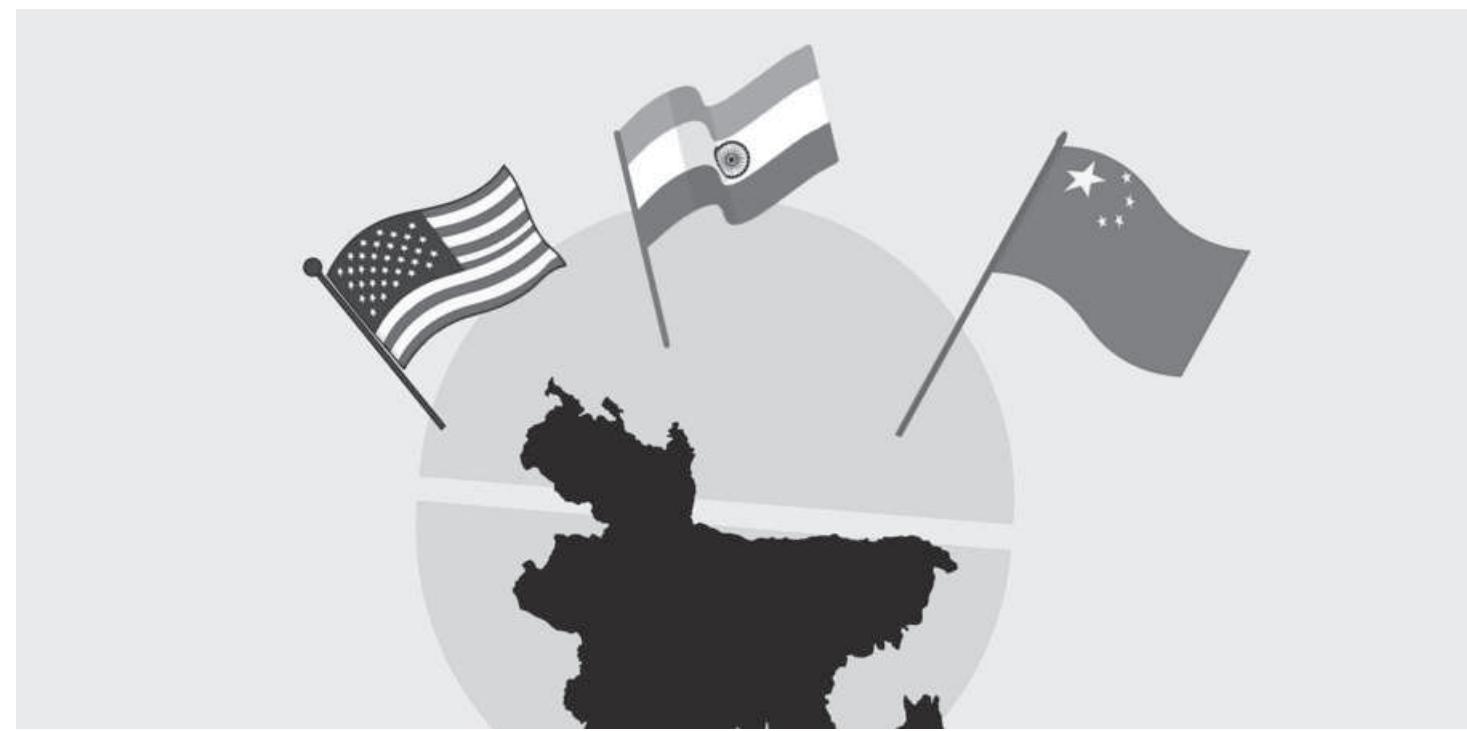
What should an India policy look like? India is not just another bilateral partner; it is an integral part of the neighbourhood structure. In most areas, India has more leverage. It is a nuclear power and an aspiring global power. But that does not mean Bangladesh cannot negotiate or exercise sovereign autonomy.

A serious India policy, therefore, begins by accepting this reality and managing it with steady discipline rather than chest-thumping. It should remain anchored in the files that never go away. Water sharing requires year-round negotiation capacity and technical preparation, not seasonal outrage. To save lives on the border and ensure security, both countries must work in a manner bound by law and accountability; otherwise, the issue turns

financial transparency, proper procurement where possible, and clear, plain-language debt assessments. When terms are hidden, suspicion grows, and that suspicion becomes a domestic weapon weakening Bangladesh's bargaining power with Beijing and others. Moreover, Bangladesh's China policy should treat technology as a security issue, not just a price issue. This will help reduce dependence in sensitive areas that foreign powers can turn

Washington only during crises, it will always negotiate from a defensive position. On security and regional strategy, Bangladesh should maintain a calm posture. As the Bay of Bengal becomes more contested, Dhaka should cooperate on maritime domain awareness, disaster response, and counter-trafficking, but avoid getting pulled into military postures that turn it into a frontline.

How should the next government do this?



VISUAL: STAR

toxic at home. The relationship is also lived through people-to-people ties—visas, culture, and media narratives. If these spaces are left to suspicion and scandal, policy may always be hostage to anger. Above all, the baseline must be clear: reciprocal respect for sovereignty and a firm commitment to non-intervention in each other's domestic politics. Ultimately, an India policy should separate real bargaining from performative nationalism.

What should a China policy look like? China is no longer just about roads and bridges for Dhaka. As China increasingly shapes industrial policy, technology standards, defence choices, and strategic infrastructure, a clear China policy has become essential. The first rule should be productivity over ribbon-cutting. Bangladesh should prioritise fewer vanity projects and more reliable energy, efficient ports, rail freight, functioning industrial zones, and skills linked to real jobs. It should also incorporate risk management into Chinese funded projects, with greater

into leverage. And China should not be treated only as a lender; Dhaka should negotiate for market access, manufacturing relocation, and joint ventures.

What should a US policy look like? Bangladesh needs a clear US policy because Washington affects its economy even when it does not mention Bangladesh. Trade rules, labour standards, brand compliance, technology ecosystems, financial regulations, and sanctions policies can influence Bangladesh's economy overnight. A serious US policy must begin with the understanding that the export economy depends on reputation. It is about protecting Bangladeshi workers and keeping Bangladeshi factories and products inside the global supply chains.

A serious US policy also requires an engagement strategy that extends beyond a single embassy channel. The US system is fragmented. Congress matters. State-level business networks matter. Brands matter. Diaspora voices matter. If Bangladesh engages

Policy needs structure. The next government should publish a foreign-policy white paper within its first year, to be updated annually, with separate chapters on India, China, and the US. It should be written in plain language and debated in parliament. When policy becomes a public document, it becomes harder to hijack for vested interest groups. Institutional coordination must also be rebuilt. Several ministries—commerce, energy, shipping, home affairs, defence, and environment—conduct foreign policy by accident. Bangladesh, therefore, needs a strong inter-ministerial mechanism to set priorities, resolve contradictions, and track implementation.

Finally, our foreign policy should no longer be treated as a partisan identity or instrument, but as a shared national framework grounded in consensus, continuity, and clear interests. It should strengthen our negotiating hand regardless of who holds office.

## How Dhaka's rental housing market marginalises Indigenous tenants



Arnab Chakma is a graduate in public administration from the University of Dhaka.

ARNAB CHAKMA

The first lesson for many young people arriving in Dhaka, after leaving the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), is not learnt in a university lecture hall. It is learnt at the landlord's doorway. There, they learn quickly that a name, an accent, or a face can decide whether a rental house is "available" or "already taken." For Indigenous people, Dhaka's rental market is where their identity quietly turns into economic strain and social marginalisation.

Internal migration has long been a driver of Bangladesh's urbanisation. Rural households move to cities like Dhaka in search of work, education, and services that are scarce in their home regions. For CHT Indigenous communities, the push factors are even sharper: land dispossession, political insecurity, and decades of marginalisation at home combine with the pull of jobs, universities, hospitals, and other urban facilities in the capital. Housing, besides shelter, is the gatekeeper to everything else in city life. Yet, once they arrive, the first and largest cost they face is rent.

Dhaka's housing shortage and informality are well known. The city grows by hundreds of thousands of new residents each year, but the formal housing supply lags far behind demand. For low- and middle-income renters, this means crowded apartments, high advance payments, and heavy dependence on informal arrangements. For CHT Indigenous tenants, this difficult landscape is layered with discrimination, both explicit and subtle, that forces them into the most precarious corners of

the market.

Interviews with Indigenous tenants living in areas such as Mirpur, Mohammadpur, and Farmgate reveal a common starting point: finding the first living place depends almost entirely on kinship and co-ethnic networks. Newcomers typically begin by staying with relatives, friends, or other CHT tenants already embedded in the city. These ties reduce search costs and offer a temporary safety net, but they also concentrate migrants into a limited set of neighbourhoods and buildings. From the beginning, their choices are narrower than those of Bangladeshi newcomers with broader urban networks.

When CHT tenants step outside these networks and approach landlords directly, their identity becomes a filter. Some recount explicit refusals: being told that "tribal people" are not acceptable tenants, that neighbours will object, or that Indigenous customs do not fit the building. In other cases, the message is delivered more politely but no less clearly: the unit has just been rented, the owner "does not rent to bachelors from outside," or the advance suddenly becomes impossibly high. Even where no openly racist language is used, the pattern of doors closing at first contact is hard to miss.

Alongside outright rejection, many CHT migrants experience what can be called "slippery discrimination," which is hard to prove. They are shown only the smallest or darkest rooms in a building, told that higher deposits are necessary "for security," or nudged towards particular floors

and alley-side units that other tenants avoid. Paperwork demands rise too: extra guarantors, employer letters, or scrutiny of identity documents. Each separate request appears reasonable, but together they produce a consistent result: Indigenous renters pay more, accept worse conditions, and enjoy weaker tenure security than comparable Bangladeshi tenants.

Many tenants describe paying a large share of their modest incomes on rents that still do not buy privacy, safety, or dignity. The promise of urban opportunity sits uneasily with the reality of dark, overheated rooms and leaking roofs.

Economic vulnerability amplifies these disadvantages. Because many CHT migrants work in low-paid jobs, informal employment, or entry-level positions, they have little bargaining power with landlords. Advance deposits and key money can amount to several months of income, locking up savings that might otherwise support education, healthcare, or small investments. When incomes fluctuate or emergencies arise, rent becomes a constant source of anxiety. Households often cut back on food, medicine, or children's schooling to avoid defaulting and being forced to move suddenly.

Frequent moves are, in fact, a defining feature of many CHT tenants' urban lives. Unwritten agreements, rising rents, conflicts over utility bills, or tensions with neighbours can quickly end a tenancy. Without formal contracts, tenants have little recourse when asked to leave. Every move means new advance payments, new school commutes, and yet another attempt to convince a landlord that they are "trustworthy people." The cycle of search, negotiation, and resettlement consumes time, energy, and money, hampering the process of building stable lives in the city.

These housing realities have deep social consequences. Physical distance and long commutes limit participation in campus life, community activities, or civil society

organisations. Language barriers and memories of discrimination make some hesitant to interact with neighbours beyond co-ethnic circles. Women, in particular, face layered constraints: they must navigate both conservative attitudes towards female tenants and ethnic stereotyping. Curfews, visitor restrictions, and heightened surveillance inside buildings can make even "safer" accommodations feel like another form of control.

However, CHT migrants also display remarkable resilience and creativity in coping with these constraints. Many rely on dense social networks, relatives, and student associations to circulate information about available rooms, negotiate better terms, and provide emergency loans for deposits. Online platforms and messaging groups have become

informal housing markets where Indigenous tenants warn each other about exploitative landlords and recommend more welcoming ones. Shared apartments, rotating savings groups, and collective bargaining by groups of tenants are all strategies that soften, even if they cannot fully remove, the sharp edges of Dhaka's rental market.

Seeing these experiences only as a "housing problem" is a mistake. Housing is the key mechanism that transforms being Indigenous and being a migrant into a daily experience of economic insecurity and social distance. When a CHT Indigenous student must spend hours commuting from a distant, overcrowded building, or when a young Indigenous worker is repeatedly turned away from better-located apartments, the effects

ripple into education outcomes, job opportunities, mental health, and civic participation. Who lives where, and on what terms, shapes who feels they belong in the city at all.

Policy responses must therefore go beyond building more units or adjusting rent controls. At a minimum, Dhaka needs clearer rules around advance payments and deposits, standard written agreements that are simple enough for ordinary tenants to understand, and mechanisms for addressing discrimination in rental advertisements and first contact. Most importantly, landlords, policymakers, and urban professionals must recognise that rental housing is not an ethnically neutral market driven only by price and location. It is a social institution where prejudice, fear, and ignorance can quietly assign whole communities to the city's margins.

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ACCESS-BLPA Component Project  
Plot No. F-19/A, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar,  
Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

Memo No.: 18.15.0000.023.14.022-06

Date: January 19, 2026

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

SI	Tender ID No.	Name of Package	Last Date and Time for Tender Selling	Last Date and Time for Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing and Opening Date and Time
1	1176832	BLPA-W1A, Construction of Port Building, Parking Facilities for Passengers with ancillary works at Benapole Land Port.	27-Jan-2026, 13:00	27-Jan-2026, 14:30	27-Jan-2026, 16:00

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## Political somersault, thy name is art

FROM PAGE 1  
representing the Janata Party  
Bangladesh.

In 1986, he won as a BAKSAL nominee, followed by another victory in 1988 as a Jatiya Party candidate. He lost the 1991 and June 1996 elections contesting from the same party. In 2001, he ran from another faction of the Jatiya Party (JP) but was defeated. He also lost elections as a BNP candidate in 2008 and 2018. Most recently, in the 2024 election, he contested as the acting chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Movement but was again defeated.

Zalar is not alone in this game of switching loyalties. There are several others who have joined new parties – or dissolved their own – ahead of the February polls.

Redwan Ahmed resigned from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and formally joined the BNP on December 24 to secure a nomination for Cumilla-7. The businessman was first elected as an MP in 1986 on a JP ticket. In 1991, he won as an independent and in 2001 as a BNP candidate. In 2006, he left the BNP to join Oli Ahmed's LDP, which he recently quit.

Meanwhile, the LDP of Oli Ahmed, a freedom fighter and retired colonel, recently joined the Jamaat-e-Islami-led electoral alliance for the next election.

Oh had begun his political life in 1980 by joining the BNP. He won a by-election that year and went on to win the seat four times between 1991 and 2001 on a BNP ticket. In 2006, he was among the founders of the Liberal Democratic Party, which later became part of the AL-led alliance. He won the 2008 polls as part of the AL-led alliance and joined a BNP-led alliance in 2012. However, in December 2025, the LDP left the alliance over a seat-sharing disagreement.

The Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party was formed in May 2020 by a group of Jamaat reformists. The group included former Jamaat and Shibir leaders who were disgruntled over their then party's refusal to apologise for its role in the Liberation War and its failure to pursue pragmatic reforms. Recently, the AB Party, led by Mojibur Rahman Monju, joined the Jamaat-led alliance. In its electoral debut, Monju is running from Feni-2.

Bangladesh LDP Chairman Shahadat Hossain Selim dissolved his party to join the BNP and is running from Laxmipur-1. Selim was the founding general secretary of Chattogram Metropolitan Chhatra Dal and later a joint secretary of BNP's Chattogram metro unit. He joined the LDP in 2006 but formed Bangladesh LDP in 2019.

Reza Kibria, son of slain former Awami League stalwart Shah AMS Kibria, joined Gonoform ahead of the 2018 polls and contested that election using the BNP's electoral symbol under the Jatiya Oikyafront alliance. In 2021, he joined Gono Odhikar Parishad as its founding convenor but left in 2024. He joined the BNP in December 2025 and is contesting from Habiganj-1.

Rustum Ali Faraj was first elected MP in 1996 on a JP (Ershad) ticket. He joined the Manju faction following a split in 1988. He joined the BNP and was elected MP in 2001. In 2014, he was an independent and joined JP (Ershad) again. In 2018, he was elected as an

Awami League alliance candidate. He lost the 2024 polls as an independent and later joined Islami Andolan Bangladesh in August 2025. He is contesting from Pirojpur-3.

Ahead of the next polls, Syed Ehsanul Huda dissolved the Bangladesh Jatiya Dal; Rashed Khan resigned as general secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad; and Bobby Hajaj relinquished his chairmanship of the Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) to join the BNP. Huda is contesting from Kishoreganj-5, Rashed from Jhenaidah-4, and Bobby Hajaj from Dhaka-13. All three are running with the BNP's sheaf of paddy symbol.

Professor Abu Sayeed is contesting as an independent from Pabna-1. He was first elected as an Awami League MP in 1970. Later, he joined the Abdur Razzaq-led BAKSAL and contested the 1991 polls. He returned to the Awami League and won in June 1996. During the army-backed caretaker government in 2007, he was labelled a "reformist," and therefore was denied nominations in the next two elections. He contested the 2014 election as an independent, joined Gonoform ahead of the 2018 polls, and contested using the BNP symbol.

### Frequent change of loyalty is hardly a novelty in Bangladesh and has been part of electoral politics for decades.

Anisul Islam Mahmud was elected in 1979 on a BNP ticket and later won elections in 1986 and 1988 as a Jatiya Party candidate. He was elected in 2008, 2014, 2018, and 2024 as a JP nominee under the Awami League alliance. In August 2025, he became leader of a faction of the Jatiya Party. His nomination for Chattogram-5 was rejected by the returning officer, and the Election Commission has not changed its decision upon appeal. The only resort left is to seek redress in the High Court.

Election expert and a former additional secretary of the Election Commission, Jesmin Tuli, said politicians who frequently change parties are not concerned with the betterment of parties – let alone the country. "When someone leaves a party and contests under another symbol, it shows that the party itself is not their priority; winning is," she said.

Another election expert, Abdul Alim, said many now view political parties as a business. "They think becoming an MP is a huge investment followed by a big return," he said, adding that once elected, many see themselves as the absolute authority of their constituency.

Alim said in Bangladesh, people still vote for the symbol, and the chance of victory is always higher for the big parties.

Both Tuli and Alim said a provision of the Representation of the People's Order Act stipulating three years of party membership to be eligible for a nomination was omitted when the RPO was amended and passed by the

parliament in 2013. It is essential to bring it back, both said.

#### PAST RECORDS

Frequent change of loyalty is hardly a novelty in Bangladesh and has been part of electoral politics for decades.

One name that comes first in this regard is Shah Moazzem Hossain. Elected from the Awami League (AL) in 1973, he was the first chief whip. After his party leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated, he joined then president Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad's Democratic League. Following BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's assassination and EM Ershad's takeover, Shah Moazzem joined hands with Ershad and was among the founders of Janadul, which later transformed into the Jatiya Party led by Ershad. He was elected MP twice on Jatiya Party tickets. He later joined the BNP in 2006 and contested the 2008 and 2018 elections as their nominee, losing both times.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury was elected an AL MP in 1973. After the assassination of Bangabandhu, he led an AL faction and won in the 1979 election. In 1984, he too joined Janadul. He became prime minister in 1986 under Ershad and was elected MP again in 1991. In 2001, he rejoined the Awami League and served as the party's adviser until his death.

Moudud Ahmed was elected in 1979 as a BNP candidate, later winning elections in 1986, 1988, and 1991 as a JP nominee. He returned to the BNP in 1996 and won the Noakhali-1 seat in 2001. In 2008, he won Bogura-7 (vacated by Khaleda Zia) but lost in 2018.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury won Chattogram-6 in 1979 on a ticket from the Muslim League and the Islamic Democratic League, an alliance which fielded candidates jointly. He also won elections as a JP nominee in 1986 and as a National Democratic Party nominee in 1991. He won as a BNP candidate in 1996, 2001, and 2008.

Former speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury was elected MP in 1979 under the BNP banner. In 1986 and 1988, he ran as a JP candidate, and in 1996 as an AL nominee.

Suranjit Sengupta lost in 1973 as a NAP (Mozaffar) candidate. He won in 1979 with a Jatiya Ekota Party ticket. In 1986, he won as a National Awami Party candidate and in 1991 as a NAP candidate. He later joined the Awami League. Although he lost in June 1996, he returned to parliament through a by-election in October 1997 and went on to serve three consecutive terms until 2014.

KM Obaidur Rahman began with the Awami League, winning in 1973. He joined the BNP in 1978 and was elected in 1979. He won the June 1996 and 2001 elections. He served as a cabinet member under Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad and later formed Janadul under the Ershad era.

Bangladesh's first female MP, Sveda Razia Faiz, was elected in 1979 by election from the Muslim League led by Khan A Sabur. In 1987, she joined the Jatiya Party and became a minister. She contested the 1991 and 1996 elections from the same party. Later, in 2008, she joined the BNP and remained with the party until her death.

Both Tuli and Alim said a provision of the Representation of the People's Order Act stipulating three years of party membership to be eligible for a nomination was omitted when the RPO was amended and passed by the

protection student Mohammad Maruf Hossain told the media that peaceful protests against injustice should not be labelled "mob violence", adding that delays in the inquiry process had prompted the protests.

On January 19, both teachers wrote to the University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz.

In her letter, Prof Layeqa wrote that the UAP VC told her on December 14 to resign, and that she met him, the pro-VC and the Board of Trustees chairperson the following day, seeking a formal investigation. She added that the university later invited complaints and formed an inquiry committee amid online harassment.

She said she filed a general diary with Tejgaon Police Station on December 22, and that officials from the Detective Branch and Dhaka Metropolitan Police visited the university on January 12.

Layeqa further alleged that the authorities asked her to resign instead of being suspended, saying she would receive all benefits if she resigned but would "lose everything" otherwise. She said she declined and chose to stand for her lawful rights.

An inquiry committee was formed for her, but she said no report was submitted before the termination

FROM PAGE 12

The following day, the university announced that all classes would be suspended until further notice, saying the situation was not favourable for continuing regular academic activities.

Meanwhile, students continued their protests yesterday, demanding the resignation of UAP Vice Chancellor Prof Qumrul Ahsan.

The controversy dates back to December 10, when Prof Layeqa made a Facebook post, which she said was shared only with friends on her profile.

In the post, she expressed opposition to face covering, commonly known as niqab, and said religion did not require it. She described the practice as objectionable and said it "heightens the risk of criminal behaviour".

She cited the Mohammadpur double-murder incident, saying the domestic worker who committed the killings had kept her face covered.

The post triggered backlash from a section of former and current students, who demanded her termination.

As criticism intensified, she made another Facebook post on December 17, saying the remarks were personal and written from a standpoint of personal security following the Mohammadpur double-murder. She apologised if anyone felt hurt and said the post had no connection with her workplace.

The protesters also demanded the termination of Prof ASM Mohsin, the department chairperson, for allegedly not taking any action against Prof Layeqa. They further alleged that he turned down proposals for setting up an Islamic club and hosting a Seerat Conference (a gathering held to honour the life, teachings and character of Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]).

On January 18, before the terminations, students accused Layeqa of making derogatory remarks about Islamic practices.

After the terminations the same day, protesting student Mohammad Maruf Hossain told the media that peaceful protests against injustice should not be labelled "mob violence", adding that delays in the inquiry process had prompted the protests.

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of OC said, adding that intelligence sources, however, informed them that Mehedi may have been freed.

Of the three, Zahidul Islam Jony and Khondoker Imran Hossain, a lance corporal of the army, were arrested from Dhaka and Magura yesterday. Another suspect, Bachchu Mia held from Chattogram on Sunday was placed on a three-day remand.

Sub-Inspector Kamrul Islam of Uttara West Police Station yesterday produced Jony and Imran before a Dhaka court with a forwarding report, which mentioned that Jony was arrested from the Gulshan area and Imran from Magura.

The two admitted their involvement in the incident before the court.

The report said Imran told interrogators that around 10 months ago, he became acquainted with Mehedi over phone. "Mehedi introduced himself as the personal secretary of the chief adviser's daughter and claimed that he lived at the Bangabhaban..."

Mehedi then asked Imran to give him an account number, saying that

money would be sent there to buy a flat.

Imran and his colleague Al Sadi, who is also an army member, were posted at the Bangabhaban. Imran discussed the matter with Al Sadi, who provided his elder brother Borhan's account number," the report read.

Police said Tk 60 lakh was deposited into the account in two instalments. Borhan later withdrew the money and handed it over to Mehedi, following instructions from Imran and Al Sadi.

The report added that the group later tried to trace the source of the money and learnt that a man from Kushtia paid Tk 40 lakh after being promised a nomination for the upcoming polls.

Mehedi also took Tk 20 lakh from the man, promising to arrange a "Bangladesh Bank loan".

After the fraud was discovered, the man from Kushtia allegedly pressured Borhan, Imran, and Al Sadi to return the money.

Police said the three then

approached a political leader, who allegedly took Tk 1.5 lakh in cash from Imran, claiming that he would recover

Students have been demonstrating

the money from Mehedi, but Mehedi could not be traced.

The report also mentioned that on Friday, the political leader, along with Imran, Al Sadi, and Borhan, went to the spot in Uttara and injured Mahbub, the gunman of abductee Mehedi.

Police added that the suspects took Mehedi with them in a car.

Over the assault on Mahbub, who later died from his injuries, his son filed a case with Uttara West Police Station against six unidentified individuals.

Md Moniruzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Uttara West Police Station, told The Daily Star that Mehedi was fraud who, at different times, introduced himself as the chief adviser's personal secretary or as the personal secretary of the chief adviser's daughter to maintain ties with high-profile individuals.

"We are investigating the matter," he added.

When contacted over the Uttara

incident, ISPR said the army would take all necessary steps to ensure whatever is required to maintain law and order under existing laws in Bangladesh.

## 2 UAP teachers terminated

decision. A January 15 letter gave her until January 22 to submit a written response, but she was terminated on January 18.

Contacted by The Daily Star, she asked, "On what basis can someone be permanently removed without concluding the inquiry?"

She also alleged that the authorities emailed the entire student body inviting complaints after the committee was formed.

Layeqa said she no longer believed the agitation was driven mainly by current students. "I am fairly certain that more than present students, ex-students are controlling this. And there is definitely a political link behind them."

She alleged that the campaign against her had right-wing leanings and claimed teachers aligned with those sentiments were pulling the strings.

She added that semesterly evaluations would have flagged earlier complaints if she held anti-religion views. She also said verifying identity during exams, vivas or interviews, including checks for devices, is routine and lawful.



**This is actually a direct insult and assault on academic freedom in any university in Bangladesh.**

DU Prof Samina Luthfa

for what they described as reforms to academic discipline, campus security and values-based practices.

The demands included prior closure of classrooms before examinations, mandatory preparatory leave ahead of finals, limits on tuition and examination fees, stricter identity verification during exams and vivas, and changes to how student evaluations are used to assess faculty performance.

They also sought approval for an Islamic Ethics Club, regular seminars under the club, arrangements for prayer facilities, improved campus transport and security for female students, restrictions on underground classrooms, and adjustments to academic schedules during the holy month of Ramadan, expected to begin in February 19.

### CITICISM OVER THE TERMINATION PROCESS

The terminations and the way they were carried out drew strong criticism from academics, who questioned the absence of due process and the lack of completed inquiry procedures.

Contacted, Dhaka University Sociology Professor Samina Luthfa said, "This is not just about Layeqa Bashir or Mohsin; this is actually a direct insult and assault on academic freedom in any university in Bangladesh."

She described the process as orchestrated and devoid of due process, saying the teachers were dismissed without a chance to defend themselves. She termed it a violation of basic human rights.

Luthfa warned that the names of the VC, pro-VC and Board of Trustees would be remembered "for creating one of the worst crises of academic freedom in Bangladesh".

"If the UAP administration wants to run a commercial enterprise where the customer is always right, they should open a business firm, not a university," she said.

Three UAP teachers said

## Prioritise CHT Peace

FROM PAGE 4  
It called for a clear action plan to implement the accord, along with five specific demands, including preparing a time-bound action plan for rapid and proper implementation of the accord, democratising the CHT Regional Council and the three hill district councils according to the accord, and ensuring indigenous participation in mainstream economic growth and sustainable development programs.

The movement urged political parties to take these recommendations seriously and include them in their election manifestos, emphasising that the upcoming election presents an opportunity to strengthen democracy and inclusivity in the country.

## US deports 36 more

FROM PAGE 4  
Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration and Youth Platform, said that after arrival at Dhaka airport, returnees received transport and emergency support from BRAC with the help of the expatriates' welfare desk and aviation security.

Shariful added that agencies sending these workers and those involved in the permission process should be held accountable.

In 2025, 1,320 Bangladeshis went to Brazil with BMET approval, including 951 from Noakhali. It is believed that many tried to enter the US through Mexico.

Shariful urged the government to be more careful before allowing workers to go to Brazil.

After Donald Trump began his second term as US president, actions against illegal immigrants intensified, resulting in citizens of Bangladesh and other countries being sent



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## 500 shelters

FROM PAGE 3  
Primarily, the fire is suspected to have originated from a cooking stove in a kitchen, he said.

Fire incidents have been recurring in Rohingya camps in recent months, raising concerns over safety and fire prevention there. On December 26 last year, a hospital at Camp-4 was destroyed by fire, while around 10 shelters were gutted in a blaze at the Kutupalong camp the previous night.

## Witness recounts

FROM PAGE 4  
In his opening statement earlier in the day, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said the brutality of the Rampura killings was comparable to March 25, 1971, adding that state forces opened fire on citizens without provocation using arms bought with taxpayers' money.

Meanwhile, the same tribunal deferred to January 26 the delivery of its verdict in a case over the killing of six people in the capital's Chankharpul area during the 2024 mass uprising.

Several parents of the victims gathered at the ITC-1 premises, hoping to witness justice for their sons. Grieving mothers and fathers arrived early, some supported by relatives. Speaking to The Daily Star, they said they had come to see whether the law would finally acknowledge their loss.

In another development, the verdict is set to be announced any day in a crimes against humanity case linked to the killing of seven people during the July uprising of 2024 in Ashulia, as arguments from both the prosecution and defence concluded yesterday.

## Recover looted weapons before polls: Yunus

FROM PAGE 3  
government approved 11 proposals, including the creation of four new police stations.

According to a presswing statement from the chief adviser, the government approved the creation of two administrative units under the finance ministry -- the Revenue Policy Division and the Revenue Management Division -- to make revenue collection more transparent, accountable and efficient.

The meeting also approved merging the Health Services Division and the Health Education and Family Welfare Division into a single Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Satkhira district was upgraded from a "B" category district to an "A"

category district due to its environmental heritage, tourism and economic potential, the press secretary said.

Approval was also given to create four new police stations by splitting existing areas: Purbachal North in Gazipur district, Purbachal South in Narayanganj district, Matarbari in Cox's Bazar district, and Raypur in Narsingdi district.

At the press briefing, Shafiqul said the Dhaka Metropolitan Police currently operates a large force with 50 police stations.

He said yesterday's meeting discussed whether the DMP could be divided into separate units such as "DMP North" and "DMP South," but no final decision was taken.

## Ensure access

FROM PAGE 3  
People Order 1972 to align it with the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act and Article 29 of the UN Convention.

He said, despite the increasingly limited timeframe, necessary steps could still be taken to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities before the February 12 election.

Presenting the policy analysis, disability specialist and lead author Nusrat Jarin said several government laws reflect a lack of recognition of human diversity by portraying persons with disabilities as incapable.

She said the participation of voters with disabilities is often treated as optional and called for legal mechanisms to make such participation mandatory.

The analysis noted that while some formal legal provisions exist, additional reforms are needed to clearly recognise persons with disabilities as rights-holders in political and electoral processes.

The report outlined medium- and long-term reform proposals, including amending the Representation of the

country's constitutional and electoral framework.

It recommended incorporating accessibility standards into all electoral rules and regulations and ensuring regular data collection and monitoring to strengthen accountability.

Lucky Akter, executive director of Dhaka DPO-D, said the EC holds the key to organising an inclusive election and that several steps could still be taken before the polls to improve inclusion.

Bappi Sarkar, a young freelancer and associate coordinator of B-Scan, said the government has yet to establish clear procedures regarding assistants for voters with severe disabilities, which could create complications at polling centres.

The report placed particular emphasis on targeted voter information and education materials, improvements to polling day infrastructure, clear guidelines on assisted voting procedures, and better transport services for voters with disabilities.

The report outlined medium- and long-term reform proposals, including amending the Representation of the

## BNP, Jamaat clash

FROM PAGE 2  
door, asking families to vote for them.

"They have campaigned in this area and this building several times before. We even hung a notice board at the entrance stating Political discussions and campaigning are forbidden here, but they ignored it," he said.

Several local BNP leaders alleged that Jamaat activists, while campaigning, were asking for residents' mobile numbers and National Identity cards.

Witnesses said a heated exchange ensued between the two groups. At one point, female Jamaat activists took shelter in the building's garage.

The situation eventually cooled down, and both groups left the spot.

However, a second round of clashes erupted shortly before Maghrib prayers.

Local BNP leaders alleged that Jamaat activists surrounded some BNP members in front of the Mubarak Mosque, accusing them of "confining" Jamaat workers inside the building.

The Jamaat activists reportedly beat and chased the BNP men.

Shariful Islam Milton, former general secretary

of Kafrul Thana Jubo Dal,

"BNP terrorists" launched a surprise attack on them.

Sixteen Jamaat and Shibir activists were allegedly injured in the attack.

"When the locals put up resistance, they [BNP men] fled the scene," Sibgatullah said.

Another Shibir leader, Azizur Rahman Azad, claimed that his party activists were attacked with sharp weapons inside the mosque.

Contacted, Mizanur Rahman, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Mirpur Zone, said, "I have learned through the police station that some junior-level Jamaat activists were campaigning in the afternoon. BNP workers went there and obstructed them. This dispute eventually spilled over into the mosque area.

"I heard there was a lot of pushing and shoving between the two groups. I am not yet aware if anyone was injured."

South Pirerbagh is located inside the Dhaka-15 constituency, where Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman is contesting against BNP candidate Shafiqul Islam Khan Milton.

## Commit to energy sector

FROM PAGE 3  
Kazi Sajjad Zahir Chandan, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said, "Thousands of crores of taka have been looted from the power sector."

He alleged that foreign companies have repeatedly been favoured over public interest. He called for a government that prioritises people's needs and commits to protecting energy resources for public benefit.

Razequzzaman Ratan, joint general secretary of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, said, "We are stuck with old projects that nobody wanted, which cost a lot but produce little."

Navid Nowroz Shah, joint chief convenor of the National Citizen Party, said, "Our energy sector must prioritise the needs of ordinary citizens and ensure fairness, transparency and

sustainability."

Readus Salchen Jawad, central council member at Network for People's Action, called for a just energy transition that protects both people and the environment.

Ashraful Alam, joint secretary general of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, said the government must ensure that energy transition meets people's needs with zero tolerance for corruption, adding that a successful energy policy would lead to a prosperous Bangladesh with fair energy and resource distribution.

Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor at The Daily Star, called for a just and inclusive energy transition, saying the current energy system places a heavy financial and environmental burden on the country.

"We are paying billions of

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## Submit probe report

FROM PAGE 3

On January 15, the court directed the CID to further investigate the case after granting a no-confidence (naraji) petition. It also asked the investigation agency to submit the report yesterday.

Inqilab Monchho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber filed the petition with the court, rejecting the probe report submitted by the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

In the no-confidence petition, the complainant said the submitted charge sheet skipped the main planners of the killing. Moreover, negligence was found in the collection of witness' testimony and evidence.

## Housing, basic services

FROM PAGE 3

people who live here and provide each family with a flat in their own name. Those who have lived here for many years will receive those flats so that they have a permanent place to live in Dhaka city."

The BNP chairman also said he wants to establish two schools and a playground for children in Korail, along with basic healthcare facilities. "If Allah helps us, then Inshallah we will be able to implement every one of these tasks."

The Korail residents arranged the programme seeking divine blessings for the departed soul of Khaleda Zia, BNP's late chairperson and former prime minister.

Tariq said Korail holds a personal connection for him, calling himself "a son

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Memo No. 46.02.00.6165.000.14.001.26.66 Date: 19-01-2026

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e-Tender is invited under in the National e-GP System Portal ([http://www.eprocure.gov.bd](https://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of following works under Muktagacha Upazila, Dist: Mymensingh.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No. and name of scheme	Last selling date & time	Closing & opening date & time	Procurement method
01	1212745 (Re-Tender)	e-Tender/PEDP4/MYM/MUK/2025-26/W15A.02228 1) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Podur Bari under PEDP4. 2) Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Rogunathpur under PEDP4.	28-01-2026 12.00pm	28-01-2026 14.00	OTM
02	1215684	e-Tender/PEDP4/MYM/MUK/2025-2026/W14-3804 Construction of Boundary Wall & Gate of Taratty Gouripura GPS under PEDP4.	01-02-2026 12:00pm	01-02-2026 14:00	OTM

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

19/01/2026

Md. Rabiul Islam

Upazila Engineer

Muktagacha, Mymensingh

[ue.muktagacha@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.muktagacha@lged.gov.bd)

GD-141



# The 26<sup>th</sup> Convocation

## Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)



21 January 2026

## CHIEF ADVISER

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



07 Magh 1432

21 January 2026

On the momentous occasion of the 26th convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), I extend my warmest congratulations to the graduating students, their proud families, and the dedicated faculty who guided them. This convocation marks not only the culmination of academic effort but also the beginning of a lifelong journey of responsibility and service to society.

The uprising in July 2024 demonstrated how the youth of Bangladesh can unite to uphold justice and integrity, setting up an inspiring example for generations to come. As new graduates, you now carry forward this legacy to lead with honesty, to innovate with purpose, and to serve with compassion.

In an era defined by rapid change, Bangladesh's future will depend on how effectively our youth combine research, innovation, and ethical leadership to build a just and sustainable nation. I trust that your education at IUB has equipped you with the skills, values, and vision to contribute meaningfully to that future.

I wish you success and fulfillment as you begin this new chapter of your lives. May your achievements continue to inspire hope for generations to come.

Professor Muhammad Yunus



উপনীষ  
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার



I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all graduates of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) on this joyous occasion. This convocation celebrates not only your personal achievement but also your readiness to contribute to the greater good through knowledge and service.

Throughout my academic journey, I have seen how education – anchored in integrity and empathy – can bring about profound social transformation. Universities stand at the centre of this process, shaping minds that question, reason, and lead with a sense of moral purpose. The events of July-August 2024 served as a reminder that conscience must always guide knowledge in building a humane and just society.

As Bangladesh advances towards a fairer and more sustainable future, your generation will be tasked with uniting research, innovation, and ethical leadership to address complex challenges. I am confident that IUB has helped you develop the intellectual strength and social awareness needed to make that contribution.

May your pursuit of learning continue to inspire others and bring lasting value to the nation and to humanity.

Dr. C R Abar

## CHAIRMAN

Board of Trustees  
Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

Dear Graduates,  
I consider it a privilege to congratulate you on the occasion of the 26th Convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh. This moment marks the completion of an important phase of your lives and the beginning of a new journey shaped by responsibility, purpose, and choice.

While your academic achievements deserve recognition, I encourage you to look beyond personal success. Education should also nurture empathy – the ability to understand others and to act with concern for society, especially for those who are underprivileged and most in need of support. Progress that benefits only oneself is incomplete. When others around us move forward, only then can we truly say that we have succeeded.

I urge you to acknowledge the role played by your parents and families, the guidance of your teachers, and the dedication of the faculty, management, and staff of IUB, all of whom have contributed to your growth.

As one of the founders of IUB, it gives me great satisfaction to see graduates who are not only capable professionals, but also thoughtful and responsible citizens. As you join the IUB alumni community, I hope you will remain connected to your alma mater and use your knowledge to create meaningful impact.

I wish you success guided by integrity, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility as you move forward.

With best wishes,

Dildar A Husain

## VICE CHANCELLOR

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)



Dear Graduates of the Class of 2026,  
Congratulations on reaching this important milestone in your lives. Convocation marks not only the completion of your academic journey, but also a transition – from structured learning to purposeful action.

It is also a time to reflect on what you have gained at IUB: knowledge developed through rigorous study, guidance from committed teachers, friendships built across disciplines, and experiences that have shaped your thinking. These lessons and memories will remain with you long after you leave the campus.

The world you are about to enter presents complex and evolving challenges. Education finds its true value when it equips you to engage with real-life problems. I encourage you to apply what you have learned to understand these challenges deeply, think critically about solutions, and act with responsibility and integrity. Meaningful progress depends on thoughtful problem-solvers who are willing to question, innovate, and persevere. Equally important are empathy, an open mind, and a commitment to lifelong learning, which enable you to grow, adapt, and contribute meaningfully to society.

As you move into the next phase of your lives, remember your responsibilities – to your families, your communities, your country, and your alma mater. I hope you will remain connected to IUB and uphold the values it represents. I wish you success, purpose, and the confidence to make a positive difference wherever your paths may lead.

Best wishes,

Prof. Dr. M. Tamim

## CHAIRMAN

Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust (ESTCDT)



Dear Graduates,

The convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh is always a moment of gratitude and reflection, and I extend my sincere congratulations to the graduating class of the 26th Convocation. By the grace of Almighty Allah, you have reached an important milestone in your lives – one that reflects perseverance, discipline, and sincere effort.

As the founding trust of the university, ESTCDT envisioned an institution where knowledge, ethical values, and service to society would go hand in hand. More than three decades later, it is deeply satisfying to see that vision reflected in the achievements of our graduates, who continue to excel in diverse fields at home and abroad.

Your academic success is a blessing, but it also carries responsibility. Education is a trust (amanah), and how you use it will define its true worth. I encourage you to remain mindful of your duties to your families, your communities, and your country, and to use your knowledge in ways that benefit others and uphold moral integrity.

We remain committed to supporting IUB's continued progress in education, research, and innovation. I gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, particularly the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC), in advancing the university's mission.

I also express my appreciation to the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and all those who contribute to IUB's academic and institutional excellence. To the graduates and their families, I offer my heartfelt congratulations. May Allah guide you, protect you, and grant you success in your endeavors, and may you continue to bring honor to IUB and to Bangladesh.

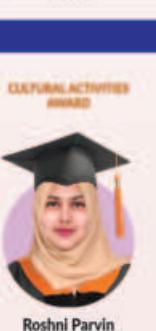
With prayers and best wishes,

Mohammad Zakaria Khan

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## TOP PERFORMERS



## Won't accept any illogical conditions, says Asif Nazrul

SPORTS REPORTER

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul on Tuesday said Bangladesh would not agree to any unreasonable conditions should the International Cricket Council (ICC) attempt to exert pressure regarding the country's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat, Asif said Bangladesh could not be compelled to travel to India under external influence. "If the International Cricket Council (ICC) bows to pressure from the Indian Cricket Board and tries to impose any illogical condition on us, we will not accept," he said.

Responding to a report by French news agency AFP claiming that Scotland could replace Bangladesh if the team refuses to tour India, the adviser said the government had not received any official communication to that effect.

"There are precedents in international cricket, when India refused to play in Pakistan, the ICC changed the venue. We have reasonably asked for a venue change," he added.

Bangladesh recently informed the ICC of its decision not to travel to India for the tournament, citing political tensions and security concerns, and formally requested that its matches be relocated to an alternative venue.

A final decision on Bangladesh's participation and travel arrangements is expected by tonight. The ICC has yet to clarify the process for selecting a replacement team should a participating nation withdraw.



SPORTS REPORTER

It seems as if nothing happening on the pitch is significant enough to overshadow the events unfolding off it.

Yesterday, the Sylhet Titans secured a thrilling three-wicket victory in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) Eliminator, knocking Rangpur Riders out of the tournament. Chris Woakes, signed specifically for the playoffs, propelled Sylhet into Qualifier 2 by hitting a six off the final delivery of a low-scoring contest in Mirpur.

Normally, such an intense finish would be the primary talking point after the game. Instead, an unpleasant reality emerged during the post-match press conference when Bangladesh T20I and Rangpur skipper Litton Das painted a somber picture of helplessness regarding the national team's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup, set to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7.

"Are you sure we are going to play in the World Cup?" Litton, visibly displeased with Rangpur's result -- and perhaps the overall uncertainty that prevails -- questioned back when



asked whether the type of pitches used in the BPL is ideal preparation for the T20 World Cup.

Bangladesh's World Cup participation currently hangs by a thread due to an impasse between the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the International Cricket Council (ICC). This follows the BCB's request to play their World Cup matches outside of India, citing security concerns.

The tension began over a fortnight ago when Mustafizur Rahman was dropped by the Indian Premier League franchise Kolkata Knight Riders on instruction from the Board of Control for

Cricket in India due to political friction between the two nations. This geopolitical standoff now appears to be weighing heavily on the players' mental preparation.

"There is still a long time before the World Cup. We aren't even sure if we are going yet," Litton remarked. "But I can say this much: this is not an ideal wicket for T20s. I don't know if it's [meant for preparation] for the World Cup or not. I expected a better wicket for a qualifier [eliminator] match."

When asked if the BCB had communicated with him or sought his opinion since their January 4 decision not to send the team to

India, Litton's response was a flat "no." He added, "I don't know, but it [communication] hasn't happened with me," when pressed on whether such a dialogue should have occurred.

The exchange highlights the uncertainty within the BCB, revealing that even the primary stakeholders -- the cricketers -- remain in the dark regarding their World Cup fate.

"Look at the situation; many things in life are not ideal. But when a certain time comes, you have to accept it. We played many T20 matches in the BPL -- the [scheduling] wasn't ideal either. But we have to play. What can I say now?" Litton added.

However, the T20 skipper remained tight-lipped when asked about the players' collective stance on the BCB's refusal to travel to India, offering only a brief "no comment." He did note, however, that the 14-day gap between the BPL final on January 23 and the start of the World Cup provides "a lot of opportunity for our mental thinking."

As Litton exited the room, he requested those present not to "take any offense" at his answers. Yet, the interaction only deepened the impression that has gripped the country's cricket for the last 17 days: one of profound uncertainty and helplessness.

## Chattogram romp to BPL final

Captain Mahedi Hasan led from the front, helping Chattogram Royals -- the only franchise managed by the Bangladesh Cricket Board this edition -- become the first team to secure a spot in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) final with a six-wicket win over Rajshahi Warriors in Qualifier 1 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mahedi played a nine-ball 19-run cameo, including a six off pacer Riton Mondol in the final over, to help Chattogram chase down Rajshahi's target of 134 with three balls to spare. On a day when each of the seven bowlers used by Chattogram took at least one wicket, Mahedi also starred with the ball, claiming two for 20 in his four overs. Rajshahi, however, will look to bounce back when they face Sylhet Titans -- who defeated Rangpur Riders in the Eliminator earlier in the day -- in Qualifier 2 today. They are set to receive a boost as their star foreign signing, Kane Williamson, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Wednesday morning.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## WOAKES came, played, conquered

Chris Woakes made a dream debut in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 yesterday, delivering a match-winning all-round performance for Sylhet Titans in the Eliminator at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. The former England all-rounder,

who arrived in Dhaka just days earlier, took two for 15 in four overs to restrict Rangpur Riders to 111, before sealing a dramatic three-wicket victory with a last-ball six.

"It is very exciting. Winning a game of cricket with a six off the last ball is something I have never

done before," said Woakes, who retired from international cricket in September last year after 217 matches.

"I've been in that situation before and failed, so to get one over the line makes it even more special."

## Barcelona eye crucial win in Prague

AGENCIES

Barcelona will be aiming to boost their hopes of securing a top-eight finish in the Champions League when they travel to face Slavia Prague on Wednesday night in a crucial league-stage clash.

The Catalan giants currently sit 15th in the table with 10 points, just two behind eighth-placed Atletico Madrid. With only two matches remaining, Hansi Flick's side know that victories are essential if they are to avoid the playoff round and qualify directly for the knockout stages.

Slavia Prague, meanwhile, find themselves struggling near the bottom of the standings in 33rd place. The Czech champions have endured a difficult European campaign, failing to win any of their six matches so far, with three draws and three defeats leaving them four points off a playoff position.

Their preparation has also been far from ideal, as they have not played a competitive match since mid-December due to the domestic winter break.

Since that time, Slavia have featured only in friendlies, and their lack of match sharpness could prove costly against a Barcelona side eager to bounce back from a disappointing weekend defeat.

Flick's men suffered a shock 2-1 loss to Real Sociedad in LaLiga, a result that trimmed their lead at the top of the Spanish table to just one.

Despite that setback, Barcelona remain confident. They are unbeaten in their last eight matches against Czech opposition, winning



seven of them.

However, recent away form in Europe has been a concern, with only one win from their last five Champions League trips.

Barcelona will be without teenage star Lamine Yamal due to suspension, while Gavi, Andreas Christensen, and Ferran Torres are sidelined with injuries. The return of Raphinha, however, offers Flick a timely boost in attack.

Slavia Prague, under coach Jindrich Trpisovsky, have scored just twice in the competition so far and will need a far more clinical display.

Flick was clear about his expectations ahead of the match. "The result doesn't reflect our performance," he said after the Sociedad defeat. "We have to keep going in this direction. On Wednesday, it's time to win in Prague."



Jannik Sinner and Madison Keys launched their respective Australian Open singles title defences with contrasting victories yesterday, as Sinner advanced after Hugo Gaston retired injured while trailing 6-2, 6-1, and Keys fought back from 4-0 down in the first set to prevail 7-6(6), 6-1.

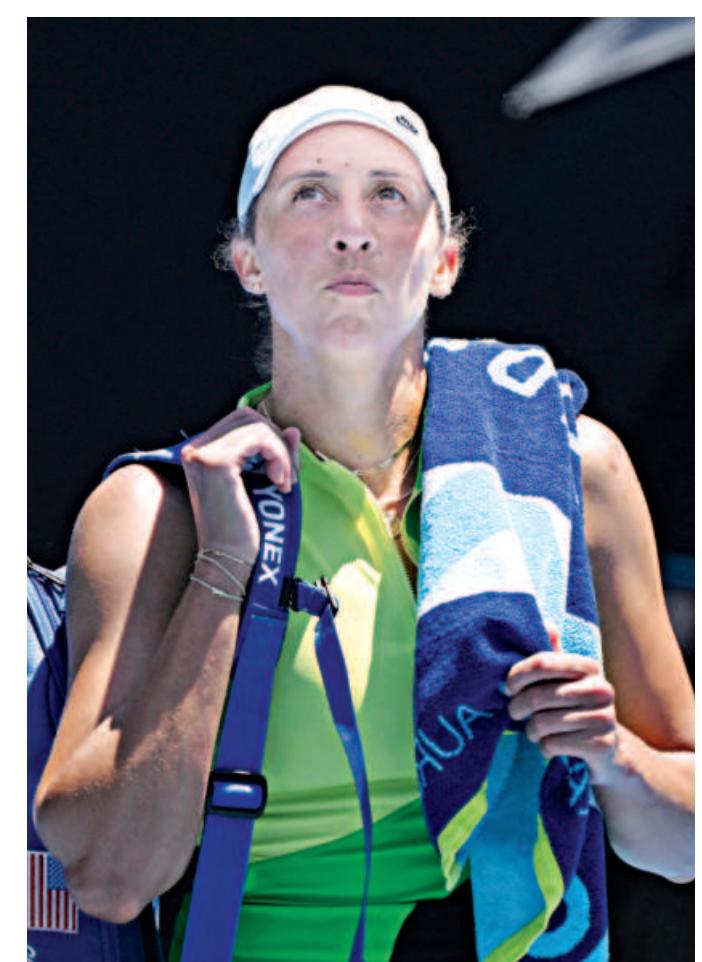


PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



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## The man 'behind' Savar murders

Police say accused Sabuj Sheikh pretended to be mentally ill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar



Police have disclosed the "real identity" of the man arrested in connection with six murders in Savar over the past seven months.

Savar Model Police Station's Inspector (Operations) Helal Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday that the suspected "serial killer" is Sabuj Sheikh.

Locals believed that he was mentally unwell, but police said he feigned the condition and used multiple aliases, including Mashiu Rahman Samrat and Tiger Samrat.

During a preliminary interrogation, Sabuj claimed that he killed the victims to prevent other people, whom he described as "mentally unwell", from staying in the area. "But we are not convinced by this claim," said Inspector Helal.

Sabuj also confessed to his involvement in the six

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus inspected the progress of works of the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum, accompanied by Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, BNP Standing Committee member Salauddin Ahmed and NCP Convener Nahid Islam yesterday. During the visit, Shafiqur was seen listening to recordings of Sheikh Hasina's orders on enforced disappearances and killings played on red phones on display.

## UTTARA ABDUCTION Army man among 3 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested three people, including an army personnel, in connection with the abduction of Hasan Sikder Mehedi and assaulting his gunman, Mahbub Alam, who later died at Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

The incident occurred on Friday evening in front of a house on Road 12 of Sector 14 in the capital's Uttara.

Kazi Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, yesterday disclosed the development of arresting three people.

Mehedi has not been rescued yet, the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

MD ABBAS

As political parties prepare to unveil their election manifestos, migration experts have urged them to include clear and strong commitments to reform Bangladesh's labour migration sector.

They stressed that migration is a major economic driver, contributing billions of dollars to

the country, yet it remains poorly governed and underfunded.

Experts called upon political parties to focus on long-term planning, skill development, good governance, and worker protection in their election pledges.

They outlined several key measures political parties should include in their manifestos.

These include increasing the

budget for migrant worker welfare, creating a long-term national migration vision, reopening old labour markets while exploring new overseas destinations, ensuring proper skill training from school to university, reducing the role of middlemen in recruitment, promoting digital registration for migrants, and improving

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

India to recall diplomats' families from Bangladesh

AGENCIES

India has decided to withdraw all family members and dependents of diplomats and other officials from the High Commission of India and other missions in Bangladesh, PTI reported yesterday, citing official sources.

The move comes ahead of the February 12 elections.

"Given the security

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

AR Rahman's 'communal' claim sparks debate

A&E DESK

Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman has found himself in the centre of controversy after a recent BBC interview in which he suggested he may have lost work in Bollywood due to communal bias.

The 59-year-old, often referred to as the "Mozart of Madras", said, "People who are not creative have the power now to decide things, and this might have



SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

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