

## Biman MD

FROM PAGE 12

under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Uttara West Police Station on Sunday.

Rejecting their bail petitions, a court sent the arrestees to jail in the afternoon, said Sub-Inspector Romer Mia, the investigation officer.

According to the forwarding letter, the complainant said he left his daughter in the custody of Shafiqur and Bithi in late June 2025 after they promised to bear her future expenses, including marriage.

He said he last saw the child in good health on November 2, 2025, but was later repeatedly prevented from seeing her. On January 31, 2026, Bithi called him and said the girl was sick and asked him to take her home.

The father alleged that when he went to their residence around 7:00pm that day, the accused handed over the child with severe injuries to both hands and other parts of her body, and she was unable to speak properly. The child was admitted to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital.

According to the document, the child told her father that she had been beaten several times on different occasions. She was also burned with a heated metal tool by the two accused and unidentified others after his visit on November 2.

Police said Rupali was sent to jail along with her two breastfeeding children as no guardian was available to take custody of them.

Shafiqur was appointed managing director and chief executive officer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on September 4, 2024.

## Defence talks

FROM PAGE 12

as a director of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

When pressed by a TV journalist about becoming a Biman director while holding the post of NSA, he said, "Not all countries in the world have Biman."

Recently, Khalilur, special assistant to the Chief Adviser on Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, and Senior Secretary of the Bangladesh Election Commission Akhtar Ahmed were appointed as directors of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd.

The decision to include them on the airline's board less than a month before the election raised questions among insiders in the aviation industry.

## Shab-e-Barat tonight

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, religious sermons focusing on the Shab-e-Barat will be delivered at different mosques after Maghrib prayers, and special munajat will be held after Isha prayers.

On the occasion, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday issued a message greeting all Muslims in the country and around the world.

On this night, a large number of devotees visit the nearest graveyards and offer special doa and munajat seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of their near ones.

People also distribute money, food, and sweets among the poor and destitute.

## Only 11 cases filed

FROM PAGE 12

the remaining 10 cases," said Makam Coordinator Mohammad Abu Saeed.

About cases not being filed in many other incidents, he said, "In the majority of the incidents, shrine residents were beaten and evicted. They are currently not in a situation to return and file cases."

The report found that most of the attacks were carried out by mobs rallying under the banner of "Tawhidi Janata", with alleged involvement of political activists.

Makam made specific allegations against Islami Andolan Bangladesh leaders and activists in 13 incidents, while Jamaat-e-Islami activists, it said, were linked to four attacks, and BNP activists to another four.

Dhaka division recorded the highest casualties, with more than 180 injured and two killed. District-wise, Cumilla saw the most attacks (17), followed by Narsingdi (10) and Dhaka (9).

Ahmed Ibrahim, adviser to the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Service Trust, criticised law enforcers for failing to act despite video evidence circulating on social media. He noted that at least 44 of the targeted shrines remain abandoned, with annual Urs ceremonies halted.

The study identified religious intolerance as the primary driver, accounting for 61 percent of the attacks.

In at least six cases, attackers used bulldozers and heavy machinery to demolish shrine structures, while loudspeakers were used to mobilise crowds in 10 cases.

The report also criticised the interim government for failing to take effective steps or announce compensation for the damaged shrines, underscoring what it described as a climate of impunity.

## Yunus govt's record uneven

FROM PAGE 1

toward far-right Islamist groups.

Termining the July charter the administration's "signature achievement", the report observes that consensus came with "caveats". It mentions the fact that the BNP issued "notes of dissent" on nine sections, objecting in particular to proportional representation in a new upper house.

"To overcome divisions, the interim government ordered a referendum to be held alongside the election, ensuring voters themselves would decide on key reforms. Even if the referendum fails, parties will face pressure to implement the proposals they endorsed, meaning some constitutional change is likely regardless of the outcome."

Meanwhile, Yunus and his cabinet have maintained a fragile consensus among political parties and the army, keeping the transition on track, the report says.

The think tank believes the interim government's final and most critical task is to deliver credible, peaceful elections on February 12, paving the way for an elected government to take office with a genuine popular mandate for the first time since 2008.

It notes the fact that national polls in 2014 and 2024 were boycotted by the opposition, while the 2018 election was marred by allegations of rigging.

"The electoral playing field has, however, shifted dramatically with the absence of the Awami League, whose activities were banned in May

2025."

The report mentions Hasina's conviction of crimes against humanity and the death sentence awarded to her in absentia by the ICT in November last year. "Millions of her supporters have effectively been disenfranchised, with thousands detained."

The contest now centres on two blocs: the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. The BNP, historically the Awami League's main rival, retains a wide activist network but has struggled with corruption allegations and internal factionalism, says Crisis Group.

"Its prospects received a boost in late December when Tarique Rahman returned from 17 years of exile in the UK. His homecoming drew large crowds and temporarily silenced critics. Days later, the death of his mother, former prime minister Khaleda Zia, brought Dhaka to a standstill."

Crisis Group, however, expresses uncertainty over whether Tarique can unify the BNP and appeal to disillusioned younger voters, mentioning in its report the lingering corruption accusations against him from the party's last stint in power.

Jamaat-e-Islami, according to the report, has emerged as a formidable force in the meantime. "Long persecuted under Hasina, it capitalised on the 2024 mass uprising, with its student wing playing a prominent role. Party chief Shafiqur Rahman has become

one of the country's most effective political performers, while Jamaat's disciplined organisation and strong social media presence have resonated with younger voters.

"Jamaat appears to be gaining popularity among younger people, many of whom are less concerned about its controversial role during the Liberation War in 1971, when it sided with the occupying Pakistani army and its members participated in mass atrocities against civilians."

Crisis Group believes Jamaat's alliance with the National Citizen Party (NCP), formed by student leaders of the uprising, has further strengthened its position, though the report notes the internal dissent within the NCP as a result of that partnership, which led to the resignation of some key leaders.

Highlighting recent surveys that suggest the BNP holds a narrow lead, the report says that Jamaat is expected to surpass its previous best performance in 1991, when it won 18 seats with 12 percent of the vote.

Whether the elections proceed smoothly is far from guaranteed, Crisis Group says, adding political violence has historically spiked around competitive polls, and human rights groups have documented a rise in political violence since August 2024. Clashes between BNP and Jamaat supporters have already occurred, while Awami League strongholds remain volatile.

The killing of Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, a student leader turned

independent MP aspirant, in December last year had heightened tensions. His murder sparked violent protests, attacks on consulates and media outlets. At least 16 politicians have been killed since the election schedule was announced in early December, most of whom were from the BNP, it adds.

Crisis Group sees a daunting agenda awaiting the incoming administration.

"Institutions remain weak, the economy is heavily reliant on garment exports and remittances, and climate change poses existential threats. Foreign policy will be equally complex, with relations with India strained, US-China rivalry intensifying, and the Rohingya refugee crisis unresolved."

Perhaps the greatest challenge lies in meeting the aspirations of Bangladesh's youthful population, the report says, adding that roughly half are under 30, many struggling to find jobs in line with their education.

Pointing to the challenge that is political reconciliation, Crisis Group states that Awami League, despite the ban, remains a major force in Bangladesh's history and society.

"A consensus among parties and institutions on the conditions for its re-entry could reduce tensions, though this would require genuine remorse from its leadership for the violence of 2024 -- something Hasina has yet to show." Foreign governments, particularly India, may play a role in brokering dialogue, it adds.

## Govt releases draft edn law at its fag end

FROM PAGE 12

Education formed by the interim government.

Speaking at a programme organised by the Campaign for Popular Education, a network of NGOs and educator groups, he said yesterday that the draft largely compiled existing rules and regulations into a single law, suggesting a hurried attempt to preserve existing system.

"We are not satisfied with such a status quo. We want reforms. And through this law, are we trying to obstruct the intended reforms?" said Dr Manzoor, who is now leading the advisory committee to improve the quality of secondary education.

The proposed law, he warned, could end up entrenching the existing education system rather than delivering meaningful reform.

Dr Manzoor, also professor emeritus at Brac University, added that the draft made no mention of rights-based education or decentralisation, nor did it address key issues such as resource mobilisation, whether per-student allocations would be adequate, or how equity in education would be ensured.

Instead, he said, it repeatedly referred to compliance with unspecified "rules". "It simply legitimises existing practices."

He added that this may be a bureaucratic strategy to maintain the status quo. "They may want to

complete this process within the tenure of the current government so that the discussion does not have to start anew under a future government. The question is whether this is what is really happening."

"**SHADOW EDUCATION**"  
The deposed Awami League government, after coming to power in 2009, framed an education policy and took the initiative to prepare an education law for proper implementation of the policy.

The education ministry had then asked a subcommittee of the education policy implementation committee to draft a law on January 26, 2011. However, it took a long time as it underwent repeated revisions. The education ministry sent a draft of the Education Act to the Cabinet Division in December 2016.

But it took the draft act back following huge criticism as the ministry gave legitimacy to coaching and private tuition in the name of "shadow education".

The then education minister, Dipu Moni, in June 2022, told the parliament that the draft bill would be finalised at the end of that month. But it did not see the light of day.

The earlier draft made printing, publishing, and marketing of notebooks and guidebooks punishable by a maximum imprisonment of three years, a maximum fine of Tk 5 lakh, or both.

However, there is no mention of

punishment in the new draft.

**WHAT'S IN THE DRAFT**

The draft Education Act, 2026, would empower the government to suspend or cancel approval, operation, and salary support for institutions found to be involved in irregularities, corruption, or activities that run contrary to the law or government directives.

No private educational institution could be established or operated without prior government approval and mandatory registration.

The government would also have the authority to merge, relocate or transfer institutions considered unnecessary due to population, location, or other factors.

Special educational institutions run by non-government organisations would be brought under the formal education system through separate rules and recognised certification.

Institutions following foreign curricula would also fall under the scope of the proposed law.

"English Version" institutions are defined as those teaching authorised English translations of National Curriculum and Textbook Board textbooks, while foreign curriculum institutions are those that follow international syllabi.

The government would be able to make certain subjects mandatory for foreign curriculum institutions through separate rules, with non-compliance risking cancellation of

registration.

At the school level, the draft assigns the government responsibility for ensuring access to education for disadvantaged children, ethnic minority communities and children with special needs.

Mother-tongue-based instruction would be allowed at pre-primary and primary levels for children from ethnic minority communities.

The national curriculum would be mandatory at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels across general, madrasa, technical and vocational streams, with separate curricula permitted for children with special needs.

The school curriculum would include instruction on independence, the Liberation War and the mass uprising, alongside science, civic rights, Bangalee culture and the cultures of ethnic minority groups. Activities contradicting these principles or hurting religious sentiments would be prohibited.

The proposed law seeks to regulate admission fees, tuition fees and other charges in Bangla-medium, English version and foreign curriculum institutions through government-approved policies.

Corporal punishment and mental harassment of students would be explicitly banned, with the institutions required to prevent bullying, ragging and cyberbullying.

member Nurul Islam, incumbent director Kamrul Islam, former director Sheikh Shahinul Islam and former assistant director Faria Sultana were jailed for five years in one of the two cases.

The court also fined them Tk 1 lakh each; in default, they will have to serve six more months in jail.

Only Rajuk's former member Mohammad Khurshid Alam was present at the packed courtroom during the verdicts. He was sentenced to two years in jail in two cases and fined Tk 2 lakhs; defaulting, he will have to serve one year's imprisonment.

His lawyer, Mohammad Shaheenoor Islam, said that they would challenge the judgements at the higher court.

## China executes 4 more accused Myanmar scam centre leaders

AFP, Beijing

China has executed four leading members of Myanmar-based scam syndicates, a Chinese court said yesterday, the second such announcement in less than a week as Beijing ramps up a crackdown on cross-border telecom fraud.

Fraud compounds where scammers lure internet users into fake romantic relationships and cryptocurrency investments have flourished across Southeast Asia, including in Cambodia and the lawless borderlands of Myanmar.

## Hasina given 10 yrs, Tulip 4

FROM PAGE 12

On November 17 last year, she was sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for crimes against humanity committed during the 2024 July uprising.

Ousted on August 5, 2024, amid a student-led mass movement, she remains accused in over 550 cases nationwide, excluding the corruption charges.

**OTHER CONVICTS**  
Apart from Hasina and her three family members, 18 others were also convicted yesterday under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act for committing criminal misconduct while allotting plots for Azmina and Bobby.

Of the 18, the court sentenced the 11 accused to 10 years' imprisonment and fined Tk 2 lakhs each in two

cases, with an additional one-year imprisonment in the event of default.

The 11 include former housing and public works state minister Sharif Ahmed, former secretary Kazi Washi Uddin, former administrative officer Saiful Islam Sarkar and former senior assistant secretary Purabi Goldar;

Rajuk's former chairman Anisur Rahman Miah, former members Tanmoy Das, Mohammad Nasir Uddin and Shamsuddin Ahmod Chowdhury, former deputy director Nayeb Ali Sharif and former assistant director Mazharul Islam, and the Prime Minister's Office's former secretary Mohammad Salahuddin.

In addition, former housing and public works secretary Shahid Ullah Khandaker, former additional secretary Md Oliullah, Rajuk's former

## 'Don't let anyone exploit delays

FROM PAGE 1

protests, the party claimed the leader's account had been hacked, but experts had rejected the claim. "They are lying," he said.

"If a party wants to confine half of the population before an election and speaks about women in such a disrespectful way, then you must ask yourselves: if they somehow come to power, what will their behaviour be like after the election?" he said.

Speaking at a rally at Prabhati School ground in Khalishpur, he addressed women voters directly. "The time has come for the mothers and sisters of Bangladesh to decide how they will respond to those who have insulted them," he said.

Calling for public vigilance,

Tarique said those who lie to the nation, change their positions repeatedly, and insult half of the population must be resisted.

"They only care about their own interests and use religion wherever it suits them," he said, adding that the country cannot develop if half of its population is left behind.

He said the party had shown its true colours during the 1971 Liberation War. "This party's predecessors violated the dignity of lakhs of our mothers and sisters. Those who have no respect for human dignity cannot be trusted with the safety of the country," he said.

He also claimed that conspirators were hatching plots from different places and urged voters to choose

between right and wrong on election day.

"The people of Bangladesh have never made mistakes. They have always stood by those who love the country," he said, questioning how a party could establish the "rule of honest people" while resorting to what he described as dishonest tactics such as buying votes through bKash.

Speaking in Jashore, Tarique said that if voted to power, the BNP would reopen the Ganges-Kobadak Irrigation Project, take initiatives to export local flowers abroad, and revive closed sugar mills.

[Our Khulna and Benapole correspondents contributed to this report]

## Cops fear arms smuggling

FROM PAGE 12

nine in Nilphamari, 39 in Lalmonirhat, 28 in Dinajpur, 44 in Panchagarh, 20 in Mymensingh, 15 in Jamalpur and seven in Sherpur.

"We do not think these linemen will be able to disrupt the election atmosphere," said Syed Rafiqul Islam, superintendent of police in Jashore, adding that regular joint drives are being conducted.

There is always a trend of illegal firearms entering the country ahead of elections, said Ashraf Huda, a former Inspector General of Police.

"This election is going to be held in a special moment, so there are 'enough reasons' to believe some groups may try to disrupt the election, damage the process, or raise questions about it by bringing weapons into the country through the border."

He stressed that Border Guard Bangladesh and police must remain highly alert and that people living in border areas should also stay vigilant.

Smuggling through the border is unrelenting and cannot be denied, said Khondokar Rafiqul Islam, additional inspector general (crime and operations) of Police Headquarters.

Police cannot claim with certainty that arms do not enter the country and that it "may happen".

However, he does not see any elevated threat given the way law enforcement agencies are deployed across the field.

One such drive by Border Guard Bangladesh, Battalion 47 nabbed Azizul Islam, 35, from Daulatpur in Kushtia on Sunday with a foreign and a local firearm. At least three linemen are active at that border.

Besides the firearms being smuggled in through the border, the previously stockpiled firearms, kept for extortion, turf control and contract killings, could resurface during the election as a large portion remains unrecovered, according to investigators and intelligence officials.

## Port workers call 24hr strike

FROM PAGE 12

One such vessel is SOL Prime, which berthed at CCT jetty-1 on Sunday afternoon. It is yet to complete unloading its total imports of 837 TEUs.

The vessel was supposed to leave Monday morning after receiving around 600 TEUs of export containers, but failing to receive enough volume, the ship now has to stay longer, said Muntasir Rubayat, head of operations of the ship's local agent GBX Logistics.

The ship's feeder operator will have to count additional charter hire worth \$15,000 and pay \$4,000 to the port authority for an additional day of stay at the jetty, he said.

Moreover, due to the delay, the export containers will surely miss connecting with the mother vessel at Singapore and ultimately be delayed in reaching destinations in Europe and the US.

Due to delays in cargo delivery, importers, mainly garment exporters, are facing delays in getting their imported raw materials from the port.

If the raw materials cannot reach factories on time, production will be severely hampered, said Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, a director of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

Due to several holidays for the national election as well as the slow work period during Ramadan, factories might suffer more production disruptions this month, he said.

Chowdhury stressed the need for an immediate solution to the crisis for the sake of the economy.

Over in Dhaka, negotiations between the government and DP World regarding the deal for handling NCT operations are ongoing at the Public-Private Partnership Authority office.

The government will not take any decision that goes against the national interest in managing the country's ports, said Shipping Adviser M Sakhawat Hossain yesterday.

"The ministry supports whatever is good and beneficial for the port and the country," he told journalists during a discussion at the shipping ministry, reports UNB.

Referring to the ongoing situation at Chittagong Port, Sakhawat said those involved in creating the 'undesirable' situation are being investigated.