



CAPACITY CHARGE AL-era power deals costing \$1.5b a year

Finds probe committee for power, energy sector

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Inflated capacity charges in power sector deals have been costing Bangladesh up to \$1.5 billion a year, according to the national committee formed to review unsolicited power contracts signed during the Awami League regime.

The committee also warned that if contracts, with at least 41 power plants under its jurisdiction, are not renegotiated, the country could face about \$7.2 billion in excess payments over the remaining life of the deals.

The sector's potential for excess profits has created strong incentives for collusion,

corruption and political influence over contract allocation, said the report titled "Bangladesh's Power Generation: Trapped Costly Contracts: Governance Failures and the Mechanics of Rent Extraction".

The now-repealed Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act, enacted in 2010, made procurement processes more opaque and more open to corruption in designing the contracts, the report said.

The act was enacted in response to an acute electricity crisis and granted extraordinary powers to accelerate project approval and procurement.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

ANOMALIES IN POWER SECTOR DURING AL RULE

FROM FY15 TO FY25

PDB's annual loss increased to Tk **50,565cr** from Tk **5,468cr**

Annual subsidy increased to Tk **59,600cr** from Tk **8,978cr**

PDB's loss was largely due to overpriced contracts awarded without competition and due diligence, and without adhering to a consistent plan aligning energy availability to power generation, resulting in idle capacity and unjustified capacity charges.

THE COST OF GOVERNANCE FAILURES

Payments to power producers increased more than 11-fold between FY11 and FY24. But electricity generation only increased by four-fold over the same period.

Capacity payments increased nearly 20-fold, becoming the dominant component of payments to producers.

For the Adani Godda imported power contract, estimated overpricing was between 4-5 cents per kWh, means the price being paid is roughly 50% higher than what it should be.



The wrong decisions were not mistakes, rather a systematic collusion between businesses, politicians and bureaucrats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Technical and legal capabilities with BPDB and the Power Division have to be improved.

More effective checks and balances are required, including strengthening the BERC and need to form a new Energy Oversight Commission.

PDB and govt should cancel contracts where direct evidence of corruption is found and there must be renegotiation of prices and terms with all private parties to reduce prices to market-competitive levels. This is essential to save the power sector.

PDB paying Adani 50% more than it should

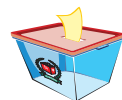
ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has been paying around \$400-500 million a year to India's Adani Power, roughly 50 percent more than it should for electricity purchase, found the national committee to review power sector deals.

The prices for electricity from the plant increased over time, and the rise in costs was much higher than in similar contracts with other local coal-based power plants.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

17 DAYS TO VOTE



'Won't allow graft to ruin BNP's plan'

Tarique says no party leader, activist will escape
punishment for wrongdoings



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BNP organises a rally at the port city's Railway Polo ground yesterday.

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, from Ctg

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday pledged a zero-tolerance policy on corruption and strict enforcement of law and order if his party returns to power, saying public safety must be ensured so people can live without fear.

"Today, in front of hundreds of thousands of people, I want to say clearly that under the plans we have taken, anyone who breaks the law or tries to obstruct these plans through corruption will not be spared," he said, addressing a massive rally at the Polo Ground in Chattogram.

Tarique arrived in Chattogram on Saturday night on his first visit to the port city after nearly 21 years. From early morning, party leaders and supporters marched in colourful processions,

thronging the field by 10:00am and spilling onto surrounding roads.

Taking the stage around noon, he spoke of his emotional ties to the city, recalling that his father, late president Ziaur Rahman, declared independence from Chattogram in 1971, and that his mother, Khaleida Zia, was recognised there as a national leader.

Introducing BNP candidates, he sought votes for them and said, "If we cannot control law and order, none of our plans will succeed, no matter how many plans we take. To implement these plans, we must strictly focus on two issues — corruption and security."

"An offender is an offender in the eyes of the law, whoever they are. Action will be taken under the country's laws."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

'We left as they strayed from Islamist principles'

Says IAB ameer
about Jamaat

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barishal

Charmonai Pir and Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) Ameer Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim yesterday said they had sought to build unity in favour of Islamist values with great hope, but were compelled to take a separate political path in the interest of Islam after observing that Jamaat-e-Islami was deviating from its commitment to Islamist principles and ideology.

"However, by the grace of Allah, we are not alone. People from all walks of life and the alem-ulemas are with us," he said at an election rally held in support of IAB candidates in Mymensingh-6 and Mymensingh-4 constituencies in Mymensingh city.

Rezaul added that BNP and Jamaat governed the country in the past but failed to meet the people's expectations. "Instead, the country became a champion in corruption."

"If, by the grace of Allah, the people entrust us with the responsibility

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Fearing defeat, some may take crooked paths'

Jamaat ameer tells Dhaka rally, vows to
secure win for 'yes' in referendum



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Supporters attend Jamaat's rally at Dhupkhola field in Old Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said some quarters, fearing defeat, might resort to unfair practices in the February 12 polls, and vowed to resist any such attempts.

Shafiqur, addressing a series of rallies in the capital, said his party would "enter a battle" to secure a "yes" vote in the referendum.

He also urged young voters, long denied the right to vote, to take charge of the country and vowed to protect their ballots. The Jamaat chief pledged to ensure children's basic rights and the safety of working women. He also reiterated his commitment to curb corruption and extortion to build an inclusive Bangladesh.

The first rally, organised by the party's election

committees for Dhaka-4 and Dhaka-5, was held at Kajla Par in Jatrabari.

Addressing the gathering, Shafiqur said, "We are hearing that some people, fearing defeat [in the national election], may choose crooked paths. We are not naming any specific party or individual. We hope they will step back from such actions by realising the spirit of July. If they do not, remember — July fighters are not asleep. They have completed their first task and are now ready for the second."

He further said, "A new profession is thriving in the country now — extortion. Those involved should return to the right path. Arrangements will be made for their halal livelihood. If they do not abandon this path, Jamaat will show them the red card."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Ecneec clears Tk 45,191cr spending just before polls

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Just 17 days before the national election, the interim administration yesterday cleared a massive wave of infrastructure and social spending, authorising 25 new and revised projects with a combined price tag of Tk 45,191 crore.

The decision was taken during a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) chaired by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

The timing of such commitments has raised questions over the necessity of major spending approvals by a transitional administration so close to a change in power. This move effectively locks in long-term financial obligations for the incoming elected administration.

However, the current leadership argues that administrative backlogs and the need to maintain economic momentum require these approvals.

A key driver of the spending surge is the first formal revision of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project. The Ecneec increased the project's cost by Tk 25,592 crore, bringing the total to Tk 138,685 crore. Alongside the cost hike, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



As the February 12 national election approaches, this craftsman is seen spending busy time preparing campaign posters and festoons for MP candidates. The photo was taken in front of the Mohsin Hall on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Dhaka slams Delhi for allowing Hasina to deliver speech Accuses her of inciting terror to derail polls

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has expressed surprise and shock that deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been convicted by the International Crimes Tribunal in a case related to the July uprising, was allowed to make a statement at a public event in New Delhi on Friday.

During the event, she openly called for the removal of Bangladesh government and issued blatant incitements to her party loyalists and general public to carry out acts of terror in order to derail the upcoming general election in Bangladesh, said the foreign ministry in a statement yesterday.

"Bangladesh is deeply aggrieved that while India is yet to act on her obligations to hand Sheikh Hasina over to Bangladesh under the bilateral extradition agreement despite repeated requests by the Bangladesh government, she has instead been allowed to make such inciteful pronouncements from its own soil," the statement said.

"This clearly endangers Bangladesh's democratic transition and peace and security."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Police probing mechanic’s death in garage fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Police have opened an investigation after recovering the charred body of a young mechanic from an automobile workshop in Narsingdi.

The victim, Chanchal Bhowmik, 25, hailing from Lakshampur village under Cumilla’s Barura upazila, had been working at the workshop at Dagaria of Narsingdi Sadar upazila for around six years.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body around 4:00am on Saturday, said Ishaq Miah, sub-inspector of Narsingdi Sadar Model Police Station.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the workshop’s owner Rubel Miah said he had a brief discussion with Chanchal around 10:00pm on Friday.

“Then Chanchal closed the shop and I left the area. Like other days, Chanchal went to sleep inside the shop,” said Rubel, adding that he heard about a fire from a person around 4:00am on Saturday.

Contacted, Shimul Rafiq, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman interacts with supporters at the Railway Polo Ground in Chattogram city yesterday.

Dhaka slams Delhi for allowing Hasina to deliver speech

FROM PAGE 1

The ministry said allowing the event to take place in the Indian capital and letting “mass murderer” Hasina to openly deliver her hate speech are contrary to the norms of inter-state relations, including the principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference and good neighbourliness.

This also constitutes a clear affront to the people and the Bangladesh government, it said.

“It sets a dangerous precedent vis-a-vis the future of Bangladesh-India relations and may seriously impair the ability of the future elected polity in Bangladesh to engage, shape, and nurture mutually beneficial bilateral relations.

“The unabashed incitements by Awami League’s leadership yet again demonstrated why the interim government had to ban its activities.”

The foreign ministry said Bangladesh would hold the AL responsible for committing incidents of violence and terror in the run up to the elections and on the election day, and will take appropriate actions to foil its evil conspiracies.

In the earlier months, the interim government repeatedly requested India to prevent Hasina, who fled to India on August 5, 2024, amid uprising, from speaking and inciting violence in Bangladesh.

Dhaka sent official letter to New Delhi, seeking her extradition.

At an event in December last year, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Hasina would decide if she wants to return to Dhaka.

‘We left as they strayed from Islamist principles’

FROM PAGE 1

of running the state, corruption will be uprooted, In sha Allah. We will build a Bangladesh that reflects the people’s aspirations,” he said.

Rezaul said many candidates make various promises of development, but no one speaks about the “development of principles”.

“If members of the parliament formulate proper policies and hold the executive accountable for implementing those policies, development will naturally reach all citizens of the country,” he said.

He said the nation has heard many claims of development over the past 54 years, but those so-called developments were followed by a “festival of corruption”.

“Killings, enforced disappearances, and money laundering have been pushing the country backwards. Therefore, emphasis must be placed on the structural development of the state and improvement of policies,” he added.

He added that Islami Andolan Bangladesh is working not merely for a change of leaders, but for a change of policies.

Party’s Central Training Secretary Nurul Karim Akram and Central Joint Vice-President Hossain Ahmed, among others, were present at the rally.

‘Won’t allow graft to ruin BNP’s plan’

FROM PAGE 1

At another rally at the Central Eidgah ground in Daudkandi upazila of Cumilla at 12:45am today, Tarique warned party leaders and activists to remain careful about wrongdoings.

“You have seen in the past that when the BNP was in power, some of our leaders and activists were involved in unethical acts that caused sufferings to people. We handed them over to the law. Do you remember? So BNP leaders and activists must remain careful.

“If anyone is found acting beyond the law, they will face legal action. There will be nothing you can do, I will also be unable to do anything,” he said.

At the Chattogram rally, remembering the martyrs of the July uprising, he said democratic and economic rights had been eroded over the past 15 years. He warned of new conspiracies to take these rights away.

He said although many allegations and criticisms can be made against rival political parties, such things do not bring any real benefit to the people.

“If we criticise only for the sake of criticism, will it help ordinary people? It will not. If we only keep criticising, will it fill people’s stomachs? It will not,” he said.

DEVELOPMENT PLEDGES

Tarique said Khaleda Zia’s earlier plan to turn Chattogram into a commercial capital would be completed if BNP forms the government, creating jobs through new Export Processing Zones.

He promised a nationwide canal-digging programme, which he said would help alleviate waterlogging in Chattogram.

A safe environment will also be created in Chattogram and other parts of Bangladesh so that people can do business easily and without fear, the BNP chief said.

He also promised to bring changes to different levels of education to help the youth get jobs.

Tarique said BNP wants to deliver

healthcare services to every doorstep, especially for women and children, by appointing 1 lakh healthcare workers.

To make women financially independent, Tarique said if the BNP can form the government, the party will deliver “family cards” to women.

He said farmers will receive loan facilities and other benefits through the “farmers cards” so that they can become financially self-reliant.

Seeking votes, he said only a BNP victory on February 12 would make these changes possible.

“If you stand by BNP and make BNP victorious with the Sheaf of Paddy in the election, only then will we be able to bring these changes. Are you with us?”

“Yes!” the crowd replied.

Later in the day, Tarique addressed a rally in Feni, where he pledged to establish a medical college and provide training and language education for youths seeking overseas employment.

Urging voters in greater Noakhali to ensure BNP’s victory, he said restoring democracy through the ballot would bring back accountability and local solutions.

‘GUARD POLLING STATIONS’

At another rally on Chouddagram High School ground in Cumilla in the evening, Tarique instructed party leaders and activists to remain alert to prevent fraud until the end of voting.

“You must guard the ballot boxes and the polling stations so that no one can conspire with the voters.”

He also advised senior party leaders and activists to offer Tahajjud prayers and then go to the polling stations and perform Fajr prayers in front of the centres.

He said some people were questioning the BNP’s card-based aid plans because they have no experience of running the country. “Why would I deceive the people if I knew that it would cause me losses? Will the people trust me anymore if I deceive them?” he asked.

He clarified that through “family cards”, the BNP plans to provide assistance for seven to 10 days a month, not the entire month. “We never said we would give everything at once. We will do it gradually and move forward step by step.”

At another rally at Suwagazi Digbajir ground in Cumilla at 10:30pm, Tarique said an EPZ would be built in the district to create jobs.

‘CALL ME BHAIYA’

Earlier in the morning, Tarique held an interactive session with students titled “The Plan: Youth Policy Talk with Tarique Rahman” at a hotel in the port city, attended by around 350 students.

When a student addressed him as “Sir”, he asked to be called “Bhaiya”, drawing applause.

He pledged to introduce student loans for higher studies abroad, including support for visa and related costs.

On indigenous rights and hill region tensions, Tarique said all citizens, regardless of region or identity, should enjoy equal rights and opportunities based on merit.

He proposed limiting quotas mainly to persons with disabilities and ensuring merit-based recruitment elsewhere.

“As we have said before, limited quotas, say around five percent, can be kept for people with disabilities. But in all other cases, recruitment or access to opportunities should be based on merit and qualifications alone. Whether from the plains or the hills, the same principle should apply to everyone,” he said.

He also said the National Identity Card system should be fully digitised so citizens can obtain NIDs from home, which would reduce corruption and complications.

[FM Mizanur Rahman and Dwaipayan Barua also contributed to the report.]

Ecneec clears Tk 45,191cr

FROM PAGE 1

project’s deadline has been extended by two and a half years, pushing the expected completion to June 2028.

The project was initially approved in 2016, with around 90 percent of the funding coming as a soft Russian loan. According to Planning Commission documents, the cost escalation is driven mainly by higher allocation for parts of the project, inclusion of 10 new components, and the depreciation of the taka against the US dollar.

Healthcare was also a major priority in the final hour approvals. The committee approved a new “health and nutrition services” project with an estimated cost of Tk 8,735 crore, supported by Tk 6,196 crore in World Bank loans. The project aims to improve the nutrition of pregnant women and the health of newborn babies.

An official of the Directorate General of Health Services said that a portion of the project funds will be used for vaccination programmes and to upgrade the infrastructure of several upazila health complexes in the Sylhet region.

Furthermore, the Ecneec approved the Bangladesh-China Friendship General Hospital, a 1,000-bed facility for the northern region. The government will build the hospital in Nilphamari at a cost of Tk 2,459 crore, with most of the funds expected from China.

Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud defended the heavy agenda during a post-meeting briefing. “Usually, political governments approve many projects in a single meeting at the last moment. But we are not doing this for that reason,” he said.

“We were supposed to have two Ecneec meetings, but it seems there is no time for another,” Wahiduddin said. “We had to consider whether it would be appropriate to hold another meeting right before the election,” he added.

Addressing concerns about the legitimacy of approving projects after the announcement of the election schedule, he maintained that the state must remain functional.

Wahiduddin, who had also served as an adviser to the 1996 caretaker government, emphasised that the administration was careful to avoid projects that could unfairly benefit specific candidates or parties. “For the sake of the economy, many policy decisions must be taken,” he said, citing his 1996 experience where regular Ecneec meetings were held to ensure economic stability.

Regarding the increased cost of the Rooppur project, Wahiduddin said that the project timeline had been extended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors, which led to higher overall expenditure.

He said the project cost has not increased in dollar terms with the original figure remaining unchanged at \$11.38 billion. However, the cost has risen in taka terms due to taka’s

All parties seeking AL vote, only JP is taking blame

Say its Chairman GM Quader

S DILIP ROY

Jatiya Party is branded as criminals and collaborators if the party seeks the barred Awami League’s votes but not the BNP, Jamaat or the National Citizen Party, said its Chairman GM Quader.

“This is nothing but extreme political discrimination,” said Quader in a press briefing at the party office in Rangpur on Saturday evening.

Quader is contesting in the election from Rangpur-3.

“The Awami League has not yet been banned as a political party. Even if there are restrictions on its political activities, there is no example anywhere in the world of stripping its supporters of their voting rights as citizens. Yet, the Awami League supporters are being told, ‘if you want to vote, you may do so, but you cannot vote for Jatiya Party’. So, what is the crime of Jatiya Party?”

After the July uprising, the head of the interim government himself said that the student coordinators of the quota reform movement are their appointing authority.



‘Fearing defeat, some may take crooked paths’

FROM PAGE 1

Shafiqur also pledged to introduce evening bus services for women in the capital and major cities. “No oppressor will dare to harass you anymore. You will no longer face harassment at your workplaces,” he said.

At the second rally at Dhophkhola field, he urged young people to prepare to take charge of the country.

“We want to entrust Bangladesh to the youth... If any miscreant tries to interfere with the votes on the 12th, that hand must be crushed. They [youth] have come of age but have been denied their voting rights. They are eagerly waiting for the 12th. No one should be allowed to carry out any criminal activities,” he said.

He said Jamaat does not want to “sit on the throne to plunder the country.”

“We will not extort people and will not allow extortion. We will neither engage in corruption nor tolerate it,” he said, adding that to build a corruption- and extortion-free country, people must exercise their rights in the two votes scheduled for the same day.

“From today, we will enter a battle to ensure every single ‘yes’ vote. We will explain to people that if ‘yes’ wins, Bangladesh will win; if ‘yes’ is defeated, Bangladesh will be defeated,” he added.

Opposing unemployment allowances, he said such a move would create an “ocean of unemployed people.”

Referring to recent developments, he said, “When the people of Bangladesh are about to make their decision in search of liberation, many are openly interfering in our internal

affairs. We would humbly but firmly request them – please stop meddling in our internal matters.”

Speaking on Old Dhaka, the Jamaat chief said, “We will turn Old Dhaka into gold, In Sha Allah (God willing). We will show that respect to Old Dhaka.”

Calling on young people to prepare for future responsibilities, he said,



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman addresses a rally at Dhupkhola field in Old Dhaka yesterday.

“This time we have a youth-based panel. We have brought forward a large number of young people. Elect them and, In Sha Allah, Bangladesh will change.”

From the rally, Shafiqur handed over the scales symbol to Abdul Mannan, the II-party alliance candidate for Dhaka-6, and the water-lily bud symbol to Nasiruddin Patwari of the NCP, the candidate for Dhaka-8.

broad daylight.

“A party whose activists, driven by extortion, do not spare even their own brothers, friends or colleagues – and take lives if extortion money is not paid – demands serious reflection from us,” he said.

Liberal Democratic Party President Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed, whose party is part of the II-party alliance, was among the speakers at the Alia Madrasa and Dhophkhola rallies.

A truth teller

FROM PAGE 12

War to the world.

During the war, when news media controlled by the then Pakistani junta carried government propaganda, his BBC radio reports became the people’s chief source of authentic information. He covered the war extensively for the BBC and documented events from close quarters.

Sir Mark Tully was born in Kolkata on October 24, 1935, into a British family. Shortly after World War II, at the age of nine, he moved to Britain for his education. Tully studied theology at Cambridge University before joining a seminary.

He returned to India in 1965, joining the BBC in New Delhi as an office administrator.

After a brief stint in London at the BBC’s Hindi and World Service, he was appointed the public broadcaster’s

correspondent in New Delhi in 1971.

Tully was named bureau chief a few years later, overseeing coverage of South Asia, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, a position he held for two decades.

His fluency in Hindi, a rare achievement in Delhi’s foreign press corps, endeared him to many Indians, for whom he was fondly known as “Tully sahib”. His warmth and evident affection for India earned him the friendship and trust of senior politicians, editors and social activists.

Tully was awarded the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan, among India’s highest civilian honours, and rarely bestowed on foreigners.

Britain also knighted him for his services to broadcasting and journalism in 2002, a recognition Tully would later describe as “an honour to India”.

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 is scheduled to deliver its verdict today in a case over the killing of six people in the capital's Chankharpul area during the 2024 mass uprising.

Eight former police officials stand accused in the case. They are former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman; joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty; former additional deputy commissioner Shah Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam; former assistant commissioner of Ramna zone Mohammad Imrul; former Shahbagh Police Station inspector (operations) Arshad Hossain; and constables Sujon Hossain, Imaz Hossain and Nasirul Islam.

Of the accused, Arshad, Sujon, Imaz and Nasirul are currently in custody.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



A worker carries five gas cylinders on his bicycle while providing door-to-door delivery for his store. Due to a gas shortage and supply disruptions following two major pipeline accidents, demand for cylinders has surged, prompting store owners to charge over Tk 2,000 instead of the fixed price of Tk 1,306. The photo was taken on the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Land rights, legal recognition, for indigenous people

Demand speakers at nat'l seminar

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Constitutional recognition**
- **Land commission for plainland communities**
- **Indigenous representation in dev process**
- **Indigenous-friendly edn, healthcare**
- **Preserving indigenous languages, culture**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous leaders, rights activists and policymakers yesterday demanded constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples, a separate land commission for plainland communities, and urgent reforms to protect their land, natural resources and cultural rights.

The demands were raised at a national seminar titled "Rights to land, territory and natural resources of plainland indigenous peoples and the role of the government," organised by Kapaceng Foundation and Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) at the YWCA Conference Hall in the capital.

IPDS President Sanjeeb Drong chaired the seminar, while Kapaceng Foundation's Advocacy and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

More and more misinformation and disinformation are flooding social media ahead of the election. To create voter awareness, we are running selective fact-check reports published by fact-checking organisations from today.

FACT-CHECKED **Old video, fake media card circulate with false claims**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

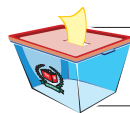
As the national election approaches, social media platforms have been flooded with misleading content, including fake photocards and old videos circulated with false claims.

Two such pieces of election-related fact-check reports were published by fact-checking organisations Rumor Scanner Bangladesh and Dismislab yesterday.

According to the Rumor Scanner report, one widely circulated video has been shared under the title "President appeals to the nation over the election", claiming to show President Mohammed Shahabuddin delivering a message about the upcoming national election.

In the video, the president is heard saying, "I have an appeal to the people of the country."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

**FEB 12 ELECTION | DHAKA-11****July frontman takes on local old guard**

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK and SHARIF M SHAHIQUE

Along Pragati Sarani – the lifeline of eastern Dhaka – stands the International Buddhist Monastery. During a recent visit, its vice-principal, Buddhanda Mahathero, prayed for national peace.

He recalled offering similar prayers in July 2024, when police assaulted students from two nearby private universities. Many of them had taken shelter inside the monastery that day.

The monk now hopes that those entrusted with running the state will work toward an inclusive society, irrespective of religion or caste.

The monastery falls within the Dhaka-11 constituency, which comprises Rampura, Badda, Bhatara, and parts of Hatirjheel police station.

The seat is witnessing a high-profile contest.

Nahid Islam, a prominent face of

the July uprising and convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP), is contesting from Dhaka-11. He hails from Fakirkhali village in Badda thana.

Expectations surrounding the youth-led party are high.

Mahmuda Begum, 40, a resident of Poshchimpara in Nurachala, said, "This time, I am for the youth. I hope not only youth-led parties, but young candidates from all parties win."

A shopkeeper by profession, Mahmuda pointed to long-standing problems such as gas and water shortages and water logging. From the politicians of "New Bangladesh," she expects stability in commodity prices.

Nahid's main challenger is BNP candidate MA Quayum, a long-serving former commissioner of the Badda area.

As the country heads toward the February 12 elections, voters in Dhaka-11 – many casting ballots after a long gap – appear politically energised.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Nahid Islam

MA Quayum

'Torture and screams marked life at Aynaghar'**Ex-army officer recounts ordeal at ICT-1**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Life inside a secret detention facility was filled with screams from adjoining rooms and constant threats of "crossfire", former Lt Col Hasinur Rahman, a survivor of enforced disappearance, told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Testifying as the second prosecution witness, Hasinur said screams and cries could be heard from every room of the detention centre, known as "Aynaghar."

Hasinur's testimony came in a case filed against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 12 others over the alleged illegal detention and torture of at least 24 individuals at a Joint Interrogation Cell operated by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence between 2016 and August 2024.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

82 lakh use illicit drugs in country**BMU survey finds youth most affected**

Cannabis was identified as the most widely used drug, with around 61 lakh users. It was followed by yaba (approximately 22.92 lakh users) and alcohol (20.20 lakh).



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An estimated 82 lakh people in Bangladesh currently use one or more illicit drugs, accounting for about 4.88 percent of the total population, according to a nationwide survey conducted by Bangladesh Medical University (BMU).

The survey also found that an average drug user spends up to Tk 6,000 per month, while the majority of substance users are young.

About 33 percent of respondents reported first using drugs between the ages of eight and 17, while 59 percent said they began between 18 and 25, indicating early exposure and high vulnerability among adolescents and youth.

Unemployment, peer influence, financial insecurity, family instability, mental stress, and engagement in informal work have been identified as the main risk factors for drug use.

Alarming, nearly 90 percent of users reported that drugs are easily accessible.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

3,000 leprosy cases detected annually**Stigma, funding gaps hinder elimination drive, say speakers**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh achieved the elimination of leprosy as a public health concern around three decades ago, more than 3,000 new cases are still detected annually, highlighting the challenges in achieving zero prevalence of the disease.

Public health elimination of a disease means reducing its prevalence rate to less than one case per 10,000 population.

Health experts and officials have recommended an intensified drive, particularly in high-burden districts, to detect new cases and ensure patients receive treatment, aiming to achieve the zero-leprosy-prevalence target by 2030.

They also said leprosy patients are often surrounded by social stigma, making awareness campaigns involving all relevant stakeholders essential to make the country

leprosy-free.

The speakers made the remarks at a discussion organised to mark World Leprosy Day, observed yesterday.

The National Leprosy Programme of the Directorate General of Health Services hosted the discussion at the DGHS under the slogan, "Leprosy is Curable, the Real Challenge is Stigma."

In her keynote speech, Afsana Alamgir Khan, assistant director and programme manager (leprosy) at the DGHS, said the National Leprosy Programme started activities in 1985 in selected geographical areas and was expanded nationwide in 1996.

In 1998, the country achieved public health elimination, but 13 districts still bear a heavy burden of the disease, meaning the detection rate is as high as five per 1,000 population, she said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

RECOMMENDATIONS**Intensified detection, stigma reduction****Mass screening in high-burden districts****Adequate funding, surveillance, awareness****Stronger govt-NGO coordination**

A flock of egrets searches for food in the drying Khayrat haor at Karimganj in Kishoreganj as the setting sun reflects on the water, creating a mesmerising scene. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

MINNEAPOLIS SHOOTING
Reactions to the
second killing by
US federal agents

AFP, Minneapolis

The killing of a US citizen by federal immigration agents in Minneapolis on Saturday triggered a wave of criticism, from family members and local leaders to Hollywood stars.

Federal agents shot Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care nurse, less than three weeks after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer shot and killed Renee Good, also 37, in her car.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said Pretti was found to be carrying a pistol and ammunition, but cell phone footage of the incident has raised serious questions about the federal government's description of the incident.

LOCAL LEADERS

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called the shooting "horrific" and demanded state authorities lead the investigation. "The federal government cannot be trusted



to lead this investigation. The state will handle it, period," Walz told a news conference.

Senator Bill Cassidy, a Louisiana Republican, wrote on X: "The events in Minneapolis are incredibly disturbing. The credibility of ICE and DHS are at stake."

"There must be a full joint federal and state investigation. We can trust the American people with the truth."

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey urged President Donald Trump to end the immigration operation, which has sparked sometimes violent demonstrations.

FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES

Pretti's parents said in a statement he was "a kindhearted soul who cared deeply for his family and friends."

"The sickening lies told about our son by the administration are reprehensible and disgusting," they said. "Alex is clearly not holding a gun when attacked by Trump's murdering and cowardly ICE thugs."

Dimitri Drekonja, chief of the Infectious Diseases Section at the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs hospital and a colleague of Pretti, called him "a good kind person who lived to help."



People gather at a makeshift memorial in Minneapolis, Minnesota, US where Alex Pretti was fatally shot as federal agents tried to detain him on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pretti did not brandish gun
Witnesses, under oath, say he tried to help a woman
shoved by US federal agents

AGENCIES

Two witnesses to the killing of Alex Pretti have said in sworn testimony that the 37-year-old intensive care nurse was not brandishing a weapon when he approached federal agents in Minneapolis on Saturday, contradicting a claim made by Trump administration officials as they sought to cast the shooting of a prone man as an act of self-defense.

Their accounts came in sworn affidavits that were filed in federal court in Minnesota late Saturday, just hours after Pretti's killing, as part of a lawsuit brought by the ACLU on behalf of Minneapolis protesters against Kristi Noem and other homeland security officials directing the immigration



crackdown in the city.

One witness is a woman who filmed the clearest video of the fatal shooting; the other is a physician who lives nearby and said they were initially prevented by federal officers from rendering medical aid to the gunshot victim.

The names of both witnesses were redacted in the publicly

available filings, reports The Guardian online.

In her testimony, the woman who filmed the shooting from just behind Pretti wearing a pink coat identified herself as "a children's entertainer who specializes in face painting". She testified that she came to the scene on her way to work because "I've been involved in observing in my community, because it is so important to document what ICE is doing to my neighbors".

She described the harrowing scene of Pretti being tackled by federal officers after coming to the aid of another observer the agents had shoved to the ground. One federal agent then sprayed a chemical agent in the faces of Pretti and the woman he had tried to help.

AL-era power deals
costing \$1.5b a year

FROM PAGE 1

These powers included exemptions from the Public Procurement Act, limitations on judicial review and broad legal protections for decisions taken under the special provision act.

Although framed as a temporary emergency measure, the act remained in force -- through repeated extensions -- for more than 14 years and became the dominant legal framework governing power-sector contracting, the report said.

By design, the act created a parallel procurement regime operating outside the normal disciplines of competition, regulatory scrutiny and judicial review.

"Over time, this exceptional regime became normalised. The removal of competitive tension weakened the primary mechanism through which costs are disciplined in infrastructure markets," the report read.

Provisions such as guaranteed capacity payments, take-or-pay clauses, fuel cost pass-through, foreign currency indexation and sovereign guarantees protected power producers from commercial risk while locking in high costs.

"Individually, some of these provisions are not uncommon in power-sector contracts, particularly in early-stage or high-risk markets. However, under the 2010 act, they were applied cumulatively, without competitive discipline, and often without adequate benchmarking."

Though the interim government has repealed the act, the true remedy is in surgically dismantling the financial legacy left behind in the form of 20-year contracts.

exceeded reasonable benchmarks by roughly 70-80 percent.

Heavy fuel oil plants exhibited margins of approximately 40-50 percent above benchmark generation costs.

Unolicited combined-cycle gas projects were consistently above benchmark tariff bands, suggesting standardised negotiated premiums rather than cost-based pricing.

"Excess pricing was therefore not incidental or temporary; it was structural," the report said.

As the single buyer of electricity, Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) absorbed the full impact of excess pricing at the generation level.

"These costs were then transmitted mechanically into PDB's financial position and, ultimately, into the national budget."

Between fiscal 2010-11 and fiscal 2023-24, total payments to independent power producers increased more than elevenfold, while electricity generation increased only about fourfold, indicating that the financial obligations rose far faster than physical output.

Capacity payments are the primary driver of this divergence, the report said.

The fixed capacity charges have grown disproportionately relative to electricity produced, especially for underutilised plants. In many cases, the payments increase even as generation stagnates or declines.

"This confirms that excess capacity, combined with rigid contract design, converts underutilisation directly into excess payments, independent of fuel costs or operational efficiency."

As fixed capacity obligations expanded, PDB's revenues became

increasingly insufficient to cover contracted costs, leading to losses exceeding Tk 50,000 crore annually and arrears surpassing Tk 55,000 crore by fiscal 2024-25.

Over the last decade, retail electricity tariffs in Bangladesh have risen significantly across all major consumer categories, reflecting the transmission of generation cost pressures into end-user prices.

Once translated into retail terms, cost-recovery electricity tariffs in Bangladesh would likely exceed industrial tariffs in Vietnam, China and Pakistan, and approach or surpass those in India.

Besides, a number of large baseload plants are infrastructure-constrained -- unable to operate reliably even when demand exists -- due to binding fuel supply limitations and evacuation constraints.

Weak accountability and institutional capture prevented corrective action, the report said.

Legal protections, weakened regulatory oversight, market concentration and the constrained role of the PDB allowed inefficiencies to persist despite growing evidence of financial strain.

The committee warned that delays in reform carry measurable costs and compounding costs, diverting public funds from transmission upgrades, renewable energy integration, energy efficiency initiatives and social spending.

"These opportunity costs are not abstract. They represent forgone improvements in service quality, affordability and economic competitiveness."

The committee flagged six power plants as having "egregious anomalies" with potential corruption risks: Adani Power, SS Power, Summit Meghnaghat,

Reliance-JERA, Payra Coal Power Plant and Rupsha Power Plant.

It recommended cancelling the Adani Power deal and renegotiating tariffs for several others, citing what it described as "substantial proof" of corruption in the Adani agreement.

Regarding SS Power, the report said two large plants were awarded under a single contract, weakening price discovery and concentrating financial exposure.

Multiple large plants were clustered at one site, including the Summit Meghnaghat facility, approved despite tightening gas supply -- creating vulnerability to underutilisation.

In the case of Reliance-JERA, the committee said capacity that was underutilised in India was transferred to Bangladesh under a long-term contract, shifting utilisation risk to PDB amid domestic fuel constraints.

The Payra Coal Power Plant was built alongside major public investment in port infrastructure that lacks the characteristics of a viable deep-sea coal hub, embedding logistics risk into generation planning.

Rupsha Power Plant was constructed without assured fuel supply or surplus LNG capacity, leaving technically capable assets structurally underutilised.

"These anomalies did not arise by accident. They were the result of collusion designed to generate massive excess profits (rents) shared between parties. Most power purchase agreements guarantee fixed capacity payments regardless of plant utilisation -- turning stranded capacity into a recurring fiscal burden rather than a one-time loss."

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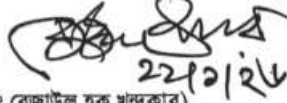
তারিখঃ- ২২/০১/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ।

“দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

খাদ্য অধিদপ্তরের অধীন নাটোর জেলার ০৬ (ছয়) টি এলএসডিভিতে সড়ক পথে খাদ্যশস্য/ খাদ্য দ্রব্য/ খাদ্যবস্তু ও অন্যান্য সামগ্রী পরিবহনের নিমিত্ত চুক্তি সম্পাদনের তারিখ হতে আগামী ০২ (দুই) বছরের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক অভ্যন্তরীণ সড়ক পরিবহন ঠিকাদার (আইআরটিসি) নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে অগ্রাধী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ ব্যক্তি ঠিকাদারদের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে-

১	মন্ত্রালয়/ বিভাগ	ঃ	খাদ্য মন্ত্রালয়
২	এজেন্সী	ঃ	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নাটোর
৩	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা	ঃ	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নাটোর
৪	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	ঃ	সরকারের যখন যেমন প্রয়োজন হয় সে অনুযায়ী নাটোর জেলার অধীন ৬ (ছয়) টি (নাটোর সদর, সিংড়া, গুপদাসপুর, বনপাড়া, গোপালপুর ও মালিঙ্গা) এলএসডিভিতে খাদ্যশস্য/ খাদ্যদ্রব্য/ খাদ্যবস্তু ও অন্যান্য দ্রব্যাদি সড়ক পথে পরিবহনের কাজ
৫	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	ঃ	স্মারক নং ১৩.০১.৬৯০০.০০৬.৪৯.০০৬.২২.২৪৪ তারিখঃ ২২/০১/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ
৬	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৭	বাজেট তহবিল সূত্র	ঃ	রাজস্ব বাজেট, বাংলাদেশ সরকার
৮	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	ঃ	১৮/০২/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন পর্যন্ত
৯	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৪/০২/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ৯:০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১২:৩০ টা পর্যন্ত
১০	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	ঃ	১। জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর দপ্তরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ ২। আঞ্চলিক খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, রাজশাহী দপ্তরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ ৩। জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর দপ্তরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ
১১	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৪/০২/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ২:৩০ টা
১২	দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করণের স্থান	ঃ	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নাটোর
১৩	প্রাক-দরপত্র সভার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৫/০২/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা
১৪	প্রাক-দরপত্র সভার স্থান	ঃ	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নাটোর
১৫	দরপত্রের মেয়াদ	ঃ	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ হতে ১২০ (একশত বিশ) দিন
১৬	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী দপ্তর	ঃ	১। জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, নাটোরের হিসাব শাখা ২। আঞ্চলিক খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, রাজশাহী হিসাব শাখা
১৭	দরপত্র দাতার অভিজ্ঞতা	ঃ	সড়ক পথে পরিবহন কাজে ২ (দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। খাদ্য বিভাগীয় খাদ্যশস্য পরিবহন কাজে ন্যূনতম ১ (এক) বছরের সহ মোট ২ (দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
১৮	দরপত্র দাখিলের নিয়মাবলী	ঃ	দুই খাম পদ্ধতিতে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। যোগ্যতা বিষয়ক প্রস্তাব সন্তোষজনক (Responsive) হলে আর্থিক প্রস্তাব খোলা হবে।
১৯	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (প্রতি সেট)	ঃ	৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা
২০	দরপত্র অংবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	ঃ	মোঃ রেজাউল হক খন্দকার, জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), নাটোর
২১	কাজের সময় কাল	ঃ	চুক্তি সম্পাদনের তারিখ হতে ০২ (দুই) বছরের জন্য
২২	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি	ঃ	৫০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা
২৩	পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি	ঃ	৫০,০০০/- (পঁচাত্তর হাজার) টাকা (চুক্তি সম্পাদনের পূর্বে জমা দিতে হবে) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে জমা দিতে হবে
২৪	পণ্যের নিরাপত্তা জামানত (পরিবহন সূচি দেয়ার পূর্বে)	ঃ	১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা (পরিবহন সূচী দেওয়ার পূর্বে দিতে হবে)
২৫	দরপত্র অংবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ও ফোন নং	ঃ	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর ফোন নং-০২৫৮৭৭৩৪০০৬
২৬	দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য প্রদানকারী	ঃ	উপজেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নাটোর সদর, নাটোর। ফোন নং-০২৫৮৭৭৩৪৫৬০৯

এ দরপত্র পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ ও বিধিমালা ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে এবং কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে সংগ্রাহক সত্তা এ নোটিশ বাতিল বা পরিবর্তন বা যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/প্রত্যাহান/ বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। অগ্রাধী দরপত্র দাতাগণ দরপত্র জারীর পর হতে অত্র অফিস চলাকালীন বিধারিত তথ্য জানতে পারবেন।



(মোঃ রেজাউল হক খন্দকার)
জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), নাটোর

ও
সভাপতি
জেলা দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি, নাটোর।
ফোন নং-০২৫৮৭৭৩৪০০৬

GD-181

Cricket loses as politics takes the field

Bangladesh excluded from T20 World Cup in a controversial decision

We fully share the frustration expressed by the World Cricketers' Association over Bangladesh's exclusion from the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup. The cricketers' body has rightly described it as "a sad moment" for cricket, and its call on stakeholders to work towards uniting the sport rather than dividing it deserves serious consideration.

Cricket's governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), last week rejected Bangladesh's request to relocate its matches scheduled in India to tournament co-host Sri Lanka, citing the impracticality of altering the fixture so close to the tournament's February 7 start. Earlier, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) sought the change after the Indian Premier League (IPL) barred Bangladesh's lone participant, Mustafizur Rahman, from joining the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), a franchise owned by Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan. Both Khan and his team reportedly received threats from several right-wing groups and the West Bengal unit of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Given the nature and gravity of these threats from Hindutva groups, the BCB declined to travel to India and requested a rearrangement of its World Cup fixtures.

Bangladesh felt further aggrieved by the ICC's decision to replace it by inviting Scotland, particularly in light of past precedents where similar requests by India and Pakistan were accommodated. India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the 2025 Champions Trophy on security grounds set such a precedent, and later the whole 2025 Men's T20 Asia Cup was relocated to the United Arab Emirates due to geopolitical tensions between Pakistan and India. This time, however, the ICC not only rejected Bangladesh's request—based on a third-party assessment of security conditions in India—but also invited a new team to take its place. The argument of logistical infeasibility is unconvincing, to say the least, as Scotland's last-minute inclusion also entails logistical preparations including arranging visas, travel, and accommodation. Add to that the very short window for the team's preparation. Scotland's entry also offers little prospect of offsetting commercial losses.

It is worth recalling that Indian diplomat-turned politician Shashi Tharoor, chairman of its parliamentary standing committee on external affairs, recently wrote in *The Times of India* that "as citizens and sports lovers, we must stand up for the principle that the playing field should remain a sanctuary for merit, not a theatre for performative nationalism." Regrettably, performative nationalism appears to have prevailed, and the ICC has failed to shield the game from politicisation.

Cricket fans worldwide, including prominent voices within India, have expressed indignation at what they see as the global regulator's double standards. The controversy now threatens to spill further into geopolitics, with the Pakistan Cricket Board apparently threatening to withdraw from the tournament and the ICC responding with warnings of harsh penalties. The world now waits to see whether the parties involved will step back from the brink and find an amicable resolution to this deepening crisis.

A blatant lack of empathy

Bureaucratic failures over parole to Saddam raise concerns

We are shocked and disturbed by the deaths of 22-year-old Kaniz Suborna Swarnali and her nine-month-old child in Bagerhat; the mother allegedly killed her infant before taking her own life. According to news reports, she was driven by prolonged mental distress while her husband, Jewel Hasan (also known as Saddam), president of the banned Chhatra League's Bagerhat Sadar unit, remained in jail and was not granted parole. Despite family claims that they had applied for his parole, he was denied the chance to attend their janaza and could only see their bodies at the prison gate. This tragic incident exposes a serious failure of the state to show basic human compassion for prison inmates and demands proper investigation.

Reportedly, Saddam was arrested in Gopalganj following the fall of the Awami League regime and has been charged in several cases, and Swarnali had been mentally broken by despair during her husband's prolonged imprisonment. Left without meaningful support, she struggled with emotional distress, social pressure and uncertainty. According to the family members, this despair drove her to take her own life after killing her infant. While proper investigations must determine the facts, the larger question remains: who will bear responsibility for these tragic deaths?

The incident also raises broader concerns about Bangladesh's parole system and its implementation. Although existing rules allow emergency parole in the event of a close relative's death, rigid procedures and a lack of compassion often undermine their purpose, as this case painfully illustrates. While the Jashore District Commissioner's Office has stated that they did not receive any parole application, a copy circulated on social media suggests that the family did apply to the Bagerhat district authorities. It later emerged that, since Saddam had been transferred to Jashore jail last December, the application should have been submitted to the Jashore district authorities instead. Because parole was denied, Saddam was forced to bid farewell to his deceased wife and son at a prison gate. The incident demonstrates bureaucratic failure and the glaring lack of empathy on the state's part.

We must also confront the wider political reality that this case demonstrates. Under successive governments, including the authoritarian Awami League regime, political cases kept individuals in jail for prolonged periods without following due process, often with catastrophic consequences for their families. The persistence of this practice, even under the interim government, seriously questions our collective commitment to justice.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

World's largest diamond discovered

On this day in 1905, a diamond that weighed over a pound was found in the Premier Mine in South Africa.

Are we getting stuck in the routine of reform?

A CLOSER LOOK



Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

At first glance, the interim administration appears to be doing what transitional governments are expected to do. The ground has been steadied. An election date has been announced and is nearing. Charters and ordinances have been drafted. The language of restoration circulates freely, carrying the reassurance that the rupture of July is being responsibly managed.

However, beneath this surface calm, something feels unresolved. Not because politics is loud—if anything, it has grown quieter compared to past election cycles—but the space in which politics is meant to unfold feels narrower than the promise of reform would suggest.

Power does not always govern through force or repression. Often, it governs through mundane procedure—timelines, expert bodies, administrative sequencing, the framing of choices as technical necessities rather than political decisions. And this is experienced not as coercion but as delay, deferral, and the gradual closing of options: through notices, legal ambiguity, and the repeated assurance that reform will follow. The talk of reforms becomes a way of managing uncertainty.

Following the 2024 uprising, reform was presented as both a moral obligation and a political promise. The near-dozen reform commissions and their recommendations, the consensus-building exercises, and finally the adoption of a national charter all pointed towards a reimagining of the state and its power structure. The language was ambitious, suggesting not merely a transition between governments but also a recalibration of how power would be exercised and contested.

But ambition alone does not transform institutions. What matters is where reform is placed in the political timeline and how it is sequenced, controlled, and insulated from political contestation. In Bangladesh's case, many of the major reform measures proposed have been procedurally deferred, their fate and likely impact all but suspended in a future that may or may not arrive.

Since August 2024, the interim government has announced reforms across nearly every major institution of the state. Constitutional amendments were promised through the July National Charter. Electoral,

judicial, anti-corruption, police, and public administration reforms were placed under review. Yet few of the reforms have crossed the threshold from proposal to enactment. The constitutional changes remain tied to future decisions, while many of the police and anti-corruption reforms remain at nascent stages. Meanwhile, electoral reform has focused largely on administration rather than political inclusion.

This pattern has a measurable outcome: reform largely as architecture, not action.

In fact, Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

International Bangladesh, remarked not long ago that the interim government effectively "surrendered" to bureaucratic power, with many reform targets largely missed. His critique was not that reform ideas were not substantive, but that resistance within the administrative machinery was never meaningfully confronted while pursuing them. Powerful interests embedded in the bureaucracy diluted or excluded key provisions, including those aimed at strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission. Despite early expectations, proposals to meaningfully reinforce ACC's independence, particularly its appointment and oversight mechanisms, have yet to materialise. Reform, when it arrived, lost its momentum; authority continued to circulate through familiar, entrenched channels.

This pattern—reform on paper, power elsewhere—is not incidental.

election—a mere four percent.

In the reform project, legitimacy was meant to be restored by opening up political space; instead, procedures have closed off participation, constrained whose voices matter, and regulated how political competition is allowed. Simply prosecuting the past regime's political actors or barring them from returning to politics, on its own, does not amount to political reform.

By treating the election as a procedural exercise rather than a reconstitutive moment, the interim government has narrowed reform precisely when political possibility was meant to expand. The result is an election that may function smoothly but yet struggle to carry the burden of expectations placed upon it.

Other areas of reform reveal similar tensions between promise and practice. As the Human Rights Watch noted in late July 2025, while some of the most visible abuses associated with the

previous regime have eased, systemic reforms to protect civil liberties and human rights remain incomplete. Arbitrary detention, politically motivated prosecutions, and threats to journalists and vulnerable groups have persisted.

Economist Debapriya Bhattacharya has made a similar point recently, but from another angle, arguing that reforms remain superficial when they rely on institutional blueprints without strengthening the social forces that sustain democratic norms. His observation matters because it exposes a deeper contradiction at the heart of our reform project. Reform was expected to be inclusive, to draw legitimacy from public participation. Instead, it has largely remained insulated: managed at a distance from the society it claims to renew. In this disconnect, the purpose of reform risks defeating itself.

For many citizens, the question is no longer whether reform will be completed, but whether it will ever touch daily political life at all. If reform is to mean more than reassurance, the logic must shift.

Electoral credibility must be treated as a matter of political architecture, not merely administrative efficiency. Transitional moments require mechanisms that widen participation, protect contestation, and prevent dissent from being neutralised as a technical inconvenience. Reform cannot be deferred to post-election promises alone. Within their limited window of authority, interim governments must establish irreversible guardrails—on administrative neutrality, prosecutorial restraint, freedom of expression, and bureaucratic accountability—that shape the way forward.

Resistance to reform must also be confronted. Bureaucratic inertia does not dissolve on its own, and reform fails mostly when power is allowed to hide behind complexity. Institutional change must be socially anchored. Minority representation must be mandated when reforms are being planned. None of this requires dramatic confrontation. But it does require a willingness to treat reform not as a sequence to be managed, but as a political space to be protected.

True, the interim government has restored a degree of calm. The harder task now is to ensure that calm does not harden into closure.

Power does not always close doors outright. Sometimes it keeps people waiting at the threshold, through the routine of procedures, reviews, and assurances. The measure of reform will not be found in the calm of election day, but in whether politics is eventually allowed to cross that threshold, long after the moment of transition has passed.

How to fix digital public service delivery in Bangladesh



GM Saiful Islam is a development professional specialising in local governance, urban planning, and results-based management.

GM SAIFUL ISLAM

Digital Public Services (DPS) are now an everyday element in citizens' lives. From land records and health appointments to general diaries and transport services, digital platforms increasingly shape how people interact with the government. Yet, the success of these digital services is not guaranteed by their existence alone; it is defined by how they perform when citizens actually try to access them at union, upazila, and district levels.

Across sectors, one challenge emerges repeatedly: fragmentation.

Multiple digital systems often operate in parallel without sufficient integration. As a result, citizens are asked to submit the same information multiple times, and service providers struggle with verification and delays. In land administration, for example, gaps between historical records, mutation registers, and digital ledgers complicate verification and slow down service delivery. These issues are not always apparent at the national level, but they are acutely felt by citizens who must return repeatedly to government

offices to complete a single application.

Infrastructure constraints further complicate service delivery. Unstable servers, slow internet connections, and limited ICT equipment disrupt services at union and upazila offices. When systems go offline, local officials have little control over resolution, but must also be on the receiving end of citizens' frustration. For citizens, infrastructure constraints result in additional travel, lost time, and increased reliance on unofficial intermediaries.

The effectiveness of digital systems largely depends on the people who operate them. Shortages of skilled staff, limited training opportunities, and frequent transfers weaken institutional memory and confidence. Even well-designed platforms lose effectiveness when frontline officials lack the support or authority to use them efficiently. On the citizens' side, limited digital literacy and lack of awareness about procedures and the correct official fees discourage direct use of digital services. Fear of making

mistakes pushes many people towards informal intermediaries, undermining equity and transparency.

Lack of inclusion also remains a central concern. Persons with disabilities, elderly citizens, and residents of remote areas face additional barriers related to accessibility, connectivity, and communication. Digital platforms that do not account for these realities risk widening, rather than narrowing, existing gaps. Inclusion is not achieved by technology alone; it requires deliberate attention to how services are communicated, supported, and delivered at the local level.

Furthermore, delays, unclear processes, and lack of feedback weaken confidence, while timely responses and transparent communication bolster it. Citizens perceive services not only by the outcomes they receive, but by how they are treated during the process. Timely responsiveness (listening, explaining, and acting) is a big part of efficiency.

Meanwhile, informal intermediaries take advantage of complex systems, unclear procedures, and weak capacity. Reducing dependency on such intermediaries requires simplifying processes, improving communication, and strengthening local support mechanisms. When citizens understand procedures and feel confident navigating services, the space for undue influence reduces.

One promising approach lies in

practical, light-touch improvements rather than large-scale system overhauls. Union Digital Centres, municipal offices, land offices, and health facilities can become more citizen-friendly through simple measures: clear display of service steps and fees, basic help desks during peak hours, and improved coordination among local offices. Such changes may appear modest, but they directly improve citizen experience.

Temporary or mobile service delivery at union or ward levels via service camps can reduce travel burdens and reach populations that struggle to access fixed offices. These initiatives are particularly valuable for elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and those living in remote areas.

Many citizens are unaware of available services, required documents, or official fees. Campaigns using multiple channels like courtyard meetings, Union Parishad offices, video displays, social media, and mobile messaging can help bridge this gap. Clear, simple information empowers citizens and reduces misinformation.

Citizen-centric digital transformation is not a one-time effort, but should be an ongoing process of adjustment, learning, and trust-building. Systems must be supported by capable institutions, informed citizens, and responsive leadership. Ultimately, digital public services succeed when they align with local realities.

POLITICAL SATIRE

Men to the rescue: A modest proposal for women’s political relief



THE SOUND AND THE FURY
Sushmita S Preetha
is an activist, writer, and outraged feminist.

SUSHMITA S PREETHA

In a generous act of national service, men across the political spectrum have stepped forward to rescue women from the exhausting burden of political participation. Panels have been formed. Microphones secured. At last, women’s rights are being discussed safely, sensibly, and above all, without women.

This is a relief to everyone involved.

Women, after all, are busy. They have revolutions to survive, harassment to endure, families to manage, jobs to show up to (frequently at unequal pay), reputations to defend, and public humiliation to absorb with grace. Why add the chaos of elections to the list? Standing for office is stressful. It requires money, stamina, exposure, and the willingness to be misrepresented daily. Men, ever thoughtful, have decided to spare women this ordeal by simply doing politics on their behalf.

It is an elegant solution.

Out of 1,981 parliamentary candidates nationwide, about 76 are women, a figure so modest it can be presented without blushing, while 30 registered political parties have achieved the remarkable feat of submitting nomination lists without a single woman among them. This, you see, is what happens when concern is properly organised.

First and foremost, applause must go to the National Consensus Commission, that shrine to male consensus-building, which gathered the nation’s finest defenders of the status quo to confront the truly destabilising prospect of women in politics. After much hand-wringing and heroic restraint, it delivered a proposal of breathtaking bravado: five percent female candidates. Five percent asked for almost nothing—and still proved too much. That most parties couldn’t even bring themselves to nominate a single woman was really just an honest admission that even symbolic inclusion requires effort. Tokenism,

it turns out, is hard work.

Credit must also be given to the Election Commission, which looked on serenely as parties violated this laughably low bar agreed upon in the July Charter (accountability is such an aggressive word). And how can one forget the interim government, many of whose members built lifelong careers peddling women’s empowerment and now oversee its quiet disappearance with the steady professionalism of people who know exactly what they are doing?

If you think about it (and women, really, should not bother to do that), women are being protected from the indignity of candidacy itself. No need to tire themselves with fundraising, smear campaigns, threats, abuse, or character assassination. True, women are receiving most of this anyway—just without the inconvenience of a seat, or any authority. But let’s not get distracted by details.

Women already do most of the unpaid work that keeps the economy from collapsing in on itself. This includes care work, emotional labour, crisis management, ensuring food security, and the small matter of reproducing the labour force. None of this appears in GDP calculations, which is how we know it is essential.

In the fields, women are bent over rice seedlings at dawn and still working when the light fades, saving seed for the next season, feeding animals, processing harvests, and running households, as if these were not already several full-time jobs. Along the water, they dry fish, mend nets, process shrimp, manage ponds, and quietly keep the entire post-harvest economy afloat. Naturally, none of this qualifies them as farmers or fisherfolk. Recognition, after all, is reserved for people who own boats, land titles, or microphones loud enough to drown reality.

In garments, women earn the foreign exchange that props up national pride, exports, and press releases. In return, they are offered long hours, low wages, and inspirational speeches about resilience. Political representation would only spoil the symmetry.

Women are also, inconveniently, busy managing violence, which is a full-time occupation in itself. Not just the cinematic

Men can debate land rights while women cultivate land they do not own. You get the gist. It is a beautiful division of labour.

Unencumbered by the unrealistic expectations of capitalist fascist patriarchy, men can, thankfully, continue their public service with the grace of people who never had to apologise for their existence. They gather in rooms designed to keep out women, reach consensus, issue statements, and nod

nominate a single woman to parliament, and manages to organise all-male panels under the banner of its women’s wing, where men gather to discuss women’s lives so women don’t have to.

The farce continues with the National Citizen Party, which arrived bearing the promise of a “new arrangement,” only to reveal that the arrangement was new mainly in branding. Like Jamaat, the NCP is keenly concerned about women, particularly about when they should step aside for the greater good. The women who stayed with the party through its many contradictions over the past year, defending it and absorbing criticism on its behalf, were eventually unceremoniously discarded when alliances had to be secured and seats redistributed. This, too, was done for women’s own good. Surely, nothing spares women the burden of politics quite like being cut loose at the moment power is negotiated.

And then there is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), now burnished into a symbol of liberal respectability and rhetorical commitment to women’s empowerment. When it came time to translate principle into practice, the party managed an impressive 3.5 percent of women candidates. Not nothing, you understand. Just very nearly. This was achieved, in part, by discarding figures like Rumin Farhana, who spent years defending the party with near-ornithological ferocity at a time when senior BNP leaders were so absent from public view that one could have searched for them with a microscope. Her reward was dismissal. Why? For the unforgivable offence of failing to heed the party line, apparently. And in a party that treats corruption and opportunism as survivable flaws, it was almost moving to see discipline enforced with such speed—once again, and unmistakably, on a woman.

It is all very caring, let me reassure you.

We should all really just heave a sigh of relief that women are being spared the chaos of elections, the mess of ambition, and the danger of visibility. They are being protected from power itself, which, frankly, can be bad for one’s skin. Instead, they can continue doing what they do best: holding everything together while being politely excluded from the decisions that affect them.

The men, generously, will take it from here.

At least until the next uprisings, when women will once again be urgently required.



ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

kind that earns headlines and hashtags, but the ordinary, bureaucratic sort: deciding which streets feel safe today, how much to say, when to shut up, which message to delete, which threat to ignore, which warning to take seriously. A constant, low-level calculation that stretches from home to office to street to screen. By the time all that is accounted for, the idea that women should also sit around pondering their political futures, drafting demands, or contesting power begins to feel wildly unrealistic. Luckily, men—freed from these minor inconveniences—have stepped in to do the thinking. It’s efficient. It keeps things moving. No one has to ask awkward questions about why women are always exhausted.

Politics is where we need men to handle the heavy intellectual lifting. Men can decide budgets while women stretch them. Men can design policies while women survive them.

gravely. They mansplain to women why now is not the time, why patience is strategic, and why they need to “trust the process.” They warn women not to fracture unity—meaning the unity of men who already agree.

This posture of benevolent supervision is perfected by Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, which insists every chance it gets that it is deeply invested in women’s wellbeing. Jamaat does not exclude women from power; it *protects* them from it. Consider the generosity of promising to reduce women’s working hours to five a day, a touching gesture of concern that somehow never extends to equal pay, job security, or the question of who will make up the lost wages. Women, apparently, need rest—but not remuneration. Authority, meanwhile, remains far too strenuous to risk. This is the same party that speaks endlessly about women’s dignity while failing to

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN ENERGY

Can we afford to not pursue clean energy?



Raida A. K. Reza
is doctoral researcher at United Nations University’s Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES), Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER), and Technische Universität Dresden.

RAIDA A. K. REZA

Conversations around energy transitions are typically focused on swift transitions, with solar panels appearing overnight on rooftops, wind farms sprouting across landscapes like mushrooms after rain. The reality, particularly for developing nations navigating complex economic pressures, tells a different story.

And for Bangladesh, a country that simultaneously grapples with climate vulnerability and economic transition, clean energy isn’t just an environmental aspiration, but a necessity that could redefine the industrial future.

Picture this: nearly 666 million people globally still live without reliable electricity, with over 85 percent concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. And while the entire population in Bangladesh is said to have access to the grid, “access” is not the same as reliability. Frequent power cuts and a heavy reliance on expensive, imported fuels make the system fragile.

While the lights are mostly on, heating energy is where the real crisis resides. Less than 30 percent of Bangladeshi households have access to clean cooking fuels like gas or electricity. Most still rely on wood or crop waste, creating indoor smoke that is a leading cause of early death in the country. This “energy poverty” isn’t just an inconvenience, but a significant health hazard to a substantial portion of the population.

However, Bangladesh suffers not only from a lack of energy access, but is also one of the world’s most climate-vulnerable nations. According to the World Bank, tropical cyclones already cost the country about \$1 billion every year. If sea levels rise by just 27 cm by 2050 (which is a very real possibility), the southern coast could lose nearly 18

percent of its farmland, plunging the country into a severe food crisis.

Every new coal or gas plant built today adds to this risk of exacerbating climate change. The irony is that Bangladesh produces very little of the world’s pollution, yet it pays one of the highest prices.

Transitioning to clean energy isn’t just about “being green,” but also about stopping the cycle of damage that drains billions from the economy. Bangladesh’s economy relies heavily on exports, with around 85 percent of its export earnings coming from the readymade garment industry. To grow further into leather, jute, and food processing, the country needs massive amounts of energy. Modern manufacturing is energy-intensive. The RMG sector requires reliable, affordable electricity for every stage of production, from spinning yarn to running sewing machines to powering climate-controlled warehouses. Leather processing demands substantial energy for tanning and finishing. Food processing and cold chain logistics are energy voracious. If Bangladesh hopes to expand and diversify its industrial base, it must solve the energy equation.

Currently, the country is stuck in an “import trap.” About 65 percent of the country’s power depends on imported fossil fuels like liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal. In 2025 alone, the cost of importing LNG jumped to nearly \$3.9 billion. So, when global fuel prices spike because of wars or supply chains, Bangladeshi factories suffer.

Clean energy offers an alternative pathway. By using sunlight and renewable resources, Bangladesh can harness energy domestically, reducing import dependence and price volatility.

Consider the RMG sector

specifically. Factories powered by rooftop solar installations coupled with energy-efficient machinery don’t just reduce carbon footprints, they lower operating costs and enhance competitiveness in international markets where there is an increasing demand for sustainable production. European and US buyers are implementing stringent environmental standards and factories powered by clean energy gain market access advantages.

Yet, the painful reality is that Bangladesh needs this transition at a time when it can least afford it financially.

The numbers paint a sobering picture. The country has already allocated \$15.7 billion for interest payments alone in fiscal year 2024–25, nearly one-fifth of the total budget. As Bangladesh graduates from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, it faces higher borrowing costs as well as reduced access to concessional financing. Tax revenues remain constrained by a narrow tax base. Development financing is becoming increasingly scarce as global crises, such as wars, pandemics, and other emergencies, dominate international attention and resources.

Climate adaptation and mitigation programmes require substantial funding through bilateral and multilateral sources. But the current geopolitical landscape doesn’t prioritise climate action when conflicts rage and economic uncertainties loom. This makes financing for clean energy much harder to find.

To make the jump to clean energy, Bangladesh needs to frame these projects not as “costs,” but as “investments.” Every dollar spent on a solar farm today is a dollar not spent on expensive foreign oil tomorrow.

Renewable energy projects create construction and operations jobs. Reduced fuel imports improve trade balances. Lower energy costs enhance industrial competitiveness. Energy access in rural areas unlocks economic opportunities previously constrained by darkness.

Renewable sources are abundant, emit minimal greenhouse gases,

and offer energy sovereignty. To stay stable, Bangladesh must move away from fossil fuels. Bangladesh has a goal: to have 40 percent renewable energy in its energy mix by 2041.

The International Day of Clean Energy, observed on January 26 is also the founding date of the International Renewable Energy Agency, and it serves as more than ceremonial recognition. It’s a call to action for just and inclusive energy transitions that benefit both people and planet.

For Bangladesh, this day should prompt reflection on uncomfortable truths. Economic stability cannot be built on unstable energy foundations. Industrial diversification cannot succeed without reliable, affordable power. Climate adaptation cannot happen while simultaneously expanding the fossil fuel infrastructure that accelerates

climate catastrophe.

Progress is taking place. Renewable energy capacity in developing countries has grown from 155 watts per capita in 2015 to 341 watts less than a decade later. But Bangladesh, along with the global community, remains off-track in terms of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7, which calls for universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030.

Of course, change takes time. The export diversification Bangladesh is seeking won’t be achieved overnight. The clean energy transition requires patient, sustained policy interventions and investments. But the foundation must be laid now, even amid fiscal constraints and global uncertainties.

The incoming government faces a momentous choice: continue down

a path of energy vulnerability and climate risk or embrace clean energy as the cornerstone of economic stability, industrial competitiveness, and climate resilience. The former threatens continued instability. The latter offers a fighting chance at a sustainable future.

For a nation that has survived cyclones, floods, and countless other challenges through resilience and ingenuity, the clean energy transition represents not a burden but an opportunity. An opportunity to power industries with the sun, to build stability on renewable foundations, and to demonstrate that climate vulnerability can catalyse climate leadership.

The question isn’t whether Bangladesh can afford this transition, but whether it can afford not to pursue it.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Kushtia
Website: eed.kushtia.gov.bd

Memo No. EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/37

Date: 25/01/2026

e-Tender Notice No. 37/2025-26
Limited Tendering Method

This is to notify all concerned that e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works. Details are given below:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work	Document last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)
1	1219095	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-04	Construction of internal roads, main gate and boundary wall at Jugia Dakhil Madrasa, Sadar, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
2	1219096	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-05	Construction of semi-Paka hall room including Repair and renovation work of EED Building at Daulatpur Dakhil Madrasa, Daulatpur, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
3	1219097	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-06	Overall repair and renovation work of existing buildings including construction of main gate at Khoksha Darul Uloom Dakhil Madrasa, Khoksha, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00
4	1219098	EED/Kush/5974/TMED/2024-25/WR-07	Construction work of Boundary wall at Bahir Char Sol Dag Dakhil Madrasa, Bheramara, Kushtia.	09-Feb-2026 16:00	10-Feb-2026 13:00

The interested persons/firms may visit website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Tanvir Islam
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Kushtia
Email: ee_kus@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-182

AGAINST FORGETTING

Chobi Mela XI bears witness to worldwide injustices



PHOTOS:
ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY

It is imperative to understand what it means to live within a wound because what follows is tracing the architecture of violence and in doing so, discover the possibilities within the cracks.

FAIZA RAMIM

As Chobi Mela XI unfolds in the country's capital, cruelty around the world continues without interruption. In the United States, a two-year-old child was detained by ICE. ICU nurse Alex Preti was killed by the same system, his hands trained to mend bodies recast as a threat. Gaza remains under occupation. Across the world, immigrants are detained, ecologies are bulldozed, communities are uprooted from ancestral homes so land can be repackaged for profit. Some of these crises dominate headlines. Others dissolve into silence, not because they lack urgency, but because fatigue has settled into the throat, and pleading begins to feel indistinguishable from being ignored.

In an interview, poet Richard Siken says, "Art doesn't come from trauma, art comes from curiosity." And we are most

curious when the emotions we feel are so intense that even more than tending to them or managing to live through them, understanding them feels as crucial as breathing. Living with grief is painful, but living through meaningless grief is impossible. It is easy to mistake this exhibition as portrayals of trauma, of grieving, but such can't be said when that is the reality people exist within. But it is just an exhibition of resistance, resilience and endurance than of torture and exploitation, sometimes more former than the latter.

It is imperative to understand what it means to live within a wound because what follows is tracing the architecture of violence and in doing so, discover the possibilities within the cracks.

Chobi Mela, in its eleventh year, gathers artists and activists from across the world to chart an atlas of violence and the survival that insists beneath it. Samar Abu Eloul's *Out of Gaza*, the face of the festival, documents survivors evacuated to Qatar for medical treatment. Samaa Emad's *Genocide Kitchen* speaks to the ingenuity of human beings who find ways to sustain



one another within systematic starvation.

The exhibition refuses to locate violence in one geography or one type of body. Karachi LaJamia documents the filling of rivers and canals to produce hegemonic infrastructures, displacing native communities to serve a privileged fraction. Through a Guided Meditation in Urdu, the artist asks the listener to return the body to itself, to sit with the tremor beneath the surface, imagine themselves as one with nature, and of the sea's tides towards the Mazar as someone attempting to reconnect with their lover.

Since the dawn of the world, the atlas has shifted many times. The cartographer has erased and made up demarcations. Through colonial extraction and militarisation, rivers are rerouted. Dams are built for human advantage. But water finds its path. Returning to its course cannot be called destruction when the land is reclaiming what was taken from it.

Toni Morrison describes flood as a way of remembering. The flood that we know now used to hold a different meaning. It was regarded as a blessing, a force that replenished soil and promised harvest. People in their rightful land, who knew how to respect and love the soil that sustains them, stood on mountains and offered gratitude for what the waters carried.



Thao Nguyen Phan's *Becoming Alluvium* tells of two brothers who died in flood and return as an Irrawaddy dolphin and a water hyacinth, speaking of past lives and altered forms. There is tenderness in the idea that their new existence holds less power to harm, as opposed to being humans. Vietnam's rapid commercialisation, driven by tourism and the desire to avoid obsolescence, frames renewal as progress. But the actions of capitalism speak more of what it discards than what it creates: histories of violence, of destruction and injustice. The infrastructure

is a front attempting to hide and erase its recurring impurity, unforgivable sins towards humans, towards nature.

Nature does not forget. Nature does not negotiate. But unfairness exists here too. The burden falls unevenly. The people least responsible remain the most exposed.

The World Bank notes that the seventy-four lowest income countries contribute only a small share of global emissions, yet they face a dramatic rise in climate-related disasters, nearly eight times more in the past decade than in the 1980s. By 2050, unchecked climate change could drive more than 200 million people into internal displacement and push up to 130 million into poverty.

The exhibition continues to widen its lens throughout multiple

geographies. Myriam Boulos documents the Lebanese revolution of 2019, the economic collapse that followed, and the Beirut port explosion in *What's Ours*. Felipe Romero Beltrán traces the suspended lives of nine young men in detention centres, waiting for a verdict while trying to cross a border. Daniel Chatard records infrastructural destruction in Germany. Mosfiqur Rahman Johan holds memories of enforced disappearance. Jannatul Mawa draws attention to the erased contributions of women. Sumi Anjuman documents violence in domestic spaces endured by women who work simply to survive.

The art extends beyond photography across multiple mediums. Short films, bioscopes, interactive pixel games, flipbooks, television screens, guided meditations. The exhibition does not allow distance. It pulls the viewer into the grain of other lives until engagement becomes unavoidable. It demands introspection, to open your eyes and unbrand liberation. The outrage that you inevitably feel is its own form of clarity.

Chobi Mela is taking place across multiple locations: DrikPath Bhubon, Shilpakala Academy, the National Museum, Alliance Française Dhanmondi, and the Joyeeta Foundation. Artist talks are scheduled at the Joyeeta Foundation, while workshops and portfolio reviews take place at the Pathshala South Asian Media Institute in DrikPath Bhubon. Shilpakala Academy is also arranging art and education programmes for school children from 25 to 29 January. The opening rally was held on 16 January, and the festival is scheduled to continue until 30 January.

NEWS

EC ready to deliver free, fair polls

FROM PAGE 12

constitutional responsibility, Nasir Uddin said the government was providing all necessary support to the EC, with security, law and order, and election-related matters receiving the highest priority.

"Law enforcement agencies and relevant government institutions are working to ensure a peaceful, orderly, and secure voting environment," he said.

The CEC expressed hope for continued cooperation from diplomats in advancing the electoral process.

He said the upcoming referendum and parliamentary election were key milestones for strengthening democratic solidarity and restoring public confidence in state institutions, as the country stood at a democratic crossroads.

He said the commission was working to make the entire electoral process independent, fair, neutral, and credible. Preparations have been completed through a coordinated and multi-dimensional approach,

including legal reforms, institutional readiness, stakeholder consultations, and effective planning.

Nasir noted that UN agencies had provided significant technical assistance to the voter registration process, contributing to its success.

The CEC also said the boundaries of the country's 300 parliamentary constituencies had been reviewed based on citizens' demands, legal principles, and fairness, and that constituency boundaries had been redrawn where justified.

On postal voting, he announced that for the first time the EC has introduced an information technology-based postal ballot system for Bangladeshis living abroad under the "Out of Country Voting" framework.

About 800,000 expatriate voters have registered under this system. Postal voting has also been introduced domestically, allowing government officials, election staff working outside their constituencies, and registered voters in legal custody to cast their ballots.

After presenting election-related statistics, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah took questions from the diplomats.

Election commissioners Abdur Rahmani Mashud, Begum Tahmida Ahmed, and Md Anwarul Islam Sarkar were also present. The briefing was moderated by EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed.

Speaking to reporters after the briefing, CEC Nasir said foreign diplomats in Bangladesh had expressed full confidence in the EC's ability to hold a free, fair, neutral, and credible election.

"They expressed satisfaction with our overall readiness and appreciated our efforts. They also conveyed their full confidence in the commission regarding a free and fair election," he said.

On law enforcement deployment during the polls, he said the commission had informed the diplomats that the army and Ansar forces would assist the police in ensuring security.

Three candidates omit UK assets

FROM PAGE 12

However, UK corporate filings show that the net assets of the chamber are worth Tk 3.5 crore, and that he owns 95 percent of its shares.

Quamruzzaman said he forfeited his British citizenship on December 22, 2025.

His case was among those deliberated by the EC, which ultimately declared his candidacy valid on January 21.

Quamruzzaman told this newspaper that he does not earn anything from Coombe Hill Development and therefore did not mention it in his affidavit.

"Lawyers are often appointed as directors in companies. I was similarly made a director there," he said.

The nationality of Mohammed Koyor Ahmed, BNP's candidate for

Sunamganj-3, is listed as "British" in UK corporate filings.

However, in his affidavit, Koyor stated that he neither holds dual citizenship nor has held any foreign citizenship in the past.

British corporate records show that Koyor was the director of a company called Sonargaon Indian Cuisine Limited for 14 years until it was dissolved in October 2022.

When the company was incorporated in 2008, Koyor was a Bangladeshi national.

From 2009 onwards, however, corporate documents list him as British. The records were duly authenticated.

The company went bankrupt and was liquidated in 2014.

At the time of liquidation, it owed £303,132 to its creditors, most of

which was owed to the UK's income tax authority.

This is further reflected in the corporate filings of another company he registered in 2016, where his nationality is again listed as British.

In his affidavit, Koyor stated that he earns around Tk 15 lakh annually from the UK.

However, he did not disclose any overseas income of his wife, Taslima Akhter Lima.

Lima, a British national, owns four active companies in the UK, according to the affidavit. The annual returns of these companies show that all are currently loss-making ventures.

This newspaper made multiple attempts over several days to reach Koyor by phone, but he did not respond.

Police probing

FROM PAGE 2

Defence in Narisingdi, said, "We got information about the fire from highway police around 3:20am. We went to the spot and brought the fire under control within 15 minutes."

Although he claimed that primary investigation suggested the fire had originated from an electric short circuit, a CCTV camera footage that went viral on social media showed a man was loitering in front of the workshop before it caught fire.

SI Ishaq said an analysis of the footage showed that the man stayed for around one hour and 20 minutes near the workshop that night.

"He had bread, sitting near the workshop. We saw the man collecting dry waste and setting them on fire to warm himself."

"We suspect that the waste in front of the workshop was mixed with flammable substances like petrol or kerosene. When the fire spread quickly, the man left the scene," he said.

"It appears to us that he was a vagabond. We are trying to identify and arrest him," said the police officer.

Asked about the fire service official's claim that the fire originated from an electric short circuit, Ishaq said, "I don't know how he [fire official] said this."

Rubel on Sunday evening filed a case over Chanchal's death, accusing unnamed persons. The body was handed over to family members after autopsy, he said.

"We want the police to find out the truth... We want justice," said Rubel.

Contacted, the police station's Officer-in-Charge ARM Al Mamun said, "We are investigating the reason behind the incident."

Bagerhat BCL leader's wife, child laid to rest

FROM PAGE 12

jail gate instead.

Speaking to this newspaper, Bagerhat Deputy Commissioner Golam Md Baten said Saddam's family had applied for his release on parole and added that as Saddam was at Jashore jail, the authority to grant parole rested with the Jashore deputy commissioner.

"I could not act on the application directly, but I advised the family to approach the Jashore DC. I also contacted the Jashore jail superintendent to ensure they received assistance."

Contacted, Jashore Deputy Commissioner Ashek Hasan said he had not received any parole application from Saddam's family seeking his release.

Earlier on Saturday, police recovered the bodies of Swarnali and her child from their residence in Sabekdanga village. After post-mortem examinations at Bagerhat 250-bed District Hospital, the bodies were handed over to the family.

Speaking to reporters, Swarnali's brother Shubho said his sister had married Saddam around five years ago. She had been under severe

mental distress since her husband's arrest following the fall of the Awami League regime on August 5, 2024, and his subsequent implication in several cases.

"My sister had been mentally distressed since her husband's imprisonment. She tried in many ways to secure his release. This caused severe mental stress and depression," he claimed.

Subarna's father, local Jatiya Party leader Ruhul Amin Howlader, said, "My daughter died by suicide. We do not want to blame anyone. We applied to receive the bodies of my daughter and grandson without delay. Now we will follow whatever decision the administration takes."

Officer-in-Charge of Bagerhat Sadar Police Station Mohammad Masum Khan said a murder case had been filed over the death of the child.

"At this stage, whether the death of Subarna was a murder or a suicide will be determined after the official autopsy report is received," he said yesterday, adding that further legal steps would depend on the findings.

A RIGHTS VIOLATION: ASK
Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday said that denying parole to Saddam

was a violation of the constitution and international human rights law.

"Despite an application from the family amid the extreme humanitarian circumstances arising from the deaths of his wife and child, denying parole release and refusing him the opportunity to participate in the janaza and burial has, in effect, subjected him to inhuman and degrading treatment."

"This constitutes a direct violation of article 35(5) of the constitution," said a statement signed by ASK Chairperson and Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna.

Citing international law, ASK said Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, while Article 10(I) requires that all persons deprived of liberty be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity.

Allowing a grieving prisoner to see the faces of his deceased wife and child for five minutes at the jail gate and depriving him of the opportunity to attend the janaza and burial are wholly inconsistent with these provisions of the ICCPR, the statement said.

Torture and screams 82 lakh use illicit drugs in country ICT verdict in Chankharpul

FROM PAGE 3

He told the tribunal that interrogators questioned him about his social media posts, threatened to kill him, and said he had been detained on government orders.

Hasinur said he was first picked up on July 9, 2011, while serving as a lieutenant colonel at his office inside Mymensingh Cantonment.

He said senior officers summoned him late at night, forcibly detained him and took him to Dhaka, where he was held for 43 days inside an interrogation cell, blindfolded and handcuffed.

He was later court-martialed on what he described as a "false and fabricated" charge of involvement with the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul Jihad and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

His appeal against the verdict was never disposed of. He said he was released in 2014 on the order of then army chief Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan.

Hasinur said he was again abducted and forcibly disappeared on August 8, 2018. He said he was taken to a secret facility where he was beaten, kept in filthy and damp rooms under glaring lights, and subjected to electric shocks. Masked interrogators threatened to kill him and dump his body, warning that he was being held on "government orders".

He alleged that interrogators demanded access to his Facebook account and questioned him about his writings against then army chief Gen Aziz Ahmed, the 2014 election, and what they described as "negative" writings about the Awami League and India.

Hasinur claimed the facility was inside the DGF Headquarters complex near Dhaka Cantonment and was referred to as Aynaghar by guards themselves.

He said he was finally released on February 22, 2020, after nearly 18 months in secret detention.

Old video, fake media

FROM PAGE 3

The national election is ahead. You must exercise your voting rights yourselves and form a government of your choice."

At the time the fact-check report was published, the most viral version of the clip on TikTok garnered 26,000 views, 900 reactions and 100 shares.

However, Rumor Scanner's fact check found that the video is neither recent nor linked to the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election. The footage dates back to 2023 and shows remarks made by the president in the context of the 12th national parliamentary election.

During verification, fact-checkers found a video titled "Let the upcoming election be fair: Mohammed Shahabuddin" published on February 13, 2023, on the YouTube channel of ATN News. The circulated clip matches this original video.

In the original footage, the president was speaking ahead of the 12th national

parliamentary election held on January 7, 2024. The same information was later confirmed through a video report published on the YouTube channel of DBC News on the same day.

Separately, Dismislab identified a fake photocard circulated on Facebook claiming that supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami and its alliance clashed in Phulbari on January 22, the first day of election campaigning. The photocard carried the logo of Ekattor TV and followed the visual style commonly used by the outlet.

However, Dismislab found that Ekattor TV did not publish any such photocard or report on its official Facebook page or website on that date.

Dismislab also contacted Ekattor TV for clarification. Arif Rahman Shibly, online editor and head of output at Ekattor TV, said, "This is definitely not ours. The card has been photoshopped over our design. We also did not publish any such news anywhere."

FROM PAGE 3

BMU and Research and Management Consultants Limited jointly conducted the study between February and June last year. The findings were disseminated at a programme at BMU yesterday.

According to a BMU press release, data were collected using the Network Scale-Up Method (NSUM) from 13 districts and 26 upazilas across all eight divisions.

The research was supervised by the Department of Narcotics Control. The findings were presented by Chief Investigator Prof Saif Ullah Munshi, also dean of the Faculty of Basic Science and Para-Clinical Sciences.

The total estimated number of people using any type of substance nationwide stands at 81,94,605, the survey said.

Cannabis was identified as the most widely used drug, with around 61 lakh users. It was followed by yaba or methamphetamine (approximately 22.92 lakh users) and alcohol (20.20

lakh).

The survey estimated that around 39,000 people inject drugs, placing them at high risk of HIV, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

Other substances used include codeine phosphate (3.39 lakh users), heroin (3.22 lakh), and sleeping pills (3.05 lakh). Smaller numbers were reported for crystal meth or ice (11,888 users), LSD (5,095), and other substances (1,35,864).

The prevalence rate of substance use varied significantly across divisions. Mymensingh recorded the highest rate at 6.02 percent, followed by Rangpur at 6.00 percent and Chattogram at 5.50 percent.

Lower prevalence rates were observed in Rajshahi (2.72 percent) and Khulna (4.08 percent).

Division-wise estimated numbers of substance users are: Barishal 4,04,118; Chattogram 18,79,503; Dhaka 22,87,970; Khulna 7,26,210; Mymensingh 7,60,812; Rajshahi 5,66,509; Rangpur 10,80,588; and Sylhet 4,88,141.

3,000 leprosy cases detected

FROM PAGE 3

She said 2,640 new cases were detected in the first nine months of last year, while the figures were 3,519 in 2024 and 3,639 in the previous year.

The National Leprosy Programme, in collaboration with NGOs, has been identifying new patients and providing treatment, she said.

There is a national strategic plan for 2023 to 2030 and an updated national guideline for treatment, she added, but said several barriers were holding back their efforts.

She said the national programme currently has no funds to continue essential activities such as training, capacity building, assessment and surveillance, while many posts remain vacant.

Talking to this correspondent after the programme, she said that following the expiry of the

sectoral programme last year, operations have been continuing with funding provided by the World Health Organization.

She said a massive drive is needed in high-burden districts to detect new cases and ensure patients receive treatment.

Shishir Moral, a special correspondent at Prothom Alo, said leprosy has long been neglected and receives very little media coverage.

Rajesh Narwal, deputy representative of WHO Bangladesh, said media and communities need to come forward to create awareness about leprosy.

Shiekh Momena Moni, an additional secretary of the health ministry, said many with leprosy are afraid to disclose their condition due to superstition. She also emphasised the need to address manpower and infrastructure challenges in leprosy treatment.

Prof Abu Jafor, director

In Bangladesh, treatment and rehabilitation services for drug users remain very limited.

The study found that only 13 percent of drug users have ever accessed treatment or rehabilitation services. Although more than half have attempted to quit, most were unsuccessful due to the lack of proper treatment for drug dependence, counselling, and social and financial support.

Drug users identified treatment and rehabilitation services (69 percent), counselling (62 percent), and employment support (41.2 percent) as their most urgent needs.

About 68 percent also reported facing stigma and discrimination within their families and communities.

BMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Shahinul Alam stressed the need for political commitment and continued research to combat drug abuse. DNC Director General Hasan Maruf called for sustained social movements and collective campaigns to counter the threat.

FROM PAGE 3

The prosecution alleges that during the uprising, the eight accused committed crimes against humanity by murdering six unarmed civilian protesters as part of a widespread and systematic attack.

Former DMP commissioner Habibur, joint commissioner Sudip, additional deputy commissioner Akhtarul,

Land rights, legal recognition

FROM PAGE 3

Communication Officer Hrasraching Chowdhury Rony moderated the session.

In his opening remarks, Kapaeng Foundation Executive Director Pallab Chakma said concern for indigenous issues remained limited.

Presenting the keynote paper, Kapaeng Foundation Programme Manager Ujjal Azim said plainland indigenous communities had lived in the region for centuries with distinct languages, cultures and nature-based livelihoods, yet remained marginalised within the state structure.

He placed five demands, including constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples, formation of a separate land commission for plainland communities, ensuring indigenous representation in development processes, creating indigenous friendly education and healthcare systems, and institutional support to preserve indigenous languages and culture through textbooks and the media.

Highlighting ground realities, Serila Lamin, a representative from the indigenous community,

said Khasi communities in Moulvibazar's Kulaura had lived there for generations but still lacked land ownership.

Eugene Nockrek, president of the Joyenshahi Indigenous Development Council, said Garo communities in Madhupur continued to be denied land rights despite long-term habitation.

"Problems arise because indigenous people traditionally occupied forest land without formal documents," he said.

Kubraj member Monika Khongla said Khasi communities had lived in Sylhet even before British rule, but land disputes persisted due to exclusion during the 1956 land record process.

"Forest ownership has been handed over to the district administration and forest department, while indigenous people face false cases and harassment," she said, also warning against land grabbing in the name of tourism and development.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration Brengzon Chambugong said the land ownership crisis stemmed from a colonial mindset inherited from British rule.

"Without changing this mentality and ensuring indigenous inclusion in lawmaking, these problems will persist," he said, supporting demands for a land commission and a separate directorate for plainland indigenous peoples.

Association for Land Reform and Development Executive Director Shamsul Huda said unresolved indigenous issues remained in several ordinances yet to be enacted into law.

"A forest commission with indigenous representation is essential for protecting both forests and indigenous rights," he said.

National Human Rights Commission Secretary Sebastian Rema said, "Without coordination within the state structure and unity among indigenous communities, these problems cannot be resolved."

PRAYER
TIMING

JANUARY 26

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 5:35

12:45

4:15

5:46

7:15

JAMAAT 6:10

1:15

4:30

5:50

7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ

Memo No. 37.01.4101.000.103.61.0002.26.35



Office of the Registrar

Jashore University of Science and Technology

Jashore-7408, Bangladesh

Date: 25 Jan 2026

Admission Circular

(Full-time/ Part-time M.Phil and Ph.D Program)

Applications are invited for admission in full-time/part-time PhD programs for the following departments:
1) Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), 2) Environmental Science and Technology (EST), 3) Microbiology (MB), 4) Fisheries and Marine Bioscience (FMB), 5) Chemical Engineering (ChE), 6) Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (GEBT), 7) Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE), 8) Petroleum and Mining Engineering (PME), 9) Nutrition and Food Technology (NFT), 10) Pharmacy (PHARM), 11) Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE), 12) Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS), 13) Physics (PHY), 14) Chemistry (CHEM), 15) Mathematics (MATH), 16) English (ENG), 17) Food Engineering (FE), 18) Accounting and Information Systems (AIS), 19) Biomedical Engineering (BME), 20) Finance and Banking (FB), 21) Management (MGT), 22) Textile Engineering (TE), 23) Marketing (MKT), 24) Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (PTR), 25) Nursing and Health Science (NHS), 26) Climate and Disaster Management (CDM), 27) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FVM), 28) Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) and 29) Applied Statistics and Data Science (ASDS)
This invitation for admission is applicable for January-2026 semester of 2025-2026 academic year.
• General qualifications, conditions and the process of admission form collection and submission of the PhD program are available in the university website (<https://just.edu.bd/notices>) or in the respective departments.
• The application form has to be filled-up properly and submitted to the respective department by **01/02/2026** (excluding holidays).

Engr. Md. Ahsan Habib
Registrar

GD-178

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project

Directorate of Technical Education

F-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Memo No. 57.03.0000.051.07.881.25-357

Date: 25/01/2026

Amendment 1

Package No: CP-GD-34

Package Name: Supply, installation and commissioning of Full Mission Engine Room Simulator, Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator & High Voltage Simulator for Ship Building and Marine Technology of Institute of Marine Technologies

Document Originally Issued on: 28-October-2025

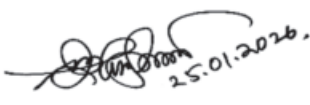
Amendment Issued on: 25-January-2026

The tender document was originally issued on 28 October 2025. As per the original tender document, the deadline for submission of requests for clarification was 20 November 2025. During this period, several queries were received from potential bidders.

The Procuring Entity (PE) conducted multiple meetings with the end users and other relevant stakeholders to address the issues raised. In the meantime, the tender submission deadline was extended twice. As per Corrigendum-2, the final date of tender submission is 15 February 2026.

Based on discussions addressing the queries received from the suppliers and the requirements of the end users, necessary amendments have been incorporated into the Tender Document. The amended tender document will be provided to all bidders who have already purchased the tender document and will also be made available at the project office to allow further participation of potential bidders.

The tender submission and opening date and time shall remain unchanged, in accordance with Corrigendum-2.



Mir Zahid Hasan
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
ASSET Project
Directorate of Technical Education
E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd

GD-184



ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

Dhaka South City Corporation

নগর ভবন, ঢাকা

ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৭১৮০-৮১, ৯৫৫৭১৮৪, ৯৫৫৭১৮৬-৮৯, ৯৫৫৮২৫৫-৫৯, ৯৫৫৮৩৫৭-৬০, www.dscc.gov.bd

স্মারকঃ ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.১২.০০.১৭০.২০২৬

তারিখঃ ২৫/০১/২৬

আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন

আপনার শিশুরে টিকা দিন

গ্রিডলকে বই উপহার দিন

পুনঃ দরপত্র নোটিশ

বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কাজের গতিশীলতা ও মানোন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা প্রাপ্তির লক্ষ্যে নতুন নিবন্ধন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর আওতাধীন এলাকায় নিয়োজিত ০৫টি ওয়ার্ডের (ওয়ার্ড নং-৪৪, ৬৯, ৭০, ৭২ ও ৭৫) প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত অনুসরণপূর্বক আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ক) প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলীঃ

৯. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান কার্যক্রম অনলাইনে সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নগর ভবন ও আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয় থেকে সরাসরি আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়/বিক্রয় এবং জমা প্রদান করা যাবে না।

১০. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের জন্য ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের চলতি হিসাব নং-২০০০১৭৮৩৯, সোনালী ব্যাংক, নগর ভবন শাখায় ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার মাত্র) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা প্রদান করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

১১. ওয়েবসাইট <https://dscc.gov.bd> হতে নিবন্ধন আবেদনপত্র ও প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলী/TOR (Terms of Reference) ডাউনলোড পূর্বক উল্লিখিত নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী আবেদনপত্র যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে চাহিদাকৃত কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাবের অনুকূলে প্রযোজ্য সকল ডকুমেন্টস দাখিল করতে হবে।

১২. নিবন্ধনের জন্য আর্থিক প্রস্তাবে উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের সমপরিমাণ অর্থ মেয়র/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডারটি (মূলকপি) প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর, নগর ভবন, ঢাকাসিক বরাবর জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে পে-অর্ডারটির স্ক্যান কপি অনলাইনে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।

১৩. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ই' এর সাথে কারিগরি প্রস্তাব মূল্যায়ন সংক্রান্ত প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদি সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

১৪. স্বাক্ষরিত আর্থিক প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ঈ' এর সাথে সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের ব্যাংক রশিদ এবং নিবন্ধন মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার জমা প্রদানের রশিদ জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আর্থিক প্রস্তাব গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

১৫. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব পৃথকভাবে সংযুক্ত করে ই-মেইলসমূহে cwmo@dscc.gov.bd, administrator@dscc.gov.bd, ceo@dscc.gov.bd প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

১৬. ইতিমধ্যে যে সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদান করেছেন, তাদের পুনরায় আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদানের প্রয়োজন নেই। এক্ষেত্রে শুধুমাত্র নিবন্ধন ফরম পূরণসহ চাহিত তথ্যাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।

খ) আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের সময় নিম্নে উল্লেখ করা হলোঃ

আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	আবেদনপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়
তারিখঃ ২৬/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ হতে ২৮/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ	তারিখঃ ২৮/০১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ
সময়ঃ বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	সময়ঃ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ নোটিশে উল্লেখিত সময়ের পরে কোন আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান গ্রহণযোগ্য বিবেচিত হবে না।



মোঃ মাহাবুবুর রহমান তালুকদার
এয়ার কমন্ডার
প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তা
বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা বিভাগ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৭৫/২০২৫-২৬

জিডি-১৮৭

Chittagong centred and de-centred A FORGOTTEN HISTORY

One reason for Chittagong's absence from historical records is that for a large part of its life it was under Arakan. Therefore, rather than studying Chittagong from Indian sources, reconstructing its history from Arakanese records that have engaged scholarly attention since the late nineteenth century makes more sense.

RILA MUKHERJEE

The previous article on Chittagong highlighted its nature as a frontier town in Harikela. The Markandeya Purana, one of the earliest of the major Puranas, validated Chittagong's marginality from South Asia by locating it within Bhadrasva-varsha as opposed to Bharatavarsa. One of the island continents in Puranic cosmic classification, geographic imagination saw Bhadrasva-varsha as a separate region: "Hear from me of the continent Bhadrāsva, which is situated east of the magnificent eastern mountain Devakūta." At the same time, given Chittagong's thousand-year-plus history in trade, its absence in sea-faring texts such as Periplus Maris Erythraei and in early navigational accounts is strange, unless we reference the geographer Claudius Ptolemy's placement of Chittagong within India Extra Gangem as opposed to India Intra Gangem, or "India within the Ganges," within which lay India.

affecting Samatata's networks—the end of Amshuvarma's rule in Nepal (621), the near-simultaneous deaths of Tibet's Songtsen Gampo, Kamrup's Bhaskaravarma and North India's Harshavardhana (all ca. 650), and the Sassanid fall in Persia (651). The trading hub now shifted southeast from Samatata. Marundanatha's seventh-century Kalapur copperplate had included Srihatta in coastal Samatata, but large deposits of Harikela coins indicate it becoming part of eighth-ninth-century Harikela. Clearly, Samatata's declining trade had shifted Srihatta's networks towards Harikela.

II. An early centring in Harikela
Seventh-century Chittagong city started rewriting the cultural paradigm from the margin, challenging traditional models of linear and totalisable historiography. Such marginocentric cities are at odds with the mainstream culture within which they find themselves. Francois Pyrard wrote of the wars between Arakan, Ayutthaya and Pegu: "the



Image 3: Pussa, the Chinese Cybele or Isis, with 'the Sacred Characters which they borrowed from the Brachmans, and which express the great attributes of the deity'. From Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 1667, p. 128.

By the tenth century, however, Harikela was monetised. Fewer land grants compared to Samatata, and the purchase of land for donation, indicate a scarcity of free land (hill tracts and saline lands impeded cultivation). Suchandra Ghosh has pointed out that lands were purchased with coin money and granted to the donee, while no such reference to direct purchases can be found in the Samatata grants.

Harikela re-enters the early tenth-century historical record, again as a mandala with Vardhamanapura as capital under Rajadhiraja Samaramarganka Attakaradeva. Perhaps hailing from Arakan, was he Bengal's Trailokya Chandra's (ca. 905–25) vassal? An Akara-type coin has been found with the name 'Attakara', suggesting links between the Akara families of Chittagong and Arakan. Sri Simghagandachandra's late tenth-early eleventh-century coin in Arakan's Kywede hoard has a script similar to the proto-Bengali script. An eleventh-century Shitthaung Pillar inscription evinces contacts with Southeast Bengal's Govindachandra (r. 1020–55).

III. Interregnum

The period from the ninth-tenth



Image 2: Yunnan stamp with Nagari-style characters.

centuries (when Arab traders came to Samandar) until the thirteenth (when Hinduism and Burmese Buddhism entered Chittagong and Arakan) is hazy for Chittagong, but records suggest that a tentative centring had lapsed into a de-centred space. Did the de-centring have something to do with events in Arakan in the post-Vesali period, which saw a break with earlier traditions and the abandonment of symbols of pre-tenth-century rulership? If so, our argument for seeing Chittagong's history through an Arakanese lens is reinforced.

The eleventh century saw the Bengal-Arakan compact collapsing. The Vesali kings had adopted Bengali-Hindu style regnal names, but in the interregnum between the Vesali and Laun-kret (Launggyet) dynasties, and even into the early Laun-kret period, regnal names were either of local origin, or of a high-status Bagan-Buddhist model, or drawn from post-Bagan era Burman dynastic lists. Names began fitting more closely into the pattern of Burman kingship. Although Bagan's hold over Arakan was purely nominal, inscriptions were no longer written in Devanagari but in a Bagan-style Burmese script instead. As proof of the breakdown of

the Vesali kingship model, there were no further issuances of coronation coins. This corresponds to a similar lack of minted coinage in eleventh- to thirteenth-century Bengal.

IV. De-centring

Chittagong was now constrained at either end. Rajendra Chola I invaded Bengal ca. 1023. Bagan's Anawrahta invaded Arakan ca. 1018, and his successors claimed the northern part of Arakan's Chandra kingdom. Tributary relations with Bagan gave Arakan a direct route into Yunnan. Zhou Qufei stated (1178) that Dali was only five days' journey from Bagan. Did Chittagong leverage this new connection? A pictorial description of a mission through eastern India to the Dali court circa 1180 shows Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhist symbols. A Yunnan stamp with Nagari-style characters and an image of Pussa, the Chinese Cybele or Isis, along with 'the Sacred Characters which they borrowed from the Brachmans, and which express the great attributes of the deity' in a work dated 1667, shows further Indic influences (images 1–3). Were these influences transmitted through Chittagong?

Coins and inscriptions reveal Harikela to be a land without a centre, unlike Pala Bengal, Laun-kret Arakan, and Burmese Bagan at this time. The restricted circulation of the Akara



Image 1: Mission to the Dali court in Yunnan, ca. 1180, showing Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhist symbols (Source: Taipei "Long Roll", National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan). Note the vajra at the very top and the script. Alexander C. Soper and Helen B. Chapin, 'A Long Roll of Buddhist Images', I–IV, *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 32 (1970–1971).

coins, despite Arab traders visiting the port of Samandar from the first half of the ninth century, suggests they may have been withdrawn from circulation and melted due to the demands of foreign trade. But al-Iḍrisī's description, ca. mid-twelfth century, suggests an extensive hinterland rather than declining numismatic vitality—he found aloes wood, yak tails, rhinoceros horns, and forest products from Kamarun (Kamrup) being exported from Samandar.

The Harikela coins circulated for nearly three centuries after the Samatata coins vanished. Then, a political and economic destabilisation across mainland Southeast Asia saw a simultaneous disappearance of minted coins at Sukhothai, Bagan, Angkor, and Harikela. Standardised silver and gold lumps served for transactions. Land grant records, not coins, reveal Harikela's subsequent history. Since Arakan's kings were devout Buddhists (Dharmavijaya [ca. 665–701] had called himself paramesvara, playing on a term referencing Śiva, 'who has given cause for crying throughout the Rudra-lineage' [i.e. Śiva] in Vesali's Odein inscription), what happened when Nathism operated as a bridge between Tantric Buddhism and Saivism, or when land grants invoking Hindu deities were made? The distinguished historian-archaeologist Ahmad Hasan Dani noted that Ladahachandra (1000–20), although Buddhist, was a Krishna devotee. Land was granted to the deity Ladaha-madhava-bhattarakā at Pattikera, and he performed tarpana for his father, the deceased Kalyanachandra, at Varanasi.

Ranavankamalla Harikeladeva's Mainamati copper-plate (1220) shows Harikelamandala coming under Comilla's Pattikera kingdom in Samatata, on the Meghna's eastern side between Dhaka and Chittagong. Amicable contacts with Tripura and Arakan are visible in terracotta plaques representing Arakanese and seemingly Burmese peoples at Mainamati. Sena chieftain Damodara Deva (1231–43), profiting from turmoil after Viśvarūpasena's death, then established an independent kingdom comprising Tripura, Noakhali and Chittagong. Archaeologist Rajat Sanyal sees a syncretic milieu appearing with land grants to Brahmins (Damodara's Chittagong Plate of 1243), Buddhist viharas (Pandita Vihara was a centre diffusing Mahayana Tantricism), and images (Chittagong was also a Mahayanist site with a large number

of images; two were bronzes of Padmapani Avalokītesvara). A bronze Buddha image found in a mosque depicts him with his left palm placed below the navel and a vajra at the pedestal's centre. Another bronze Buddha image, similar in all respects to the former, is covered with gold leaf. In 1927, a large Mahayanist hoard was discovered at Anwara: 61 Buddhist images, two miniature shrines, and three image fragments. Some show affinities to Nalanda bronze images, and others to Burmese bronzes, proving the existence of a local centre of beautifully executed Buddhist art that formed a link in the chain of its development and extension to Burma, Lan Na, Sukhothai and Sri Lanka.

V. Breakdown

The thirteenth century was very turbulent for the Bay politics. Mongol expansion left polities without discernible centres in the region. The southern Bay of Bengal vacuum created by the thirteenth-century Chola decline was exacerbated by Srivijaya's fading networks. Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat), Boni (northwest-coast Borneo) and Jambi (mid-east coast Sumatra) contested its intermediary role between India, China and Southeast Asia. Majapahit Java and Sukhothai became commercially prominent. Gulf of Siam polities traded directly with Yuan China, which also accessed goods through the Pandya Coromandel port of Kaveripattinam, vital to China as a maritime pathway to the Malabar coast and, thence, to West Asia.

Bengal was seemingly bypassed. Zhao Rugua's description of Bengal in ca. 1225 says:

"Pong-k'ie-lo of the West has a capital called Ch'a-na-ki (? Pandua). The city walls are 120 li in circuit. The common people are combative and devoted solely to robbery. They use (pieces of) white conch shells ground into shape as money. The native products include fine swords, to-lo cotton stuffs and common cotton cloth. Some say that the law of the Buddha originated in this country..."

But Wang Dayuan (ca. 1311–?) says Pengjiala (Bengal) remained an important destination for Chinese traders as a gateway to Delhi and Tibet. Ma Huan's The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores said in 1433:

"Travelling by sea from the country of Su-men-ta-la (Sumatra) ... the (Nicobars) are sighted, (whence) going north-westward for 20 li one arrives at Chih-ti-chiang [Chittagong]. (Here) one changes to a small boat, and after going 500 odd li, one comes to So-na-erh-chiang [Sonargaon], whence one reaches the capital."

Around 1436, Fei Xin's The Overall Survey of the Star Raft said:

"This country has a sea-port on a bay called Ch'a-ti-chiang; here certain duties are collected ... After going 16 stages (we) reached So-na-erh-chiang, which is a walled place with tanks, streets, bazaars, and which carries on a business in all kinds of goods... Going thence 20 stages (we) came to Pantu-wa [Pandua], which is the place of residence of the ruler."

The upper Bay trade had become important again. The decline of land-based trade routes forced Arakan's kings to regard maritime trade as their new primary link to the outside world. Maritime trade provided new economic opportunities for kingly legitimisation. Fifteenth-century Mrauk U kings abandoned the Burmese kingship model and adopted the Bengal Sultanate's coinage styles and regnal names. Min Saw Mon used the name of Suleiman Shah (1430–34); Min Khayi was Ali Shah I (1434–59); Basawpyu was Kalima Shah (1459–82); Min Dawlya was Maw Ku Shah (1482–92); Basawnyo was Muhammad Shah (1492–94); Ranaung was Nuri Shah (1494); Salingatha was Sheikh Abdullah Shah (1494–1501); Min Raza was Ilyas Shah (1501–13); Min Saw O was Zala Shah (1515); Thazata was Ali Shah II (1515–21); Kasabadi was Jali Shah (1523–25); Min Bin was Zabauk Shah (1531–53); Min Phalaung was Sikandar Shah I (1571–93); Min Raza Gyi was Salim Shah (1593–1612); Min Khamaung was Hussain Shah (1612–22). With the Bay now open to growing royal interest in maritime trade, these rulers embraced the shift, changing from petty monarchs satisfied with political isolation to kings bent on empire and new economic opportunities. Chittagong would feel these effects. At the same time, it would become enmeshed within global trading networks—and that will be the story my next article will recount.

Rila Mukherjee is a historian and the author of India in the Indian Ocean World: From the Earliest Times to 1800 (Springer Nature, 2022) and Europe in the World from 1350 to 1650 (Springer Nature, 2025).

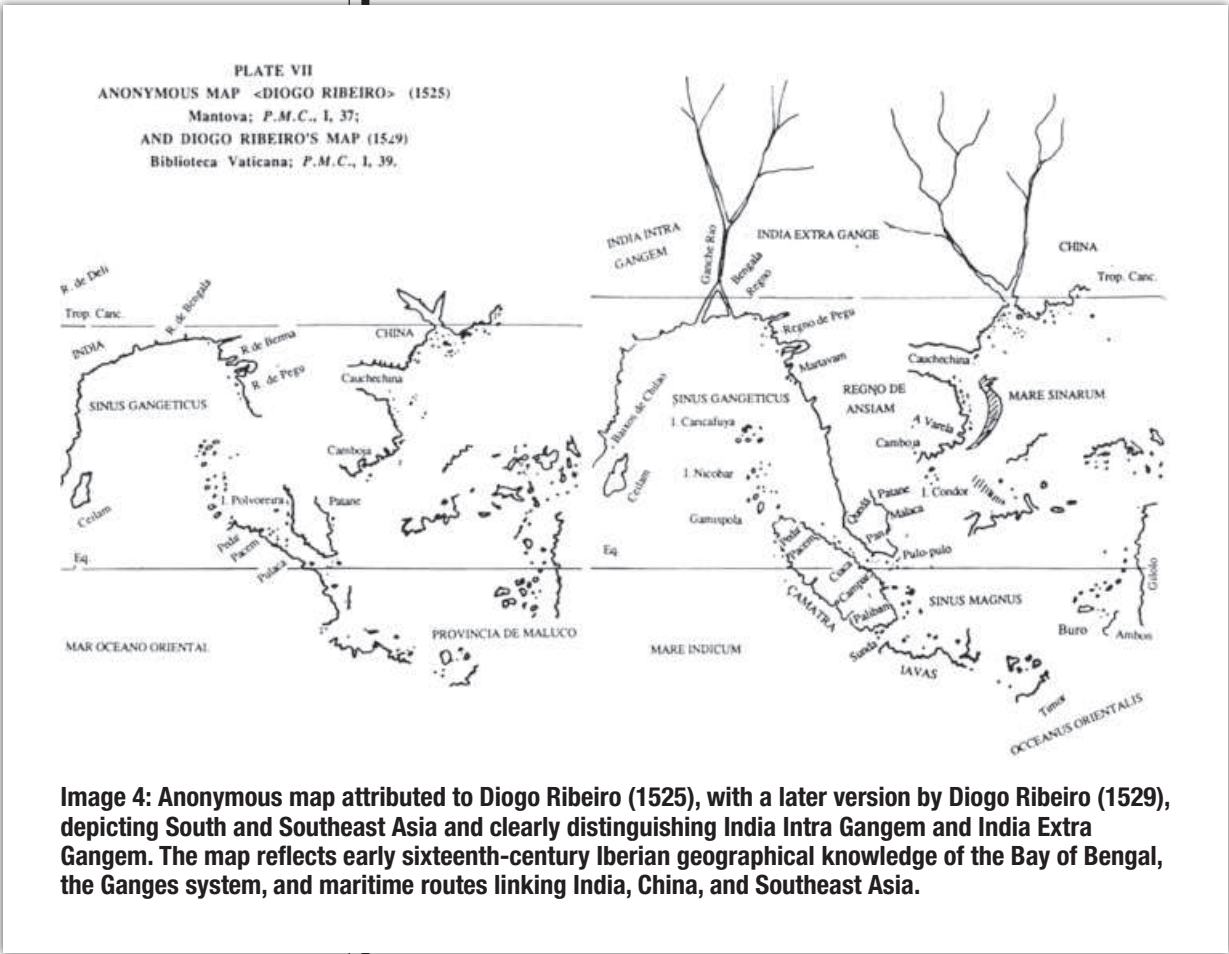


Image 4: Anonymous map attributed to Diogo Ribeiro (1525), with a later version by Diogo Ribeiro (1529), depicting South and Southeast Asia and clearly distinguishing India Intra Gangem and India Extra Gangem. The map reflects early sixteenth-century Iberian geographical knowledge of the Bay of Bengal, the Ganges system, and maritime routes linking India, China, and Southeast Asia.

Buddhist king Devātideva's land grant of 715 referenced Harikelayam (Harikela's people)—the first epigraphic reference to Harikela to date. A Harikela kingdom emerged soon after, embracing the area north of Samatata from Comilla, forming a mandala with the capital (vāsaka) at Vardhamānapura (present Bara-Uthan village in Patiya Upazila).

The Cantino Planisphere of 1502, which heralded Portuguese arrival into the Bay of Bengal, marked Chittagong as a major portal. However, this would be disputed shortly thereafter; the Jorge Reinel map of 1510 highlighted only Hormuz, Cambay and Melaka, and depicted, in addition, Goa, Dabhol, the Malabar ports and Sri Lanka. Chittagong was not depicted. Chittagong would evolve thereafter from a point within a string of ports to a sub-region among a band of coastal states, and finally, to a princely territory in the traveller's imagination.

I. A Janus-faced history

One reason for Chittagong's absence from historical records is that for a large part of its life it was under Arakan. Therefore, rather than studying Chittagong from Indian sources, reconstructing its history from Arakanese records that have engaged scholarly attention since the late nineteenth century makes more sense.

Arakan Chandra king Dhrtichandra's downfall (ca. 665) encouraged Chittagong's elite to declare independence from Arakan with silver coins carrying the legend Harikela above the bull. These are among the most plentiful coin issues of Southeast Bengal. Of similar style and identical weight standard to the later Chandra coins from Arakan, their iconography suggests Saivite and Vishnuite affiliation, but instead of giving the name of a ruler on the coins, as was done in Arakan, a place-name or polity is given. It is unusual for coins of this period to inscribe Harikela rather than the king's name, but as maritime trade had become important in the region, probably merchant families or guilds wielded power, with any ruler there taking a purely ritual role and not being involved in coin issuance.

The Burma-based Pyu Sriksetra-enclosed "urban" community of ca. 638, and the rise of the Sumatra-based Srivijaya realm in the Indian Ocean maritime network sometime prior to 681, helped Chittagong. Trade with them offset the hostile conditions created by the Nan Zhao polity (729) in Yunnan, which saw the overland route—previously transmitting Vajrayana interactions from Bengal—becoming increasingly unstable. A third factor, noted by the late numismatist Nicholas Rhodes, was a cluster of events adversely

Gentile people of this Bengal country (!) have for their pagoda, or idol, a white elephant; it is but rarely met with, and is deemed sacred. The kings worship it, and even go to war to get it from their neighbours, not having one themselves, and sometimes grand battles are fought on this score." This clearly references an Arakanese and not Bengali practice; white elephants were frequently seen in Chittagong when it was under the former's rule. But marginocentric cities also find their own agency, as seen in Arakan's sixteenth-century trilingual coin issues from Chittagong.

Buddhist king Devātideva's land grant of 715 referenced Harikelayam (Harikela's people)—the first epigraphic reference to Harikela to date. A Harikela kingdom emerged soon after, embracing the area north of Samatata from Chittagong to Comilla, forming a mandala with the capital (vāsaka) at Vardhamānapura (present Bara-Uthan village in Patiya Upazila). Amity with Arakan's Vesali (Waithali) dynasty is seen in matrimonial ties, genealogical connections, shared use of specific script types, peculiarities in documentation of endowments to religious institutions, common Bengali-Hindu style regnal names, and overlapping coinage traditions. Arakan Chandra ruler Sri Dharmavijaya's coins of ca. 750 are found not only in the Akyab area, but also in Chittagong, southern Tripura, and in and around Comilla. It seems that he reasserted hold over Chittagong and over all of the now-declining kingdom of Samatata. After his death, Arakan's influence may not have extended north of Chittagong, as no coins of the later Arakan kings have been found there.

As an entrepôt of Bahr Harkand, Harikela participated in what Australian historian Geoff Wade has called the 'ninth-century age of commerce'. Slightly after the mid-ninth century, a huge cache of coinage with the legend 'Harikela' was issued in the Samatata area as well. Despite its marginal location on major transoceanic routes, Chittagong became a gateway for Arab merchants. Sulaiman states, ca. 851, that at Samandar (? Chittagong) valuable muslin was exported. Trade was carried out using cowrie shells, which were the current money of the country, although Bengal possessed gold and silver.

‘Please save cricket’

SPORTS REPORTER

“Please save cricket, that’s all there is to say.”

The comment, made on condition of anonymity by a leading Bangladesh cricketer, reflects growing frustration among players after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) reinstated director M Najmul Islam to his previous role as finance committee chairman, highlighting the sense of helplessness felt by cricketers under a board perceived to be failing to honour its commitments.

“We had given our observation to the board, and the board made the call,” BCB disciplinary committee chairman Faiazur Rahman informed The Daily Star yesterday.

Najmul had earlier been relieved of his duties as finance committee chairman following a wave of protests by cricketers. The protests stemmed from remarks Najmul made on January 14, when he said the board did not owe players any compensation if Bangladesh missed out on the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup, arguing that the board does not seek refunds from players for poor performances at global events.

“This is good news,” one player remarked sarcastically after Najmul’s reappointment. “You can understand how things are happening here,” he added, underscoring the prevailing sense of discontent.

Najmul’s comments prompted cricketers to boycott all forms of cricket, leading to the recently concluded Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) being halted for a day. Players eventually returned to the field “for the greater interest of cricket,” scaling back their initial demand for Najmul’s complete removal from the board. Instead, they sought a public apology and the continuation of the process regarding his directorship, as promised by the board.

However, no apology was issued. Najmul also responded to a show-cause letter from the BCB a day after the stipulated deadline.

In fact, it was learned that during a board meeting on Saturday, Najmul enjoyed the support of board directors when the decision to reinstate him was taken. A BCB source further claimed that the disciplinary committee had submitted its observations to the board and that “by the president’s direction, he [Najmul] was reappointed.”

Cricketers’ Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) president Mohammad Mithun, visibly unhappy with the development, was reluctant to dwell on the matter but made clear where cricketers stand in the board’s list of priorities.

“We made our demands known openly and they made commitments openly. So who is not keeping the commitments should be clear. The responsibility also lies with those who are not keeping commitments,” Mithun told The Daily Star on Sunday.

The BCB media committee could not be reached for comment regarding Najmul’s reinstatement at the time of filing this report.



Bangladesh cricket in DISARRAY

EKUSH TAPADER

“A sad moment for the game” – that was the phrase used by the World Cricketers’ Association (WCA) while reacting to Bangladesh’s exclusion from the upcoming ICC Men’s T20 World Cup.

Few descriptions could better capture the turbulence currently engulfing Bangladesh cricket – turbulence that continues to wound genuine lovers of the game across the country.

Under the leadership of former national captain Aminul Islam Bulbul, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) appears to be struggling both internally and externally. Many now fear that if this trajectory continues, the game itself could become the biggest casualty in this cricket-crazy nation.

Missing out on the World Cup is only part of the damage. Domestic cricket remains largely paralysed. Although the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) managed to conclude, controversy followed it to the finish line. As the tournament ended, a match-fixing scandal surfaced, adding yet another chapter to a growing list of irregularities.

Following allegations of involvement in match-fixing in the BPL, BCB director Muhammad Mukhlesur Rahman was forced to step down from his role as audit committee chairman. Another franchise adviser publicly raised fixing allegations via a Facebook Live session, further eroding public trust.

Following Saturday’s board meeting, influential director Ishtiaque Sadeque resigned, with rumours suggesting that more may follow. Disagreements with the board president and unresolved personal conflicts among directors have now become open secrets rather than internal matters.

Meanwhile, controversial figures continue to resurface. M Najmul Islam, removed from his role as finance



“The withdrawal of Bangladesh from the T20 World Cup, and resulting absence of a valued cricketing nation from cricket’s pinnacle international T20 event, is a sad moment for our sport, the Bangladesh players and fans, and one that requires deep reflection. Rather than allowing division or exclusion to take hold, we call on the game’s leaders to work with all stakeholders, including Governing Bodies, leagues and players, to unite the sport, not divide it ...”

WCA chief executive **TOM MOFFAT** said in a statement.

committee chairman after making derogatory remarks about cricketers during protests, was reinstated following the BPL, making the growing disconnect between the board and the players unmistakable.

The long-standing stagnation and disputes in Dhaka club cricket have reached a breaking point. With Bangladesh out of the T20 World Cup – set to be played in Sri Lanka and India

from February 7 – there is no clarity on the next domestic schedule. Even Rajshahi Warriors captain and Test skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto publicly voiced his frustration, saying he had no idea when they would next take the field.

With cricket disrupted both at home and abroad, organisers appear directionless, unable to chart a clear path forward.

In what many see as an attempt to mask failure, the BCB has floated the sensational idea of bringing back the country’s most successful cricketer, Shakib Al Hasan, who is currently in exile. For many, the move lacks logic and appears to be a desperate and misguided effort to divert attention from the ongoing turmoil surrounding the World Cup exclusion.

This is not merely the pain of missing a global tournament – Bangladesh cricket is passing through what may be its most fragile phase in history. In such moments, resilience is only meaningful when guided by a clear mission and vision, something that currently appears to be missing.

BCB president Bulbul said on Thursday, following a meeting with players and Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul, that the board “will keep on fighting” to ensure Bangladesh’s participation in the T20 World Cup. But when the ICC replaced Bangladesh with Scotland on Saturday, the BCB confirmed it had accepted the decision and would not pursue further action.

“We are not going into any separate arbitration or any other process,” the board stated – a declaration that underlines the absence of a clear roadmap.

Bangladesh cricket is, quite literally, struggling to stay afloat in a sea of sorrow, not only because of exclusion, but because a fight without purpose, clarity, and vision rarely leads to recovery.

Sony Sports 2, 5
Australian Open
Fourth round
Live from 6:30 am
Star Sports Select HD2
ICC U19 World Cup

Bangladesh vs England
Live from 1:30 pm
Star Sports Select HD1
Premier League
Everton vs Leeds
Live from 2:00 am (Tuesday)

Sabina and Co add another laurel for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh wrote another chapter in the country’s women’s football history as Sabina Khatun and Co emerged unbeaten champions of the inaugural SAFF Women’s Futsal Championship with a resounding 14-2 victory over Maldives in their last match in Bangkok yesterday.

The women in red and green finished the seven-team round-robin tournament with 16 points from six matches, ending four points clear of runners-up India and six ahead of third-placed Bhutan.

The maiden futsal triumph extends Bangladesh’s recent dominance in women’s football. It follows their back-to-back SAFF Women’s Championship titles and historic qualification for 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup, alongside success at age-group levels on the regional and continental stage.

Captain Sabina, who led Bangladesh to SAFF Women’s Championship titles in 2022 and 2024, once again underlined her importance by guiding the team to glory in the new futsal format. The



32-year-old returned to the national colours after a 15-month absence and proved her worth emphatically, scoring a tournament-high 14 goals. She was ably supported by experienced campaigners Krishna Rani Sarkar and Matsushima Sumaya, who contributed seven and four goals respectively.

This title was a story of redemption, tactical evolution and the unyielding spirit of players who refused to be defined by past exclusion.

Ahead of the tournament, expectations were low. Bangladesh were widely considered outsiders in the fast-paced futsal format, with India and Nepal tipped as favourites. Played on a hard surface with five players per side and a low-bounce ball, futsal demands relentless stamina, rapid transitions and technical precision in tight spaces.

Yet Saeid Khodarahmi’s charges quickly defied those assumptions. They announced their credentials with a commanding 3-1 win over India in the opening match and followed it up with consistent, increasingly assured performances.

Khodarahmi implemented a high-pressing system built around swift transitions, effectively utilising Sabina’s clinical finishing to dismantle regional powerhouses. Rather than treating his players as discarded figures, he moulded them into seasoned professionals with a point to prove.

Bangladesh’s technical flair, one-touch passing and intelligent movement stood out even in Thailand’s humid conditions, establishing their supremacy in the new format.

Pakistan name T20 WC squad amid uncertainty

STAR SPORTS DESK

Just a day after raising doubts over Pakistan’s participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup in support of Bangladesh, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) yesterday announced a 15-member squad for the marquee event, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka and India from February 7 to March 8.

“We are selectors, and our job is to pick the team,” said PCB chief selector Aaqib Javed, adding that Pakistan’s participation will still depend on a decision from the government. “We’ve announced the team very close to the deadline. The government will decide on our participation, so I can say nothing on that front. That’s what the chairman has said too, so we’ll wait for their decision.”

Earlier on Saturday, PCB Chairman and Pakistan’s Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Bangladesh were “being treated unfairly” by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and should be allowed to participate in the T20 World Cup. Regarding a potential boycott of the tournament

by Pakistan in support of Bangladesh, Naqvi said a final decision would be taken after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s return from abroad.

The ICC officially replaced Bangladesh with Scotland for the 20-team tournament on Saturday, rejecting the Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) request to shift their World Cup matches outside India.

The ICC also reportedly threatened the PCB with sanctions yesterday, including suspension of all bilateral series, denial of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for foreign players in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), and exclusion from the Asia Cup, following Naqvi’s comments.

PCB were the only board to support Bangladesh’s request for relocation of matches outside India during an ICC Board meeting last Wednesday.

Pakistan Squad: Salman Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Nafay (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan (wk), Usman Tariq.



French superstar Kylian Mbappe struck a brace to hand Real Madrid a 2-0 LaLiga win away at Villarreal yesterday. Despite an underwhelming start to the season and the departure of coach Xabi Alonso, Real have found timely momentum, registering three consecutive victories across all competitions as Los Blancos look to revive their campaign and cut the gap on LaLiga leaders Barcelona. Much of that push hinges on Mbappe’s sizzling form. The 27-year-old tops the LaLiga scoring charts with 21 goals and also leads the Champions League standings with 11 strikes. Overall, he has now racked up 34 goals and five assists in all competitions -- the joint-highest tally among players in Europe’s top five leagues, alongside Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID

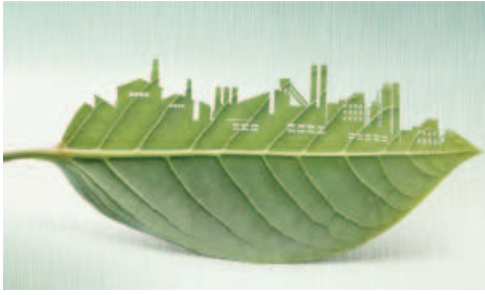
U-19 WORLD CUP Bangladesh face England today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take on England in their opening match of the Super Sixes stage of the ICC Men’s Under-19 World Cup in Bulawayo today, with the match scheduled to start at 1:30pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh have carried one point from the group stage and currently sit behind India and England, both on four points, and Pakistan, who have two points, in the six-team Group A of the Super Sixes. The Junior Tigers will need victories against England today and Zimbabwe on January 31 to keep their hopes of reaching the semifinals alive. Bangladesh won only one of their three group-stage matches, losing one and seeing another washed out, while England progressed to the Super Sixes with a perfect record, winning all three of their matches.

The top two teams from each Super Sixes group will advance to the semifinals of the tournament, which Bangladesh have won once, in 2020.



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Sir Mark Tully
(1935-2026)

A truth teller of 1971

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Veteran British journalist Sir Mark Tully, widely recognised in Bangladesh for his truthful depiction of atrocities during the Liberation War of 1971, passed away at a hospital in India yesterday. He was 90.

Tully, known to millions as the broadcaster's "voice of India", covered defining moments across the subcontinent.

"Sir Mark opened India to the world through his reporting, bringing the vibrancy and diversity of the country to audiences in the UK and around the world," BBC News interim chief Jonathan Munro said in a statement.

In 2012, Bangladesh named him a Foreign Friend of Bangladesh for his role in exposing the true face of the Liberation

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A screengrab from a video obtained by Reuters shows a law enforcement officer pinning down a man identified as Alex Pretti, before he was fatally shot when federal agents were trying to detain him in Minneapolis, Minnesota, US, on Saturday. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: REUTERS

EC ready to deliver free, fair polls

CEC tells diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday assured Dhaka-based foreign diplomats that transparency would be ensured at all stages of the February 12 general election and referendum.

To that end, the Election Commission (EC) has undertaken comprehensive preparations, he said at a briefing arranged by the commission at a city hotel to apprise diplomats of the overall election readiness.

Heads of 41 diplomatic missions, representatives of 11 UN agencies in Bangladesh, and senior government officials attended the closed-door briefing in the morning.

According to an EC statement, the CEC said all election materials were ready and ballot paper printing was underway. Legal and administrative measures have been put in place to resolve election-related complaints and disputes.

He added that nationwide awareness campaigns were being conducted to boost voter turnout, alongside ongoing training programmes for election officials and staff.

Highlighting the government's

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Three candidates omit UK assets, citizenship in affidavits

ZYMA ISLAM

Several candidates in the upcoming parliamentary election have withheld information about significant overseas assets and, in some cases, foreign citizenship from their mandatory affidavits, official filings and UK corporate records show.

The discrepancies involve BNP and Gono Odhikar Parishad nominees, who are listed as British nationals or directors of UK-based companies in British corporate records, despite declaring otherwise to the Election Commission.

The EC has cleared their candidacies.

A total of 21 candidates disclosed in their affidavits that they had acquired and later renounced foreign citizenship.

Zahidur Rahman, a Gono Odhikar Parishad candidate for Sylhet-6, made no mention in his affidavit of 11 companies in the United Kingdom with which he is associated. Two of these are trusts – Bangladesh Probashi Odhikar Parishad UK Ltd and Haji Aftab Ali Foundation Trust Ltd.

Zahidur holds shares ranging from 12.5 percent to 100 percent in seven of the companies.

In his affidavit, he declared earning Tk 29.7 lakh annually in rent from overseas properties and Tk 1.32 crore from his profession.

He stated that he filed for forfeiture of his British citizenship on December 28, 2025.

"I have absolutely nothing to hide. I did not mention these companies because I have not taken out any dividends from these companies," Rahman told The Daily Star. "Until the money is taken out or paid as dividends, it belongs to the companies."

AKM Quamruzzaman, BNP's candidate for Dinajpur-5, did not disclose a UK-based company where he serves as a director.

The real estate firm, Coombe Hill Development Ltd, appointed Quamruzzaman as a director on February 12, 2021.

The company has total assets worth £1.41 million, and Quamruzzaman is its sole director. It is wholly owned by Avox Ltd, an offshore entity based in the United Arab Emirates.

In his affidavit, Quamruzzaman mentioned only his law chamber in London, valuing it at Tk 50 lakh.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Bagerhat BCL leader's wife, child laid to rest

ASK says denying him parole a rights violation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The wife of Bangladesh Chhatra League leader and their nine-month-old child were laid to rest in Bagerhat early yesterday.

Following their namaz-e-janaza, the burials took place at her family graveyard in Sabekdanga village of Sadar upazila around 12:00am.

Kaniz Suborna Swarnali, 22, was the wife of Jewel Hasan, alias Saddam, president of the banned student organisation Chhatra League's Bagerhat Sadar upazila unit. Saddam is currently imprisoned at Jashore Central Jail.

Earlier yesterday, Saddam was allowed to see his wife and infant for the last time under police supervision at the jail gate as their bodies were brought there in an ambulance.

According to jail authorities, six family members were permitted to be present at the jail gate area during the brief farewell, which took place around 7:30pm.

Family members said they had applied for his release on parole but then had to arrange for the bodies to be taken to the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

MANIFESTO EXPECTATIONS

With the national election just 17 days away, political parties are finalising their manifestos. The Daily Star spoke to serving and ex-civil servants to identify the pressing issues that should top the agenda for parties.

End partisan influence in bureaucracy

BAHARAM KHAN

In their election manifestos, political parties should clearly commit to reforming public administration, leaving no scope for partisan loyalty in the bureaucracy, say former and serving government officials.

The parties should also outline how they will overhaul the recruitment process and implement a merit-based pay structure if they are voted to power. Efficiency and integrity should be the main criteria for promotion and posting, they say.

"Qualified and competent people must be appointed at all levels. Honesty and efficiency, not partisan loyalty, should be the criteria for appointing secretaries and heads of agencies as well as officials in the Public Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Election Commission," said former secretary Abdul Awal Mazumder.

Terming the current state of the civil service deplorable, he said no other civil service in Asia is performing so poorly. Political parties have the most important

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT GOVT

- Overhaul recruitment process to ensure merit-based entry
- Make efficiency, integrity basis for postings, promotions
- Appoint qualified, competent people to top positions
- Address the weak, corruption-prone legal framework
- Enforce zero tolerance for corruption, disorder in admin
- Strike a balance of power between MPs, upazila chairmen

role in overcoming this situation, and in their election manifestos, they should make commitments to play their due part.

Mazumder, also former rector of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, said that training institutions require major restructuring, and officers with a strong interest in training should be given priority for leadership roles.

Stressing the need for legal reforms, writer and former additional secretary Firoz Mia said this is the first requirement for restoring transparency

and accountability in public administration.

The legal framework for public administration was inherently weak and was further undermined during the tenure of the previous government. If the next government wants to restore discipline in the administration, it must start with legal reform, he noted.

The existing Government Service Act and related rules leave ample scope for corruption. At present, many officials do not think twice before indulging in corruption, knowing that their jobs won't be

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

JULY UPRISING

Noab did not provide journo with protective gear: Shafiqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) did not provide protective gear to journalists during the July uprising, claimed Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday.

"Six journalists lost their lives during the 2024 mass uprising. They were brutally killed. This happened because not a single journalist was provided with protective equipment," he said at a programme at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the capital.

He claimed that those reporting from the frontlines had no helmets, vests or goggles and were left exposed to heavy tear gas.

"Noab often makes big statements but does not provide [protective] equipment for even a single journalist. A few days ago, they organised a big convention, yet no one spoke about protective equipment for journalists."

He urged journalists to hold their employers accountable, saying those who assign reporters to cover hostile events bear significant responsibility.

"The government fails in many areas, and the media rightly reports that. But employers also have responsibilities, and journalists should speak out about how much those responsibilities are being fulfilled."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: SAFF

Captain Sabina Khatun holds the trophy aloft as Bangladesh players and officials celebrate their title triumph in the inaugural SAFF Women's Futsal Championship in Bangkok yesterday, following a resounding 14-2 victory over Maldives in their final match. Sabina and Co dominated the competition, registering five wins and a draw to finish as unbeaten champions. Story on Page 11.

40 hurt in pre-polls violence

Supporters of BNP, rebel, Jamaat candidates involved

STAR REPORT

At least 40 people were injured yesterday in clashes involving activists of BNP, its rebel candidates, and Jamaat-e-Islami over election campaigning in Mymensingh, Lalmonirhat, and Chuadanga.

In Mymensingh, around 20 people were injured as supporters of BNP and rebel candidates clashed in Bhaluka (Mymensingh-11).

According to police, tensions escalated in the evening when Mohammad Morshed Alam, an expelled BNP joint convener and independent candidate, went door-to-door campaigning in the Batajhor area. At one point, his supporters clashed with those of BNP nominee Fakhar Uddin Ahmed.

Quoting locals, Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, additional superintendent of Mymensingh police (admin), said chases and counter-chases quickly turned into violent clashes. Several offices belonging to both groups were vandalised.

Later, the BNP upazila office in the bus stand area of Bhaluka municipality was attacked, and several motorcycles were damaged. The office of Adi Khan (Shakil), member secretary of the municipal unit Chhatra Dal, and a Jubo Dal office were attacked and set on fire. Morshed Alam's office was also torched, locals said.

At least seven injured people were hospitalised.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6