

NINTH NAT'L PAY COMMISSION Up to 142% salary hike pitched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ninth National Pay Commission yesterday proposed a new salary structure for government employees, recommending increases ranging from 100 percent to 142 percent, alongside substantial rises in other benefits.

If implemented, the proposals will require an additional annual expenditure of more than Tk 1 lakh crore.

The 21-member commission, led by former finance secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the Jamuna in the evening.

The commission recommended 20 pay scales, with the minimum salary proposed to rise from Tk 8,250 to Tk 20,000 and the maximum from Tk 78,000 to Tk 160,000, according to a statement from the CA's Press Wing.

Zakir said implementing the proposals would require an additional Tk 1.06 lakh crore annually. Currently, the government spends Tk 1.31

- ➔ Minimum salary Tk 20,000, maximum Tk 160,000
- ➔ Pensions to increase by 55-100%
- ➔ Additional Tk 1 lakh crore will be needed
- ➔ Govt has about 14 lakh employees, 9 lakh pensioners

lakh crore a year for its 14 lakh employees and nine lakh pensioners, the press statement said.

Explaining the rationale, Zakir said the new pay structure was prepared after reviewing significant changes in "nearly all global and national economic indicators, particularly the sharp rise in the prices of essential commodities over the past decade."

"Without a timely and appropriate pay structure, it has become increasingly difficult for government employees to manage living

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CANDIDATES FOR FEB 12 POLLS

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| BNP | 288 |
| Jamaat-e-Islami | 224 |
| National Citizen Party (NCP) | 32 |
| CPB | 65 |
| Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis | 34 |
| Islami Andolan Bangladesh | 253 |
| GM Quader led JP | 192 |

The 2026 polls should be such an election that will set a standard for future elections.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus

12.76cr registered voters

42,761 polling centres

2,44,739 polling booths

15,33,683 voters registered in Postal Vote BD App

436 regained candidacies

305 aspirants withdrew candidacy

1,981 candidates contesting

1,15,137 polling booths for male

1,29,602 polling booths for female

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ICC rejects BCB's relocation request Bangladesh given one day to decide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Cricket Council rejected Bangladesh Cricket Board's request to relocate the national cricket team's matches of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup from India after an ICC board meeting yesterday.

ICC announced its decision through a media release after the meeting, held through a video conference. In it, the world cricket's governing body said it did not want to set a bad precedent through accepting Bangladesh's request "in the absence of any credible security threat".

"In the absence of any independent security findings that materially compromise the safety of the Bangladesh team, the ICC is unable to relocate fixtures," an unnamed ICC spokesperson was quoted in the media release, which is also the ICC's first formal response in any form since the BCB first requested relocation on January 4.

"Doing so would carry significant logistical and scheduling consequences for other teams and fans worldwide, and would also create far-reaching precedent-related challenges that risk undermining the neutrality, fairness, and integrity of ICC governance," the ICC spokesperson added.

The tournament, set to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, will now begin on February 7 with an unchanged schedule.

Meanwhile, according to an ESPNCricinfo report, the ICC has given the BCB one more day to confer with the government and decide whether it would send the team to India for the World Cup.

"I asked the ICC board for time to talk to my government for one last time," the cricket website quoted Aminul as saying. "They said it's a

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BNP expels 59 rebel candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday expelled 59 rebel candidates from the party for their involvement in activities that go against party policy, ideology and discipline.

Earlier, the party had expelled 11 rebel candidates.

Of the 59, three are from the Rangpur division, eight from the Rajshahi division, six from the Khulna division, two from the Barishal division, nine from the Dhaka division, seven from the Mymensingh division, seven from the Faridpur division, five from the Sylhet division, six from the Cumilla division and six from the Chattogram division.

From the Rangpur division, ANM Bazlur Rashid from Dinajpur-2, AZM Rezwanul Haque from Dinajpur-5 and Riyad Arafan Sarkar Rana from Nilphamari-4 were expelled.

The eight rebel candidates expelled in the Rajshahi division are

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13TH NATIONAL POLLS Election campaigns officially underway

Parties plan rallies across country today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With election symbols allocated yesterday, MP candidates and their supporters are set to hit the campaign trail as electioneering for the 13th national polls formally kicks off today.

The nation is expected to be swept up by election fever, with streets, villages, and towns anticipating the familiar buzz of door-to-door canvassing, slogans, rallies, and a deluge of promises in the coming weeks.

The aspirants have until 7:30am on February 10 for electioneering. The election is slated for February 12, which is three weeks away.

For a large section of voters, this election offers the first genuine chance to exercise their franchise after three consecutive polls were marred by rigging and engineering.

An inquiry commission into the polls of 2014, 2018, and 2024 concluded those elections were orchestrated at

the highest levels of the state, with segments of the administration, police, Election Commission, and intelligence agencies mobilised to carry out the plans.

This time 1981 candidates — including 288 from BNP, 224 from Jamaat-e-Islami, 32 from the National Citizens Party, and 249 as independents — are vying for 300 parliamentary seats, according to the Election Commission.

Besides, 253 candidates from Islami Andolan Bangladesh, 192 from Jatiya Party, 90 from Gono Odhikar Parishad, 65 from the Communist Party of Bangladesh, 42 from Insaniyat Biplab Bangladesh, 39 from Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, 30 from Amar Bangladesh party, 34 from Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, 26 from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and 19 from Gono Forum are also competing in the race.

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'This was going to be her last term'

Joy tells Al Jazeera
about Hasina

STAR REPORT

Sajeb Wazed Joy, son of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has said his mother had already planned to step away from politics, describing her removal from power as "in a sense the end of the Hasina era".

Speaking to Al Jazeera in Washington DC, Joy said Hasina, who is now living in India under government protection, is elderly and had intended that term of her government to be her final one.

"...This was going to be her last term anyway. She wanted to retire," he said, adding that the Awami League would continue to exist without her leadership. "It's the oldest party. It's been around for 70 years. It will continue with or without her. No one lives forever."

Hasina was ousted in August 2024 following

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Returning officers in 298 constituencies across the country allocated symbols to candidates yesterday. In this photo, Sanjida Islam Tulee, a BNP candidate for the 13th parliamentary polls, smiles as she displays her symbol allocation paper outside the Election Commission's Dhaka divisional office at Segunbagicha.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

When electoral symbols were still up for grabs

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

There was a time when the boat was not confirmed for the Awami League, nor was the paddy sheaf the BNP's permanent symbol.

Electoral symbol distribution was not always as straightforward as it seemed yesterday when the election office finalised 118 symbols for the candidates without any notable discontent.

In the case of the National Citizen Party's demand for the water lily, after months long dispute with the Election Commission, the party finally settled on the water lily bud in November 2025.

THE FIRST DISPUTES: 1973

The debate over symbols began even before the country's maiden parliamentary election. Both the Awami League (AL) and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) demanded the boat.

On January 25, 1973, the EC met political parties to reserve the symbols. The commission adopted the principle that a party which had used a symbol in the previous election would have prior right in the next election. Based on this principle, the EC allocated the boat to the Awami League.

Barrister Aleem Al-Razi, representing the National Awami Party (Bhasani), opposed this decision. He argued that the terms "last

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IMAGE: AI GENERATED

Students threaten shutdown over Sucsu verdict

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) yesterday warned of a complete shutdown of the campus if the Supreme Court verdict goes against their demand for immediate central students' union elections.

The warning came at a press briefing held in front of the Library Building in the afternoon, where agitated students announced that 28 departments would boycott classes and examinations starting today.

The Sust Central Students' Union (Sucsu) and hall union polls were scheduled for Tuesday. However, the High Court on Monday stayed the elections for four weeks, triggering protests across the campus.

Foysol Hossain, a general secretary candidate, said, "As there are laws not to hold any elections within 21 days of the national polls, we understand the issue. However, we urge the Supreme Court to consider the fact that the schedule for the SUCsu polls was declared before the schedule for the national polls was announced."

Delwar Hossain Shishir, a vice-president candidate, alleged political interference. "A party influenced two candidates and a voter to file a writ petition that stopped the polling and snatched the voting rights of nine thousand voters," he said.



Printing presses in the capital hum with activity, churning out leaflets and banners for the election campaign as formal electioneering begins today. The photo was taken at a press in Fakirapool yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Election campaigns officially underway

FROM PAGE 1

In a break from the usual, along with the national election, voters will cast their ballots in a referendum to decide the fate of key constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening fragile democratic institutions and rebalancing state powers.

With the Awami League barred from contesting the polls, political analysts say this election is shaping up primarily as a contest between the BNP- and Jamaat-led alliances.

The BNP, Jamaat, NCP, and other political parties have planned rallies in divisional and district headquarters and roadside meetings to drum up public support for their candidates.

The BNP will start its election campaign from Sylhet. Party Chairman Tarique Rahman, accompanied by his wife, Zubaida Rahman, reached the city last night and visited the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA).

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and several other senior party leaders are also travelling with him.

Tarique will address a public meeting at the Sylhet Government Alia Madrasa ground in the city's Chowhatta area around 11:00am today. This will be his first public rally outside Dhaka since assuming the role of the party chairman.

Later in the day, around 1:00pm, he will attend an election rally at the Sherpur-Ainpur playground in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila, followed by another rally at 2:30pm at the proposed new Upazila Parishad ground in Shayestaganj upazila of Habiganj.

At 4:00pm, Tarique is scheduled to join an election rally at the Kuttapara Football Ground in Sarail upazila of

Brahmanbaria and later another at Bhairab Stadium in Kishoreganj around 5:00pm.

In the evening, around 7:00pm, party leaders will attend a rally near the municipal park area in Narsingdi. Around 8:30pm, they will join election rallies in the Gausia area of Araihazar and Ruppanj in Narayanganj.

After attending day-long programmes, Tarique is expected to return to his Gulshan residence around 10:00pm.

Jamaat will also start its campaign today through a door-to-door canvassing in the Dhaka-15 constituency led by Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman and other central leaders, followed by a rally around 2:30pm.

The party's candidates across the country will also begin campaigning and other election-related activities. The Jamaat ameer will visit northern districts on Friday and Saturday, starting with Panchagarh.

He is scheduled to reach Panchagarh at 11:00am Friday. From there, he will travel to Dinajpur for a rally, then proceed to Thakurgaon. In the evening, he will address another rally in Rangpur and stay there overnight.

Large rallies will be held along the way, and Shafiqur will interact with people in constituencies on the route as well as in key markets and towns.

On Saturday morning, he will first visit the home of Shaheed Abu Sayeed and offer prayers at his grave. He will then go to Palashbari in Gaibandha to address a rally at 10:00am, followed by another in Bogura town at noon and one more in Sherpur, Bogura. He will later address rallies in Sirajganj town and Ullapara before reaching Pabna in the evening.

The NCP will officially launch its election campaign by visiting the mausoleum of three leaders and the grave of martyr Sharif Osman Bin Hadi at Shahbagh around 10:30am today, said Mahbubur Rahman, joint convener of the party and head of its Election Management Media Sub-Committee.

They will hold a rally there before taking out a procession and proceeding towards the Jatiya Press Club. There they will hold another rally before splitting up and going to their respective constituencies.

Among others, top NCP leaders, including Nahid Islam, Akhter Hosen, Asif Mahmud, Nasiruddin Patwari, Adeeb Arif, Monira Sharmin, Javed Rasin, Dilshana Parul, Nabila Tasnid, and other party leaders, will be present there.

The Jatiya Party led by GM Quader will also head into the campaign today.

He will begin the election campaign in Rangpur with visits to the shrine of Maulana Keramat Ali Jaunpuri, his parents' graves in Munshipara, and the grave of the party's founder, Hussein Muhammad Ershad, said party sources.

For the first time, campaign posters are banned nationwide to reduce paper waste.

The Election Commission finalised preparations for 42,761 polling centres and 2,44,739 booths for around 12.76 crore voters.

Polling will run from 7:30am to 4:30pm, an hour longer, as voters will cast both election and referendum ballots.

The referendum ballot will be pink; the national election ballot will be black and white. Both will be dropped into a single ballot box.

Constituencies with only one candidate will include a "no vote" option.

to the BNP.

THE PLOUGH AND THE BOAT: 1969

Ahead of the 1986 polls, 33 parties sought election symbols. Eight parties, including the Jatiya Party, applied for the plough. Three parties – Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, Bangladesh Islami Andolan, and Bangladesh Bekar Samaj – sought the scales.

The Awami League and Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BaKSAL) applied for the boat.

The scales were allotted to Jamaat-e-Islami, as it was their first preference. This was the first time since independence that Jamaat participated in an election under its original name.

As for the plough, there were eight applicants, six of which had already adopted other symbols.

The remaining claimants were the Jatiya Party (JP) and the Bangladesh Jatiya League (BJL). Advocate Gias Uddin, representing the BJL, stated that the plough was previously reserved for his party and used in earlier elections. Therefore, it should not be allocated to any other party.

At this stage, JP Secretary General Professor MA Matin argued that the Jatiya League had merged into Jana Dal, which had then become the JP.

He emphasised that the JP was the largest political party in the country and had nominated candidates in all constituencies. Thus, legally, the plough belonged to the JP. He also stated that the claim of a larger party should prevail over that of a smaller party. The commission then reserved the plough for the JP.

PERMANENT SYMBOL ALLOCATIONS

The AL, BNP, and Jamaat did not participate in the 1988 polls. In the 1991 election, following discussions and settlements, the paddy sheaf went to the BNP, the plough to the JP, the boat to the AL, and the scales to Jamaat.

This allocation continued in the 1996 (June) and 2001 elections.

A dispute over the plough between HM Ershad and Anwar Hossain Manju in a 1999 by-election was resolved by the High Court in favour of Ershad's JP.

Ahead of the 2008 polls, the EC introduced party registration and formally reserved symbols in same manner as in 1991, reserving the plough for Ershad's JP.

This was going

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weeks of mass protests that culminated in a violent crackdown by security forces. Hundreds of people were killed – 1,400 deaths according to UN estimates – during the unrest, prompting widespread domestic and international criticism.

Responding to reports by Al Jazeera and the BBC that cited audio recordings in which Hasina appeared to authorise the use of lethal weapons, Joy said the clips had been taken out of context. He claimed the orders referred to protecting lives and property against militants, not to targeting peaceful protesters.

Responding to a question on Bangladesh's extradition request, Joy said India would not hand over Hasina, arguing that there was no evidence against her and that New Delhi followed due process. He said India was currently the safest place for her, though she wanted to return home and retire.

Regarding accusations of the Awami League inciting violence and links to the killing of youth leader Sharif Osman Hadi, Joy said the party currently lacks the capacity to carry out such attacks. "If we had the ability to conduct killings in Bangladesh right now, do you think this regime would still be standing?" he said.

EC greenlights

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Brahmanbaria-4 BNP candidate Mushfikur Rahman; Feni-3 BNP candidate Abdul Awal Mintoo; Noakhali-1 IAB candidate Jahirul Islam; Cumilla-3 BNP candidate Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad; Manikganj-3 BNP candidate Afroza Khanam; and Sylhet-3 BNP candidate MA Malek.

On the other hand, the candidacies of 11 aspirants were cancelled by ROs over dual citizenship issues. The aspirants then filed separate appeals with the EC.

After hearings, the EC restored the candidacies of nine, while the remaining two were rejected and remain invalid.

The nine are: Rangpur-1 Jatiya Party candidate Md Manjum Ali; Chapainabaganj-2 Jatiya Party candidate Muh Khorshid Alam; Natore-1 Khelafat Majlis candidate Md Azabul Haque; Jashore-2 Jamaat candidate Mohammad Moshleh Uddin Farid; Chattogram-9 Jamaat candidate Dr AKM Fazlul Haque; Chattogram-3 Jamaat candidate Mohammad Amzad Hossain; Kurigram-3 Jamaat candidate Md Mahbulul Alam; Sylhet-1 National Citizen Party (NCP) candidate Ehteshamul Haque; and Cumilla-10 BNP candidate Abdul Gaur Bhuiyan.

Mymensingh-6 independent candidate Tanvir Ahmed Rana and Kishoreganj-1 IAB candidate Mohammad Azizur Rahman both lost their candidacies. Asked about the legal position on dual citizenship and candidacy, Election Commissioner Anwarul Islam Sarkar yesterday told The Daily Star, "Earlier, Article 66[2] of the Constitution barred foreign citizens from contesting elections. Following an amendment, Article 66[2][A] now allows a person to run if they have renounced foreign citizenship."

About the conditions reviewed during appeals in such cases, he said, "The first condition is that the candidate had to renounce foreign citizenship. The second is that the application letter must be officially acknowledged. The third is that the citizenship cancellation fee must be paid."

On January 19, a day after the final day of nomination appeal hearings, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said, "Following a major revolution, we now stand at a critical juncture. I am not siding with anyone. ... Mr Kaikobad was not a Turkish citizen by choice; he had to remain one for 17-18 years. At least, that is my understanding under the law."

"There have been many such instances. [Amar Desh editor] Mahmudur Rahman became a Turkish citizen out of compulsion. Some dual citizens have held foreign citizenships from earlier times. They were persecuted and took up foreign citizenship to save their lives. If we cling to backwards thinking, we won't be able to move forward."

Up to 142% salary hike

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expenses," he added.

The Eighth National Pay Scale was implemented in 2015.

Zakir said the commission held 184 meetings and gathered opinions and proposals from 2,552 individuals before finalising the recommendations.

During the submission, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said a committee would be formed to work on the implementation process.

Speaking to The Daily Star, he said, "The recommendations will be implemented as soon as possible."

He added that there are certain procedures involved and he was not sure whether the new pay scale would be effective during the interim government's tenure.

"We have only a few more weeks. However, we have kept provisions in the budget and also partially in the revised budget. So, there is nothing to worry about," he said.

Expressing satisfaction over the commission's work, Prof Yunus said, "This is a monumental task. People have been waiting for this for a long time. From the outline, I can see it is a very creative piece of work."

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the additional burden would be "huge".

He told this newspaper, "The additional expenditure is one-fourth of the revenue earnings. I'm not sure whether the state has the capacity to finance this huge additional amount. You can't finance salaries by borrowing money."

"Even if the recommendations are implemented in a staggered way, it would require Tk 30,000 crore to Tk 40,000 crore. That is also a very large amount."

Zahid also said pay commissions usually argue that higher salaries would curb corruption. "But from our past experience, we have not seen a change," he said.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman,

Child's body found in water tank; sister-in-law held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was arrested after police recovered the body of a five-year-old girl from a water tank at a house in the capital's Kuril Mirdhabari area under Bhatara Police Station yesterday afternoon.

The child was identified as Arifa, 5, who lived with her parents in a rented house in the area.

The arrestee was her sister-in-law, Khadija Akter. Umaul Haque, officer in charge of Bhatara Police Station, said Khadija confessed during interrogation that she strangled Arifa and later dumped the body in the water tank.

Quoting family members, he said the child's father, Md Rajib, is a day labourer. Her elder brother, Hasan, and his wife Khadija lived in a separate room in the same house.

The OC said, "Arifa would often ask her brother to buy her different food items, which he usually did. On Tuesday, Hasan brought toys for his sister, which led to a quarrel with his wife Khadija. At one point, Hasan reportedly physically assaulted Khadija."

"Angered by the incident, Khadija strangled Arifa to death in her room yesterday and then threw the child's body into the house's water tank."

When the child could not be found despite searching, family members later checked the water tank and discovered her body there. They then called 999 and informed police.

The OC said legal proceedings were underway in this regard.

When electoral symbols were still up for grabs

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election" and "existing political party" had no application, as this was Bangladesh's first election and all political parties should be considered new. Since both the AL and the JSD were new parties, he said, the symbol should be allocated through a coin toss.

Aleem's contention was supported by JSD representative Shajahan Siraj, Bangla Jatiya League representative Oli Ahad, and several other party representatives.

Tofail Ahmed, representing the Awami League, countered that his party had existed prior to independence and had used the boat in the preceding election. Therefore, he argued, the Awami League had a rightful claim to the symbol.

The EC ruled that the JSD was a newly formed party and that there was no question of a coin toss. It allocated the boat to the Awami League and its nominees. The JSD challenged the decision in the High Court, which dismissed the petition and upheld the commission's decision.

Meanwhile, the sheaf of paddy was allocated to the National Awami Party (Bhasani) under the same prior-use principle.

BNP GETS PADDY SHEAF: 1979

According to reports, around 50 parties applied for symbols ahead of the 1979 parliamentary election. The newly formed Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), along with 16 other parties, demanded the paddy sheaf.

The NAP (Bhasani) had used paddy sheaf in 1973. Major General Ziaur Rahman had also used it in the 1978 presidential election as a nominee of a six-party alliance, the Jatiyatabadi Front.

This front included the Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal, NAP (Bhasani) led by the late Mashiur Rahman, United People's Party, Bangladesh Muslim League led by Shah Azizur Rahman, Bangladesh Labour Party, and Bangladesh Tafsili Federation.

Applicants for the paddy sheaf fell into four groups including BNP and four factions of NAP (Bhasani) – NAP-B (Nurur Rahman and Zahid), NAP-B (Gazi), NAP-B (Naser), and NAP-B (Bazluz Sattar), among others.

To reach a fair decision, the chief election commissioner invited all parties to present their arguments.

BNP's Maudud Ahmed told the commission that party chair Ziaur Rahman had contested the 1978 presidential election as a nominee of the Jatiyatabadi Front. He said NAP (Bhasani) was registered and recognised under the Political Parties Regulation, 1976, and was a component of the Front.

Maudud argued that this NAP (Bhasani) had used the paddy sheaf in the 1970 and 1973 elections and had formally applied to the EC to allocate the symbol to Ziaur Rahman during the presidential election.

A dispute arose over which election should be considered the "last election" – the 1978 presidential election or the 1973 parliamentary election. The CEC clarified that, as the EC conducts both presidential and parliamentary elections, the 1978 presidential polls should be regarded as the last election.

Representatives of NAP-B factions – Gazi Shahidullah, Naser Khan Bhasani, and Sakhawat Ali Sikdar – opposed BNP's claim. They argued that NAP (Bhasani) had been dissolved upon merging into the BNP and that the existing NAP-B factions were the true successors to the original party and therefore entitled to the paddy sheaf. They further asked the commission to allow the NAP-B factions to determine the rightful claimant among themselves.

The CEC noted that the only registered NAP (Bhasani) was the one led by Mashiur Rahman, which had been a component of the Jatiyatabadi Front that sponsored Ziaur Rahman as its presidential candidate.

He said the EC had widely publicised the allocation of the paddy sheaf to a presidential candidate and none of the NAP-B factions had protested either to the EC or in the media. By their silence, he said, they had waived their claim under the legal doctrine of waiver and acquiescence.

He also stated that determining the true successor of the original NAP (Bhasani) was a matter for the courts, not the EC.

After hearing all submissions and without an amicable settlement, the EC relied on the doctrine of prior use. Since Ziaur Rahman had used the symbol as chair of the Jatiyatabadi Front and was now seeking the same symbol, the commission allocated the sheaf of paddy

the commission also recommended increasing the Pahela Baishakh allowance from 20 percent to 50 percent.

The proposals include major revisions to pension benefits. Sources said pensioners receiving less than Tk 20,000 per month would see their pensions nearly doubled, those receiving between Tk 20,000 and Tk 40,000 would get a 75 percent increase, and those drawing more than Tk 40,000 would receive a 55 percent hike.

The Ninth National Pay Commission's recommendations include introducing health insurance for government employees, reforming the pension system, and restructuring the government employees' welfare board.

The commission also proposed an allowance of Tk 2,000 per month for an employee with a child with disabilities.

In addition, it recommended increasing theiffin allowance from Tk 200 to Tk 1,000 per month for employees in grades 11 to 20.

BNP expels 59 rebel candidates

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Parvez Arefin Siddiqui Jony from Naogaon-3, Taiful Islam Tipu and Yasir Arshad Rajan from Natore-1, Daudar Mahmud from Natore-3, Isfa Khairul Haque Shimul and Rezaul Karim from Rajshahi-5, KM Anwarul Islam from Pabna-3 and Zakaria Pintu from Pabna-4.

Rajan, however, went to submit his withdrawal paper 10 minutes after the deadline yesterday, but it was not accepted.

From the Khulna division, Nuruzzaman Hablu Molla from Kushtia-1, Monirul Islam from Narail-2, Shahid Iqbal from Jashore-5, Shahidul Alam from Satkhira-3, Engineer Masud from Bagerhat-1 and Khairuzzaman Shipon from Bagerhat-4 were expelled.

Two rebel candidates in the Barishal division have been expelled: Abdus Sobhan from Barishal-1 and Mohammad Mahmud Hossain from Pirojpur-2.

Nine rebel candidates expelled in the Dhaka division are Mohammad Dulal Hossain from Narayanganj-1, Md Ataur Rahman Khan Angur from Narayanganj-2, Md Rezaul Karim from Narayanganj-3, Mohammad Ali from Tangail-1, Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad from Tangail-3, Farhad Iqbal from Tangail-5, Md Jamal Ahmed Chowdhury from Narsingdi-5, Md Mumin Ali from Munshiganj-1 and Md Mohiuddin from Munshiganj-3.

Seven rebel candidates expelled in the Mymensingh division are Rezaul Karim Chunnur from Kishoreganj-1, Sheikh Mojibur Rahman Iqbal from Kishoreganj-5, Salman Omar Rubel from Mymensingh-1, AB Siddiqui Rahman from Mymensingh-10, Md

Morshed Alam from Mymensingh-11, Md Delwar Hossain Bhuiyan from Netrokona-3 and Md Aminul Islam Badsha from Sherpur-3.

From the Faridpur division, Lovlu Siddiqui and Kamal Zaman Nuruddin Molla from Madaripur-1, Milton Baidya from Madaripur-2, Nasirul Haque Sabu from Rajbari-2, MS Khan Manju and Sirajul Islam Siraj from Gopalganj-2 and Habibur Rahman Habib from Gopalganj-3 were expelled.

The party expelled Anwar Hossain from Sunamganj-3, Dewan Zainul Zakarin from Sunamganj-4, Mamunur Rashid from Sylhet-5, Mohsin Mia Madhu from Moulvibazar-4 and Sheikh Sujat Mia from Habiganj-1 from the Sylhet division.

Six rebel candidates expelled in the Cumilla division are Kamruzzaman Mamun from Brahmanbaria-1, Kazi Nazmul Hossain Tapas from Brahmanbaria-5, Saiduzzaman Kamal from Brahmanbaria-6, Abdul Matin from Cumilla-2, Atikul Alam Shawon from Cumilla-7 and MA Hannan from Chandpur-4.

Mizanul Haque Chowdhury and Shafiqul Islam Rahi from Chattogram-14, Liyakat Ali Chowdhury from Chattogram-16, Kazi Mofizur Rahman from Noakhali-2, Fazlul Azim and Tanbir Uddin Rajib from Noakhali-6 were expelled from the Chattogram division.

In another development, Mahmudur Rahman Manna's Nagorik Oikko has parted ways with the BNP.

Since there is no seat-sharing agreement with the BNP, the party will contest the election in 11 seats alone using the party symbol 'kettle', said the party leaders.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে "ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার" পূবালী ব্যাংক প্রকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



Hadi's family to get Tk 1cr more from govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to provide an additional Tk 1 crore to the family of slain Inqilab Mancha spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi as livelihood support, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

Earlier, the government had allocated Tk 1 crore for purchasing a flat in Dhaka for Hadi's family.

The finance adviser disclosed the decision while speaking to journalists after chairing a meeting of the Advisers Council Committee on

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman offers prayers at the shrine of Hazrat Shah Paran (RA) in Sylhet yesterday, as he visits the city to formally launch the party's campaign for the 13th National Parliamentary Election.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Simeen Rahman, others exempted in one case, bailed in another

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transcom Group Chairman Shahnaz Rahman, Chief Executive Officer Simeen Rahman, and three other top officials were exempted yesterday from a case filed by the CEO's sister.

In a separate case, five individuals, including Shahnaz and Simeen, were granted bail by a Dhaka court.

In the first case, filed over allegations of fraud through forged signatures, Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sefatullah relieved Shahnaz, Simeen and three others after accepting a final report, according to a sub-inspector working at the court.

The three others are Zeraif Ayaat Hossain, son of Simeen Rahman; and Transcom Group directors Md Kamrul Hassan and Fokhruzzaman Bhuiyan.

The case was filed on February 22, 2024, by Simeen's younger sister Shahzreh Huq at Gulshan Police Station against the five. Investigation officer Md Tariqul Islam, an inspector at the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), recently submitted the final report to the court.

The report said that Simeen is the complainant's sister and Shahnaz is her mother. The complainant had alleged that the signatures of herself, her father Latifur Rahman and her brother Arshad Waliur Rahman were forged on a deed of settlement arising from a family dispute.

During his lifetime, Latifur, founder chairman of Transcom Group, executed the deed of settlement concerning the distribution of his shares and matters related to company management.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Shared trauma, mutual respect shape race for Dhaka-14

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK and SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

As the sun set, a tea stall on the slope of Rainkhola near Mirpur Zoo buzzed with speculation. A group of young men debated whether the upcoming national election would affect personal relationships in the neighbourhood.

At the same time, across the city at the July Uprising Memorial Museum in Gono Bhaban, the two main contenders for the Dhaka-14 seat -- BNP's Sanjida Islam Tulee and Jamaat-e-Islami's Mir Ahmad BinQuasem Arman -- stood side by side.

Invited by the interim government, they stood before a replica of the former fascist regime's secret torture cell -- "Gumghor".

One screen showed a documentary on Arman's year-long enforced disappearance, while nearby was displayed a dress once owned by Tulee's brother, Sajedul Islam Sumon, a BNP leader who was also a victim of enforced disappearance.



MIR AHMAD BINQUASEM ARMAN
Jamaat candidate

Despite being from another party, Barrister Arman is like a brother to me. When we stood before the torture cell at the July Museum, there was no rivalry -- only humanity.



SANJIDA ISLAM TULEE
BNP candidate

In that shared moment of trauma, electoral rivalry faded. Both broke down in tears, united by personal loss rather than divided by politics.

That spirit of mutual respect has also reached the streets of Mirpur-1

in the Dhaka-14 constituency.

The third major contender, Syed Abu Bakar Siddique Shaju -- an independent candidate and son of late BNP leader S A Khaleque -- began his street march at Mirpur New Market by expressing respect for his rivals' sacrifices.

Dhaka-14 is a diverse constituency, home to the Shah Ali Mazar, Gabtoli Bus Terminal, the National Zoo, and Mirpur Stadium.

Its electorate includes middle-class residents, labourers, and a large number of vocal young voters. Issues such as teen gangs, drug abuse, and public security dominate tea-stall conversations.

"Young voters are very observant this time," said Bappi, a tea-seller at Rainkhola. "There is sympathy for both BNP and Jamaat candidates. We hope for a peaceful environment without clashes."

A female voter from Mirpur-6, speaking anonymously, echoed the call for stability. "We see reports of attacks over opinions and faiths across the country. This must stop.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

China's influence, polls in focus as new US envoy sets out Bangladesh agenda

Brent Christensen says the US will not back any political side

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent Christensen has said he is concerned about the broader Chinese influence in South Asia and committed to clearly articulating the risks of involvement with China should Bangladesh choose to go down that path.

Speaking at his first media interaction at the EMK Centre in Dhaka since joining the US Embassy on January 12, Christensen also said that the US will not take sides in Bangladesh's elections but aims to work with the elected government on trade, economy, security and counter-terrorism.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Barrister Arman recounts 8-year confinement in Aynaghar at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An enforced disappearance victim yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal that a guard at his secret detention centre informed him his body weight had been measured days after his abduction so that a concrete slab of the same weight could be prepared to dump his body after killing him, ensuring it would never be recovered.

Testifying as the first prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case, Mir Ahmed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Form law to make primary healthcare constitutional obligation: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health experts and campaigners yesterday urged the immediate formulation of a law making primary healthcare (PHC) a constitutional obligation aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

They also called for refocusing and strengthening PHC as the foundation of the country's health system and for better coordination between rural and urban healthcare services, which currently operate in a fragmented manner.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Hefazat chief praises Islami Andolan for cutting ties with Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hefazat-e-Islam Amir Mohibullah Babunagari has congratulated Islami Andolan Bangladesh Ameer Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim for withdrawing from their political association with Jamaat-e-Islami ahead of the upcoming election.

In a statement sent to the media on Tuesday, Babunagari said Islami Andolan's decision to distance itself from Jamaat -- which he described as "Maududi-inspired ideology" -- was a timely and courageous move aimed at safeguarding "Sunni beliefs".

He said since the July uprising, Hefazat-e-Islam has been working for broader unity among Islamic forces under the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

'Ensure justice, accountability, democratic rights'

Gonotrantik Odhikar Committee unveils 'Peoples' Manifesto' for next elected govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gonotrantik Odhikar Committee yesterday presented a set of 25 recommendations for the next elected government, calling upon it to ensure justice, accountability, peace, security, and democratic rights of the people, and public ownership of the July uprising, the Liberation War, and all past uprisings.

The committee unveiled the recommendations at an event titled "Manifesto for Peoples' Peace, Comfort, Security, and Democratic Rights" at the National Press Club in Dhaka.

The manifesto was read by Akram Khan, Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, and Sushmita S Preetha.

The manifesto's demands to the next elected government include: publishing final lists of all those killed and injured during the July uprising, from both sides, within three months; ensuring compensation within six months to families of all the deceased and critically injured in the uprising; preventing harassment of affected families; state guarantee of safety to all July Uprising participants; banning the use of the uprising for personal gain, corruption, or political influence;

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



PHOTO: COURTESY

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) held its 26th convocation at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka yesterday. Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar conferred certificates on graduates, while acclaimed photographer, journalist and human rights activist Dr Shahidul Alam delivered the convocation speech. University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz attended as the guest of honour.

Level playing field remains absent for polls

Allege two parties, BNP candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis and BNP's Dhaka-15 candidate yesterday alleged that a level playing field remains absent ahead of the 13th national parliamentary election and referendum scheduled for February 12.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair alleged bias by law enforcers and election officials towards a particular party and claimed Jamaat activists, including women, were being harassed.

After receiving his electoral symbol in Dhaka-15, he said Jamaat wants a fair, peaceful and intimidation-free election and urged the Election Commission to ensure a level playing field.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Senior Nayebe-Ameer Yusuf Ashraf said equal opportunities were being denied and submitted complaints to the CEC, demanding stronger security at polling centres and action against alleged code violations.

Meanwhile, BNP's Dhaka-15 candidate Shafiqul Islam Khan Milton accused rival candidates of violating electoral rules in his constituency.

NEXT NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Symbol allocation for 20 Dhaka seats finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The symbol allocation process for the upcoming national elections was completed across 20 constituencies of Dhaka district yesterday.

Candidates, however, voiced concerns to returning officers and demanded a level playing field ahead of the polls.

Symbols were distributed at three venues – the Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's Office, the District Commissioner's Office, and the Election Training Institute in Agargaon.

Party nominees received their party symbols, while independent aspirants were given symbols of their choice.

At the Divisional Commissioner's Office, symbols were allocated among 137 candidates from 13 constituencies in Dhaka city.

The candidates had pledged to abide by the election code of conduct, and cooperate with the election officials to ensure free, fair polls, said Sharf Uddin Ahmed Choudhury, returning officer and also Dhaka divisional commissioner.

Independent candidate Ishaq Sarkar (Dhaka-7) expressed concern over use of arms and muscle power ahead of the elections unless illegal weapons are not fully recovered.

Nasiruddin Patwari, NCP chief coordinator and candidate from Dhaka-8, alleged that BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman had violated election rules by promising flats to fire victims of Korail slum.

Jamaat's Dhaka-6 candidate Abdul Mannan alleged that all election offices in his constituency were rented in buildings owned by BNP candidate Ishraque Hossain. "I submitted a complaint in this regard on January 14, but the office could not produce the document," he said.

At the Election Training Institute, symbols were distributed among 17 candidates from Dhaka-13 and Dhaka-15.

SEE PAGE 9 COL.3

Justice Farah Mahbub BJSC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Justice Farah Mahbub, a judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, has been appointed as the chairman of the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC).

The law ministry issued a gazette notification to this effect yesterday, saying President Mohammed Shahabuddin gave the appointment.

The BJSC is tasked with selecting candidates for the posts of lower court judges by holding necessary examinations.



Farmers soften the red earth with water and mud to sow seeds and transplant seedlings during the peak season for Boro rice, mustard, onions, and maize. The Barind region is currently lush with crops. The photo was taken in the Saramangala area of Godagari upazila, Rajshahi yesterday. PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Barrister Arman recounts 8-year confinement

FROM PAGE 3

BinQuasem said the guard also told him that authorities initially planned to kill him and dispose of his body in a river in Barishal after disfiguring his face and hands with acid to prevent identification.

Also known as Barrister Arman, he gave a detailed account of his eight-year confinement in the "Aynaghar" before ICT-1 while testifying in a case over enforced disappearance linked to the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell, allegedly operated under the Rab. He said the plan was abandoned only after the officer assigned to carry out the killing was killed in a terrorist attack and the alleged mastermind, Ziaul Ahsan, was transferred from Rab.

The son of executed Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali, who was convicted of crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War, Arman said senior

officials frequently visited his cell.

During those visits, he was handcuffed, blindfolded, and ordered to remain silent. He said he could identify their seniority from mobile phone sounds, expensive perfumes, and even "conversations in Hindi". He told the tribunal he was abducted on the night of August 9, 2016, when seven to eight armed men in plainclothes entered his Pallabi residence, identified themselves as members of a "state force", and took him away without showing any warrant.

According to the prosecution, at least 14 detainees were confined and tortured at the TFI cell between 2016 and 2024.

The case names 17 accused, including ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her former defence adviser Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, three former

Rab chiefs, and 11 army officers who previously served in Rab. Ten of the accused army officers were present in the dock, while the others remain absconding.

Barrister Arman said he was taken blindfolded and handcuffed to a narrow, damp cell inside the Rab headquarters compound, where he was held in inhuman conditions amid rats and cockroaches. He said items inside the cell bore markings such as "RAB-1", "RAB/INT", and "TFI", which he cited as evidence of official involvement.

He testified that he frequently fell ill, once suffering heatstroke and later developing a severe abscess that required minor surgery. He alleged his food

was often contaminated with chemicals and said he was initially denied a copy of the Holy Quran. He also said he regularly heard screams of other detainees being tortured.

He further said one night he was driven for about 30 minutes and thrown out of a vehicle, believing he was about to be killed. He later realised he had been released near a construction site in Diabari, Uttara. He also submitted a pendrive containing a video documentary on his return, prepared by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and published from the verified Facebook page of the Chief Adviser, which was marked as an exhibit.

The witness will continue his testimony.

Simeen

FROM PAGE 3

Forensic examinations conducted by the CID confirmed that the signatures of Shahzreh, Latifur, and Arshad were genuine. Based on this, the investigating officer submitted the final report, stating no evidence was found against the accused and recommending their exemption from the case.

Simeen's lawyer, Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah, said the complainant had received all the properties under the deed of settlement and had declared them in her income tax returns. "Two years later, those who wanted to damage the business reputation of Simeen Rahman and destroy the institution conspired with the complainant to file false and harassing cases. With this one, three cases have now been proven false," he added.

Meanwhile, Shahnaz, Simeen and three officials – Kamrul Hassan, Mohammed Mosaddek and Abu Yusuf Md Siddik – were granted bail in another case concerning alleged fraud related to the company's shares.

Magistrate Md Sefatullah accepted the charge sheet against six people, including Shahnaz and Simeen, and granted bail to the three officials. Later, Shahnaz and Simeen appeared before the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Jewel Rana and obtained bail. PBI Inspector Syed Sajedur Rahman had submitted the charge sheet to the court on January 11.

According to lawyers, of the four cases filed against Simeen, final reports have now been submitted in three, and she and the others have been exempted in all three cases by court orders.



BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

National Science & Technology Complex, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207
Website: www.bas.org.bd

Academy Awards in Science and Technology

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) announces the following awards in Science and Technology as stated below:

- BAS Gold Medal Award 2025**
Two awards, one for Physical Sciences including Engineering & Technology and another for Biological Sciences including Agriculture & Life Sciences.
- BAS-National Professor Dr. M. Innas Ali Memorial Gold Medal Award 2025**
For a distinguished scientist with outstanding achievement in any branch of Science and Technology.
- BAS-Dr. M. O. Ghani Memorial Gold Medal Award 2025**
For a distinguished scientist with outstanding achievement in any branch of Science and Technology.
- BAS-Dr. Sultan Ahmed Choudhury Science & Technology Gold Medal Award 2025**
For a distinguished scientist of Health Sciences only.

Bangladeshi scientists and technologists who have distinguished themselves by their outstanding scientific and technological work may apply for the above awards. Heads of research institutions/respective Deans of Universities/ Fellows of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences may nominate candidates for the awards or Candidates themselves may apply through their Heads of institutions directly. Each nominee/candidate is required to submit 7(seven) copies of their bio-data along with a list of publications, technologies, patents and photocopy of 1st page of each of the important publications (not more than 10).

Note: Those who were awarded Gold Medal in any of the above categories earlier are not eligible for nomination.

Application/nomination for the above awards must reach the Secretary of the Academy by **25 February 2026** at the latest.

Prof. Dr. Yearul Kabir
Secretary



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
www.police.gov.bd

(Corrigendum)

Memo No. 44.01.0000.024.02.002.25.377 Date: 14/01/2026

In the advertisement titled 'International Tender Notice' published in this newspaper on January 15, 2026 on page 'Business-2', in the table (point nos. 11 & 12), the closing and opening date has been wrongly printed as 26 February, 2025, which should be 26 February, 2026, and should be read as such. This inadvertent error is deeply regretted.

GD-108



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division-1, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

Memo No-25.36.2680.534.14.170.26-1549 Date: 21/01/2026

e- Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal:

| Tender ID No. | Last Selling Date | Opening Date |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1217822 | 03/02/2026 | 04/02/2026 |

This tender is online Tender where only e-Tenderer will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division-1, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
Email: ee_wood@pwd.gov.bd

GD-158



বিমান বাহিনী সদর দপ্তর

শিক্ষা পরিদপ্তর

ঢাকা সেনানিবাস

বই ক্রয়ের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি


নং ০১/২০২৬ তারিখ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬

বাংলাদেশ বিমান বাহিনীর বিভিন্ন এলাগারের জন্য বই ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্সধারী পুস্তক সরবরাহকারী/প্রকাশকের নিকট হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে সিলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। বইয়ের তালিকা এবং দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলীসম্বলিত সিডিউল ৭৫০.০০ টাকা (অফেরথুযোগ্য) মূল্যে বিমান বাহিনী সদর দপ্তর (অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষ) ঢাকা সেনানিবাস- এ আগামী ২৫ হতে ২৭ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালে (০৮৩০ হতে ১৪৩০ ঘটিকা, ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) পাওয়া যাবে। দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলী অনুসরণ করে ০৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে বিমান বাহিনী সদর দপ্তর অভ্যর্থনা কক্ষে সন্নিবিষ্ট দরপত্র বাস্তবে ফেলতে হবে। এই দিন ১২৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র দাখিলকারীগণের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলা হবে। প্রাপ্ত দরপত্রসমূহ বই ক্রয় সক্রমের কমিটি কর্তৃক যাচাইবাহাজি-এর পর মনোনীত দরপত্র দাতাদের পরবর্তীতে যথানিয়মে ডিম্বাদেশ দেয়া হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন বা সর্বদা দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

শিক্ষা পরিদপ্তর
বিমান বাহিনী সদর দপ্তর
ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২০৬
ফোন : ৫৫০৬০০০০ সঞ্চ ৩৭৮

আইএসপিআর/বিমান/০৬

GD-156



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka.

No: 54.01.2600.210.07.001.26 – 1146 Date: 19.01.2026

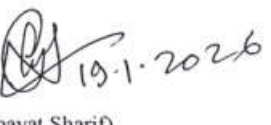
Tender Notice

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


| Name of Goods/Works/Services | Tender Proposal ID | Publishing Date and Time | Last Selling Date and Time | Closing Date and Time |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Installation of Non-interlocked color light Signalling system and point Machine at south yard (GNDR side) at Dhaka | 1199714 | 22-Jan-2026 10:00 | 08-Feb-2026 11:30 | 08-Feb-2026 12:00 |
| Supply of Permalit Block joint and Track feed rectifier with related accessories for Signal and Interlocking system of different sections of Dhaka Division. | 1159139 | 22-Jan-2026 10:00 | 08-Feb-2026 11:30 | 08-Feb-2026 12:00 |
| Generator Overhauling with required spare parts for CBI signaling system at different Station of Dhaka Division. | 1196568 | 25-Jan-2026 10:00 | 10-Feb-2026 11:00 | 10-Feb-2026 12:00 |

Only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hand copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for the Downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal must be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

এস (২৬)(১৬০)


(Rubayat Shari)
Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka.

GD-164



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)

প্রধান কার্যালয় ব্যাংকিং সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়
মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ ই-মেইল- info.bsccs@bb.org.bd
বাংলাদেশ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ২৬/২০২৬ তারিখ- ০৬ মাঘ, ১৪৩২
২০ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৬


নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকিং সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত বিভিন্ন ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে ১. এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (সিভিল)/ সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (সিভিল)/ সিনিয়র অফিসার (সিভিল ইঞ্জি:) (গ্রেড-৯) ২. সাব-এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (ইলেকট্রিক্যাল) (গ্রেড-১০) ৩. সাব-এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (মেকানিক্যাল) (গ্রেড-১০) ৪. সাব-এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (সিভিল)/ উপ-সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (সিভিল) (গ্রেড-১০) ৫. সিনিয়র অফিসার (আইন)/আইন অফিসার/সিনিয়র অফিসার (ল) (গ্রেড-৯) ৬. অফিসার (ল) (গ্রেড-১০) ৭. সিনিয়র অফিসার (নিরীক্ষা) (গ্রেড-৯) ৮. সিকিউরিটি অফিসার (গ্রেড-১০) ৯. ফিন্যান্সিয়াল এনালিস্ট (গ্রেড-৫) এবং ১০. প্রিন্সিপাল অফিসার- ডাক্তার (পিও-ডাক্তার) (গ্রেড-৬) পদসমূহে সরাসরি নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে প্যানেল প্রকল্পের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকের নিকট হতে Online এ দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদন দাখিলের বিস্তারিত নিয়ম ও শর্তাবলী বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) পাওয়া যাবে।

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তারিখ : ২১/০১/২০২৬ (আলিম-উর-রাজী সৈয়দ)

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন। পরিচালক (বিএসসিএস) (চলতি দায়িত্বে)

GD-159



রবীন্দ্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ

শাহজাদপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ

স্মারক : রবিবা/প্রশা/নিয়োগ/১০৯৩/২০২৫/০৩৯; তারিখ : ২১.০১.২০২৬

রবীন্দ্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ-এর নিম্নোক্ত সৃষ্ট শূন্য স্থায়ী পদসমূহে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে :

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GD-163

Trump seeks ‘decisive’ options for Iran

US military assets move into Middle East

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump is pressing aides for “decisive” military options against Iran after stepping back from potential strikes last week, according to a report Tuesday.

Trump’s discussions come as the US deploys additional forces to the Middle East, including an aircraft carrier that was spotted by maritime traffic trackers sailing west from the South China Sea toward the Persian Gulf and F-15E fighter jets that landed Sunday in Jordan, said The Wall Street Journal.

The report, citing anonymous US officials, said Trump has repeatedly used the term “decisive” in internal discussions about what he would want any potential US action against Iran to achieve.

That language has prompted officials at the White House



and the Pentagon to prepare a range of military scenarios for the president, including options that could seek to remove Iran’s leadership, reports Anadolu Ajansi online.

The officials were quoted as saying that Trump has not authorised strikes and that his final decision remains uncertain, but the ongoing discussions indicate he has not ruled out taking action against Tehran over the killing of protesters.

Iran has been rocked by nationwide protests since late December over economic hardship and the sharp depreciation of the rial, with demonstrations spreading from Tehran to several cities.

According to the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) on Monday, at least 4,029 people have been killed, more than 26,000 arrested and over 5,800 injured during the unrest. Iranian officials have accused the US and Israel of backing what they describe as “armed rioters.”

Trump has repeatedly threatened to “hit hard” if protesters were killed but later commended Tehran for reportedly cancelling hundreds of scheduled executions.



People take part in the nationwide “Stop ICE Terror” rally in New York, US on Tuesday evening, protesting US President Donald Trump’s immigration policies.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli fire kills 11 Palestinians in Gaza

Two boys, three journos among the dead

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli fire killed 11 Palestinians, including two boys and three journalists, in Gaza yesterday, local medics said, and the Israeli military said it had “eliminated a Palestinian man” who posed a threat to soldiers.

In the latest violence disrupting a brittle, three-month-old ceasefire, Palestinian health officials said an Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinian journalists travelling in a car in the central Gaza Strip.

The three were on an assignment sponsored by the Egyptian Committee, which supervises Egypt’s relief work in Gaza, to film tent encampments built



by Egypt for displaced Palestinians, other local journalists told Reuters.

An Egyptian security source confirmed the vehicle belonged to the committee but gave no further details.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Israel and Hamas have traded blame for multiple breaches of the October truce after two years of war that devastated Gaza and caused a humanitarian disaster.

Trump said on Tuesday “you got to let the UN continue” when asked about his plans for a so-called “Board of Peace” that has alarmed international experts.

Japan restarts world’s biggest nuclear plant

AFP, Kariwa

The world’s biggest nuclear power plant was restarted yesterday for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima disaster, its Japanese operator said, despite persistent safety concerns among residents.

The plant was “started at 19:02”, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) spokesman Tatsuya Matoba told AFP of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata prefecture.

The regional governor approved the resumption last month, although public opinion remains sharply divided. On Tuesday, a few dozen protesters demonstrated near the plant’s entrance.

Fair, credible polls

FROM PAGE 12

senior government officials, and representatives from the Election Commission. Following the meeting, Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam briefed reporters at the Foreign Service Academy.

Yunus said the government would extend full support to the Election Commission to ensure Bangladesh can proudly claim a fair election.

“This is a major challenge for the nation. We must take it on, complete this enormous task, and turn it into a historic achievement,” he said.

He emphasised the need for flawless arrangements on polling day, stressing that no shortcomings or technical glitches should occur during voting.

The chief adviser said the 2026 election should serve as a benchmark for future polls. “The EC’s instructions are now the most important directives. Everyone must work together in strict accordance with them,” he said.

He added that the Ministry of Home Affairs will play the lead role in maintaining law and order, with body cameras and CCTV deployed and all activities monitored from a central control room.

Yunus also underscored the importance of seamless coordination among all forces assigned to election duties, noting that a large number of domestic and international journalists and observers are expected to monitor the polls.

“We must be prepared for everything. Given the current situation and the preparations in place, a fair and credible election is possible,” the chief adviser said.

EC Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told the meeting that 51 of the 59 registered political parties are participating in the election, and representatives from 26 countries have been invited as observers.

The European Union is expected to send an observer team of around 300 members. Already, 56 EU representatives are in Bangladesh, and two have observed the appeal process related to nomination papers.

Candidates will be allowed to campaign from midnight tonight until 7:30 am on February 10, Akhtar said.

He warned that misinformation in cyberspace poses a major challenge in this election.

“Additional time will be needed to count party symbol ballots, referendum ballots, and postal ballots. So, I will urge the media to act responsibly to prevent the spread of misinformation and rumours,” he said.

Home Affairs Adviser Lieutenant General Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury (retd) said members of the armed forces will be considered law enforcement personnel during this election and, if necessary, will be able to enter polling centre premises.

Army Chief Waker-Uz-Zaman said 3,619 firearms and 456,418 rounds of ammunition were looted from police stations during the August 2024 mass uprising, with 2,259 firearms (62.4 percent) and 237,100 rounds (52 percent) recovered so far. He said coordinated measures are being taken to ensure public confidence and that, if continued, a peaceful election will be possible.

VDP Director General Major General Abdul Motaleb Sazzad Mahmud said armed Ansar members will remain inside polling centres, ensuring no one can force out a rival candidate’s polling agent or conduct illegal activities inside the stations.

Advisers Muhammad Fawzul Kabir Khan, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser Lieutenant General (retd) Abdul Hafiz; National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman; Faiz Ahmed Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser; Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid; Navy Chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nazmul Hasan; Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmud Khan; Chief Adviser’s Chief Secretary M Siraj Uddin Mia; Home Secretary Nasimul Ghani; Police Inspector General Baharul Alam; Border Guard DG Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui; Coast Guard DG Rear Admiral Md Ziaul Haq; RAB DG AKM Shahidur Rahman; and heads of various intelligence agencies were among those present at the meeting.

Ex-adviser M Hafizuddin Khan

FROM PAGE 12

Hafizuddin Khan was rushed to Uttara Crescent Hospital in the morning after he complained of chest pain, his niece Moushumi Mostafa told The Daily Star. He was later put on life support and pronounced dead around 6:00pm, she said.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at multiple locations today. His two daughters, who live abroad, are expected to arrive in Dhaka today.

He will be laid to rest tomorrow at his village home in Rahmatganj of Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

Born in Sirajganj in 1939, Hafizuddin Khan served as an adviser to the caretaker government in 2001.

He completed his graduation and master’s degrees in political science from Dhaka University in 1960 and 1961 respectively, according to a brief biography published by Midas

Financing Limited, where he served as a director. He later obtained a diploma in development finance from the University of Birmingham in the UK.

Hafizuddin joined government service in the Audit and Accounts Cadre in 1964. After 35 years of service, he retired in 1999. In 2001, he served as an adviser to the caretaker government, overseeing the ministries of finance, planning, and textiles and jute.

Widely regarded as a reformer in administrative and financial management, he served as a director of BASIC Bank and Rupali Bank, and as chairman of Agrani Bank.

He also served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Transparency International Bangladesh and as president of the central executive committee of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan).

Suspected jihadist attack kills 31 civilians in Niger

AFP, Abidjan

An armed attack has killed at least 31 civilians in western Niger near the borders with Burkina Faso and Mali in a region rife with jihadist groups, local sources said Tuesday.

The assailants struck on Sunday in a village lying in the Tillaberi region, located in the so-called tri-border area -- a flashpoint zone where the frontiers of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali converge.

Jihadists linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group have made the region a fiefdom, carrying out deadly attacks for nearly a decade.

Tillaberi became the “deadliest region across central Sahel” in 2025, with more than 1,200 deaths, most of them civilians, according to ACLED, an NGO that monitors conflicts.

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
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Website: <https://sylhet.polytech.gov.bd>
E-mail: principalsylhetpoly@gmail.com

Memo No: 57.03.9131.349.04.07.001.25-68

Date: 20/01/2026

e-Tender Notice

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

| Tender ID No. | Package No | Package Description | Tender Publication Date and Time | Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time | Remarks |
|---------------|-----------------|---|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 1212787 | SPI-25-26-GD-06 | Supply of Raw Materials and Spare Parts for Computer Science, Electrical and Electronics Technology (3256105) | 21-Jan-2026 10:00:00 | 01-Feb-2026 15:45:00 | Re-Tender |
| 1212812 | SPI-25-26-GD-07 | Supply of Sports Materials (3256107) | 21-Jan-2026 10:00:00 | 01-Feb-2026 15:45:00 | Re-Tender |
| 1212762 | SPI-25-26-GD-10 | Supply of Engineering & Equipment for Mechanical Technology (4112304) | 21-Jan-2026 10:00:00 | 01-Feb-2026 15:45:00 | Re-Tender |
| 1176735 | SPI-25-26-WD-14 | Repair of Electrical Installations (3258119) | 21-Jan-2026 10:00:00 | 01-Feb-2026 15:45:00 | |
| 1216198 | SPI-25-26-WD-15 | Repair of Others Building and Installation (3258108) | 21-Jan-2026 10:00:00 | 01-Feb-2026 15:45:00 | |

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal; and offline or hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
(Mohammed Rehan Uddin)
Principal (Additional Charge)
Phone : 02-9966-32529

GD-157

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Analyst/Berger/2026

An efficient energy sector needs political commitment

A just transition to renewables must be in the plan

Political parties, especially those hoping to win in the upcoming election, must clearly commit to ensuring good governance in the power and energy sector. This must be included in their election manifestos. At a recent dialogue attended by representatives of political parties, civil society members and energy experts, the most-talked-about subject was the corruption and waste in this sector. The Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED), one of the organisers, presented a 13-point citizen manifesto for a “just transition in the energy sector.” A transition to renewable energy has clearly become essential given the increasing environmental pollution (especially carbon emissions) caused by fossil fuel plants, which contribute 28 percent to the country’s air pollution.

The huge financial burden of our overdependence on fossil fuels and their imports is another compelling factor that demands such a transition. We spend around \$18.5 billion in capacity charges and an additional \$27.23 billion in losses sustained by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), according to BWGED. Meanwhile, the annual expenditure on fossil fuel imports is around \$11.72 billion, which is a huge strain on the country’s foreign exchange reserves. It is therefore reassuring that representatives of the political parties spoke about the need for transparency and accountability in the sector; this is in the backdrop of the rampant corruption and abuse of power plants during the Awami League regime. We expect that removing corruption from this sector will be a priority in party manifestos.

At the same time, subsidies for coal, gas, and fuel need to be phased out to encourage industries, businesses, and households to shift rapidly to cost-effective renewable energy. No new coal, gas, or oil-based plants should be approved, and workers of retired plants must receive guaranteed alternative livelihood opportunities. No new LNG terminals should be approved, with strict measures to prevent gas leakage and illegal connections.

A clear roadmap is needed for this transition, with time-bound targets integrated into all national and sectoral plans. There must be significant budget allocations for renewable energy. VAT and import duties on solar panels and related equipment have to be removed. The transport sector is one of the biggest polluters, which must be addressed. The BWGED’s citizen manifesto also demands significant reductions in import duties and taxes on electric vehicles and zero duties on advanced batteries. This includes public buses and other modes of transport. A “just transition” includes everyone—in particular women, indigenous communities, farmers, fishers, workers, and the poor. Thus, new green jobs must be created by providing short-term training and easy loan access, especially for the unemployed youth, women, and other marginalised groups. Land acquisition for energy projects must be prohibited to protect agricultural livelihoods. Special incentives must be given to farmers for using renewable energy.

The citizen manifesto has given a clear direction for the next government for the country’s smooth transition to renewable energy that will eventually reduce our financial burden and carbon footprint. Political parties must realise that committing to these demands and living up to them, if they form part of the next government, is imperative for Bangladesh’s economic and environmental resilience.

Migrant welfare must be a priority

Parties must commit to addressing migration governance failures

As political parties prepare to unveil their election manifestos, with the curtain on official campaigning set to rise today, experts have been sharing their thoughts on the priorities that should be reflected in political commitments. Migration experts have also joined the conversation, stressing the inclusion of clear and credible commitments to reform Bangladesh’s labour migration sector. This is only logical. Labour migration remains a major economic driver—with remittance inflows hitting a record \$32.8 billion in 2025—yet the sector remains poorly governed. While talking to this daily, experts have laid out a case for why and where serious policy action is needed.

The numbers alone justify the urgency. Despite bringing in hefty remittances and shoring up forex reserves, the sector receives just 0.08 percent of the national budget, as one expert revealed. This mismatch exposes a long-standing policy contradiction where the state celebrates migrant workers as its economic lifelines but casts their welfare and protection as peripheral concerns. Calls for allocating at least one percent of the budget to migration, alongside the formulation of a 10-year national migration vision, therefore deserve serious consideration. Without a long-term framework, migration governance will continue to be reactive, fragmented, and ineffective.

Equally important is the emphasis on what another expert called “quality migration.” Sending unskilled workers through opaque recruitment systems not only limits remittance potential but also exposes the workers to abuse, debt, and exploitation. This must be addressed. To ensure quality migration, proposals such as reducing the role of middlemen, promoting digital registration for migrants, embedding skills development from school to university, upgrading Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training to a full directorate, and strengthening support services at embassies and upon return are well justified. Here, we must stress the importance of proper reintegration for returnee migrants. Returnees often find themselves deprived of state support and facing shrinking opportunities. A serious migration policy must see return as an integral phase of the migration cycle and plan accordingly.

Broader labour issues also demand political attention. Frequent calls from labour organisations for fair wages, democratic labour laws, and worker protections suggest that workers, whether at home or abroad, remain undervalued despite their central role in our economy. Any economic growth cannot be sustained without protecting those who produce it. The question is, can the parties move beyond rhetoric and signal seriousness through concrete, time-bound commitments? They do not have to come up with novel ideas; the proposals made by the Labour Reform Commission already provide much of the background on which they can build. What’s needed is strong political will. If parties are serious about inclusive growth and economic resilience, they must place workers, including migrant workers, at the centre of their future visions.

Why the next government must put power sector reform first



Shafiqul Alam
is lead energy analyst for Bangladesh at the
Institute for Energy Economics and Financial
Analysis (IEEFA).

SHAFIQU ALAM

The power sector’s high reserve margin, capacity payment obligations, and reliance on imported fossil fuels have weakened the Bangladesh Power Development Board’s (BPDB) financial strength. In a bid to urgently address its distress, the interim government, after assuming office in August 2024, undertook some measures to reduce costs. Yet, the power sector registered a record revenue shortfall in FY2024-25, calling for long-term efforts to deliver results. With the general election scheduled for February 12, 2026, the next government will be well-placed to design and implement long-term reforms to steer the power sector towards sustainability, while ensuring that the country’s economic growth trajectory remains intact.

These reforms must include a rational power demand projection to avoid future overcapacity and associated capacity payments, greater reliance on grid power, reduced use of costly oil-fired power plants, increased renewable energy, and reduced transmission and distribution (T&D) losses.

It is worth recalling that Bangladesh’s power demand projection—relying on optimistic GDP growth rates—has created several challenges. The power sector faces a high reserve margin, resulting in capacity payments for idle plants and a greater annual subsidy burden.

In FY2024-25, the power system’s reserve margin hovered around 61.3 percent, based on the maximum peak demand of 17,000MW against an installed capacity of 27,414MW. While reserve margins typically rise with an increasing share of variable renewable energy (VRE), the country’s on-grid VRE share remains low. The power system’s reserve margin, excluding the VRE capacity of 762MW registered on June 30, 2025, stood at 56.8 percent in FY2024-25, substantiating its high surplus capacity. With power plants of a combined capacity of 6,756MW—excluding renewable energy—expected to come online before 2030, concerns remain about the persistently high reserve margin (installed capacity as of January 14, 2026 is 28,909MW; derated capacity is 28,484MW). Accordingly, the next government should project a more rational power demand and refrain from adding new fossil fuel-based capacity to prudently manage the reserve margin, thereby reducing obligations for exorbitant capacity payments for fossil-fuel

plants.

Enhancing electrification and modernising the grid

Industries in Bangladesh use gas for both boilers and captive power generation, avoiding significant dependence on grid power. It is a double whammy for the power sector: the surplus power capacity adds to capacity payments and BPDB’s revenue shortfall mounts.

On the other hand, with the deepening piped gas supply crisis, industries are turning to alternative fuels like compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). This increases their operational costs, raising



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

business concerns. As CNG stations also face gas supply shortages, CNG is unlikely to fix the problem. Similarly, the recent LPG supply shortage poses a serious challenge to industries.

The next government should consider a two-pronged strategy for electrification to address these concerns. It can encourage industries operating captive generators without waste heat recovery systems to shift to grid power. The cost of electricity produced in a captive power plant with 40 percent efficiency is about Tk 10.75 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), which is comparable to grid electricity tariffs (this cost is calculated based on a gas price of Tk 40 per cubic metre and operational expenses equal to five percent of fuel costs). Likewise,

the government can push industries with inefficient gas boilers to switch to electric boilers, thereby driving demand for grid power. The additional electricity sales to high-paying industrial consumers will partially relieve the fiscal burden on the power sector. Higher power demand will also help the government increase the share of on-grid renewable energy.

The success of this electrification will hinge on transforming the national power grid to meet evolving demand and provide reliable electricity, requiring investment to make the grid flexible and modern.

Reducing losses

Despite the current government’s efforts, rising costs continue to dent the power sector’s sustainability. BPDB’s FY2024-25 annual report shows that the power sector’s year-on-year (YoY) expenses swelled by 13.94 percent as opposed to a nine percent rise in sales revenue. The sector’s overall revenue shortfall soared to Tk 55,660 crore (\$4.55 billion), marking an 18.3 percent YoY increase.

The new government should take stock of these challenges and devise concrete strategies to operate economical plants, based on merit order dispatch, and limit T&D losses. In addition to raising the share of BPDB’s economic plants in total power generation, the government should aim to initially bring down the use of oil-fired plants to five percent, supported by renewable energy. With the integration of battery energy storage systems, it should try to limit the use of oil-fired plants. Likewise, the government should first contain T&D losses to the global average level (less than eight percent) and then strive to bring it further down to the average of the advanced economies (just over six percent).

Such interventions are financially compelling. For instance, reducing oil-fired power generation to five percent can help Bangladesh save Tk 8,990 crore (\$0.73 billion), slashing the subsidy of Tk 38,640 crore (\$3.2 billion) by 23.3 percent. This estimate is based on total power generation of 101,187

gigawatt-hours (GWh) in FY2024-25, an average oil-fired generation cost of around Tk 25/kWh (\$0.2/kWh) and a weighted average solar tariff of Tk 9.5/kWh (\$0.078/kWh) from recently approved projects totalling 918MW. In addition, a two percent reduction in T&D losses could save the country Tk 2,450 crore (\$0.2 billion), thus reducing the subsidy burden by 6.34 percent (average power generation cost of the grid: Tk 12.1/kWh [\$0.1/kWh]).

The next government needs to strategically reboot Bangladesh’s power sector to address its persistent vulnerability, which would help contain fiscal pressures. Its efforts must focus on long-term reforms rather than quick fixes to gradually improve the sector’s sustainability.

How AI can revolutionise healthcare in Global South



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BENZIR AHAMMED SHAWON

For decades, the global pharmaceutical industry has been impacted by a frustrating trend known as Eroom’s law. While computers become twice as powerful every two years, the cost of developing a new drug has doubled roughly every nine years. In the 1960s, \$1 billion yielded 10 new drugs. Today, that same amount cannot produce even one. This trajectory has led to a crisis in developing nations, rendering life-saving innovations financially inaccessible to billions of people. However, artificial intelligence is disrupting this pattern and revolutionising healthcare, specifically in the Global South.

What AI offers in transforming healthcare lies primarily in its ability to accelerate the process and reduce the cost of drug discovery. Currently, it takes an average of 10 years and over \$2 billion to bring a drug to market, with a failure rate higher than 90 percent. For a developing economy, these barriers are often insurmountable. AI changes this by streamlining the “pre-clinical stage,” the phase where researchers screen up to a million compounds to identify one or two

candidates, which typically accounts for approximately one-third of all development costs. By using models like AlphaFold 3, which can predict the structure of nearly every molecule in a living organism, researchers can reduce months of trial and error to mere hours of computation.

We are already seeing the results of this. Recently, one AI startup identified a new drug target and designed a molecule for human trials in just 18 months, costing \$2.7 million, which is a tiny fraction of the usual time and expense. For nations like Bangladesh, which boasts a robust domestic pharmaceutical sector, this represents a massive opportunity to move from generic manufacturing to genuine innovation. If AI can indeed double the productivity of research and development (R&D), the cost of medicine could eventually decrease, allowing overstretched budgets in Africa and Asia to cover a larger part of their populations.

Beyond traditional pills, AI is a pivotal moment for cancer vaccines. In 2025, the world witnessed breakthroughs in mRNA-based

personalised vaccines. These personalised treatments leverage AI to predict the most effective molecular markers for stimulating the immune system, which adapt to the unique tumour mutations of each patient. While the current manufacturing process is complex and costly, parallel efforts are underway to develop off-the-shelf vaccines that target common markers across wider populations. For developing nations, these off-the-shelf versions could be the key to managing a growing non-communicable disease burden without the need for the hyper-expensive infrastructure required by personalised medicine.

However, this AI-led future is not guaranteed; it faces a significant infrastructure bottleneck. AI is not a weightless tool; it requires AI factories, which are massive data centres with outstanding energy requirements. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that data centre power consumption is on track to double by the end of 2026. Consumption is reaching levels equivalent to the total electricity use of Japan. Many developing nations, already struggling with grid constraints and high public debt, may find it difficult to power the very technology intended to save them.

Furthermore, the Sino-American tech war poses a risk to global health equity. The backbone of the AI era is the high-powered semiconductor, like Nvidia’s Blackwell chip. Yet, the US is increasingly impeding the flow of Western technology to adversaries like China to maintain an upper

hand in AI tech. If these restrictions expand, developing nations might find themselves caught in the crossfire, unable to access the hardware needed to run the latest medical models.

Still, there is a silver lining. Emerging markets are expected to see faster growth in the coming years, even as the rich world faces a “lost decade” of sluggish productivity. Some nations are already innovating around constraints; Chinese engineers, for example, have become adept at doing more with less due to export controls. Similarly, India is positioning itself as a hub for “global capability centres,” taking over high-end legal and HR work for multinationals. There is no reason why similar centres could not be established for AI-driven diagnostic services or drug screening.

To truly benefit, governments in the developing world must move beyond being mere consumers of Western tech. They should prioritise selective openness, wooing high-achieving talent, and investing in the green energy infrastructure, such as grid-scale battery storage, needed to power tomorrow’s data centres.

The year 2026 is expected to be a crunch year, during which the disparity between AI hype and reality will be put to the test. If we can navigate the geopolitical and infrastructural limitations, AI could be the tool that allows the Global South to bypass the high-cost barriers of the last century’s medicine. It is time to ensure that the “AI factory” produces not just wealth for Silicon Valley, but health for the world.

After decades of failure, can we finally fix our education system?



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MANZOOR AHMED

Arguably, the most consequential failure of political leadership in independent Bangladesh has been in the field of education. The result is today's disarray across all sub-sectors of education, which holds the future of our nation hostage. The burning question is whether a newly elected government will recognise the seriousness of the situation and embark on a path of educational renewal.

Education has been a priority only rhetorically for elected and non-elected governments of Bangladesh since its birth. The major contenders in the upcoming parliamentary election—the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami—have included education in their election promises—a sundry list of targets yet to add up to a vision of a much-needed educational transformation. More critically, given the history of promises and plans unfulfilled, questions loom as to whether and how the targets will be realised.

At present, we do not have an education sector plan. What we have are partial sub-sector projects. An example is the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP), the fourth phase of which is ongoing. Though described as a sector-wide approach, it covers only government primary schools, leaving behind various non-state institutions and madrasas, which together serve, mostly very poorly, about 40 percent of the primary school-age children.

Of the primary school children, around 80 percent reportedly complete the level. However, an assessment has shown that more than half of them do not acquire a functional level of literacy and numeracy even after completing five years of primary education.

Nevertheless, there has been a compulsory primary education law since 1990, and the government also pledged to provide primary education to all for free.

On the other hand, the state has no plan for universal secondary education. At present, about two-thirds of appropriate-age children enrol in secondary schools of all types up to grade ten and roughly half of them complete the level. The numbers of enrolment and completion say nothing about students' actual learning, which is widely recognised as seriously deficient.

A rapid expansion of madrasa education—both Alia madrasa, supported by the government, and the Qawmi madrasa, which is outside the purview of state supervision—has happened since the 1980s. Driven by poor performance and higher costs, many children moved to both of these types of madrasas from mainstream schools during the Covid and post-Covid periods. However, the quality of teaching, learning environment and, critically, the relevance of what is taught in madrasas to prepare young people for life and work remain questionable.

There has been growth in the number of institutions and students in vocational and technical education, general higher education and professional education. In each of these subsectors, the major criterion for justifying the investment and judging the outcome is the employability of the graduates. However, there is no systematic approach to assessing these sub-sectors by this criterion, such as periodic tracer studies of graduate employment in respective fields.

Available evidence indicates that the majority of vocational-technical graduates

are not employed in their respective areas of training at an adequate salary, presumably because of the poor quality and low market-relevance of the training. The National University, the affiliating body for about 2,500 colleges enrolling three-quarters of general higher education students, produces graduates who face an uncertain future in the job market. At least a third of them wait for years before being hired, and many end

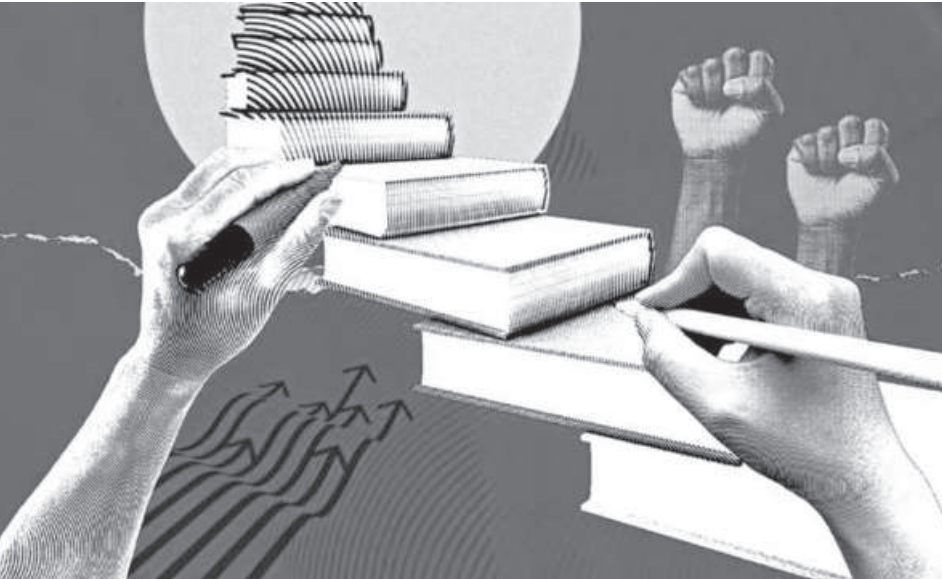
regimes from 1975 to 1990—such as the rapid growth of the two types of madrasas as a parallel education system and acceptance of the multiple streams of schooling with different objectives, learning content and learning experience.

The 2010 policy mentioned some key reform issues, such as the critical role of teachers in the education system and the need to enhance skills, capabilities,

stakeholders in the various sub-sectors of education has kept the two ministries dealing with the education sector preoccupied. Will there be a change now in the way education is prioritised, how educational decisions are made, and how these are followed through when a new government takes over?

The long-accumulated morass in education calls for bold steps, away from the trodden path. The policy discourse among education academics and activists suggests a few early actions capable of paving the way for transformative change required at least in school education, the foundation of the education system: (i) Bring all school education from pre-primary to pre-university under one ministry to facilitate a holistic approach to building an equitable and inclusive foundation of basic education of acceptable quality for all children. (ii) Prepare a time-bound plan to ensure that a primary and a secondary school of acceptable quality are within easy reach and affordable for every child. (iii) Examine education resources and financing to ensure that no child is deprived of schooling of acceptable quality because of poverty, at least up to the secondary level. (iv) Begin a pilot project to establish district education authorities for school education, leading to decentralised and responsive governance and management. (v) Rethink the management of teachers and the education workforce, including their professional preparation, remuneration, status and career path to attract “the best and the brightest” to the education profession.

A school education reform plan, as well as other education sub-sector reform plans, can be components of the overall education decade plan. Should we not have a decade-long plan guided and overseen by an education reform council comprising education experts respected for their integrity and judgment? The education reform council can be turned into a statutory and permanent education commission as envisaged by the NEP-2010. A new post-election government must be ready to respond to citizens' expectations regarding a new beginning for the country. A plan for the education sector must be more than rhetorical.



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

up in jobs not requiring a tertiary education qualification. About 30 percent of youth aged 18-25 are not in education, employment or training (NEET). They are in a socio-economic limbo and vulnerable to emotional distress, criminality and extremist behaviour.

The Education Policy 2010 (NEP-2010) adopted during Sheikh Hasina's regime is still in effect. It is replete with compromises and contradictions. For instance, the 2010 policy departed from the 1974 recommendation of Bangla as the medium at all levels of education. The policy accorded legitimacy to educational developments that emerged during the military and military-backed

incentives and status of teachers. It noted the perils of over-centralised education management. It recommended larger public investment to fulfil the state's obligation for children's education. The policy, however, did not indicate specific strategies that would redirect a trajectory of reform and acquiesced to the continuation of the existing pattern. In any case, there was no systematic effort and a mechanism was never set to follow up.

The legacy of rhetoric without action towards real change has continued during the tenure of the interim government. A firefighting mode dealing with myriad demands and complaints of many

US twin deficits, Trump's economic gambit, and the risk of global disorder



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MIZANUR RAHMAN

The United States has grappled with an unsustainable economic imbalance for over two decades, characterised by persistent twin deficits in its fiscal and current account balances. This has propelled its international indebtedness to unprecedented levels, with the net international investment position reaching approximately \$26 trillion by mid-2025. A more relevant metric is that the US public indebtedness exceeded \$38 trillion by the end of 2025. Compounding this vulnerability, President Donald Trump's second term, secured in the 2024 election, promised a radical overhaul: reversing de-industrialisation through reshoring manufacturing, attracting over \$20 trillion in foreign investment, and imposing reciprocal tariffs on nations like China with chronic trade surpluses against the US. However, these tariffs have backfired, unsettling financial markets and exacerbating economic volatility.

In a bold escalation, the Trump administration orchestrated a military invasion of Venezuela earlier this month, capturing President Nicolás Maduro and installing a compliant regime to exploit the country's vast natural resources. This action aligns with the National Security Strategy (NSS) released in November 2025, which explicitly asserts US dominance in the Western Hemisphere and signals measures against

Iran to safeguard Middle Eastern oil and gas supplies. These interventions risk igniting protracted military confrontations—“forever wars”—with unforeseen ramifications. Ultimately, Trump's envisioned international economic adjustment will falter, potentially precipitating the collapse of the dollar-centric global monetary order.

The roots of the US's economic predicament lie in its twin deficits, a phenomenon that has persisted since the early 2000s. The fiscal deficit, driven by government spending outpacing revenues, has ballooned due to factors like tax cuts, military expenditures, and pandemic-era stimulus. For instance, the federal deficit stood at \$1.8 trillion in FY2025, even as revenues grew by six percent. Projections indicate it could rise to \$2.6 trillion by 2034, representing over six percent of GDP. Paralleling this is the current account deficit, which measures the shortfall in trade and investment income with the rest of the world. Over the past two decades, this has averaged around three to five percent of GDP, fuelled by Americans' consumption exceeding domestic production and leading to reliance on foreign capital inflows.

These deficits are interconnected: fiscal profligacy stimulates demand for imports, widening the current account gap. The cumulative effect has been a surge in US

international indebtedness, which exposes the country to external shocks such as rising interest rates or shifts in investor confidence, which could trigger capital flight and economic instability.

Entering his second term, President Trump campaigned on a platform to rectify these imbalances through aggressive economic nationalism. He pledged to bring factories back from overseas, particularly from China, by leveraging incentives and penalties. Additionally, Trump promised to attract massive foreign investment—over \$20 trillion—to revitalise US industry. A cornerstone of this strategy was “reciprocal tariffs,” such as a proposed 60 percent tariff on Chinese goods and a 10-30 percent levy on others. These measures were framed as tools to level the playing field, protect domestic workers, and fund infrastructure without raising taxes. Trump's vision echoed mercantilist principles, prioritising trade surpluses and industrial self-sufficiency to restore US's economic primacy. In practice, however, implementation began with broad tariff hikes, including on European goods, under the guise of national security.

Despite these ambitions, the tariffs have backfired, destabilising US financial markets rather than fostering stability. Initial announcements triggered sharp stock market declines, with indices dropping significantly in the days following “Liberation Day”—Trump's term for the tariff rollout. The reasons are multifaceted: tariffs raised input costs for US manufacturers, squeezing profits and prompting retaliatory measures from trading partners. Studies indicate that such policies reduce GDP by about 0.5 percent and increase unemployment, while generating revenue that falls short of expectations—already declining in early 2026. Moreover, they heightened

uncertainty, deterring the very foreign investment Trump had sought. Instead of accelerating reshoring, the combination of tariffs, immigration restrictions, and spending cuts has complicated supply chains, making domestic production more expensive and less attractive. The US dollar weakened amid these disruptions, and even the Treasury market experienced volatility, eroding investor confidence. Far from correcting the twin deficits, these policies have amplified economic pressures, pushing the US towards greater isolation.

Escalating beyond economics, the Trump administration's foreign policy has veered into militarism, as exemplified by the invasion of Venezuela. Trump declared the US “in charge” of Venezuela until a transition, framing it as a law enforcement action rather than war, despite widespread criticism for lacking congressional authorisation. This move aims to secure cheap energy resources, reducing dependence on Middle Eastern oil and bolstering domestic industry. However, it risks entangling the US in prolonged occupation, with no clear endgame amid local resistance and international condemnation.

The NSS of November 2025 provides the doctrinal backbone for such actions, openly proclaiming US enforcement of hemispheric control and readiness to act against Iran to protect Middle Eastern energy flows. Emphasising “strength as the best deterrent,” it integrates economic vitality with military leverage, criticising allies and prioritising unilateralism. Tensions with Iran have intensified, with Trump previously warning of strikes on its nuclear programme and potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz, threatening global oil supplies. A full-scale confrontation could involve US assistance to Israel, escalating into a broader regional

war. These military adventures, while avoiding direct US boots on the ground where possible, contradict Trump's aversion to endless conflicts, potentially drawing the country into quagmires reminiscent of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The consequences of this trajectory are dire. Regime changes in Venezuela and potentially Iran will likely spawn “forever” wars, draining resources and further inflating the fiscal deficit. Insurgencies, proxy battles, and humanitarian crises could persist indefinitely, diverting funds from domestic priorities and accelerating indebtedness. Trump's international adjustment—rebalancing trade and investment—will not materialise amid retaliatory tariffs and geopolitical instability, perpetuating the twin deficits.

Most alarmingly, these strains threaten the US dollar's hegemony. As the world's reserve currency, the dollar underpins global finance, but mounting debt, policy unpredictability, and de-dollarisation efforts by adversaries like China and Russia could erode its dominance. Central banks are diversifying reserves, and US actions in Venezuela have heightened perceptions of American unreliability, risking a plunge in the dollar's value and a financial tsunami. If unchecked, this could dismantle the post-World War II monetary order, ushering in multipolar chaos.

The US's twin deficits and surging indebtedness set the stage for Trump's bold but flawed interventions. While tariffs and military actions promise quick fixes, they instead foster volatility and conflict. The risk of forever wars will thwart economic recovery, ensuring that the international adjustment remains elusive. As the dollar's foundation crumbles, the world may witness the end of an era, with profound implications for global stability and American prosperity.

CROSSWORD BY
THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Met offering
6 Striped grazer
11 Repaired
12 Distant
13 Had a banquet for
14 In itself
15 Otherwise
17 Ship's staff
18 Soup buys
20 Visitor to Oz
22 High trains
23 Famous racehorse
26 River through Nantes
28 Minotaur's home
29 Rat
31 Singer Henley
32 "Doggone!"
33 Pinnacle
34 Accord
36 Use a pestle
38 Steer clear of
40 Small porch
43 "— Doonee"
44 Caesar's land
45 Cut off
46 Pick from the menu

DOWN

1 Switch setting
2 Diner dessert
3 Power aid
4 Film units
5 Says further
6 Ray-gun sound
7 One with a ballot
8 Musician's mode mixture
9 Token of love
10 Three or four
16 Seventh letter
18 Animation frames
19 Heaps
21 In the past
23 Goody sandwich
24 Physics bit
25 Painter Magritte
27 Run-of-the-mill
30 Belief, in brief
33 Fall flower
34 Washed out
35 Stratford's river
37 Regarding
39 Pop
41 Vein contents
42 Hole number

10-13

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MONDAY'S ANSWERS

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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO

dsopinion@gmail.com.

Bangladeshi film ‘Saatao’ wins Best Int’l Feature in Nepal

Bangladeshi film ‘Saatao’, directed by Khandaker Sumon, has won the Best International Feature Film award at the 14th Nepal Africa International Film Festival (NAIFF), held in Kathmandu from January 16 to 19.

Among 43 films from 20 countries, other Bangladeshi winners included **Jhora Patar Chithi** (Best International Female Film) and **No Dice** (Special Mention, International Short Film).

Set in northern Bangladesh, **Saatao** depicts a poor rural community’s resilience through the story of a couple whose lives change after their cow dies, leaving behind a calf they raise like a child.





ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Veteran Bangladeshi film actor Ilias Javed, one of the most recognisable leading men of Dhallywood’s golden era and a revered dance director, passed away on January 21, 2026, at around 12:00pm at his residence in Uttara, Dhaka. He was 81. He had been battling cancer for a prolonged period. His death was confirmed to The Daily Star by Apurba Rana, joint secretary general of the Bangladesh Film Directors’ Association.

Javed occupied a singular place in the history of Bangladeshi cinema. Debuting as a hero with the 1964 Urdu-language film *Nai Zindagi*, he rose to wide popularity after *Payel* (1966), opposite Shabana. Over a career spanning nearly three decades, he acted in close to 200 films, remaining a bankable star through the 1990s and leaving an imprint defined by screen presence, discipline and range.

Among his notable films are **Maleka Banu, Nishan, Papi Shatru, Rokto Shopoth, Sahib Bibi Golam, Kajol Rekha, Onk Din Agey, Ajjo Bhulini, Kothor, Ma Baba Shontan, Rakhal Raja, Rosher Baidani, Jibon Shongi, and Abdullah**. His portrayal of Kalu in *Nishan* remains one of his most enduring performances.

Beyond acting, Javed was a renowned dance director, trained under legendary subcontinental maestro Birju Maharaj; a lineage that earned him the affectionate honorific “Ustad” among peers. His choreography shaped several iconic songs, including *Malka*

Banur Deshere, Moner Ei Chotto Ghore Agun Legechhe Hayre, and Chakbhom Chakbhom Chandni Rate.

The legendary actor settled in Bangladesh in the early 1960s and remained here throughout his life. His connection with the country extended beyond cinema and was reflected in a rare, community-driven recognition in Old Dhaka’s Siddiqbazar, where a neighbourhood came to be known as “Javed Mohalla” through popular usage. The name reflected the affection and respect he earned among local residents with whom



Industry veterans at the janaza of Ilias Javed

PHOTO: STAR

he shared longstanding personal ties. In a 2020 interview with The Daily Star, he said he visited the area whenever his health allowed. In later years, he lived in Sector 14 of Uttara.

Born in 1944 in Peshawar, Javed’s family later moved to Punjab. In 1963, he relocated to what was then East Pakistan, choosing to build his life and career in Bangladesh. Though Pakistani by birth, he remained steadfastly rooted here—speaking Bangla with ease and conviction, and identifying

Bangladesh as his home.

Actor Sohel Rana, a lifelong friend and contemporary, remembered him as both an artiste and a companion. “Most of my contemporaries are no longer alive... After losing Javed, I feel terribly lonely,” he told The Daily Star, adding that Javed’s work as a dance director brought “something exceptional” to films and would keep him alive for generations. Rana also noted Javed’s deep love for Bangladesh and the Bangla language, recalling that he rarely spoke Urdu.

Javed is survived by his wife, Dolly Chowdhury.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Café de Volte

‘Café de Volte’

Hunt Inc’s *Café de Volte* plunges into the dark heart of Jinjira, where gifted Bengali Christian chef Max D’Rosario turns a restaurant opening into a tense moral crucible. The play fuses sharp storytelling with a riveting ensemble performance under Diana Merline’s direction.

DATE: FRIDAY | JANUARY 23, 2026

TIME: 5:00PM AND 7:00PM ONWARDS

VENUE: STUDIO THEATER HALL, BSA

Jatra festival finale returns to Shilpakala

The month-long jatra festival is ending in Dhaka from January 21 to 23 at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, after a short pause for a state mourning period.

Organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and run by Shilpakala Academy, the festival began on December 1 as part of the Victory Month programme.

The finale opened yesterday, January 21, at 6:30pm at the Experimental Theatre Hall. Urmi Opera of Magura staged *Premar Somadhi Tire*, written by Nirmal Mukhopadhyay and directed by Shamim Khandakar. On Thursday, January 22, Tisha Opera of Dinaipur will present *Daini Bodhu*.

The festival will close on Friday, January 23, with a ceremony attended by Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, followed by **General Osmani**.

A city procession of artistes will begin at 2:00pm. In total, 37 productions were staged.



NEWS

Political use of police must end

FROM PAGE 12

transparent recruitment, and establishing an independent police commission to oversee appointments, promotions, training, and benefits.

For years, political influence has plagued policing in Bangladesh, with almost all parties accused of using law enforcement for partisan ends.

During the 15-year Awami League rule, police were often described as acting like a “party force.” Law enforcement agencies were involved in enforced disappearances and so-called gunfights, according to a government commission and some rights groups. The 2024 mass uprising saw a brutal crackdown by law enforcement, with nearly 1,400 people killed, according to UN estimates.

The law-and-order situation remained unsatisfactory during the interim government’s one-and-a-half-year tenure, with frequent incidents of murder, robbery, kidnapping, abduction, and rising public safety concerns.

Mob violence remains a major concern.

In 2025, at least 197 people were killed in mob attacks, up from 128 in 2024, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. During the interim government’s tenure, the total reached 293 deaths.

Corruption within law enforcement agencies is also a longstanding issue; a Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics survey in June 2025 found that 61.94 percent of respondents reported bribery and corruption, making police the second most corrupt public service in 2024.

The interim government pledged

police reform and issued a gazette in December 2025 to establish a police commission. Experts, however, criticised the ordinance as flawed, undermining the goal of an independent body.

Amid this situation, the major political parties are going to unveil their election pledges soon.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, “If the influence of political parties over the police cannot be controlled, it will not be possible to establish a people-centric force. This cannot be achieved by just writing it on paper; there must be clear plans on how to implement it.”

He described the police commission ordinance as “completely unsuitable” and urged the next elected government to form an independent, neutral, and effective commission. Its main role, he said, should be to probe complaints against police personnel independently and impartially, both from the public and within the force.

He emphasised two key points — keeping police free from political influence and ensuring professionalism through stronger institutional capacity.

Odhikar Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan said the public’s high expectations stem from serious rights violations over the past 15 years. “Political parties must clearly promise to stop using law enforcement agencies for political purposes. This is the first and most important commitment,” he said.

He added that the next government must also prevent enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses, ensuring prompt investigations and accountability.

Addressing existing law-and-order problems is also crucial to ensure public safety and a peaceful environment, he said.

Rights activist Nur Khan stressed that political parties must refrain from interfering in police work, recruitment, promotions, training, or operations. “In the past, police were often used for political interests and treated like a party force,” he said.

Former IGP Ashraful Huda highlighted the need to increase police manpower, noting that the police-population ratio is among the lowest worldwide.

“The idea of an independent police commission has been discussed but remains unresolved,” he said, adding that such a commission could oversee recruitment, training, promotions, and benefits.

Huda also called for better logistical support, stronger training, and improved pay and housing conditions to boost morale. “Many officers live away from their families for long periods, which affects their performances,” he said.

While not excusing wrongdoing, he added, police officers struggle to support their families with current salaries. “If they have a minimum standard of living, corruption might decrease.”

US ‘won’t use force’

FROM PAGE 12

to use force. I won’t use force.”

Trump made the comments in a closely watched economic speech that has been overshadowed by fraying transatlantic ties and tensions with Europe over his push to acquire Greenland.

He downplayed the issue as a “small ask” over a “piece of ice” and that an acquisition would be no threat to the Nato alliance that includes Denmark and the United States.

“The fact is, no nation or group of nations is in any position to be able to secure Greenland other than the United States. We’re a great power, much greater than people even understand,” Trump said, adding: “I’m seeking immediate negotiations to once again to discuss the acquisition of Greenland by the United States.”

ICT-2 orders to provide Azad documents

FROM PAGE 12

Tribunal (ICT) yesterday after more than a decade as a fugitive.

The three-member ICT-2, led by Justice Md Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, ordered that Azad shall be “at liberty to remain as he is” until the appellate forum passes an appropriate order.

It also directed the authorities to provide him with certified copies of all case documents to enable him to file an appeal against his death sentence.

After the hearing, Azad left the tribunal premises in a car.

Azad was convicted in absentia in a case filed in 2012. The tribunal found him guilty of abduction, torture, rape, and mass killings of unarmed civilians, particularly members of the Hindu community, during the Liberation War, as well as of collaborating with the Pakistan occupation forces and local auxiliary forces.

Before proceedings resumed in a separate case linked to the July uprising against former minister Hasanul Haq Inu, Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim sought permission to place Azad’s petition before the tribunal. The chairman said the matter would be

taken up later.

When the hearing began around 3:30pm, Azad appeared before the tribunal and sat in the dock.

His lawyer, Md Mosiul Alam, said the home ministry had suspended Azad’s death sentence for one year in October last year, prompting the tribunal chairman to question whether the government had the authority to issue such an order.

The defence cited section 401(f) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), but the tribunal noted that the CrPC does not apply to proceedings under the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973, as per section 23 of the act.

Prosecutor Tamim said the government may not be bound to execute a tribunal order.

The tribunal then stated categorically that the government does not have the authority to suspend a sentence passed by the tribunal, noting that such powers rest with the president and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Seeking clarity, the tribunal chairman asked what relief the defence was seeking.

The defence replied that by surrendering, Azad only wanted certified copies of the case documents so that he could move the Appellate Division against the 2013 verdict.

At one stage, the defence counsel said the government had already issued the suspension order and asked whether the tribunal could simply disregard it. The chairman observed, “We are not bound to carry out the government order.”

Later, the defence said, “Where will I go? Please return my documents and I will go to the Appellate Division.”

The tribunal then ordered that certified copies of the necessary papers be supplied to Azad. Initially, it said the convicted petitioner would remain in custody until filing the appeal and advised the defence to approach the Appellate Division expeditiously.

Both the defence and Prosecutor Tamim later informed the tribunal that the home ministry’s order had been issued following a presidential directive, backed by a gazette notification.

The defence also said Azad is around 80 years old and requires assistance from two people to move.

330 journos behind bars

FROM PAGE 12

then Israel, which detained 29 Palestinian journalists, the press freedom watchdog said in its annual report.

Next was Russia with 27 prisoners, of which five were Ukrainian, then Belarus with 25 and Azerbaijan with 24, the CPJ said.

In 2025, Asia remained the region with the highest number of imprisoned journalists at 110. Beyond China and Myanmar, Vietnam held at least 16, Bangladesh four, India three, and the Philippines one.

It is the third highest total recorded by the CPJ since its census began in 1992 and just short of the record 384 journalists in prison for their work at the end of 2024.

“These record-setting numbers reflect growing authoritarianism and

escalating numbers of armed conflicts worldwide,” the CPJ said in its report.

The New York-based NGO said that almost half of the imprisoned journalists had not been convicted of a crime. Of those who had been, more than a third were serving prison sentences of over five years.

Nearly a third of the detained journalists had experienced “mistreatment,” the CPJ said, including 20 percent with claims of torture or beatings. Since 1992, Iran has had the greatest incidence of torture and beatings, followed by Israel and Egypt.

The United States detained Salvadoran journalist Mario Guevara in June after he covered a protest against President Donald Trump, but he was deported over his immigration status before the December 1 CPJ census was taken.

Reinstate UAP teachers immediately

He also criticised university administrations for lacking a “backbone” and accused them of compromising with those “engaging in bullying and terrorist activities” to protect their positions.

Warning that such an environment undermines the purpose of education, he said, “If there is no space for critical thinking or questioning in history, sociology, or philosophy, then the purpose of education ceases to exist. If we must only follow a scripted narrative, there remains no difference between a human and a robot.”

According to the teachers’ network, the UAP administration pressured Bashir to resign over a Facebook post without verifying the complaints against her. An inquiry committee was formed only after she filed a General Diary with Tejgaon Police Station, citing concerns for her safety.

Speakers criticised the inquiry process, noting that the committee sought complaints through a Google Form and received around 34 anonymous submissions, making verification impossible. They also said Bashir was given until January 22 to respond but was terminated before the deadline.

Regarding Dr Mohsin, the network said he was dismissed without any investigation, reportedly after being labelled a supporter of the previous regime, despite his active role in standing with students during the July

uprising.

The speakers suggested the terminations were influenced by internal politics, noting that Bashir had recently convened a sexual harassment complaint committee involving influential officials and that Mohsin had supported her stance.

Prominent academics, including Prof Samina Luthfa, Prof Mirza Taslima Sultana, and Prof Kajalie Shehreen Islam, were present at the press conference.

The UAP, which announced an indefinite closure on Monday, remained shut amid ongoing student protests over a controversial Facebook post, the subsequent termination of two faculty members on Sunday, and demands for the vice-chancellor’s removal.

In a notice issued yesterday, the university announced the academic activities are likely to begin from January 25.


NARIPOKKHO CONDEMNS ‘MOB TERROR’

In a separate statement, Naripokkho strongly condemned Bashir’s dismissal, describing allegations of “hurting religious sentiments” as a tool of harassment.

Asserting a teacher’s right to present objective historical data and express personal opinions, the organisation said dismissing a teacher without verifying complaints or allowing the right to self-defence constitutes a clear violation of the law.

Ensure justice

Meanwhile, independent candidate Shaju said his long-standing ties to the area give him an edge. "I am a son of this neighbourhood. My family's legacy and my 17 years of involvement

| <div> <div>PRAYER TIMING</div> <div>JANUARY 22</div> <div>  </div> </div> | | | | | |
|--|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | 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 | | | | | |

Symbol

Form law to make

Hefazat chief

“Another Tk 1 crore will

ICC rejects BCB's relocation request

Prof Rumana Huque, executive director of ARK Foundation, emphasised the need for a clear operational model for PHC in both rural and urban areas. Prof Liaquat Ali, Prof Syed Abdul Hamid of Dhaka University, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, and former health secretary Ashadul Islam also spoke at the programme.

Sources said the money has been allocated to buy a flat at the government officers' residential building, Doel Tower, in Lalmatia, Dhaka.

| ক্র. নং | পদের নাম, বেতন স্কেল গ্রেড (জা: বে: স্কেল/২০১৫ অনুযায়ী) | পদের সংখ্যা | আবেদনের প্রয়োজনীয় যোগ্যতা |
|---------|---|-------------|---|
| ১। | বৈজ্ঞানিক কর্মকর্তা; ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/- (গ্রেড- ৯) (অস্থায়ী পদ) | ৬ | (ক) কোনো বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে জীবপ্রযুক্তি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর (থিসিসসহ) ডিগ্রি; (খ) মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট (এসএসসি) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষা হইতে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি পর্যন্ত অনূন ৩ (তিন)টি ১ম বিভাগ, শ্রেণী বা সমমানের Cumulative Grade Point Average (সিজিপিএ): তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, কোন পরীক্ষায় ৩য় বিভাগ, শ্রেণী বা সমমানের Cumulative Grade Point Average (সিজিপিএ) গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে না। |

(ক) প্রাধিকার <http://nib.teletalk.com.bd> এই ওয়েব সাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করবেন।

- (ঘ) প্রার্থী Online-এ দাখিলকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্টকপি পরবর্তী কার্যক্রমের জন্য সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিতে হবে।

৩) SMS প্রদানের নিমিত্ত বাণী ও আবেদনকার ফি প্রদান: Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে বাংলাদেশ মোবাইলকোমোনিটি কর্পোরেশন (BCTC) এর ওয়েবসাইটে www.bctc.gov.bd এ গিয়ে আবেদনপত্রটি Submit করে ফি হলে কমিশনটিকে খবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করলে প্রার্থী User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's copy পাাবে। উক্ত Applicant's copy প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's copy'তে প্রাপ্ত User ID ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে Teletalk Pre-paid Mobile নম্বর হতে ২ (দুই)টি SMS করবেন।
আবেদনকারি ব্যবহার ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বার্ষিক ২০ (দুইশ) টাকা হতে মোট ২২০ (দুইশত তেইশ) টাকা অর্থের প্রদান।
(বাংলাদেশ) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিন। Online-এ সমলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করে হলেও আবেদন ফি জমা না দিলে আবেদনপত্র গ্রহীত হবে না।

প্রথম SMS: NIB<Space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: NIB ABCDEF
Reply Applicant's Name, TK. 223 will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To Pay fee Type
NIB<Space>Yes<Space> PIN and send to 16222

বিত্তীয় SMS: NIB <Space>Yes<Space>PIN লিখে send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: NIB Yes 12345678
Reply: Congratulations Applicant's Name, Payment completed successfully for -----.
Application for (post name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (xxxxxxx).

- (জ) শুধুমাত্র টোলটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রাথমিক নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ User ID এবং PIN পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।

- (i) **User ID** জ্ঞান থাকলে **NIB<Space>Help<Space>User<Space>User ID** and Send to 16222.
Example: NIB Help USER ABCDEF
- (ii) **PIN Number** জ্ঞান থাকলে **NIB<Space>Help<Space>PIN<Space>PIN Number** and Send to 16222
Example: NIB Help PIN 12345678

(ক) অলাইনে আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে টেলিটক মোবাইল নম্বর থেকে ১২১ নম্বর অথবা vas.query@teletalk.com.bd বা nibnampower2015@gmail.com ই-মেইল যোগাযোগ করা যাবে। (Mail এর subject-এ Organization Name: NIB, Post Name: ****, Applicant's User ID ও Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।)

এ) বিজ্ঞপ্তি নৈমিক পত্রিকা ছাড়াও ন্যাশনাল ইনস্টিটিউট অব ব্যারোকেটনোলজির ওয়েবসাইটে (<http://nib.gov.bd>) এবং <http://nib.teletalk.com.bd> অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল (<https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd>) ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।

৪। কেবলমাত্র লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ প্রদান করা হবে।

৫। লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল সনদের মূলকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্রের ১ (এক)

সেট দাখিল করতে হবে: ক) আবেদনপত্র (Applicant's Copy); খ) প্রবেশপত্র; গ) ৩ (তিন) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সদ্য

তোলা সত্যায়িত রঙিন ছবি; ঘ) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি ও প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে খিসিস এর কপি; ঙ) সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তিপত্র (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে); চ) সংশ্লিষ্ট স্থানীয় সরকার প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে প্রাপ্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র; ছ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম নিবন্ধন সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি; জ) গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক নামমুক্ত সিল দ্বারা প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক

সনদপত্র; বা) ক্ষুদ্র মুক্তিগোষ্ঠী, শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের কোটায় আবেদনকারীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি;
 ঙ) আবেদনকারী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শহিদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রাজ্জার সন্মান হলে প্রমাণক হিসেবে আবেদনকারীকে (সংশ্লিষ্ট মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহিদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রাজ্জার গেজেট/ভারতীয় তালিকা/গাল মুক্তিবার্তা নম্বর/সাময়িক সনদের নম্বর ও তারিখ/বামুস সনদের নম্বর ও তারিখ উল্লেখপূর্বক) সংশ্লিষ্ট উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষের প্রদত্ত প্রমাণক উপস্থাপন করতে হবে;

৬। কোন তথ্য গোপন করে বা ভুল তথ্য প্রদান করে চাকরিতে নিয়োগ প্রাপ্ত হলে এবং পরবর্তী সময় তা প্রমাণিত হলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর নিয়োগাদেশ বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

৭। কোটা সম্পর্কিত প্রচলিত সরকারী নীতিমালা এবং নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য সরকারী বিধি-বিধান যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে। প্রয়োজনীয় ক্ষেত্রে জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক জারিকৃত বিধি বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে।

৮। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার জন্য প্রার্থীদের কোন টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।

৯। আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ, বাতিল, নিয়োগ এবং বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত পদ সংখ্যা হ্রাস বৃদ্ধিসহ সকল ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

১১। এই বিজ্ঞাপ্তি বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি মন্ত্রণালয়ের ১৭ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৫ তারিখের ৩৯.০০.০০০০.০২৫.১১.০০১.১৯.১৪৮ নং স্মারক মূলে প্রাপ্ত ছাড়পত্রের আলোকে প্রদান করা হলো।

GD-160

On January 4, the BCCI wrote a letter to the ICC saying that it would not be sending the national team to India for the T20 World Cup due to security reasons.

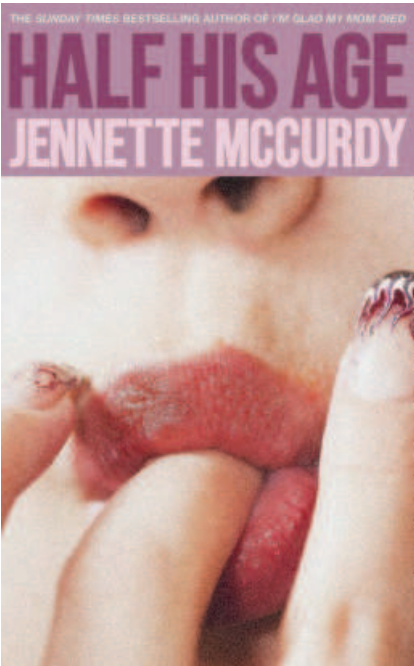
Since then, BCB and ICC have had several communications, where the world cricket's governing body tried to persuade the BCB to change its stance, but the board held firm on its position.

THE SHELF

7 new books to look out for in 2026

We truly believe that one of the highlights of starting a new year is the anticipation of newer titles slated for publication—freshly made out of the press and ready to grace our already-waiting shelves. With a plethora of options mushrooming on the internet, here are seven books to put on your radar in 2026.

NUR-E-JANNAT ALIF

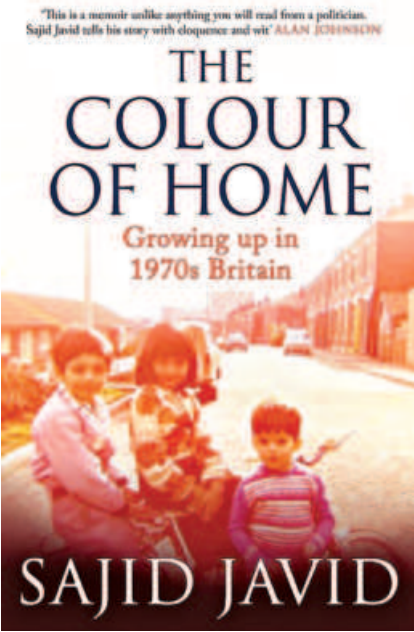


Half His Age
Jennette McCurdy
Ballantine Books, 2026

First on our list, we have the fiction debut of Jennette McCurdy, author of the widely fascinating and heartbreakingly hilarious memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* (Simon & Schuster, 2022). A 17-year-old is the protagonist of this story, a girl with too much hunger and not enough steadiness, who walks into a creative writing classroom and latches onto the one adult who seems to notice her. Waldo wants Mr. Korgy, her teacher, with a fixation that's messy and urgent, less 'romance' than a desperate attempt to be seen and chosen. McCurdy frames that desire as both thrilling and frightening, tracing how power can hide inside attention, how loneliness can make risk feel like relief. What makes the premise hit harder is how it keeps widening the lens: class and consumerism, the internet's ability to amplify longing, and the strange ways a young person can confuse intensity for safety. It is haunting and funny, deeply morbid and full of longing, a coming-of-age story told like a warning and a confession at the same time.

The Colour of Home: Growing up in 1970s Britain
Sajid Javid
Abacus, 2026

A five-year-old Sajid Javid walks to primary school through a Rochdale underpass, where a racist taunt, "Run, Paki, Run", bounces off the walls and teaches him, early, what it means to be seen as an outsider in 1970s Britain. His family has arrived from Punjab in the wake of Partition, holding on to Indo-Pakistani traditions that offer comfort at home, but often bring rejection outside it. In this memoir, Javid recounts a childhood marked by poverty, racism, and the tension of trying to navigate two cultures simultaneously. Those pressures spill into trouble at school, run-ins with police, and later a rupture at home, when he risks estrangement by defying



an arranged marriage in favour of the woman he loves. Told with honesty, heart, and humour, *The Colour of Home* is both a tribute to the family who carried him and an invitation to every outsider to keep going.

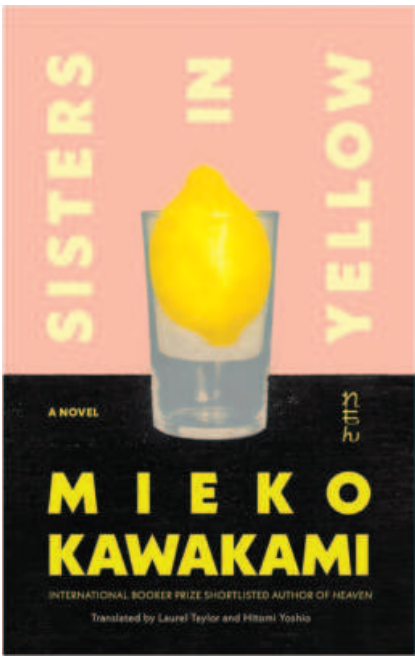
Tomar, Shongkho
Prodipto De Chowdhury
Lekhachitro Prokashoni, 2026



Tomar, Shongkho was written in just four days, but it does not read as something rushed; it reads like a personal diary, crafted at times of covetous yearning. For those four days, Shongkho, the protagonist of the novel, stayed inside the narrator's mind—his pain, sorrow, love, and childhood replaying like scenes that the author just could not look away from. The book unfolds as a monologic epistolary, intimate and unguarded, moving letter by letter toward an ending that feels inevitable. It is, first, written for Shongkho, with love, and then handed gently to the reader, as if saying, this is for you too.

Sisters in Yellow
Meiko Kawakami, Laurel Taylor

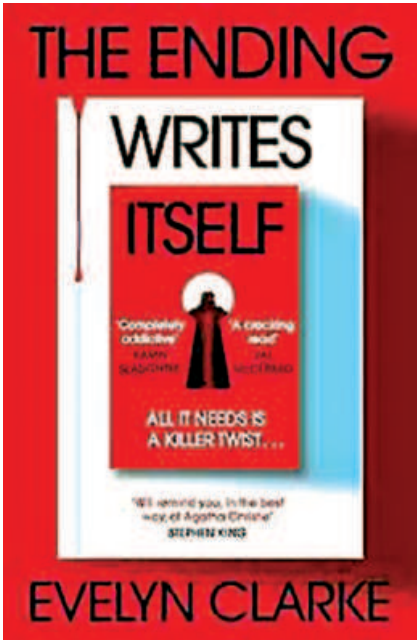
(Translator),
Hitomi Yoshio (Translator)
Knopf, 2026



Set in a 1990s Tokyo splitting fast into haves and have-nots, *Sisters in Yellow* moves with the swagger of noir and the urgency of a thriller. Hana, growing up without a father and exhausted by the pity she attracts at school, is drawn to Kimiko, an older woman who feels strangely young, talking easily about boys and possibilities, offering Hana a different kind of 'mother' and a glimpse of a better life. Soon, fate gathers two more young women into their orbit, each bruised but unbroken. The four decide to remake their lives the only way they can—together. They open a bar called Lemon and fight to keep it afloat, navigating predatory lenders, organised criminals, and the plain bad luck that seems to follow people with no safety net. What begins as a business soon becomes a pact, taking care of Lemon means taking care of one another. Narrated by Hana in Kawakami's vivid, poetic voice, the novel is packed with reversals and sharp portraits of Tokyo nightlife, from bar owners and ageing hostesses to street touts coaxing strangers indoors.

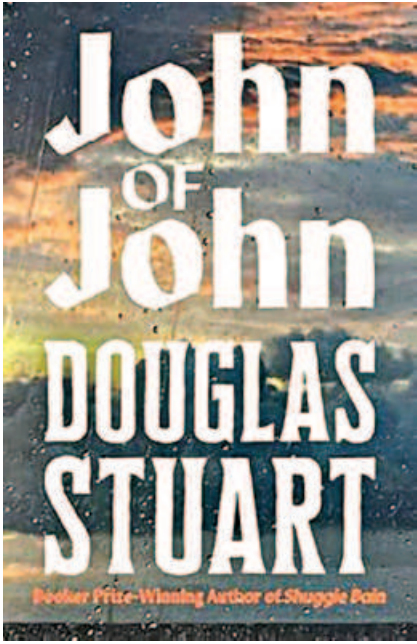
The Ending Writes Itself
Evelyn Clarke
Harper, 2026

Evelyn Clarke is actually two authors. No, seriously, they are—Victoria E Schwab and Cat Clarke, two lifelong friends joining forces to present the world with a cutting-edge mystery thriller. Six struggling authors accept what sounds like a dream weekend on a private Scottish island, invited by Arthur Fletcher, a reclusive literary superstar famous for his twisted plots and iconic characters. When they arrive, the dream curdles fast: Fletcher is dead, and his final manuscript is unfinished. His agent and editor, desperate to publish the book, turn grief into a deadline. The writers are given 72 hours to produce a worthy ending, and the prize is a huge payout for ghost-writing the last chapter, plus a promised career resurrection for the winner, complete



with future bestsellers. Suddenly, with the clock ticking, the island becomes a pressure cooker of ego, ambition, and suspicion. Starting is hard. Finishing may be dangerous. *The Ending Writes Itself* is a locked-room thriller with a sharp publishing world hook, and if you happen to love books about books, April 7, 2026, might be the time to hop on it.

John of John
Douglas Stuart
Grove Press, 2026



Another promising creation from the Booker Prize-winning author Douglas Stuart, *John of John* is about John-Calum Macleod, who comes back to the Isle of Harris with an art school education and not much else. Out of money, short on prospects, he takes the ferry home and steps into a life that feels unchanged in every way that matters, except that he no longer fits inside it. There, Cal finds himself pulled between two forces that have always shaped him. There is his father, John, a sheep farmer and tweed weaver, steady in his work and firm in his faith, a pillar of the local Presbyterian church who looks at his son's long hair and sees a soul drifting

from salvation. And there is Cal's grandmother Ella, a profanity-loving Glaswegian with a soft spot for him and a sharp tongue for everyone else, who has spent decades keeping an uneasy peace inside a fraying household. As the seasons move from lambing to shearing, the island's tight community begins to feel less like a shelter and more like a net, the kind that holds you, and tightens. Cal wonders what kind of life is possible for him here, what kind of love, what kind of truth.

The Sleeping Sisters
Jennifer Givhan
Mulholland Books, 2026



Fortuna Miércoles moves her family across the Rio Grande to a better neighbourhood, hoping distance can outrun a curse that has stalked her bloodline since her great-great-grandmother crossed the desert with a cactus thorn splitting her throat. But a family's violent legacy does not stay buried for long. Twenty years earlier, girls and women vanished into the Albuquerque night, their bones later found on the mesa. The killer, the so-called Reaper, was never caught. Now, beneath the dormant volcanoes called the Sleeping Sisters, the killings have begun again. Detective Jeanette Palacio, haunted by the murders of her own cousins, is pulled back in when a new body turns up in Fortuna's backyard. As mother and detective collide, the novel tightens into an investigation that feels both earthly and ancient: are the Sleeping Sisters awakening, or has someone in Fortuna's family set the trap? Inspired by true events and shot through with a Chicana Indigenous reimagining of the headless woman legend, *The Sleeping Sisters* is a fierce literary horror novel about motherhood and the monstrous bargains we make to protect the ones we love.

Nur-E-Jannat Alif is a gender studies major and part-time writer, who dreams of authoring a book someday. Find her at @literatureinsolitude on Instagram or send her your book/movie/television recommendations at nurejannatalif@gmail.com.

EDITORIAL

Why read?



ILLUSTRATION: MAHUDA ENDAD

There is a curious bite to the air now. Notwithstanding the terrifying levels of AQI that threaten to permanently damage our lungs, heart, and brain, the air feels promising—of new beginnings, of renewed potential, of reevaluating the old and embracing the new. It is not only the first month of a new calendar year that makes one want to rethink the past, it is also the way the January sun hits one just right, the way the dustgreen leaves sway as one wraps the shawl around them a little tight, the way one cracks the spine of a new book open, curling up with a piping hot cup of dudh cha.

Elsewhere, the world remains as terrifying and frustrating as ever. Battles long fought before—for equality, for access to public space, for participation in politics, for living a dignified, human life—are being waged again. As the world increasingly turns inwards, where borders tighten and laws preventing movement become stricter, we turn, as we must, to books. To fiction's ability to transcend borders. To poetry's ability to see through the pain of others. To the world of make believe and storytelling, of kinder voices and

softer ideas, with the hope that we will recall, and indeed, reembrace the very essentiality of our human existence.

When I think about reading, and I do think about reading quite a lot as this is what I do at work and at leisure, I think about reading's ability to affect and its ability to enact change. Against the harsh

Exactly a year ago, after having read a poem titled "Egg Drop Soup" on our Literature page, a regular reader reached out to share that she simply had to make herself the same soup that day.

realities of the world we must inhabit, reading has allowed me to hold a sort of tenderness that has often cushioned the brutal blows the world throws at us. When I read through submissions—creative submissions as well as student work—I cannot help but marvel at the sheer privilege of bearing witness to someone else's voice

and vulnerability, courage and conviction, all expressed through written words.

I recently read a submission where Joseph Stalin's reading habits were discussed. The point was that being a great reader did little to deter him from his dictatorial proclivities. Is it a rather sobering counterpoint to the case in hand here? Perhaps. Here at Star Books and Literature though, nothing is going to stop us from hoping that you will pick up our pages on Thursdays and Saturdays. That maybe you will find a poignant piece here, a remarkable one there, and maybe, just maybe, pick up your own pen and write a line or four.

Exactly a year ago, after having read a poem titled "Egg Drop Soup" on our Literature page, a regular reader reached out to share that she simply had to make herself the same soup that day.

I hope our pages help you find your soup.

Dr Nazia Manzoor teaches English at North South University. She is also Editor, Star Books and Literature. Reach her at nazia.manzoor@gmail.com.

What to
WATCH

STAR SPORTS
SELECT HD2
ICC U19 World Cup
Zimbabwe vs
Pakistan
Live from 1:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
Australian Open
Second round
Live from 6:30 am
Europa League
Live from 11:45 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
Sri Lanka vs
England
1st ODI
Live from
3:00 pm



Arsenal perfect, City upset

AGENCIES

Manchester City suffered a major shock, losing 3-1 to Bodo/Glimt in freezing Norway. PSG also slipped on Tuesday, losing 2-1 to Sporting Lisbon despite a late equaliser. Arsenal stayed perfect, defeating Sassuolo, with Gabriel Jesus scoring twice, while Real Madrid rose to second after beating Levante 6-1, thanks to Kylian Mbappe's double and Vinicius Junior's goal. Tottenham beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0, Copenhagen drew 1-1 with Napoli, Olympiacos defeated Bayer Leverkusen 2-0, Ajax beat Villarreal 2-1, and Club Brugge thrashed Kairat Almaty 4-1.



Rajshahi Warriors all-rounder Jimmy Neesham celebrates after running out in-form Sylhet Titans opener Parvez Emon during the second qualifier of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The run-out midway through the 10th over proved to be the turning point of the match, swinging the momentum firmly in Rajshahi's favour. Emon, who was batting fluently, was dismissed for a 34-ball 48, taking the momentum out of Sylhet's run chase and handing Rajshahi a 12-run victory and a place in the BPL final.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

From chaos to the final

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Chattogram Royals will play the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) final in Mirpur tomorrow, capping a campaign shaped by upheaval both on and off the field.

From last-minute ownership changes to instability, Chattogram's route to becoming the first team this season to qualify for the final was far from smooth.

The turmoil began just a day before the tournament when the franchise's original owners withdrew due to financial complications, prompting the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to take over. Habibul Bashar was appointed team director as part of swift changes that also saw Mizanur Rahman Babul named head coach

and Nafees Iqbal become team manager.

Players were uncertain about payments, local cricketers had lost confidence, the coaching structure kept changing, and overseas signings were initially hard to secure.

"We wanted to ensure our players didn't have to worry about their basic payments," Bashar said.

Stability soon translated into results. Chattogram finished second in the league stage with six wins

from 10 matches before defeating table-toppers Rajshahi Warriors in Qualifier 1 to seal a spot in the final.

They also had to cope with losing their most in-form batter, Adam Rossington, midway due to a finger injury. But the team responded through collective performances.

Now one win away from their maiden BPL title, Chattogram will hope a campaign that began in chaos ends in historic triumph.

**Read full story on The Daily Star website



Mirpur cricket 'completely different'

Despite being a highly productive cricketer, England wicketkeeper-batter Sam Billings could not enjoy a prolonged international career, largely due to the presence of two superstars -- Jonny Bairstow and Jos Buttler -- competing for the same role. Rather than chasing an uncertain place in England's playing eleven, Billings chose a different path, building a career across franchise leagues around the world. Now 34, he is representing Sylhet Titans in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20.

"Anytime you play in the subcontinent, the passion for the game is phenomenal," Billings told The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan in an interview.

"The support and love we get in Bangladesh is amazing -- you feel it as soon as you get off the plane and again at the stadium. I was saying to Moeen [Ali] and Woakesy [Chris Woakes] last night that when you come here, you realise how tough the conditions are.

"Yesterday's [Tuesday's] wicket was very difficult to bat on, and it's a completely different style of cricket compared to anywhere else.

"Even at 34, I'm still developing and learning, and I'm very grateful for the experience."

**Read full interview on The Daily Star website



Coach-cum-archer outshines regulars

On the opening day of the Teer 16th National Archery Championship yesterday, Aishwarzo Rahman equalled the national qualification record in the individual compound event, topping the field with a score of 708. What made the feat more remarkable was the context. Apart from competing, Aishwarzo was also overseeing his students, juggling dual responsibilities with quiet authority.

**Read full story on The Daily Star website

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Meril
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Lemon Fresh
Vitamin
C

পিওর অ্যান্ড
কিউর
নো ফ্লেগর্যান্স

কোকোয়া ফ্রেশ

অ্যালো ফ্রেশ

লেমন ফ্রেশ

কুমার ট্যুলেট্রিজ লিমিটেড

কাক্সার বাংলাদেশ- এর হাউসহোল্ড প্র্যানেল সার্ভিস সেন্টার ২০২৫ জুনে, 'মেরিল' দেশের নাম্বার ওয়ান পেট্রোলিয়াম জেলি।



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Fair, credible polls possible

Says Prof Yunus, urges all to adhere to EC directives

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said a fair and credible election is possible under the current circumstances, expressing confidence in preparations for the upcoming 13th parliamentary polls.

He said political parties and candidates are maintaining a positive attitude and mutual harmony, but urged all stakeholders to remain prepared for any possible scenario.

"I hope that none of them will deviate from this approach," Yunus said at a high-level meeting on the overall law-and-order situation ahead of the election and the referendum on the implementation of the July National Charter.

The meeting, chaired by Yunus, was held at the Chief Adviser's Office and attended by advisers, force chiefs,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



Under a clear blue sky, a woman scavenges for metal and plastic scraps to sell to recyclers at the Paroir Chak landfill of Sylhet City Corporation in Dakshin Surma, as smoke from small fires rises and birds circle overhead. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Ex-adviser M Hafizuddin Khan no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

M Hafizuddin Khan, a former adviser to the caretaker government and ex-comptroller and auditor general (CAG) of Bangladesh, passed away yesterday at a private hospital in the capital's Uttara due to age-related complications. He was 87.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, and a host of relatives and admirers.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Reinstate UAP teachers immediately

Demands university teachers' platform, Naripokkho

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network and rights organisation Naripokkho yesterday demanded the immediate reinstatement of two University of Asia Pacific (UAP) faculty members, accusing the authorities of succumbing

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

MANIFESTO EXPECTATIONS

With the national election less than a month away, political parties are finalising their manifestos. The Daily Star spoke to experts to identify the pressing issues that should top the agenda for parties.

Political use of police must end

MUNTAKIM SAAD and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

As major political parties prepare their election manifestos, law enforcement experts and rights activists urge them to make law and order a top priority, keep police free from political interference, and end the partisan use of the force.

They also called for an independent body to investigate allegations of rights violations by law enforcement personnel and submit regular reports to the government.

Experts recommended increasing police strength in line with the population, ensuring neutral and

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

330 journos behind bars for 5yrs: CPJ

AFP, New York

The number of journalists imprisoned worldwide for their work was 330 in the final month of 2025, the Committee to Protect Journalists said yesterday, the fifth consecutive year the count has exceeded 300.

China held 50 prisoners as of December 1, followed by Myanmar with 30 and

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

US 'won't use force' to take Greenland

Says Trump, demands 'immediate negotiations'

REUTERS, Davos

US President Donald Trump ruled out the use of force in his bid to control Greenland yesterday, but said in a speech in Davos that no other country can secure the Danish territory.

"People thought I would use force, but I don't have to use force," Trump said at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Switzerland. "I don't want

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



ICT-2 orders to provide Azad documents for his appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Kalam Azad alias Bachchu, who was sentenced to death in 2013 for crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War, surrendered before the International Crimes

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

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