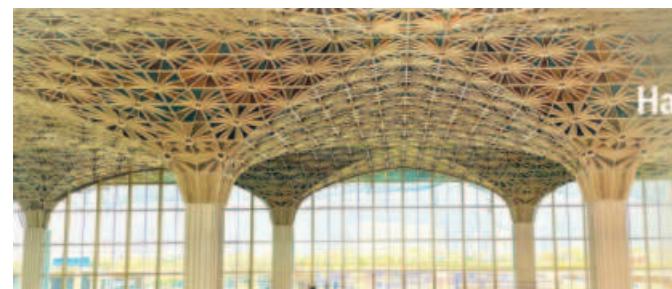




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## 'No one can declare a Muslim infidel' Says Porwar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Comparing Jamaat-e-Islami's ideals and activities with "kufr" and "shirk" is "irresponsible, ignorant, and a violation of Islamic principles", the party's Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said yesterday.

Porwar, a candidate for Khulna-5, made the remarks at a street rally in Dumuria upazila. He also attended street rallies in Phultala upazila.

Porwar said such comments insult the fundamental teachings of Islam.

"No one has the authority to declare a Muslim -- who believes in Allah, the Prophet (PBUH), angels, afterlife and destiny -- as an infidel," he said.

Addressing BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, Porwar said Tarique could have asked his late mother why she



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## Protect UN's central role in global affairs

**China's Xi calls on nations; EU has 'serious doubts' about Trump's 'Board of Peace'**

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping called on countries to protect the "central role" of the United Nations in international affairs, urging his Brazilian counterpart yesterday to help safeguard international norms, state media reported.

The comments come after US President Donald Trump unveiled plans for his new "Board of Peace" at the World Economic Forum.

Uphold UN's central role, fairness and justice: Xi

Brazil expresses scepticism about Board of Peace

China, Brazil yet to confirm role in Trump's new bloc

Although originally meant to oversee Gaza's rebuilding, the board's charter does not seem to limit its role to the Palestinian territory and has sparked concerns Trump wants to rival the United Nations.

European leaders have serious doubts about the scope of Trump's "Board of Peace" but are ready to work with the United States and the newly founded body in Gaza, EU chief Antonio Costa said yesterday.

While China and Brazil have both been invited to



A north-bound truck carrying iron rods tipped onto its side after hitting a road median in foggy conditions on the Dhaka-Aricha highway at Baliaarpur in Savar early yesterday. The driver sustained minor injuries.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



## Support BNP for development

**Fakhrul urges voters**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said that voters must support his party if they want development.

Speaking at an election rally at Sholtohori Bazar in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila in the afternoon, Fakhrul said BNP had governed in the past and had experience in delivering development.

"If we want development in this area, you must support us. Development is not possible without the BNP," he added.

Addressing members of the Hindu community, he pledged that BNP would ensure no one faces injustice or oppression and that temples would be protected from vandalism.

"Just as Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians have together built our society and our nation in the past, we want to move the country forward in the same spirit," he said.

He noted that people had been deprived of voting rights over the past 15 years. "Now an opportunity has come," he added.

Referring to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Fakhrul said, "Hasina has gone to India. It is good that she has gone there. But she has left her supporters and

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## Bangladesh-Malaysia labour route rife with corruption

Bloomberg probe says cartelised recruitment, political links driving migrant exploitation

### STAR REPORT

Endemic corruption in the Bangladesh-Malaysia migrant worker system is enriching a powerful few while trapping migrants in a punishing economy of exploitation, Bloomberg reported in an investigative piece published yesterday.

Titled "Everyone gets a cut, and migrant workers pay the price," the months-long investigation describes a recruitment system manipulated by businesses linked to political elites.

The report opens with the story of Shofiqul Islam, who borrowed to pay \$4,400 for a construction job in Malaysia. The job never materialised, his employer vanished, and his visa expired, leaving him stranded in a derelict building outside Kuala Lumpur. Shofiqul died there in February 2024.

He is one of more than 800,000 Bangladeshis who have gone to Malaysia over the past decade, often sinking into debt to pay recruitment fees far higher than those charged to workers from

other countries, sometimes for jobs that do not exist.

Bloomberg interviewed more than 100 people, including current and former officials, labour analysts, recruiters and migrants, and found a system shaped by entrenched corruption, designed to extract as much money as possible from

desperate workers, often leading to debt bondage, forced labour and human trafficking.

More than a dozen interviewees said figures in Malaysia's ruling elite, including at the highest levels of government, are aware of the abuses but do little to stop them because recruitment fees benefit everyone involved.

A representative for Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim referred Bloomberg to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which did not respond. Bangladesh's government also declined to comment.

### AMIN'S BESTINET

Malaysia has recruited Bangladeshi workers since the 1980s, with unofficial payments long embedded in the process. But costs surged after a man from Bangladesh rose to prominence: Aminul Islam, known as Amin, reported Bloomberg.

A controversial member of Malaysia's elite, Amin told Bloomberg in his first interview last July that he has spent his career helping migrant workers and denied responsibility for their hardships.

Companies he founded have generated more than \$100 million in profits over the past decade, filings show. Amin declined to comment on his personal wealth.

After migrating from Bangladesh in 1988, Amin built businesses providing housing and transport for workers before moving into

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FILE PHOTO: REUTERS



## Meta to cut 1,500 jobs as Zuckerberg bets on AI

### TECH & STARTUP DESK

Meta is preparing to cut about 1,500 jobs from its Reality Labs division, a move that would affect roughly 10 percent of the unit's workforce, as the company intensifies its focus on artificial intelligence (AI).

According to a recent filing submitted to the state's Employment Security Department, Meta has already laid off 331 employees in the Seattle area and across Washington as part of the broader job cuts. The reductions will affect staff at four Meta facilities in Seattle and on the Eastside, as well as about 97 employees who work remotely in Washington. The layoffs are scheduled to take effect on March 20, the filing shows.

Meta's Reality Labs, which focuses on virtual and augmented reality (AR) technologies, employs roughly 15,000 people and accounts for about 19 percent of Meta's total global workforce of approximately 78,000 employees. The division has accumulated more than \$70 billion in losses

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Haate Khori, a ritual marking the start of a child's education, being performed during Saraswati Puja, a major religious event of the Hindu community, at the Jagannath Hall premises of Dhaka University yesterday. Inset, people throng the area to visit the mandaps.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## US withdraws from WHO

**Global health experts urge re-think**

REUTERS, London

The United States officially left the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday after a year of warnings that doing so would hurt public health in the US and globally, saying its decision reflected failures in the UN health agency's management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

President Donald Trump gave notice that the US would quit the organization on the first day of his presidency in 2025, via an executive order.

According to a press release from the US Health and State Departments, the US will only work with the WHO in a limited fashion in order to effectuate the withdrawal.

"We have no plans to participate as an observer, and we have no plans of rejoining," a senior government health official said. The US said it plans to work directly with other countries - rather than through an international organization - on disease surveillance and other public health priorities.

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Today 24<sup>th</sup> January 2026 is the 4<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Mr. Hasan Ahmed. His bereaved mother, brothers, sisters, officers and employees of the company seek forgiveness from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for his departed soul.

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