



## Govt faces \$30b debt servicing bill

### IMF warns of growing risks

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is set to spend over \$30 billion this fiscal year to service its debts, covering both principal repayments and interest on domestic and foreign loans, according to projections by the International Monetary Fund.

The global lender has warned that unless Bangladesh significantly improves its revenue collection, the country will face heightened "rollover

Public debt rises to \$188.79b, or 41% of GDP

Domestic debt servicing consumes 89.4% of revenues

Loan repayments outpace export earnings, revenue

#### SUGGESTIONS

Strengthen revenue collection

Diversify investor base for govt securities

Form liability management framework



There was heavy traffic in the capital starting from early morning yesterday, the first working day of the week. The number of vehicles on the streets jumped after the Ekushey February holiday. This gridlock was seen at Gabtoli, one of the city's entry points. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## RUNNING 3RD TERMINAL

### Fresh push made for deal with Japanese consortium

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh is likely to hold a meeting with the Japanese consortium to resume talks on finalising an agreement for the operation and maintenance of the Third Terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting, convened to review the status of the much-talked-about Third Terminal, chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Cabinet Division's special conference room yesterday.

Contacted by The Daily Star, a top CAAB official who was present at the meeting said, "CAAB is likely to sit again with the Japanese consortium as a last chance to finalise the deal and start operations at Terminal 3."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

risks", meaning the government may find it increasingly difficult and expensive to borrow new money to pay off its maturing debts.

In its Article IV Consultation Report published last month, the IMF estimated that public debt servicing would jump to \$30.59 billion this fiscal year, up from \$26.63 billion previously. This figure is expected to rise further to \$33.84 billion in the next fiscal year.

According to IMF data, Bangladesh's total public debt now stands at \$188.79 billion, rising to 41 percent in the 2024-25 fiscal year, up from 39 percent the previous year. This includes \$101.24 billion in domestic borrowing and \$87.55 billion in foreign loans.

In FY25, domestic debt repayments amounted to 4.2 percent of the GDP, while external debt servicing remained stable at 1.2 percent.

However, the strain on government coffers was severe. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, domestic debt stood at 22.6 percent of the GDP while servicing domestic debt consumed 89.4 percent of government revenues – a figure significantly higher than similar countries. Both ratios are expected to continue rising.

After falling to 0.3 percent of GDP in FY25, net domestic debt issuance is projected to average about 2 percent of the GDP over the forecast period, compared with a historical average of around 1 percent over the past decade.

"The elevated debt service-to-revenue ratio, including interest payments, poses significant rollover risks over the medium term," the IMF said in its report.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



## Home boss hints at police top brass shakeup

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday signalled that changes at the top posts of the police force may be imminent.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Iran willing to dilute uranium stockpile

### Say sources; fresh protests erupt in Iranian universities

AGENCIES

Iran is refusing to export its 300kg stockpile of highly enriched uranium, but is willing to dilute the purity of the stockpile it holds under the supervision of UN nuclear inspectorate the IAEA, Iranian sources have said.

The proposal will be at the heart of the offer Iran is due to make to the US in the next few days, as the US President Donald Trump weighs whether to use his vast naval build-up in the Middle

- ▶ Trump curious why Iran has not 'capitulated': Witkoff
- ▶ Aides urge Trump to focus on voters' worries, not Iran war

East to attack the country.

The news came as protests erupted on Saturday at Mashhad University of Medical Sciences and at least two

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## 'Govt moves to replace ICT chief prosecutor'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has reportedly decided to appoint a new chief prosecutor for the International Crimes Tribunal, replacing Tajul Islam.



Tajul Islam

Contacted last night, Tajul told The Daily Star that the government unofficially informed him about the move. He refused to make further comments until a gazette notification was issued.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

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## Man called out of his home and then murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A man was killed after being called out from his home allegedly by one of his neighbours in Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Mujib, 45, of the Kasaipara area.

Police suspect that the killer tried to cover up the killing as an incident of robbery.

Quoting family members and locals, police said Mujib had a longstanding rivalry with Mohammad Arif, 28.

On Saturday evening, Arif called Mujib from his home offering to have Iftar together. The two went to Shah Omar Mazar.

On their way back around 8:30pm, Mujib was allegedly tied up and strangled to death on a road near Sebakhola Dumchita pond. His body was then dumped in a nearby tobacco field.

The killer staged a drama of robbery to cover up the killing, said Mohammad Monir Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chakaria Police Station.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Saudi Ambassador Abdullah Zafer H bin Abiyah pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat's Cabinet Division yesterday.

PHOTO: PFD

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Students, staff allege sexual abuse by headmaster

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Multiple complaints of sexual abuse against the headmaster of Bandarban Government High School have been filed with the district's deputy commissioner.

Victims – including both students and staff – allege that he exploited his position of authority to prey on vulnerable members of the institution.

Confirming the complaints, Bandarban DC Shamim Ara Rini said she received a written complaint signed by two students and their guardians on February 10, accusing the headmaster, Md Sirajul Islam, of sexual abuse.

The complainants alleged that Sirajul sexually assaulted them by threatening to fail them in examinations, the DC told The Daily Star at her office on February 16.

She also said that some temporary staff of the institution alleged that the headmaster sexually abused them, promising to make their jobs permanent.

The DC yesterday said a three-member committee, headed by Senior Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Foyzur Rahman, was formed to investigate the matter on February 10.

"If the allegations are proven, this would constitute a grave offence for a teacher, and appropriate legal action will be taken," she said.

## Fresh push made for deal

FROM PAGE 1

Without elaborating on the issues discussed, the official, who preferred to remain anonymous, said the main objective of the meeting was to apprise the prime minister of the latest developments in the deal process with the Japanese consortium and the overall status of the terminal.

Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury; Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroza Khanam; State Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat; CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmud Siddique; Bangladesh Investment Development Authority Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun; and Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Nasreen Jahan, among others, were present at the meeting.

Civil aviation ministry sources said the meeting discussed the progress of the terminal and how it could be made operational at the earliest possible time.

Following the meeting, the finance minister declined to comment, saying it was a closed door meeting.

Civil Aviation Minister Afroza Khanam, however, told reporters, "It would not be possible to say [right now] exactly when the third terminal will be ready for operation."

"There will be further discussions and technical assessments to determine how the process can be expedited. Work is underway, but we cannot give a definite date right now," she said, adding that the prime minister has taken initiatives in this regard.

Asked, BIDA Executive Chairman Ashik Chowdhury said, "Today's [yesterday's] was just a briefing. The PM has given some directives. Our goal is to get the third terminal up and running as early as possible.... No specific timeline has been set."

In 2017, the then Awami League government took up the Third Terminal

construction project, and work began on December 28, 2019, with an estimated cost of around Tk 21,398 crore.

The government contributed Tk 5,000 crore to the project, with the remainder funded through loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The "soft inauguration" of the Third Terminal took place under deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina on October 7, 2023.

At the time, CAAB said several times that full operations would begin in 2024. However, that did not happen.

Despite repeated efforts by the interim government later, the terminal is yet to open.

CAAB sources said the delay was mainly due to failure to reach decisions on ground handling and other operational issues, as well as technical flaws in work inside the terminal building.

A CAAB official said that with the BNP-led new government assuming office on February 17, fresh hopes have emerged for the opening of the terminal.

In early January, then civil aviation adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said the interim government made every effort, including negotiations with the Japanese vice minister, but those attempts were unsuccessful.

Negotiations between CAAB and the Japanese consortium on the mandatory operation and maintenance agreement failed to reach a consensus, another CAAB official said.

The consortium includes Japan Airport Terminal Company, Sumitomo Corporation, Sojitz, and Narita International Airport Corporation.

Officials involved in the process told The Daily Star that the ministry and the Japanese consortium could not finalise the modalities for running the terminal, causing the delay. They could not reach

consensus on the terms and conditions of the agreement, sources at CAAB and the ministry said.

"The government considered the consortium's revenue-sharing proposal too high," a CAAB official said, adding that several meetings were held late last year without any conclusive outcome.

CAAB Chairman Mostafa Mahmud said about 99 percent of construction work on the terminal has been completed.

In September 2023, the Public-Private Partnership Authority signed a deal with the International Finance Corporation for transaction advisory services for the terminal's operation and maintenance.

The AL government had decided in principle to operate the terminal under a public private partnership with the Japanese consortium.

Under the interim government's plan, Biman Bangladesh Airlines was to manage passenger and cargo handling for two years under the consortium's supervision, while CAAB would oversee data security.

Officials said that even after signing the agreement, opening the terminal would require at least six months to recruit and train manpower.

Besides, the standard operating procedure for the terminal is yet to be formulated, they added.

The terminal spans 542,000 square metres and will require around 6,000 personnel to operate in four shifts, including about 4,000 security staff.

Business leaders have repeatedly called for the terminal's swift opening, especially after India suspended third-country transshipment on April 8 last year, creating challenges for Bangladesh garment exporters.

Air transshipment through India had gained popularity due to lower costs and faster services compared to Dhaka airport, which has long struggled with inefficiency and mismanagement.

## Home boss hints at police top brass shakeup

FROM PAGE 1

"Some changes will certainly come; give it a little time," he told reporters outside the Prime Minister's Office at the Secretariat, declining to elaborate on what form those changes might take or which posts could be affected.

His remarks come amid mounting speculation over appointments to key positions in the police hierarchy following the formation of the BNP-led government.

Talk of a major reshuffle has centred on the force's two most powerful offices

– the inspector general of police (IGP) and the commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Incumbent IGP Baharul Alam and DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali were appointed on November 20, 2024, during the interim government's tenure on two-year contractual terms. The chief of the Special Branch was also appointed on contract.

Their appointments, made after retirement, had triggered discontent among sections of the force.

According to Police Headquarters sources, after the 13th national election

on February 12, Baharul conveyed his intention to resign at an internal meeting and later submitted a letter to the home ministry. The ministry did not accept it and asked him to continue for the time being.

Meanwhile, several senior officers have begun lobbying for the top posts. Police sources say the names of at least five senior officials are being discussed for the IGP position, while three are being considered for DMP commissioner. No formal decision has yet been announced.

## Govt faces \$30b debt servicing bill

FROM PAGE 1

The IMF noted that all public debt indicators are on a more prominent upward trend than in the previous analysis, reflecting higher borrowing costs and slower economic growth.

While tax reforms may slightly lower the debt service-to-revenue ratio by fiscal year 2026-27, extreme scenarios, such as a major natural disaster, could see it surge to over 110 percent of the GDP by 2030.

"This underscores the importance of raising the revenue to GDP ratio to reduce growing domestic debt vulnerabilities," the IMF said.

Bangladesh's tax-to-GDP ratio currently remains below 7 percent, limiting its ability to manage debt. Addressing this, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury has announced that the BNP government aims to raise this ratio to 8 percent in the upcoming budget.

The IMF warned that heavy reliance on domestic borrowing, particularly from banks, could "crowd out" private businesses, which means less money is available for the private sector, and strain the financial system's

capacity to absorb government debt, potentially pushing up borrowing costs.

Furthermore, if the government relies on the central bank to support insolvent banks, it risks losing control over short-term interest rates. This could trigger currency devaluation and inflation, creating a harmful economic cycle that would further undermine debt sustainability.

Overall risks to Bangladesh's debt-servicing capacity are "notable and rising", the IMF said. Delayed reforms in the banking sector or slow progress in boosting revenues – currently projected to reach only 12.2 percent of the GDP gradually – could weigh on economic activity in both the near and medium term.

To mitigate these risks, the report stressed the need to diversify the investor base for government securities, noting that authorities are already working on reforms, including to the primary dealer system.

A primary dealer system is an institutional arrangement where a select group of financial intermediaries, typically banks or large investment

firms, are authorised to trade directly with the government to support the issuance and distribution of securities.

The IMF report also said that a liability management framework is essential to address increasing rollover risks.

Former finance adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, in a note to his successor, acknowledged that Bangladesh's debt risk has been downgraded from low to moderate.

While the debt level is still considered tolerable by IMF benchmarks, he emphasised that caution is essential.

He noted that loan repayments are outpacing export earnings and government revenue.

The note advised strengthening revenue collection and avoiding high-interest, non-concessional loans whenever possible.

The recently dissolved interim government had also acknowledged these challenges in its response to the IMF. It recognised that low revenues, rising costs, and banking sector vulnerabilities pose urgent hurdles to meeting the country's growing financial requirements.

## PM sets strict punctuality tone at Secretariat

FROM PAGE 12

On his first day, he noticed several ministers arriving late. The following day, he had attendance checked across ministries and found that a number of ministers and state ministers were not maintaining office hours.

By the third day, he personally asked about which officials had yet to arrive at the Secretariat and expressed displeasure over their tardiness.

Tarique, who has himself attended the office on time and worked through the weekend, reminded colleagues at a meeting yesterday of the importance of punctuality and urged cabinet members and senior officials to ensure timely attendance and strict adherence to office hours.

Seeking anonymity, a state minister said, "While Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has been maintaining office hours properly, some ministers and state ministers have reportedly overlooked it. The prime minister is firm on the issue of punctuality and discipline."

"The prime minister has made it clear that the practice of arriving late, as may have been tolerated in the past, will not be accepted under his leadership. He has instructed

all concerned to adhere to fixed office hours and ensure regular attendance," he told this newspaper.

Tarique has formed a 49-member cabinet, including 25 ministers and 24 state ministers. During Ramadan, office hours for public institutions have been fixed from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

The prime minister has also been monitoring appointments of private secretaries, viewing them as indicators of how ministers intend to run their offices.

During yesterday's meeting, he emphasised the need for efficiency, transparency and accountability in the functioning of his office.

He noted that public expectations are high following the national election and that the government must set the standard for governance.

"He wants the ministry to function in a disciplined and result-oriented manner. Election pledges and other public welfare-related work must be prioritised," a senior official at the secretariat said, requesting anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

Another officer said, "The prime minister has set a clear message: competence, responsibility and transparency will be central to the functioning of his office as the new

administration moves to implement its policy priorities."

The prime minister wants experienced individuals with a clean image to avoid controversy and accelerate development activities, sources said.

Tarique is also making a note of which officials performed their duties properly and with responsibility, sources added.

The premier has directed senior officials to monitor progress regularly and submit performance updates.

Yesterday, the prime minister held meetings with the foreign minister, Saudi Arabia's ambassador, and senior cabinet members. He also chaired a session on the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

In the final meeting of the day, a programme titled "Building a Healthy Bangladesh" was discussed.

The government plans to appoint one lakh new health workers, 80 percent of them women, for door-to-door screening of common diseases, in line with the BNP's health sector election pledges.

Officials discussed how to implement the programme effectively so that the public can benefit properly, said sources.

## Trade deal chains Dhaka to US tech orbit

FROM PAGE 12

with the US.

"We have no interest in keeping the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions," he said, adding that other developing countries want to lift the moratorium to unlock a revenue stream, and Bangladesh should do the same.

Under the agreement, Bangladesh has pledged not to introduce a digital services tax that "discriminates against US companies." That may effectively protect US tech companies from local taxation on sales revenue generated from Bangladeshi users, limiting a future revenue source for the government.

Traditional international tax laws dictate that a company only pays corporate income tax in a country if it has a "physical presence" there, like a factory or a headquarters.

Today, big tech companies (often based in the US or Europe) can generate millions of dollars in revenue from users in a developing country without ever opening a local office. Digital service tax allows governments to bypass the physical presence rule and tax the gross revenue a company makes directly from local users.

Developing nations argue that

their citizens are the ones generating value for these platforms – Netflix, for example – through their data, attention, and content use.

Experts say the digital trade provisions in the deal could undermine Bangladesh's freedom in future digital policy and increase its reliance on US technology.

Abdur Razaque, chairman of Research and Policy Integration for Development, said the deal was the outcome of a power-based negotiation.

"It has been imposed on us," he said.

Signed on February 9, the agreement on reciprocal trade, as it is known, sets binding rules on taxation, data governance and digital trade. The commitments Bangladesh has made may curb its ability to shape its own digital economy as the sector expands.

The deal also bars Bangladesh from enforcing data localisation, which means authorities cannot force foreign firms to store or process personal and commercial data of Bangladeshi citizens within the country. Instead, the agreement guarantees unrestricted cross-border data flows, reducing Dhaka's control over a growing pool of digital and

commercial data.

Attention is also focused on enforcement provisions within the agreement that allow Washington to withdraw trade benefits and reimpose punitive tariffs if Bangladesh enters into digital trade arrangements with other countries, deemed detrimental to US interests.

Mostafa Abid Khan, a former member of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, said the agreement refers to the possible restoration of President Donald Trump's executive order issued on April 2, 2025, which had imposed a 37 percent tariff on Bangladesh exports to the US.

Although the original executive order is no longer in force, experts say, the inclusion of these restrictive provisions in the signed agreement signals continuing leverage.

The provisions could also determine Bangladesh's future technology choices. If Bangladesh turns to lower-cost telecom equipment from Chinese suppliers, for example, it may trigger US trade penalties and affect key export sectors such as garments.

"There is no other option but to review the agreement with the US," Mostafa said.

## Iran willing to dilute uranium stockpile

FROM PAGE 1

Tehran universities, prompting fresh clashes in the street.

The universities were reopening after being closed due to fear of protests. At Sharif University, the students chanted "Javed Shah", "Until the mullah is shrouded, this homeland will not become a homeland" and "Death to the dictator."

The Sharif University president urged the students to stop, warning that the authorities would force classes back online, reports The Guardian.

Iranians had reprised their protest slogans earlier this week to mark the 40th day since thousands of people were killed as a wave of demonstrations was peaking on January 8 and 9.

Meanwhile, Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said the US is curious as to why Iran has not yet "capitulated" and agreed to curb its nuclear programme.

"I don't want to use the word

'frustrated,' because he understands he has plenty of alternatives, but he's curious as to why they haven't...I don't want to use the word 'capitulated,' but why they haven't capitulated," Witkoff said in an interview on Fox News on Saturday.

"Why, under this pressure, with the amount of seapower and naval power over there, why haven't they come to us and said, 'We profess we don't want a weapon, so here's what we're prepared to do?' And yet it's sort of hard to get them to that place."

As Trump pushed the US to the brink of war with Iran, his aides urge him to focus more on voters' economic worries, highlighting the political risks of military escalation ahead of this year's midterm elections.

A senior White House official said that despite Trump's bellicose rhetoric there was still no "unified support" within the administration to go ahead with an attack on Iran.

Iran has a stockpile of uranium enriched to 60 percent, close to weapons grade, but is willing to down-blend the purity to 20 percent or below.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is also claiming that there has been no US demand to abandon the right to enrich inside Iran. The focus is instead on the purity of the enrichment and the number of centrifuges to be permitted.

There had been discussion of the stockpile being sent to Russia, and for Iran's domestic enrichment programme to be linked in with an overseas consortium, but Iranian sources are insisting the concept of a consortium has not been raised.

Iranian media close to the government quoted an Iranian diplomat as saying: "We emphasised this position during the negotiations that nuclear materials will not leave the country."

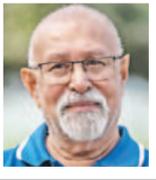
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Veteran journo  
Saleem Samad  
no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saleem Samad, an award-winning investigative journalist, writer, and media rights defender, passed away yesterday while undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital in Dhanmondi.

He had been suffering from cancer, according to his family.

Saleem, a member of the Jatiya Press Club, had served as a special correspondent for the English dailies The News Times, The Bangladesh Observer and The Asian Age.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the Jatiya Press Club around 2:30pm.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus being welcomed by colleagues at the Yunus Centre in Mirpur yesterday as he resumed his previous duties following the end of the interim government he led for 18 months. Yunus also plans to return to his residence in Gulshan, Dhaka, by the end of this month.

PHOTO: YUNUS CENTRE

ICT hears  
Inu defence,  
frames charges  
in Tayim case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counsel for JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday played two video clips submitted by a defence witness in a crimes against humanity case, and told a tribunal that Inu's remarks in the footage reflected his positive and supportive stance towards protesting students during the July uprising.

Testifying as a defence witness, Shoriful Kobir Shopen, public relations affairs secretary of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, placed the two videos before International Crimes Tribunal 2.

In the first clip, Inu is heard saying there had been many deaths. "I regret that, and the government must take responsibility for it..." he said.

In the second clip, Inu says, "The quota system should neither be retained nor scrapped entirely; rather, it needs reform. As a freedom fighter, I believe the quota system should be reformed. The students have taken to the streets demanding quota reform, and their concerns are resolvable."

However, the prosecution told the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

DU VC Niaz  
Ahmed Khan  
resigns

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Niaz Ahmed



Khan submitted his resignation letter yesterday.

The resignation letter was handed over to Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon, said Mohammad Firoz Shah, protocol officer to the vice-chancellor.

"The letter will be forwarded to the chancellor through the appropriate ministerial channels," Firoz said.

No let-up in mugging in  
Mohammadpur, Adabor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers, extortionists and teenage gang members continue to operate in Mohammadpur and Adabor, locals alleged, citing a series of recent incidents that have renewed fears among residents and business owners.

On Saturday night, a group allegedly attacked staffers of an embroidery factory, Abir Fashion, in Adabor after demanding extortion money, leaving at least two people injured.

In protest, local factory owners and workers surrounded Adabor Police Station for several hours.

Mustafizur Rahman, 44, owner of Abir Embroidery Factory, filed a case with the police station over the incident.

In his complaint, he alleged that the accused had long been demanding money from him and had at times snatched cash and mobile phones from his workers on their way to and

from the factory.

According to the complaint, the attack took place around 9:40pm on Saturday, shortly after workers received their monthly wages and were leaving the factory. The

Residents demand tighter security

Factory workers attacked over extortion

CCTV captures daylight mugging

Market threatened over extortion

IGP orders crackdown on crime

accused allegedly tried to snatch their cash and phones.

Police said five people, including prime accused Rohan Khan Russell alias Kala Rasel, 22, have been arrested. The others are Maruf, 35, Hasan, 23, Md

Raihan, 22, and Md Roman, 24.

Police also detained Russell's father for questioning and later released him.

Mustafizur said factory owners, workers and residents gathered in front of the police station demanding the arrest of those involved and tighter security in the area. The demonstration began around 10:30pm and continued until about 3:15am.

As traffic came to a standstill on the road in front of the station, army personnel stepped in and brought the situation under control.

In a separate incident in Mohammadpur, CCTV footage from a three-road intersection in Basila shows a pedestrian being mugged in broad daylight. During the scuffle, alleged teenage gang members are seen striking the victim with a sharp weapon before he runs away.

Locals accused a group known as "Killer Badal" of being

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

JP alleges  
'engineered'  
defeat in polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party yesterday alleged that the interim government "orchestrated" its electoral defeat in the 13th parliamentary polls through "widespread irregularities and engineering" of the results.

Speaking at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, the party's Secretary General Shameem Haider Patwary claimed the interim government did not want the party to secure even a single seat.

"We believe the outcome was manipulated with the support of officials. While we are disheartened by the result, we are not discouraged. Our votes were taken away through fraud," he said.

In the February 12 polls, the Jatiya Party failed to win any seat.

Shameem alleged that of the party's 196 candidates, 45 had their nominations cancelled. He described

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

MIRPUR-10 KILLINGS  
Father recounts  
son's death at ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A father's trembling voice describing the moment his fingers touched his teenage son's shattered skull left the International Crimes Tribunal-1 in stunned silence yesterday, as he recounted how the boy was killed in Mirpur-10 during the July 2024 uprising.

Alongside him, an injured survivor gave harrowing testimony in a crimes against humanity case against former law minister Anisul Huq and former prime minister's adviser Salman F Rahman.

Survivor Emran Hossain and Kamal Hawlader, father of 18-year-old Sifat Hawlader, described how Awami League cadres, alongside police, unleashed deadly attacks on student protesters at Mirpur-10 on July 19 and 20.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Publish white  
paper on interim  
govt's activities  
Demands Democratic  
Rights Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Democratic Rights Committee has called for the publication of a white paper detailing the activities of the recently concluded interim government.

The committee also demanded accountability for individuals who allegedly acted against national interests during the transition period.

The demands were raised at the committee's general meeting on Friday, presided over by Professor Anu Muhammad, said a press release issued yesterday.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

No pavilions at  
Ekushey book fair  
PM to open it on Feb 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities have decided to exclude pavilions from the Amar Ekushey book fair following a meeting with publishers' representatives held last evening at Bangla Academy.

The meeting was attended by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Ali Nawaz Mahmud Khayyam, Cultural Affairs Secretary Md Mofidur Rahman, Bangla Academy Director General Prof Mohammad Azam, and its Secretary Dr Md Selim Reza.

The book fair is scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at 2:00pm on February 26.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

A century of flavour at  
Ananda Confectionery

HELEMUL ALAM

At Abul Hasnat Road in Satraowza, Old Dhaka, the aroma of sizzling paratha and simmering halim drifts through the narrow lanes every afternoon during Ramadan. Inside the century-old Ananda Confectionery, customers crowd the counters, carrying forward a culinary tradition that has endured for more than a hundred years.

Established in 1920, the bakery has grown into a cherished name among residents of Old Dhaka and beyond. Its iftar offerings, rooted in tradition and family recipes, draw customers from across the capital, with many travelling from outside Dhaka to savour its signature items.

A wide range of delicacies awaits customers each Ramadan. Among the most popular are chicken tikka, chapli kebab, nimak para, chicken kofta, chicken paratha, tana paratha, paneer paratha, chicken drumstick, chicken cutlet, chicken sizzler, doi bora, firni, jilapi and halim.

Mohammad Ramjan, who travelled from Gazipur to buy iftar items for his family of five, said, "I have bought

tana paratha and dudh malai and will purchase some other items as well. My family loves traditional food from this shop."

"I grew up eating their food. The taste hasn't changed," he added.

Echoing him, Emiazur Rahman, now a resident of Hatirpool but raised in Old Dhaka, said Ramadan feels incomplete without a visit to the shop.



"I come here for their halim, jilapi and other special items. Due to traffic and work, I cannot come every day, but during Ramadan I manage to visit three to four times to buy my favourite items," he said.

Nayeem Ahmed from Wari

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Customers throng the 'Holiday Market' on the first Sunday of Ramadan to buy clothing for their families on Salimullah Road in the capital's Mohammadpur area yesterday. The makeshift market is set up every Sunday, and many shoppers got a head start to purchase items at reasonably bargained prices ahead of expected Eid-centric price hikes.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Probe NCT, Pangaon, Laldia deals

Citizens' platform demands  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A citizens' platform named Deshpremik Nagarik Samaj yesterday demanded an investigation into alleged corruption and commission-seeking in moves to award concession deals of Chattogram Port's New Mooring, Laldia and Pangaon terminals to foreign operators.

The group's spokesperson Md Al Amin Hossain and co-spokesperson Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil Chowdhury made the demand while speaking to reporters in front of the Anti-Corruption Commission in Dhaka.

The platform accused former BIDA chairman Ashik Chowdhury and former international affairs envoy to the chief adviser Lutley Siddiqui of involvement. It also named Chattogram Port chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman and former naval adviser Sakhawat Hossain.

The platform alleged that efforts are underway to lease the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to a UAE-based company under a concession agreement. Despite a stalled previous attempt following protests, fresh moves have reportedly begun to reopen talks with the same firm, the speakers claimed.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



A father and son mix fertiliser in Gabaram Chandrapur village of Jhalakathi yesterday to boost yields from Boro paddy, usually planted at the start of Falgun and harvested in Jaishtha.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Bogura-6 by-polls, Sherpur-3 election by April 14: EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday said the Bogura-6 by-polls and the rescheduled election in Sherpur-3 will be held by April 14.

Election Commissioner Abdur Rahman Masud explained that the commission is aiming for this timeline as storms and heavy rains are common during Pchela Baishakh. "We are trying to complete the polls before then, and we expect to succeed," he added.

On the reserved seats for women, Masud said the process has already begun since these elections are essentially determined by parliamentary parties nominating candidates. "By this time, they may have already started. Formally, it must be completed within 90 days of oath-taking, and we will ensure that," he said.

Asked about the timing of local government elections, Masud said, "As far as I know, the ordinance has annulled the provision for voting with party symbols in local government elections. Now parliament will sit. If the bill or ordinance is ratified in parliament, it will proceed accordingly. If it is changed or reverted to the previous state, then it will be different. We are just waiting for the parliament session."



## Toxic effluent from sugar mill pollutes Chandana

SUZIT DAS, Faridpur

Untreated toxic effluent from Faridpur Sugar Mill has been discharged into the Chandana River in Madhukhali upazila during the sugarcane crushing season for years, polluting the river and adjoining areas.

Faridpur Sugar Mills was set up by the government in 1974 and went into production in 1976. The mill is located around 300 metres upstream of the river.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that wastewater from the mill was being released directly into a canal that flows into the river at the Madhukhali Shmashana Ghat area. People crossing the area were seen covering their noses with cloth due to the strong smell of toxic chemicals in the water.

According to locals, around 5,000 residents of four villages near the canal, more than 1,500 students of two schools, and traders at a nearby market have long been suffering due to the foul-smelling, polluted water.

"We cannot pay attention in class due to the strong smell coming from the canal beside the school," said a student of Faridpur Sugar Mills High School.

Md Masudul Islam, a governing body member of Ideal Academy near the mill,

said the institution has been witnessing a decline in the number of students due to the deterioration of the academic environment caused by pollution. "We urged the mill authorities to take steps in this regard, but they did not respond."

Md Shajahan Munshi, 56, a trader at Mill Gate Bazar, said, "Our businesses are suffering



as customers cannot even stay a few minutes due to the strong smell emanating from the canal beside."

Contacted, Rakib Hossain, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Faridpur, said he had inspected the site recently.

"The water of the river and canal is severely

polluted due to toxic discharge from the mill. I requested the mill authorities to take steps in this regard," he added.

Nasreen Jahan, Faridpur district fisheries officer, said Chandana is a very important river in the area. "A spot visit revealed that fish in the river are dying due to the pollution. The matter has been raised in the recent district coordination meeting," she added.

Syed Anwar, deputy director of the Department of Environment in Faridpur, said the site would be inspected and the mill authorities would be directed to take necessary steps.

Rousona Jahan, Madhukhali UNO, however, said the mill authorities had told her they dump their wastewater in their own ponds after treatment in their effluent treatment plant. She said that she would discuss the matter further with the mill's managing director.

Contacted, Tarek Farhad, MD of the sugar mill, said, "Presence of lime and sulphur dioxide in the effluent discharge causes the strong smell. We dump the effluent in our mill's pond after treating it in the ETP; I do not know if it flows into the river. It is possible that some wastewater seeps through the bottom and enters the canal and river. We will take measures to solve the issue."



**INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)**  
**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**School of Environment and Life Sciences**  
**Dept. of Environmental Science and Management**

● **Assistant Professor**

**Application Deadline**  
**Sunday, March 8, 2026**

For detailed information and to apply, please visit: <http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub> or scan the QR code



## JP alleges 'engineered'

FROM PAGE 3  
the election as a "hybrid vote", claiming it was marred by ballot stuffing, vote engineering and administrative interference.

"The interim government cannot evade responsibility for the irregularities. Ensuring a credible election was not its objective," he said.

He also alleged that turnout was inflated with official support, adding that similar complaints were made by several

parties. On constitutional reform, Shameem said the BNP had made the "right decision" by not taking the oath in the reform council.

"There was no consensus over the July Charter from the outset. Any referendum or constitutional amendment must be carried out through parliament," he said.

He further criticised the continuation of "mob culture" and called for its immediate end.

**Pakistan Team's Tour of Bangladesh 2026**  
**Worldwide Media Rights**

Ref No: BCB/Worldwide Media Rights /2026 /123 Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

**Expression of Interest (EOI)**

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) invites Expression of Interest (EOI) along with financial offers from the TV Broadcasters, Digital Platforms and Marketing Agencies / Consortia / Firms for acquiring the Worldwide Media Rights of Pakistan Team's Tour of Bangladesh comprising of 03 ODIs (only) to be held from 09<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**Categories of Media Rights :**

01. Satellite TV (Linear) Rights - Worldwide including Bangladesh  
02. Digital OTT (Over-the-Top) Rights - Worldwide including Bangladesh

**Area of Rights :**

A detailed EOI document has been developed incorporating all necessary EOI details and documents for acquiring the abovementioned Worldwide Media Rights of Pakistan Team's Tour of Bangladesh 2026 involving Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men).

**Eligibility Criteria :**

a) Companies related to Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting or Online Betting and its surrogate shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.  
b) Any person(s) or entities with an existing unresolved dispute (i.e. Financial, Disciplinary and any other) with BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI Process.  
c) The Broadcaster / TV Channel must be in operation (on air) for at least 03 (Three) years. Marketing agents must have the capability and reasonable experience in marketing international standard cricket events.

**EOI Document Collection Procedure:**

a) Interested parties need to obtain a copy of the EOI Document (General Guidelines) related to EOI will be available at the BCB's Official Website: [www.tigercricket.com.bd](http://www.tigercricket.com.bd)  
b) The details of the EOI process, Series Itinerary, Production Specifications etc. set out in the EOI Document. EOI document will be available from 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 to 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2026.

**EOI Submission Procedure:**

The EOI along with financial offer (prepared in accordance with the EOI Document) must be submitted at the BCB Management Office at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh by 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026 during office hours (between BST 1000 to BST 1700) and should be in a sealed envelope to be addressed to: Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board. Interested participant may also submit EOI along with financial offer electronically via email at : [sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com](mailto:sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com)

**The EOI needs to be accompanied with the following documents:**

01. Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.  
02. Updated auditor's report on financial statements (In case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).  
03. Bank Solvency Certificate along with Bank Statement.  
04. Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.  
05. Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.  
06. In case of Consortium, notarized consortium Agreement.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the EOI.

Chief Executive Officer  
Bangladesh Cricket Board  
Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Ministry of Labour and Employment  
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000  
Common Service Section-1

Reference: 40.00.0000.038.07.005.25-415

**e-Tender Notice**

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

e-Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of the goods	Last date and time for tender/proposal security submission	Tender/proposal closing date and time
1224420	40.00.0000.038.07.005.25-244 (Lot-1)	Purchase of Computer and Relevant Goods	09-March-2026 13:00pm	09-March-2026 14:00pm

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

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

  
**Deputy Secretary**  
Ministry of Labour and Employment  
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka  
E-mail: [commonserservice@mole.gov.bd](mailto:commonserservice@mole.gov.bd)  
Phone: 02-55100339

GD-363

  
**NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY**  
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

**TENDER NOTICE**

**Tender No. NSU/25-26-T07**

North South University is inviting sealed offer from bona fide/reputed organization/ distributors/ business partners/ agents for supplying various lab equipment for various department of NSU as described in the tender schedule.

The details of the lot are mentioned below:

Sl. #	Department	Lot
Sl. # 1	Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences	Lot-01
Sl. # 2	Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering (DCEE)	Lot-02
Sl. # 3	Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE)	Lot-03

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka within the banking hour on all working days till March 10, 2026 by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **March 11, 2026 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

**Director, Internal Affairs**  
**NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY**  
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229  
Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, 1248  
Email: [procurement@northsouth.edu](mailto:procurement@northsouth.edu), Web: [www.northsouth.edu](http://www.northsouth.edu)

## Trump sends hospital ship to Greenland

AFP, Copenhagen

Greenland does not need medical assistance from other countries, Denmark's defence minister said yesterday, after US President Donald Trump claimed he was sending a hospital ship to the autonomous Danish territory that he covets.

"The Greenlandic population receives the healthcare it needs. They receive it either in Greenland, or, if they require specialised treatment, they receive it in Denmark. So it's not as if there's a need for a special healthcare initiative in Greenland," Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen told Danish broadcaster DR.

In Greenland as in Denmark access to healthcare is free. There are five regional hospitals across the vast Arctic island, with the Nuuk hospital serving patients from all over the territory.



Palestinian women mourn during the funeral of 17-year-old Mohammed Hanani, who was killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers during a night raid on the village of Beit Furik, southeast of Nablus in the West Bank yesterday. Inset, Palestinians carry Hanani's body during the funeral.

PHOTO: AFP



## Man shot, killed when trying to enter Mar-a-Lago

AFP, Miami

The US Secret Service said yesterday its agents had shot and killed an armed man who illegally entered the premises of President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump was in Washington at the time of the incident, which officials said happened around 1:30 am (0630 GMT).

"An armed man was shot & killed by US Secret Service agents & @PBCountySheriff after unlawfully entering the secure perimeter at Mar-a-Lago early this morning," agency spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said in a post on X.

The suspect, a man in his early 20s, was observed by the north gate of the Mar-a-Lago property carrying what appeared to be a shotgun and a fuel can," the agency said in a statement.

Agents confronted the man and fired shots. No US officers were injured. Trump has been the target of several assassination plots or attempts.

Earlier this month, Ryan Routh, 59, who plotted to assassinate the president at a Florida golf course in September 2024, two months before the US election, was sentenced to life in prison.

## Russian drones, missiles pound Ukraine

Energy, rail infrastructure, residential buildings hit; one killed, dozens hurt

AFP, Kyiv

Russia fired scores of missiles and drones at targets across Ukraine yesterday, crashing into energy and rail infrastructure and residential buildings, just two days before the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion.

AFP journalists in Kyiv heard a series of blasts starting at around 4:00 am (0200 GMT), shortly after an air raid alert was issued, with the air force later widening the alert nationwide citing the threat of missiles.

"Moscow continues to invest in strikes more than in diplomacy," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky commented on the attack on social media, saying that Russia launched about 50 missiles and 300 drones overnight.

"The main target of the attack was the energy sector. Ordinary residential buildings were also damaged, and there is damage to the railway."

One man was killed and dozens were wounded, among them four children, in and around Kyiv, Ukraine's national police said.

AFP saw rescuers sifting through debris of a largely destroyed two-storey house in Solyivska Borshchagivka in the Kyiv region.

Temperatures had plunged to nearly -10C when the capital was

struck, with emergency services deployed across the city.

The Ukrainian capital, regularly targeted by Russian missile and drone attacks since the start of the invasion on February 24, 2022, has faced waves of overnight strikes in recent weeks as Moscow has intensified its winter assaults.



The Russian army said it had carried out a mass strike targeting facilities used by Ukraine's military, saying all targets were hit, in a standard comment for such attacks.

Authorities in Russia's western Belgorod region said one man died

after a Ukrainian drone strike.

The bombardment, which included ballistic and cruise missiles, prompted heightened vigilance across Ukraine, all the way to the western border.

Ukraine's energy ministry said consumers in six eastern and southeastern region were without

power after the strikes.

Poland's Operational Command said early yesterday it was scrambling jets after detecting "long-range aviation of the Russian Federation conducting strikes on the territory of Ukraine".

## IS claims two attacks on Syrian army

Announces 'new phase' of ops

REUTERS

Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility on Saturday for two attacks targeting Syrian army personnel in northern and eastern Syria, as the group signaled what it described as a new phase of operations against the country's leadership.

The group said on its Dabiq news agency that it had targeted "an individual of the apostate Syrian regime" in the city of Mayadin in Deir al Zor province using a pistol, and attacked two other personnel with machine guns in the northern city of Raqqa.

Syria's Defence Ministry said in a statement that a Syrian army soldier and a civilian were killed on Saturday by "unknown assailants." A military source told Reuters the soldier belonged to the army's 42nd Division.

The attacks come amid a sharp escalation by IS against Syria's leadership under President Ahmed al-Sharaa, a former al-Qaeda leader who broke with the group in 2016 before leading a coalition of Islamist factions that overthrew President Bashar al-Assad at the end of 2024.

## ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO ME

### Arab states condemn US envoy's remarks

AFP, Jerusalem

Arab and Islamic countries yesterday issued a joint condemnation of remarks by US ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, who suggested Israel had a biblical right to a vast swath of the Middle East.

Huckabee, a former Baptist minister and a fervent Israel supporter, was speaking on the podcast of far-right commentator and Israel critic Tucker Carlson.

In an episode released Friday, Carlson pushed Huckabee on the meaning of a biblical verse sometimes interpreted as saying that Israel is entitled to the land between the river Nile in Egypt and the Euphrates in Syria and Iraq.

In response, Huckabee said: "It would be fine if they took it all."

When pressed, however, he continued that Israel was "not asking to take all of that", adding: "It was somewhat of a hyperbolic statement."

The backlash widened sharply yesterday as more than a dozen Arab and Islamic governments issued a joint statement denouncing the US diplomat's comments as "dangerous and inflammatory".

The statement, released by the United Arab Emirates' foreign ministry, was signed by the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria and the State of Palestine, as well as the OIC, the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council.

## Car in MP's motorcade hits, kills 8-year-old

FROM PAGE 12

Witnesses said he was hit by the third vehicle in the MP's convoy while crossing the road to a shop.

Chakaria Police Station Officer-in-Charge Monir Hossain said the accident did not involve the MP's personal vehicle, but rather another vehicle in his convoy.

He said the child was crossing the road to go to a nearby shop when the accident occurred.

An agitated crowd later intercepted the vehicle in Ferryghat, brought it

back to the scene, and vandalised it. The MP's car had already left the area.

No case had been filed as of 9:00pm last night, but police have taken the vehicle into custody, the OC said.

Contacted, MP Farid confirmed the incident, describing it as "very tragic".

He said the vehicle was rented for election campaigning and had no passengers at the time. The driver fled immediately after the accident.

## 'Govt moves to replace ICT chief prosecutor'

FROM PAGE 1

On Friday, Tajul told journalists that the government gave a "positive signal" that the tribunal's activities would continue uninterrupted, although no formal directive was issued at the time.

The ICT is currently prosecuting crimes against humanity cases against Awami League politicians and law enforcement officials accused of involvement in killing and injuring protesters during the July uprising that led to

the fall of the Hasina-led government.

The tribunal is also handling cases relating to enforced disappearances between 2009 and 2024. So far, three trials have been completed.

Supreme Court lawyer Tajul was appointed the chief prosecutor of the tribunal on September 7, 2024. Earlier, he was the defence lawyer for Jamaat leaders, who were accused of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in 1971.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH POLICE

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

PIROJPUR

Memo No-P.O.PIR/Repair/(25-26/ 810 /E

Date: 21 .02.2026

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender invited in the National system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of good as follows:

Tender ID No	Package Name	Online Tender Notice Publication Date and Time	Online Method Tender Closing Date and Time	Method of Tender
1214721	Pirojpur District Sadar Circle Office Boundary Wall Repair Work.	22-Feb-2026	08-Mar-2026	OTM
1214703	Pirojpur District Sador Thana Officer Incharge Quarters Repair Work.			
1214699	Pirojpur District Police Line 03 Unit Inspector quarter Repair Work.			
1214239	Pirojpur District Kawkhali thana Building Repair Work.			
1213449	Pirojpur District Police Line Hospital Building Repair Work.			

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 sub mit e-Tender registration. In the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for Last Downloading e-Tender Document from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branches up to Date & Time.

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#### Conditions

1. As Per TDS

MD. MANZUR AHAMED SIDDIQUE  
BP 7808121652  
Superintendent of Police Pirojpur  
Phone: 90305, Fax: 90497  
e-mail: [sppirojpur@police.gov.bd](mailto:sppirojpur@police.gov.bd)

GD-362



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police

Office of the Deputy Police Commissioner (Supply)

Chattogram Metropolitan Police, Dampara, Chattogram

Memo No. CMP/Ration/25-26/231

Date: 22.02.2026

### e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of package	Last selling date and time	Closing and opening date & time
1230415	CMPSupply/Rev/25-26/OTM/13	Goods Supply of high quality lentil for Ration of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (4th Quarter). FY-2025-26	09-03-2026 12:00	09-03-2026 13:00
1230788	CMPSupply/Rev/25-26/OTM/14	Goods Supply of Fortified Soyabean Oil for Ration of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (4th Quarter). FY-2025-26	09-03-2026 12:00	09-03-2026 13:00

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 please registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees of downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any member of schedule bank for e-GP.

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22.02.2026

Md. Ferdoush Ali Chowdhury  
Bp-7705104557  
Deputy Police Commissioner (Supply)  
Promoted to Additional DIG  
On behalf of Police Commissioner  
Chattogram Metropolitan Police, CMP  
[dpcclmp@police.gov.bd](mailto:dpcclmp@police.gov.bd)

GD-366

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Road safety must come first

The government must maintain strong stance to ensure safe roads

The procession of preventable deaths from road crashes never seems to end in Bangladesh. In January alone, at least 487 deaths and 1,194 injuries from 559 road crashes were reported in the country, according to data compiled by the Road Safety Foundation (RSF). Another report in this daily highlights the persistence of these tragedies despite the change of government, with 10 people killed over the weekend of February 20-21. Even as we write this, news has emerged of two passengers of a human hauler killed in the capital's Jatrabari area, when a bus rammed it from behind; another passenger was critically injured.

Unsurprisingly, the highest death toll in January, according to RSF, was in Dhaka division, which also recorded the highest number of crashes. In the capital alone, 26 crashes resulted in 18 deaths. Poor traffic safety and urban transport mismanagement are the primary causes of the numerous crashes witnessed on Dhaka's crowded streets. On highways outside the capital, however, the presence of slow-moving vehicles—including two- and three-wheelers—alongside heavier vehicles is a major cause of collisions. Of the five crashes reported in this daily over the weekend, three involved motorbikes, and all three riders were killed. The RSF report also underscores this concern: 15.81 percent of total deaths involved riders and passengers of motorbikes, easy bikes, CNG run auto-rickshaws, and auto-vans. Additionally, 27.90 percent of crashes occurred on national highways and 37.03 percent on regional roads.

According to experts, such unfortunate incidents cannot be prevented unless the number of two- and three-wheelers is regulated through strict registration and licensing requirements, and unless a professional system of bus route management is introduced. Road safety awareness must also be strengthened among both riders and passengers. Dedicated lanes for two- and three-wheelers and other slow-moving vehicles can be considered as well.

However, the most crucial factor is political will. One of the main reasons that reckless driving, unfit vehicles, buses operating without route permits, and unlicensed drivers continue unchecked is the corrupt system that benefits transport owners, drivers, law enforcers, and politicians. Extortion and bribery sustain this system, obstructing any attempt at reform. In this context, the incumbent road transport and bridges minister's recent comment—that money collected from transport operators on the roads through "mutual agreement" cannot be called extortion—sends an alarming signal.

There are high expectations from the BNP government that came to power through a credible election following a mass uprising that toppled the authoritarian Awami League regime. It must remember that the July uprising was preceded by the 2018 road safety movement and its demands remain unmet to date. Therefore, the government must employ every effort to break the corrupt nexus that has long plagued our transport system. Ensuring safer roads needs strict actions, not the redefinition of terms such as extortion.

## Clean air must be prioritised

Govt needs to treat air pollution as a public health emergency

We are alarmed by reports that Savar's Air Quality Index (AQI) soared to 537 on Sunday, surpassing the "hazardous" threshold of 500 and ranking it among the most polluted places in the world. On the same day, Dhaka's AQI stood at 220, in the "very unhealthy" category. With safe air quality generally measured between 0 and 100, these figures underscore the severity of the crisis unfolding in and around the capital.

Savar, located some 20 kilometres from Dhaka, has been a significant source of pollution affecting the capital. Last year, the government declared the area a "degraded airshed" and restricted the operation of brick kilns. Considering that brick kilns account for nearly 58 percent of the region's air pollution, the move appeared sensible; however, weak enforcement and non-compliance by kiln owners have rendered the decision largely tokenistic. Additionally, northwesterly and northeasterly winds during the dry season carry polluted air from Savar into Dhaka, further deteriorating the capital's already unhealthy air.

According to 2024 data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), over 25,000 older vehicles are running in Dhaka, emitting toxic gases. Emissions of airborne lead particles from battery rickshaws are putting a significant number of children at risk of irreversible neurological damage. Furthermore, chemical fumes from fog machines—used to spray medicines to prevent mosquito breeding—are hazardous for humans when inhaled. Other sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the country include solid waste burning, dust from construction sites, and transboundary pollution, etc.

The consequences of persistent air pollution are deadly. According to a study by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), some 48 percent of those who die due to air pollution in Bangladesh are residents of Dhaka and Chattogram. The study—conducted on data from 2022 to 2024—found that controlling the presence of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the air could prevent over one lakh deaths in the country. Furthermore, air pollution increases the overall healthcare costs in Bangladesh, reducing the overall quality of life.

The persistence of such toxic air and its repercussions on citizens reflects years of weak enforcement and political complacency. Therefore, the elected government must treat air pollution as a public health emergency and move beyond just simple declarations. This requires strict implementation of existing laws, transparent monitoring, and holding polluters accountable. Without sustained political will and regulatory integrity, hazardous air will remain a recurring crisis rather than a solvable one.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Dhaka's first Shaheed Minar built

On this day in 1952, Dhaka's first Shaheed Minar was built on Dhaka Medical College campus. It was informally inaugurated the next morning by Mahbubur Rahman, father of martyr Shafiur Rahman, and formally on February 26 by Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, the editor of The Azad.

# Army's role during the polls and interim period merits a nod



WINKERS AWEIGH!

Tanim Ahmed  
is digital editor at The Daily Star.

TANIM AHMED

Now that the dust has settled and we have begun another hopeful journey under a new government, we can look back at the interim government's 18-month tenure and say with confidence that the defence forces, especially the army, played a highly creditable role. Their final act came during the election, which was most likely their finest.

Zero tolerance for mischief—that was the tone firmly set by the army on the eve of the February 12, 2026 election. It was a relief to see aspiring troublemakers scampering through crop fields and alleyways as men in fatigues gave chase. The army was in no mood for disorder, and the sight of soldiers patrolling the streets was reassuring.

Considering the uncertainties surrounding this election, the army's role was always going to be crucial. Law enforcement in the run-up to polls and on polling days is critical even in normal times, since it is customary for the losing side to reject the results outright. It was therefore, bound to be a serious challenge for the Election Commission to make the February 12 polls so fair and peaceful that even the losing side would find them broadly acceptable. The army was always going to be the commission's linchpin in this exercise.

Although seldom stated openly, it was almost a foregone conclusion that the army would be a decisive factor in ensuring law and order, more so because it was perhaps the one institution that still commanded authority among the people. And as far as the public was concerned, the army acquitted itself commendably. Together with the Election Commission, it delivered an election that will remain exemplary.

To be fair, despite the shifting timelines and narratives—"early election if fewer reforms are wanted," "election between December 2025 and June 2026," and so on—the army was unwavering in its stance on the necessity of elections at the earliest possible time. For much of the interim



'The army's final act in the interim period came during the election, which was most likely their finest.'

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

government's tenure, the timetable remained conditional, but the army was resolute both in its support for the government and in its insistence on a return to polls.

In fact, it was the army chief, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, who first articulated the 18-month timeline for the national election. As early as September 2024, just over a month after Muhammad Yunus and his cabinet had been sworn in, when they were still coy or uncertain about the duration of their tenure, General Waker stated in a rare interview with Reuters that an election could be held within a year and a half. It was the first time that a key figure had publicly advanced such a timeframe. In the same interview, he also asserted his force's wholehearted support for the chief adviser and his mission, thus allaying concerns about the military establishment's position.

Later that month, however, the interim government indicated that

the election timing would depend on progress in reforms. It also pointed out, most likely for the consumption of the army chief, that only the government could determine the length of its stay in office. There were several more occasions when General Waker's patience was also tested.

Perhaps the most visible episode occurred in March 2025, when a July

actors did not seem especially keen on transitioning to elected rule but rather content with the interim arrangement, whereas the army chief was making pointed public statements in favour of a democratic transition.

A few months later, the newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP), led by a section of the July leaders, faced a setback in Gopalganj. The army did not dither in rescuing those very leaders who had earlier mocked and criticised General Waker. Had it not been for the deployment of APCs, the outcome could have been quite grave. Significant bloodshed in Gopalganj at that juncture would have been detrimental to Bangladesh's stability.

Going back to the beginning, it was also General Waker-Uz-Zaman who assumed responsibility during the brief but critical power vacuum in August 2024—between the fifth, when Sheikh Hasina fled, and the eighth, when Muhammad Yunus took the oath of office. During those days, it was the army that maintained what semblance of order existed across the country. Having lost moral authority after siding with the Awami League regime and opening fire on protesters, the police were initially afraid and later reluctant to confront crowds or mobs for much of the interim period. Hence, policing effectively became the army's job. Deployed with magistracy powers, it was instrumental in maintaining order throughout these 18 months. Barring some unfortunate excesses, its role in standing beside the people and giving them a sense of security must be noted.

Since the early days of August 2024, Bangladesh has teetered dangerously close to the brink on several occasions. One of the reasons that it was able to weather these storms was because the army stood resolutely behind the interim government while strongly insisting on a democratic transition. In doing so, General Waker set himself apart as an army chief who did not reach for power even when it lay within grasp.

The past year and a half has been a testament to Bangladesh's unique brand of resilience and resourcefulness. Now that an orderly transition has taken place, it is time to recognise the army's role as a pillar of stability during a turbulent period, and General Waker as a patriot.

# Tourism and roads won't solve CHT's deeper wounds

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KURNIKOVA CHAKMA, JOYA DEWAN and MUHAMMAD ASADULLAH

In July 2024, a student-led movement demanding quota reform evolved into the mass uprising against authoritarianism, bringing an end to over fifteen years of increasingly centralised and coercive rule. What followed was an interim government and then Bangladesh's first genuinely competitive election in decades, won by the BNP. Since then, the country has been gripped by a mix of hope, excitement, anxiety, and speculation. From farmers in rural areas to political elites in Dhaka, and from indigenous communities in the hills to people in the plains, Bangladeshis are looking ahead to how the BNP will shape the nation's political future.

This energy has also reached the most historically marginalised regions of the country. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and indigenous villages in the plains, election banners lined the roads, and political processions were a regular sight during the election campaign period. Yet among hill communities, this moment was marked as much by scepticism as by anticipation. A common concern was that no matter which party came to power, life in the hills would remain unchanged. This belief has deep roots, shaped by decades of unfulfilled promises, stalled agreements, and systemic neglect. Whether the BNP will prove

different remains to be seen.

The CHT occupies a distinct place in Bangladesh's political imagination. Its geography, cultural diversity, Indigenous identities, and history of conflict and marginalisation set it apart from the rest of the country. Internationally recognised standards, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), affirm that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, to maintain their distinct political, social, and cultural institutions, and to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives. Any serious democratic project must therefore address the

Hill Tracts Accord all featured prominently. These commitments resonated with UNDRIP's emphasis on redress for historical injustices, cultural protection, and Indigenous participation in governance. However, beyond these broad pledges lies a troubling consensus: all three parties primarily frame the CHT as a site for eco-tourism and infrastructure development.

This narrow understanding of "development" overlooks the core political and historical issues that define the hill tracts. Roads, resorts, and tourist facilities cannot substitute for constitutional recognition, land rights, demilitarisation, justice

**Tourism in the CHT has increasingly become synonymous with Sajek Valley. Yet during the summer months, residents of Sajek Valley struggle to access safe drinking water. While new roads have improved connectivity, quality schools, trained teachers, and higher education opportunities remain scarce. There are very few university students from the valley. Bandarban offers a similar paradox.**

specific realities of the CHT rather than subsume them under generic development narratives. In this context, it is worth examining how Bangladesh's major political parties addressed—or failed to address—the concerns of hill communities in their manifestos for the election.

At present, political discourse largely revolves around the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party (NCP). A review of these parties' manifestos revealed some encouraging language. Commitments to a truth and healing commission, constitutional rights, protection of Indigenous languages and cultures, strengthening the Hill District Councils and the Regional Council, and reforming the Chittagong

for past atrocities, protection from communal violence, and the full implementation of the CHT Accord. UNDRIP clearly recognises Indigenous peoples' rights to their traditionally owned or occupied lands and requires that development projects proceed only with their free, prior, and informed consent. Treating infrastructure as a cure-all risks depoliticising deep-rooted injustices and reinforcing existing inequalities.

Tourism in the CHT has increasingly become synonymous with Sajek Valley. Yet during the summer months, residents of Sajek Valley struggle to access safe drinking water. While new roads have improved connectivity, quality schools, trained teachers, and higher

education opportunities remain scarce. There are very few university students from the valley. Bandarban offers a similar paradox. Celebrated as a premier tourist destination, it continues to have one of the lowest literacy rates in Bangladesh. These contradictions reveal the limits of a development model that prioritises visibility over lived realities and fails to uphold Indigenous peoples' rights to education, health, and social well-being.

Particularly noteworthy is the BNP's assertion that everyone in both the hills and the plains should be defined by a single identity: "Bangladeshi." While shared citizenship is essential, conflating nationality with ethnic identity risks erasing the distinct Indigenous identities of hill communities. UNDRIP affirms that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain their distinct identities while fully participating in the political life of the state. A democratic society should be capable of accommodating plural identities within a shared political framework. Unity does not require uniformity.

If this election and the subsequent democratic transition are to represent a genuine break from the past, BNP must move beyond symbolic recognition and cosmetic development. The people of CHT are not asking for charity or tourist branding. They are demanding justice, recognition, meaningful participation in decision-making, and the fulfillment of long-standing political commitments. Until these demands are addressed with sincerity and courage, the hope that "this time will be different" will remain fragile, not only in the hills but across Bangladesh.

# Will the real poor get the benefits of the family card?



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NAWSHAD AHMED

The social safety net or social protection programme enables the government to advance the well-being and security of citizens by protecting them from vulnerability and deprivation so they can pursue a better life. The purpose of the family card, proposed by the new government, seems to be the same. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, during an inter-ministerial meeting held on February 19, instructed the launch of the programme. On the same day, a 15-member cabinet committee led by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury was formed. The high-powered committee includes ministers, advisers and secretaries who will finalise the beneficiary selection process and eligibility criteria, and propose a rollout mechanism of the initiative. The committee will identify marginalised and low-income families in one upazila per division for the pilot phase to test the programme starting this Ramadan before rolling it out across the country.

The family card programme reportedly has an ambitious target of reaching five crore families eventually and would offer more than double the benefits currently provided under the existing social safety net schemes. At the planning stage, several factors need to be considered. If the weaknesses of the existing social safety net programmes are not taken into consideration during design, implementation and monitoring, the family card may end up like the older programmes.

The social safety net programmes in Bangladesh, with provisions for cash, food and assets, are expected to reduce and ultimately alleviate poverty and food insecurity. As per

Article 15 (d) of Bangladesh's constitution, it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of life of the people through planned economic growth, with a view to securing its citizens' right to social protection, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, in other such cases.

Bangladesh has a fairly long history of social safety net programmes (SSNPs), the first undertaken immediately after independence in 1971. Since then, the number of total schemes implemented is over 120. The country spent about 16 percent of the national budget on SSNPs in recent years,

**If the weaknesses of the existing social safety net programmes are not taken into consideration during design, implementation and monitoring, the family card may end up like the older programmes.**

which is 2.5-3 percent of the GDP, covering about 35 percent of citizens. However, a vital question is whether the benefits of the SSNPs reach the targeted beneficiaries—poor households and the vulnerable population?

According to Bangladesh's 8th Five-Year

Plan, there are high exclusion and inclusion errors in the existing SSNPs. However, there is no recent data to estimate the errors, which is necessary to assess beneficiary selection or targeting efficiently. The current process of beneficiary selection often relies on individual knowledge rather than the collection and evaluation of standardised data. Details about people's income and how much land they own are not checked

commitment to address the triple problems of poverty, vulnerability, and marginalisation, and it provides a roadmap for establishing a lifecycle-based social protection system covering people's needs over their entire lifetime. It adopted a lifecycle approach developed by William Beveridge, which involves long-term planning of programmes directed at different stages of life, such as childhood, school age, youth, working age

needs to be formulated and adopted, which requires a lot of attention by the government and all relevant stakeholders.

Any large-scale SSNPs are ideally required to follow a life-cycle approach covering all the stages of life. There are many factors which can cause or exacerbate poverty and can occur at any point in a person's life. The NSSS brought together all SSNPs under five broad themes to align with the lifecycle approach. The needs are different at different stages of life, and families require different support depending on the age of the family members, and vulnerability conditions such as disability, sickness, poverty level, etc. Therefore, no single social SSPN can replace all the existing programmes. A single programme—family card—will not be able to cover all, as programmes are age-specific, implemented by different ministries and departments, and do not necessarily use cash as the only support tool. For example, the objectives of the mother and child benefit programme are to ensure nutrition and good health of women and newborns up to 1,000 days through a combination of cash payment, training of pregnant women and lactating mothers of poor families on parenting, and taking good care of their babies, and ensuring vaccination.

Ultimately, the success of the government's ambitious family card programme will depend entirely on its execution. If it inherits the systemic flaws of past social safety net schemes—such as unverified data, poor targeting, and weak monitoring—it risks becoming just another inefficient programme. Moreover, as the current NSSS concludes this year, it is crucial to recognise that a single card cannot address all human vulnerabilities. The upcoming strategy must seamlessly integrate the family card with the proven lifecycle approach, ensuring that specific needs like child nutrition, maternal health, and elderly care are not sidelined. A transparent, data-driven, and comprehensive social protection system is the only way forward to sustainably uplift the nation's poor and marginalised.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

for accuracy. Due to poor monitoring, it is not possible to have accurate information on the weaknesses of the SSNPs in Bangladesh. However, it is apparent to those who know the programmes that they have very high exclusion and inclusion errors.

Besides, there is no robust, standardised, and operational grievance system for the safety net programmes. Also, regular monitoring and "cleaning" of the beneficiary registry is not done to remove people who are no longer eligible for various reasons, such as death, to make way for eligible, genuine new applicants to the programmes.

Bangladesh adopted the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015. The strategy is scheduled to end in 2026. It is a

and old age. Over the years, these systems have evolved globally through trial and error and incremental innovations. Taking into consideration risk factors such as natural disasters, climate change and food price shocks, policymakers aimed to create social safety nets, usually in the form of cash, food and other kinds of support, to improve the socioeconomic conditions of people living in poverty.

The adoption of NSSS coincides with the beginning of the new era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which set out a global commitment to reduce poverty following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since the duration of the current strategy is due to end this year, a new strategy

# Bangladesh's foreign policy enters its post-election test



**Tasneem Tayeb** is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem\_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

The recently held parliamentary election in Bangladesh was watched more closely than usual. More than 330 international observers were accredited—over twice the number present in the 2024 election—reflecting a moment of suspended judgement rather than routine election monitoring. In the current international order, elections are just the beginning in a long order of assessments. What happens post-polls matters just as much. Some of the most consequential judgements will not be made at home but elsewhere, as neighbours adjust their expectations, markets weigh risk, and foreign partners decide whether the next government's assurances are meant to last.

The formation of the new government has confirmed the transition from spectacle to scrutiny. The early days of a new administration rarely produce policy manifests. They produce something more revealing: intent and indications. External partners often read these cues before they read statements.

The pressures shaping Bangladesh's foreign policy are less about ideological bent than structure. Neighbourhood stability now rests more on predictability, rather than sentiment. Market access is filtered through social compliance, regulatory credibility, and reputational risk. Infrastructure finance is assessed against political volatility. Labour migration depends on formal diplomatic negotiation rather than informal accommodation. These relationships are no longer moored in affinity. They are governed by constant evaluation.

What has changed is not simply the country's external environment, but the nature of foreign policy itself. It no longer operates primarily through bilateral courtesies or summit diplomacy, but is increasingly mediated through investment decisions, compliance benchmarks, grant conditionalities, and strategic supply-chain positioning. Diplomacy today is conducted as much through markets, regulators, investors and diasporas as through embassies. This is why foreign policy now reaches factory floors, remittance corridors and regulatory desks long before it reaches press briefings. The diplomatic arena itself has shifted from corridor negotiations among officials to networked engagement involving investors, institutions, civil society, and transnational communities. In this environment, traditional

definitions of foreign policy become insufficient. Navigation depends increasingly on alignment choices.

Early external responses suggest cautious continuity. Several of the country's key regional partners, such as India, China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, along with the US, have already issued formal congratulations to the new government. While such gestures are routine in diplomatic practice, they also indicate that channels remain open and expectations remain in play.

But foreign policy today is shaped less by gestures than by the capacity to behave consistently once political theatrics end. Few issues test that capacity more starkly than Myanmar.

**The pressures shaping Bangladesh's foreign policy are less about ideological bent than structure. Neighbourhood stability now rests more on predictability, rather than sentiment. Market access is filtered through social compliance, regulatory credibility, and reputational risk. Infrastructure finance is assessed against political volatility.**

The Rohingya crisis is no longer a temporary humanitarian emergency. It has become a permanent diplomatic condition for Bangladesh, exposing the limitations of multilateralism and the costs of prolonged deferral. Meanwhile, the strain on national security, public finances, and social cohesion persists.

This is no longer a question of alignment, but whether Bangladesh has the administrative capability to sustain what it has undertaken. Hosting the Rohingya population has already significantly impacted its security posture and coffers. The issue now is whether that endurance risks slipping into normalisation.

This is where foreign policy intersects most directly with domestic governance. Keeping the Rohingya issue internationalised requires sustained diplomatic efforts. It demands the ability to pursue justice, humanitarian

financing, and risk management, without allowing any one track to drift into symbolism.

In this context, many in Bangladesh will regard early clarity on a Myanmar engagement strategy as a measure of leadership acumen.

There is another lesson to be learnt here. In the years preceding its 2022 economic collapse, Sri Lanka experienced a gradual erosion of external confidence: rising debt, repeated credit-rating downgrades, delayed engagement with multilateral lenders, and shrinking access to capital markets. Long before shortages appeared on the streets, options were already thinning. Trust withdrew before diplomacy intervened.

The relevance of this comparison is structural. It shows how external judgement precedes formal crisis and how sovereignty can be hollowed out gradually when institutional capacity misaligns with external expectations.

Bangladesh's position is different. The point is not that the fundamentals are identical; it's about sequence: how credibility erodes before collapse, and how foreign policy options narrow long before crisis is acknowledged.

In such an environment, strategic partnership is less a declaration of alignment than an exercise in calibrated balance. For Bangladesh, this requires sustaining working equilibrium among its major relationships, particularly with India, China and the US, without allowing engagement with one to be read as positioning against another. Durable diplomacy rarely rests on extracting concessions at a counterpart's expense; it rests on structuring cooperation so participation remains rational for all sides. A foreign policy that places national interest first succeeds through agreements whose stability serves every participant. Upcoming negotiations such as the renewal of the Ganges water treaty with India will offer an early indication of how effectively this balance can be maintained in practice. The Bangladesh-US deal, signed in a rush just days before the election, can also serve as an opportunity for the government to prove its mettle if, in light of recent developments, it can re-open negotiations with the US to work out a more favourable path for Bangladesh.

Initial remarks from the new administration has emphasised continuity, procedural engagement and dialogue with all partners rather than immediate strategic pronouncements. Such language is characteristic of governments seeking to stabilise external expectations before articulating doctrine.

A public mandate may open doors. How long they stay open depends on credibility. And credibility is built over time and tested under uneven circumstances. Transitions test not the strength of mandates but the discipline of systems. Elections redistribute authority. Governance determines whether that authority stabilises or thins. The world rarely reacts to declarations. It reacts to

patterns. That is usually where the real verdict begins.

Our foreign policy will not be judged by intent alone. It will be judged by whether markets, migration partners, and multilateral institutions continue

to treat Bangladesh as a country whose commitments survive political change. Foreign policy is no longer something governments conduct abroad. It is something states perform continuously at home.

**Zila Parishad, Manikganj**  
[zp.manikganj.gov.bd](http://zp.manikganj.gov.bd)

Memo No. ZPManik/e-Tender/02/2025/108 Date: 22/02/2026

**Invitation for Tender (Works)**  
**e-Tender Notice No. 05/2025-2026(LTM)**

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

Sl No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of scheme	Tender proposal last selling & submission date and time
1	1225995 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-21	(a) Improvement of road from Joyra Abd. Karim house to Abdul Jolil house under Jagir UP 2 No. Ward, Upazila-Manikganj Sadar, Dist-Manikganj. (b) Construction of Guide wall with slope protection work at Motilal Digree College Main-Gate to Golam Mostofa house road under Daulatpur upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	09 March-2026 16.00 & 10 March-2026 14.00
2	1225996 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-22	Construction of Noore Rowshan Girls Madrasa Bhabon under Manikganj Sadar upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	
3	1225997 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-23	Development of Chakmirpur Yad Ali Darul Uloom Madrasa under Daulatpur upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	
4	1226000 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-24	Maintenance of Bridge Approach on Alok River of the north side of Baliati Jomidar house under Sauria upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	
5	1226001 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-25	Improvement of road from Basamara Purbopara Rowshan Member house to Basamara Bazar Jame Mosque via Shamsul shop (ch.00-700m) under Daulatpur upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	
6	1226002 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-26	Maintenance of road with Guide wall of the pond at Baliati Ishwar Chandra High School under Sauria upazila, Dist-Manikganj.	
7	1226396 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/REV/W-27	Improvement of road from Gopalpur-Savar road to Abdur Rahman Khan High School (Ch 00-366m) by HBB under Sauria Upazila, Dist-Manikganj. (2nd Call, FY 2021-22)	
8	1229341 e-GP/ZPM/2025-26/02/OWN/W-04	Maintenance of Zila Parishad Auditorium cum Community Center under Manikganj Sadar upazila Dist.- Manikganj.	

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

**Md. Shahidur Rahman**  
Assistant Engineer  
Zila Parishad, Manikganj  
Tel No. 02996611005

GD-364

# 'ALO'

## Prothom Alo's artistic, powerful response to violence against press freedom



PHOTOS: ABRAR FAIYAZ NILOY



FAIZA RAMIM

Freedom of expression, enshrined in UN human rights instruments, UNESCO declarations, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, remains a cornerstone of democratic societies. It ensures that journalists can report facts, hold authority to

artist Mahbubur Rahman's reflections on destruction, memory and resilience, transforming the damaged space into a site of introspection and dialogue.

On December 18, 2025, that risk became visible when the Prothom Alo office in Dhaka was attacked. A large group of individuals reportedly descended on the premises, causing extensive

described feeling overwhelmed by what he saw; charred walls, damaged rooms and fragments of what once sustained daily work.

Burnt books were later displayed in a transparent case inside a partially intact room. Beyond it, blackened remnants filled the space, suggesting both loss and continuity. One installation features a steel lock marked

original form. Yet the exhibition resists framing them solely as ruins. Instead, it poses a quiet question: how can such a space regain balance? How can light re-enter darkness?

In one installation, pigeons move freely across a fire-damaged floor, navigating desks and scattered remnants. Their presence suggests continuity amid disruption, a living counterpoint to destruction.

Throughout the exhibition, Rahman juxtaposes fragility and persistence, stillness and motion, absence and presence. The burnt fragments serve as evidence of violence, but also of survival. Even in a damaged space, traces of life remain.

In the artist's words, "If this spontaneous yet carefully composed arrangement can offer even a fleeting moment of introspection, inviting us to reflect both on ourselves and the world around us. I will be satisfied."

It is often easy to dismiss something as propaganda when it challenges one's perception of the news. In moments of violence, when aggression overtakes dialogue and force seeks to silence expression, the strength of the pen may appear to falter. Yet, it rarely does so for long. Within 17 hours of the attack, Prothom Alo resumed operations, its online platforms restored, a reminder that institutions built on reporting and documentation persist, even under immense pressure.

**In the artist's words, "If this spontaneous yet carefully composed arrangement can offer even a fleeting moment of introspection, inviting us to reflect both on ourselves and the world around us. I will be satisfied."**



account, and document history as it unfolds. Though protected by law, these rights are often taken for granted. Journalism, in its pursuit of truth, continues to carry inherent risk.

In response to the recent violent attack on December 18, Prothom Alo organised an art initiative built around its scorched premises. Titled *Alo*, the exhibition brings together

damage to the building. Furniture, books and equipment were thrown from upper floors and set on fire outside. Law enforcement officers faced threats, and those attempting to document the incident encountered intimidation.

Soon after, the Daily Star premises were also targeted.

Entering the burnt structure for the first time, Mahbubur Rahman

with footprints; a stark symbol of forced entry. Another binds together surviving books under the inscription: "Ei mohashagore snan kore jagore" (Awaken and bathe in this great ocean), underscoring knowledge as a force that endures beyond violence.

Objects warped by fire, once functional and purposeful, now stand altered, stripped of their

# NEWS

## 13th JS convenes on March 12

FROM PAGE 12  
on convening the session would be sent from the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat to the president through the Prime Minister's Office.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin will convene the session in line with the Constitution.

The 13th parliament will have to go into its maiden session within 30 days of the oath-taking of the newly elected MPs, according to sources at the parliament secretariat.

As Speaker of the 12th parliament Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has reportedly resigned, a senior BNP leader will preside over the first sitting, an official of the parliament secretariat said.

Immediately after the House goes into its maiden sitting, the Speaker and deputy Speaker will be elected and sworn in by the president.

After their election, the session is likely to be adjourned for 15 to 20 minutes for oath-taking.

The new Speaker will then preside over the House session.

The Business Advisory Committee of the new parliament will also be formed at the first sitting, with the new Speaker as its head.

The committee will decide the tenure of the inaugural session and other business of parliament.

The main task of the treasury bench on the first sitting will be to place those ordinances before the

House which the government wants to turn into law.

The interim government promulgated or amended a total of 130 ordinances during its 18-month tenure.

The standing committees on different ministries are likely to be formed during this session.

At the first sitting, the House will also adopt an obituary motion.

The current parliament was formed through the February 12 national election in which the BNP-led alliance secured 212 seats, while BNP alone won 209 seats.

The Jamaat-e-Islami-led alliance bagged 76 seats, with Jamaat securing 68.

## Students, staff allege sexual abuse

FROM PAGE 2  
Contacted, Foyzur yesterday told The Daily Star that the committee had recorded statements of another seven students, one guardian, and seven to eight teachers of the school so far, and all of them substantiated the allegations against the headmaster.

He also said that the accused headmaster appeared before the committee on February 17.

"He, however, refuted all the allegations, terming them a conspiracy against him," Foyzur said, adding that the committee will submit its report next week.

Earlier, on February 10, the accused headmaster told The Daily Star over the phone that he was busy and would call back later. However, he has not responded to repeated phone calls since then.

Shah Mohammad Rezaul Karim, assistant headmaster of the school, on February 16 said the headmaster has been absent since February 10 and has not delegated any responsibilities

during his absence.

He said he heard some students had filed complaints with the DC but was unaware of the details.

The issue came up on February 10 when four to five alleged victims and their guardians approached a local human rights organisation with the allegations of sexual assault by the headmaster.

Human rights activist Dow Nai Pru Neli said they took the victims to the deputy commissioner's office, where a written complaint was submitted.

The Daily Star talked to a number of complainants and their family members, who alleged that the headmaster exploited poor and vulnerable students by misusing his power.

An eighth-grade student, requesting anonymity, alleged that he was called to the headmaster's room where he was sexually assaulted. Out of fear and shame, he initially kept silent but later informed his grandmother and a local human rights activist before filing a

written complaint with the district administration.

A ninth-grade student made similar allegations, adding that at least 15-20 other students may have suffered similar abuse.

One guardian alleged that after his son failed eighth grade and was readmitted, the headmaster offered to "guide" him privately and asked him to attend evening sessions. Months later, the boy refused to visit the headmaster and displayed signs of fear before eventually disclosing the alleged abuse.

A temporary computer operator alleged that he was called to the headmaster's room after office hours and was subjected to forced inappropriate conduct. He claimed he was threatened with dismissal if he resisted.

Muhammad Faridul Alam Hossaini, deputy director of secondary and higher education for the Chattogram region, said his office had not yet received any formal complaint. He also said the headmaster had not applied for leave.

## India ready for people-centric cooperation

FROM PAGE 12  
Commissioner in Dhaka Pranay Verma at the Secretariat yesterday.

On the same day, Khalilur also met Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Yao Wen, after which Wen told journalists that any attempt to undermine Sino-Bangla ties was "doomed to fail".

In a statement, the foreign ministry said Khalilur has indicated Bangladesh's intent to build a "forward-looking and balanced partnership" with India based on mutual interests for the benefit of the people of the two countries.

Meanwhile, Verma expressed India's readiness to work closely with the new government to further advance bilateral cooperation and make it more people-centric. The two sides agreed to maintain regular and constructive engagement to further strengthen the bilateral relationship.

The Indian envoy also extended an invitation to Khalilur from Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to undertake an official visit to New Delhi at an early date, the statement added.

The India-Bangladesh relations have been strained since the ouster of the Awami League regime through a mass uprising on August 5, 2024, when the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled and took shelter in New Delhi.

Talking to the media after the first meeting with Foreign Minister Khalilur and State Minister Shama Obaed Islam, Verma said India wants to work together in a positive, constructive, and forward-looking manner based on mutual benefits and mutual interests

and emphasised people-to-people exchanges as a vital part of bilateral relations.

After the February 12 polls, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, made a phone call, and sent him a letter that was handed over by Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who attended the oath-taking ceremony of the new cabinet on February 17.

"In all these communications, we expressed our desire to build on our historic ties with Bangladesh and strengthen our multifaceted bilateral relations. We also conveyed our commitment to support democratic, progressive, and inclusive Bangladesh," Verma said.

Asked about resuming tourist visas for Bangladeshis, the diplomat said the matter fell under the broader goal of enhancing people-to-people cooperation.

On Friday, all Bangladesh missions in India resumed visa services, after the services were largely suspended in the face of demonstrations in various parts of India in late December.

Earlier yesterday, Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh Yao Wen said Chinese cooperation with Bangladesh or any other South Asian country is not targeted at any third country and should not be affected by any foreign country.

"So, any attempt to undermine our cooperation with Bangladesh, or any South Asian country, is doomed to fail," he told journalists after separate meetings with Khalilur Rahman and State Minister Shama Obaed Islam at the foreign ministry.

In a recent media interaction, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent Christensen expressed concerns over expanding Chinese influence in South Asia, including Bangladesh, emphasising the importance of clearly communicating the risks of engaging with China in specific sectors if Bangladesh chooses to pursue that direction.

Speaking to media, Wen said Chinese cooperation with Bangladesh and other South Asian countries is meant to benefit the people of the region.

He added that China supports the new government under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in ensuring smooth governance.

"China supports Bangladesh in maintaining solidarity and stability and in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity," he said, adding that his country appreciates Bangladesh for pursuing its "Bangladesh First" policy and stands ready to carry forward cooperation in all sectors with the new government and jointly write new chapters in bilateral ties.

During the meeting, Foreign Minister Khalilur underscored the importance of advancing the Bangladesh-China Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

He also called for enhanced Chinese engagement with all relevant stakeholders for the early repatriation of the Rohingyas.

Ambassador Wen conveyed an invitation from the Chinese foreign minister for Khalilur to undertake an official visit to China at a mutually convenient time.

## Man called out of his home

FROM PAGE 2  
As part of the drama, the killer forcibly took two pedestrians hostage, tied their hands and legs, and left them in the same tobacco field, the OC said.

Arif later rushed to the neighbourhood and informed locals that a robbery had taken place but he managed to escape.

Locals rushed to the spot, rescued the three and sent them to the hospital, where the doctors declared

Mujib dead.

The injured people are Md. Mozammel, 45, of the same area, and Mohammad Khorshed, 40, of the Lotoni area.

Both are undergoing treatment at Chakaria Upazila Health Complex.

An inquest report has been prepared and no visible injury marks were found on the body. Police initially believed Mujib was killed by strangulation, the OC said.

Asked, the OC did not clarify whether Arif was alone in the killing mission or whether several others were in it.

"Police detained Arif to interrogate -- we are still investigating it," the OC said.

There had been a prior dispute between Arif and Mujib, during which Arif lost a finger. Although the two appeared to have reconciled, police suspect the killing was carried out in a planned manner.

## Pakistan air strikes kill 18

FROM PAGE 12  
AFP on condition of anonymity.

Islamabad said its military targeted the Pakistani Taliban and its associates, as well as an affiliate of the Islamic State group, an information ministry statement said.

Afghan authorities have previously denied harbouring militants.

Taliban government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said "people's homes have been destroyed, they have targeted civilians, they have committed this criminal act" with the bombardment of eastern Nangarhar and Paktika provinces.

Residents from around the remote Bihud district in Nangarhar joined searchers to look for bodies under the rubble using shovels and a digger, an

AFP journalist said.

"People here are ordinary people. The residents of this village are our relatives. When the bombing happened, one person who survived was shouting for help," said neighbour Amin Gul Amin, 37.

Nangarhar police told AFP the bombardment started at around midnight and hit three districts, with those killed all in a civilian's house.

"Twenty-three members of his family were buried under the rubble, of whom 18 were killed and five wounded," said police spokesperson Sayed Tayeab Hamad.

Strikes elsewhere in Nangarhar wounded two others, while in Paktika, an AFP journalist saw a destroyed guesthouse but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

## Lt General Mainur

FROM PAGE 12  
promoted to major general and moved from the Army Headquarters to the DGFH headquarters.

Current DGFH Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Jahangir Alam has also been transferred to the foreign ministry.

Brig Gen Md Hafizur Rahman, currently serving as defence adviser at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, has been promoted to major general and appointed GOC of the 55 Infantry Division in Jashore.

Maj Gen JM Emdadul Islam, who is now leading the 55 Infantry Division, has been transferred as commandant of the East Bengal Regimental Centre. The current commandant, Maj Gen Ferdous Hasan, has been appointed GOC of the 24 Infantry Division.

## Veteran journo

FROM PAGE 3  
followed by a second janaza at Dhaka Reporters Unity at 3:00pm. After the funeral prayers, he was laid to rest at the family graveyard in Mirpur-11.

Born in Dhaka in 1952, Saleem studied at Shaheen School. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Jagannath College in 1976. In 1994, he obtained his master's degree from Colorado State University in the US.

On November 29, 2002, Saleem was arrested on charges of sedition. Before his death, he himself had stated that he was subjected to physical torture during interrogation in custody. He was released from prison about 50 days later.

In a Facebook post on October 7, Saleem said that he had been forced to leave the country in 2004. He returned to Bangladesh six years later.

His writings had appeared in international publications including

TIME magazine, India Today, Outlook (India), and South Asia magazine (Pakistan).

Beyond journalism, Saleem had played a significant role in training and mentoring small-town journalists in Bangladesh on social development issues.

He also conducted workshops on environment and development journalism for South Asian journalists in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Over the course of his career, he had worked as a media specialist for several organisations, including the US-based Academy for Educational Development (AED), the Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO), the Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC), the Bangladesh Human Rights Journalists Forum (BMSF) and Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB).

## Father recounts son's death

FROM PAGE 3  
Kamal, the second prosecution witness, told the tribunal that on the afternoon of July 20, he had gone to buy vegetables with his son Sifat, an eleventh grader. Spotting his classmates protesting at the Mirpur-10 roundabout, Sifat joined them.

"Within minutes, three armed Awami League processions converged from different directions and started firing indiscriminately," Kamal said.

A long-time resident of the area, he said he knew many local AL leaders, whom he alleged openly carried firearms and shot directly at students.

"One bullet struck my son in the head," he said.

Breaking down, Kamal recounted how he ran forward and lifted Sifat into his arms.

"When I touched his wound, my two fingers went straight inside his skull. That's how big the

bullet hole was," he told the tribunal, drawing gasps from the courtroom.

Beside Sifat lay another wounded boy, writhing in pain, his eye blown out by a bullet, he said.

As he searched for a rickshaw, local AL activists forcibly took Sifat inside a nearby house. Only after repeated pleas did they allow Kamal to take him away. He then carried both Sifat and the other injured boy by rickshaw to Al Helal Hospital. Doctors there referred them to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, where Sifat was pronounced dead.

Kamal further testified that when he brought his son's body home to Mirpur, local AL activists prevented him from performing funeral rites or even washing the body.

Later, he arranged an ambulance and took his son's blood-soaked body to their village home in Kalkini, Madaripur, where Sifat was finally laid to rest.

Earlier, first prosecution witness Emran Hossain, 33, from Puthia in Rajshahi,

told the tribunal how he permanently lost his right leg after being shot during clashes at Mirpur-10 on July 19, 2024.

A technician at a pest control company, Emran, said he had gone to Mirpur-10 for official duty. While returning, a bullet fired by police and helmet-wearing attackers at protesting students struck his leg near the Mirpur-10 roundabout.

He remained hospitalised for nearly 40 days.

Sitting in the witness box, visibly disabled, Emran broke down while recounting the agonising moments of uncertainty in securing hospital admission and managing treatment costs, as none of his family members could travel from Rajshahi due to curfew restrictions.

Both witnesses held senior AL leaders, including Anisul and Salman, responsible for the violence.

After the testimonies, defence counsels for Anisul and Salman cross-examined both witnesses. The tribunal fixed March 3 for the next hearing.

## No let-up

FROM PAGE 3  
behind the incident, claiming it has become a source of fear in the area.

On the same day in Basila, another CCTV clip reportedly captured an extortion threat, warning that an entire market would be shut down if money was not paid.

Police arrested Faruk alias Kala Faruk from the Kolatia area in Keraniganj yesterday in connection with the incident, Mesbah Uddin, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Amid the incidents, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam yesterday asked field-level officers to take strict measures against extortion, snatching and drug-related crimes.

"Law and order must be maintained at any cost. If anyone commits extortion, terrorism or drug-related crimes, legal action must be taken against them irrespective of party and opinion affiliations," he told officers.

He issued the directives during a virtual meeting with all police unit heads, metropolitan police commissioners, range DIGs and district police superintendents from Police Headquarters, according to a release.

## ICT hears Inu defence

FROM PAGE 3  
tribunal that Inu had taken a double stand during the uprising.

During cross-examination, prosecutor Minazul Islam said although Inu spoke in favour of the students in the media, he actually took a position against them and supported suppressing the movement by using lethal weapons.

The prosecutor claimed Inu's double role was revealed in audio phone conversations with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The tribunal adjourned proceedings in the case till today.

In a separate case, the tribunal framed charges against 11 former police officers over the killing of Imam Hasan Bhuiyan Tayim, a 12th grader, in Dhaka's Jatrabari on July 20 during the uprising.

The tribunal said it found sufficient grounds to frame charges in the case.

The accused are former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman; former DMP joint police

commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty; former Wari Division deputy commissioner Iqbal Hossain; former additional deputy commissioner (Demra Zone) Md Masudur Rahman Monir; former ADC (Wari Zone) SM Shamim; former assistant police commissioner Nahid Ferdous; former Jatrabari OC Abul Hossain; Inspector (investigation) Md Zakir Hossain; Inspector (operation) Md Wahidul Haque Mamun; and sub-inspectors Sajjad Uz Zaman and Md Shahadat Ali of the same police station.

Two of the accused, Abul Hossain and Zakir Hossain, who are currently in custody, pleaded not guilty before the tribunal yesterday.

The tribunal set March 29 for opening statements and recording witness testimonies.

Tayim, the son of a police officer, was seen in widely circulated video footage being shot at close range by another policeman while a friend tried to pull him away.

**পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি**  
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**e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের জিএমডি, সিরাজগঞ্জ দপ্তরে আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works
1219795	GMD Sirajganj/OTM Notice/Ullapara 132 KV/2	Procurement of Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of IP Camera Based Surveillance Systems at Ullapara 132/33 KV Grid Substation under GMD Sirajganj, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC
1219867	GMD Sirajganj/OTM Notice/GMD Office/4	Procurement of Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Grid Connected Net Metering Solar PV Systems with a Total Capacity of 40 kW at Substations under GMD Sirajganj, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রের অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ মামুন সবার  
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, সিরাজগঞ্জ

**National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF)**  
A State-Owned Company under Finance Division  
Probashi Kalyan Bhaban (Level-6)  
71-72 Old Elephant Road  
Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.  
www.nhrdf.gov.bd

**Invitation for Tender for 'Procurement & Installation of Air Conditioner (AC) for NHRDF (Package-1)'**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Finance
2	Agency	Finance Division
3	Procuring Entity Name	Managing Director & CEO, National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF)
4	Procuring Entity Code	None
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Procurement & Installation of Air Conditioner (AC) for NHRDF
7	Invitation Ref No	FD/NHRDF/02.03.00.15.26-131
8	Date	22 February 2026

**KEY INFORMATION**

9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

10	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

12	Project/ Program Code (if applicable)	N/A	
13	Project/ Program Name (if applicable)	N/A	
14	Tender Package No.	NHRDF-GD-10	
15	Tender Package Name	Procurement & Installation of Air Conditioner (AC) for NHRDF (Package-1)	
16	Tender Publication Date	23 February 2026	
17	Tender Last Selling Date	09 March 2026	
	Date	Time	
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	10 March 2026	2:00 p.m.
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	10 March 2026	2:30 p.m.
20	Selling Tender Document	National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF) Probashi Kalyan Bhaban (Level-6), 71-72 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000. Telephone No: 55138350	

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

**Receiving Tender Document**  
Room # 1201, Building # 11, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

**Opening Tender Document**  
Office of the General Manager (Admin & Finance), NHRDF Room # 1201, Building # 11, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

21	Place/ Date/ Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	Not Applicable
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**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

22	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	As per Tender Document			
23	Brief Description of Service	Procurement of Air Conditioner (AC) & Installation for NHRDF			
24	Price of Tender Document (Taka)	1000.00 (Taka One Thousand Only) (Cash Only)			
25	Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount	Completion time in Weeks/ Months/ Days
	NHRDF-GD-10	Procurement & Installation of Air Conditioner (AC) for NHRDF (Package-1)	Probashi Kalyan Bhaban (Level-6) 71-72 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.	Pay-order BDT 30,000.00 (Thirty Thousand) in favor of Managing Director & CEO, NHRDF	30 Days from the Signing of Contract

**PROCUREMENT ENTITY DETAILS**

26	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Touhidur Rahman
27	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Managing Director & CEO
28	Address of Official Inviting Tender	National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF) Probashi Kalyan Bhaban (Level-6), 71-72 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton Garden, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
29	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No: 0255138350 e-mail address: nhrdfmd@gmail.com
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject any or all tenders or annul the tender proceedings	

(Md. Touhidur Rahman)  
Managing Director & CEO  
National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF)  
Finance Division

GD-365

## A century of flavour

FROM PAGE 3  
recently rediscovered the bakery's jilapi and returned on Sunday for more. "I found it very delicious, so I came again," he said.

During Ramadan, the bakery sells around 60 different items daily. Among the most sought-after are suti kebab paratha, murg musallam, beef halim, jilapi and chicken lollipop.

Even well-known food entrepreneurs frequent the shop. On Sunday afternoon, Haji Babul, owner of the popular Nanna Biryani, was seen purchasing iftar items.

"I don't usually come myself; my family members buy from here. Today I purchased paneer samosa and nimki," he said.

Junayed Ahmed, a fourth-generation member

of the owning family, said the confectionery's journey began with his great-grandfather, Chan Mian, in 1920.

"My great grandfather started the business in Faridpur. Later, it shifted to Raowza on a small scale at home and gradually expanded," he said.

Besides its main outlet in Old Dhaka, Ananda Confectionery now has branches at Jahangir Gate and Wari. The shops operate from 8:00am to 10:00pm, while the main outlet remains open until midnight, he added.

Abdul Karim, a third-generation member of the owning family, said the bakery maintains its tradition by selling exclusively on a retail basis and focusing on quality over expansion.

## Publish white paper

FROM PAGE 3  
At the meeting, members strongly condemned what they described as the interim government's "arbitrary, hasty, and non-transparent" dealings with the United States, including a trade agreement they termed "disastrous" for Bangladesh.

The committee alleged that such agreements are aimed at undermining national sovereignty, permanently entangling the country and making it economically dependent on the US. It urged the elected government to immediately withdraw from what it called an "illegal" agreement.

Committee members also expressed concern over the appointment of an adviser, whom they identified as the "architect" of several anti-national agreements, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, describing the move as a major risk for the country,

added the release.

Members further called for investigations into incidents of post-election violence and the reported gang rape in Hatiya. They also demanded the release of individuals, including members of the Bawm community, who have allegedly been detained for prolonged periods on what it described as false charges.

Those present at the meeting included Liberation War activist Dipa Dutta, researcher Mahtabuddin Ahmed, writer Chowdhury Bhattacharya, Sadrul Hasan Ripon, Mohsin Ali, Nazmus Sakib, trade union leader Satyajit Biswas, Iqbal Kabir, Democratic Student Union leader Dilip Roy, Rafiquzzaman Farid, Shayedul Haque, lawyer Alaudin Ahmed, filmmaker Akram Khan, Rafsan Ahmed, rights activist Marzia Prava, and Fakhruddin Kabir.

## No pavilions

FROM PAGE 3  
This year, of the 37 publishers allotted pavilions, 36 have decided not to participate and have demanded that the fair be rescheduled to after Eid-ul-Fitr.

The Bangla Academy, however, decided to go ahead with the book fair. The fair will run from February 25 to March 15.

According to decisions taken at the meeting,

publishers who had previously been allotted pavilions agreed to dismantle them, with support from the Bangladesh Publishers and Booksellers Association.

Meanwhile, the lottery for stall allocation among publishers who applied by February 19 was held at 10:00pm yesterday. Publishers are expected to begin constructing their stalls from today.

## Probe NCT, Pangaon

FROM PAGE 4  
It also alleged that the deals were concluded with "unusual haste" and under non-disclosure agreements.

The group called for a comprehensive probe into the NCT lease process as well as the Laldia and Pangaon concession deals

to determine whether any bribery or illicit financial transactions occurred.

It also urged authorities to examine the local and overseas bank accounts of those involved and take steps to prevent evidence tampering or possible flight abroad during the investigation.

**বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক**  
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ) ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি পরিচালনা  
ই-মেইল: info.bscc@bb.org.bd

প্রধান কার্যালয়  
মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০  
বাংলাদেশ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-৫৮/২০২৬ তারিখঃ ০৪ ফাল্গুন, ১৪৩২  
১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ২০২৬

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত বেসিক ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর ১. প্রিন্সিপাল অফিসার (আইসিটি)- ডাটাবেইজ এডমিনিস্ট্রেটর (জব আইডি-২৫১২২); ২. প্রিন্সিপাল অফিসার (আইসিটি)-নেটওয়ার্ক এডমিনিস্ট্রেটর (জব আইডি-২৫১২৩); (৩) প্রিন্সিপাল অফিসার (আইসিটি)-আইসিটি সিকিউরিটি স্পেশালিস্ট (জব আইডি-২৫১২৪) এবং (৪) অফিসার (আইসিটি)-ইওডি স্পেশালিস্ট (জব আইডি-২৫১২৫) পদসমূহে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে সরাসরি নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকের নিকট হতে Online এ আবেদন এবং আবেদনের সপক্ষে দলিলাদি প্রেরণ করার আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদন দাখিলের বিস্তারিত নিয়ম ও শর্তাবলী বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) পাওয়া যাবে।

স্বাক্ষরিত/-  
মিজানুর রহমান আকন  
পরিচালক (বিএসসিএস)  
ও  
সদস্য-সচিব (বিএসসিএস)

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৬-৫১২  
তারিখঃ ২২/০২/২০২৬

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে, হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিবা  
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জিডি-৩৭০

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www.brtc.gov.bd

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১।	মহালায়/বিভাগ	: সড়ক পরিবহন ও মৎস্যক বিভাগ।
২।	বিক্রয় স্থান/নাম	: চেয়ারম্যান, বিআরটিসি।
৩।	বিক্রয় পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।
৪।	দরপত্র বিক্রয় নং	: ০৫.০৪.০০০০.০৭.০০.৬৬৩.২৬
৫।	দরপত্র সিডিউল পাতওয়ার স্থান	: <a href="http://www.brtc.gov.bd">www.brtc.gov.bd</a> হতে ডাউনলোডকৃত সিডিউল।
৬।	ডাউনলোডকৃত দরপত্র সিডিউল গ্রহণের তারিখ ও শেষ সময়	: ২৩/০২/২০২৬ ইং হতে ১৫/০৩/২০২৬ ইং এবং বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৭।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	: দরপত্রের প্রতিটি সিডিউলের মূল্যাবন ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা (অফেরৎযোগ্য) "চেয়ারম্যান, বিআরটিসি" অনুমুলে যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে পৃথক পৃথক ড্রাকট/পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে ডাউনলোডকৃত দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। সিডিউলের মূল্যাবন পে-অর্ডার ব্যতীত দরপত্র বাতিলযোগ্য।
৮।	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	: ১৬/০৩/২০২৬ ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ক্রয় বিভাগ (৯ম তলা), বিআরটিসি, ২১, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০ হতে ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ারযোগে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে (ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ারযোগে প্রেরিত দরপত্র প্রধান কার্যালয়, ক্রয় বিভাগে ১৬/০৩/২০২৬ ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত না পৌঁছালে দরপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না)।
৯।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	: ১৬/০৩/২০২৬ ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা বিআরটিসি, ক্রয় বিভাগ (৯ম তলা), ২১, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১০।	দরপত্রের সাথে আনানত (আর্নেস্টম্যানি)	: মোট উন্মুক্ত মূল্যের নূনতম ১০% আনানত (আর্নেস্টম্যানি) "চেয়ারম্যান, বিআরটিসি" অনুমুলে যে কোন রাইয়াখ/সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে প্রদত্ত পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাকট এর মাধ্যমে ডাউনলোডকৃত দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে জমা করতে হবে।
১১।	সিডিউলের সাথে যে সমস্ত ডকুমেন্টস সংস্কৃত করতে হবে	: (ক) <a href="http://www.brtc.gov.bd">www.brtc.gov.bd</a> হতে ডাউনলোডকৃত সিডিউল, (খ) ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, (গ) আয়কর প্রত্যয়ন পত্র, (ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, (ঙ) ব্যাংক স্বাক্ষরকার সনদপত্র, (চ) আত্মীয় পরিচয়পত্র, (ছ) ০২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রশ্মি ছবি। দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত কাগজপত্র হাল নাশাদ নবায়িত এবং প্রথম শ্রেণীর কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১২।	বিক্রয়স্থল মাল্যাসের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	: বিআরটিসি'র অযোগ্য ঘোষিত ১০টি গাড়ী (একতলা ও দ্বিতল বাস) নিলামে বিক্রয়।
১৩।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম ও পদবী	: ইমাম হোসাইন, ম্যানেজার (ক্রয়)।
১৪।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর অফিসের ঠিকানা ও টেলিফোন নং	: ক্রয় বিভাগ, ৯ম তলা, বিআরটিসি, ২১, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০, ৪১০৫১০৪৩।
১৫।	কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা	: কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণের দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী সংযোজন, সংকোচন, পরিমার্জন ও পরিবর্তনের ক্ষমতা রাখে এবং সর্বক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
১৬।	নির্দেশনা	: অনস্বর্ণ, ক্রটিমুক্ত ও আনানতবিহীন (আর্নেস্টম্যানি) দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

GD-367

ইমাম হোসাইন  
ম্যানেজার (ক্রয়)  
বিআরটিসি।

# THE GREAT AGE OF CHITTAGONG

## and our failure to understand it



Equestrian portrait of Shayista Khan, by Ilyas Khan, Delhi, c. 1666. The painting commemorates Shayista Khan's role in the Mughal conquest of Chittagong in 1666, depicting the imperial commander on a rearing horse in the restrained grisaille style characteristic of late seventeenth-century Mughal court painting.

**Until modern borders partitioned it, Chittagong's location on the ethnic, linguistic and cultural frontier between South and Southeast Asia made it central in a honeycomb of contiguous material spaces of hazy social configurations but clearly visible routes connecting west to Magadha; northwest to the Tripuri, Koch and Ahom regions; northeast to the Shan domains, Burma, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan; southeast to Arakan. Buddhism linked it to Sri Lanka, Lan Na, Arakan, Burma and Siam. A meshwork of land-river routes connected it to port-towns and caravan-cities in Burma, Yunnan and China.**

RILA MUKHERJEE

Accessing the sea through the Karnaphuli River, Chittagong's site was exceptional in the early modern age of commerce. No other port had such an excellent harbour. Duarte Barbosa (1518) saw 'a very excellent sea haven'. With lesser siltation and fewer geomorphological changes, Chittagong, controlling navigation at the Meghna's mouth, showcases a long history. Unlike in the Ganges estuary, the Feni River to its north and the Sangu's and Matamuhuri's arms in the south are accessible to the largest barges in all seasons. The Karnaphuli, at the centre of these water courses, is navigable year-round, although Alexander Hamilton noted (1718) that its entry was 'pestered with sand banks, and some rocks within'.

Until modern borders partitioned it, Chittagong's location on the ethnic, linguistic and cultural frontier between South and Southeast Asia made it central in a honeycomb of contiguous material spaces of hazy social configurations but clearly visible routes connecting west to Magadha; northwest to the Tripuri, Koch and Ahom regions; northeast to the Shan domains, Burma, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan; southeast to Arakan. Buddhism linked it to Sri Lanka, Lan Na, Arakan, Burma and Siam. A meshwork of land-river routes connected it to port-towns and caravan-cities in Burma, Yunnan and China.

Chittagong's political status was indeterminate. Under Bengal from 1340 to 1448, it then went under Arakan, came back into Bengal when recovered by Rukn-ud-din Barbak (1459-74), thereafter lost to Arakan and Tripura, again under Bengal (1516/17-1531), and under Bengal and Arakan until the Mughal conquest of 1666. The conquest was not conclusive. Mrauk U king Sanda Wizaya (1710-31) invaded Chittagong in 1723, enslaving Bengalis who were then donated as pagoda-slaves in the ordination halls and monasteries at the Mahamuni complex. The Bengal nawabs recovered Chittagong in 1729 and it saw some trade again.

**The last great port**  
Chittagong's location attracted Europeans seeking autonomy from

the English-controlled Hughly zone. In the 1620s, Manrique dreamt of a second Portuguese empire based on Chittagong. In the 1730s, Duplex fancied creating a Chandernagore-Chittagong trading bloc which would connect to Arakan, Pegu and Ava through coastal sailings and the Brahmaputra-Meghna-Chindwin-Irrawaddy waterway. In the 1750s, Chevalier saw Chittagong as the centre of a maritime continental bloc linking Bengal-Assam-Tripura-Ava-Arakan-Pegu-Mergui-Andaman/Nicobar Islands-Southeast China. All these schemes failed.

For the British, Chittagong was only a conduit to the Pegu trade. The Hunter report (1785) recommended developing this 'peddling trade', but as Company surveyor John Ritchie was preparing the Andamans hydrography charts in the 1770s, the focus shifted, Port Blair was founded, and Chittagong languished. The great earthquake of 1762 did not help matters.

Cordier noted in 1823 that Chittagong was no longer commercially sustainable. But Burmese vessels, navigating the northwest monsoon through coastal channels, still made an annual voyage from Bassein, Rangoon and Martaban to Chittagong, where they sold their produce—mainly Rangoon rice—and brought back cloth and Indian goods. Its deepwater port and proximity to Ava, Arakan and Burma provided for a limited rice-and-salt trade at Jugdia, Srirampur, Dhaka, Sylhet and Goalpara. Surrounded by populous villages, Chittagong still contained 12,000 people. In 1836, around 300 vessels of between 40 and 100 tons called there, including 'several large Maldiv boats of incredible construction'. Penang's Tamil Muslim shipping called in 1838.

**Early modern Chittagong**  
This sad state of affairs is belied by the flourishing trade that took off once Bengal became independent of the Delhi Sultanate. Already, Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah of Sonargaon had conquered Chittagong in 1340, but with the Ilyas Shahis (1342-1415) its networks expanded. Religious, diplomatic and commercial ties bound Chittagong to Hijaz, Timurid Herat and Ming China. Ibn Battuta saw 'a

junk about to set off for the country of Javan which is forty days distant'. Under the later Ilyas Shahis (1437-87), as many as 20 mints existed, including at Chittagong, where a fleet of 62 Ming ships called in 1405. Until 1448, when it went under Arakan, its mint was active.

Chittagong was equally important to the Husain Shahis. Baghdadi merchant Alfa Husaini, who traded with Chittagong, supposedly instigated the 1516/17 reconquest, assisting Sultan Husain Shah with ships, manpower and material. After taking Chittagong, Husain Shah founded Bhalwa town and Suluk Bahr port, settled people, built mosques at Hathazari and Fathabad, and a tank commemorating his victory.

The earliest recorded Portuguese missions were under Joao Coelho's and Dom Joao de Silveira's leadership in 1517 and 1518 respectively. An incognito mission passed through Chittagong in 1521. The mint was active from 1523 to 1526 under the Husainids until it reverted to Arakan in 1531. Yet in 1552 Barros remarked: 'Chittagong is the most famous and wealthy city of the kingdom of Bengal, on account of its port, at which meet the trade of all that Eastern region'. Federici saw 'eighteen ships of Portugals great and small... From the great port of Chitigan they carie for the Indies great store of ryce, verie great quantitie of Bombast cloth of everie sorte, Suger, Corne, and Money, with other merchandise. And by reason that Warres was in Chitigan, the Portugall shippes tarried there so late'.

Ships came from Yemen, the Arab peninsula, the Ottoman Empire, Europe, China and Southeast Asia. Visitors included Ralph Fitch on his return voyage (1588) and Dutch merchant-traveller Jan Huygen van Linschoten, who regarded Chittagong as the 'chief townne' of Bengal (1596). In 1607, Francois Pyrard de Laval saw it as the 'port of the kingdom of Bengal'. Fernao Guerrero, also in 1607, saw its ruler as the most powerful of Bengal's kings.

Pyrard makes this distinction: 'On landing, they took me with them to salute the king, who is not, however, the great king of Bengal, but a petty king of this province, or rather a governor, with the title of king, as is generally the case in those parts. The great king of Bengal lives higher up the country, thirty or forty leagues off. On being presented to this petty king, he received me with great kindness...'



Folio 3 recto from the Miller Atlas, completed in 1519 for King Manuel I of Portugal, depicting a richly decorated map of the northern Indian Ocean, with Arabia and India.

The great king [of Arakan] is a pagan; he of Chartican, whom I saw, was a Mohammedan.'

Mint output matched trade whenever silver inflows corresponded with periods of sultanate control. John Deyell has computed that the period 1291 to 1357 saw heavy inflows; 1358-66 saw a net outflow; 1367-1415 saw moderate to heavy inflows; 1416-29 saw heavy outflow; the China and Portugal trade during 1430-1533 saw steadily increasing inflows. But until Chittagong's reconquest in 1666, Arakan's lack of a money economy meant that whenever the Chittagong port was under its control, Arakan issued trade coins intended for transactions with foreign merchants.

From 1539 to 1573, in the absence of a ruling authority, Chittagong's trader-banker nexus engaged in producing a trade coinage which was reliable as money but spurious as a message-bearing medium. The impulse came from those engaged in intra-regional trade; coins carried no mint name and were struck to the old tanka weight standard favoured throughout the region from Arakan to Tripura inclusive, as opposed to the prevailing rupiya standard current throughout Bengal and India. The transitional coinage reinforced a frontier character,

in contrast to the administered Arakan and Burma trades. It stopped when Arakan established its Chittagong mint in the 1580s, producing crude and stylistically plain Arakanese/Arabic coins.

**Unstable borders, capricious rivers**  
Borderlands were tense throughout this period. Chakmas ('Chacomars' in European maps), from Tripura and the Chittagong hills, raided Arakan between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century, local rulers, Portuguese and Arakanese fought over Sandwip, a strategic salt-producing gateway south of Chittagong. The neighbouring 'Regno (Kingdom) de Codovascam' saw conflict with the Arakanese and Portuguese. King Min Khayi had pillaged 'Cukkara' port there in 1439 and founded Ramu north of the Naaf River, affirming Arakanese control until that point. The Bengal-Arakan border pact had shattered.

The sixteenth century's west-to-east fluvial shifts and large-scale flooding in Chittagong's western hinterland affected trade. The Mathabhanga, Bhairab, Garai-Madhumati and Arialkhan rivers linked the Meghna-Brahmaputra and Ganges estuaries, enabling the western ports to access Southeast Bengal's goods directly. Trade based on Chittagong's wide hinterland collapsed once Mughal occupation rendered the western ports prominent. It is no accident that Dhaka town, directly connected to these ports through the Padma River, rose after 1610.

Hughly, Kasimbazar, Patna and ultimately British Calcutta became primate ports, compared to whose reach Arakan-held Chittagong was only a minor emporium and a limited gateway to eastern contacts which had decayed. China, its major trading partner, withdrew from the Indian Ocean trade. A belligerent Burma started exerting pressure on Arakan. The Portuguese, embedded in small river valleys, could not arrest the decline. The local elite class could no longer bounce back.

Fluvial shifts made Chittagong a slave-raided zone, yet the slave trade positioned it within a new network of slave ports and slave markets headed by seventeenth-century Achin in Sumatra. Portuguese-Arakanese bands called magh raided Southeast Bengal to provide slaves for Arakan to sell and trans-ship, and for public

successfully defend their interests against Bengal and Arakan, although, in the absence of a ruling authority, Chittagong's businessmen managed to produce a reliable trade coinage.

Partly due to the political destabilisation in western Bengal, Chittagong was unable to leverage the new economy; it was incapable of consolidating its position with other ports and powerless to forge new connections. When the Surid Afghans conquered Gaur in 1538, the Portuguese lost the privileges granted by the last Husain Shahi sultan. But Mughal emperor Humayun's capture of Gaur in July that year saw the Afghans routed.

The Afghans moved towards Chittagong. With old networks changing and the Gaur connection severed, various elements jostled for power: Bhati's chief Suleiman Baisia; Portuguese renegades; Afghan commander 'Nogazil'; Chittagong's governor Amirza Khan; his enemy Codovascam, or Khuda Bakhsh Khan, feudatory chief of south Chittagong. Chaos ensued. An Arakan silver plate inscription shows it coming under Arakan ca. 1540/41, but this may have been only a formal occupation, since Federici in 1569 and Fitch in 1586 saw both Chittagong and Sandwip under Bengal. Turmoil from Devamanikya's death and Bijoymanikya's succession in 1540 prevented Tripura from meddling in Chittagong's affairs, but there would still be periods of Tripuri, Afghan and Bengali control until ca. 1582, when Arakan recovered it.

As endemic conflict affected routes and hampered mint operations, other ports started challenging Arakan-held Chittagong. Bakla's Paramananda Rai and Viceroy Constantino de Braganza signed a treaty on 30 April 1559. Bakla was opened to Portuguese shipping with low and fixed customs duties if they stopped visiting Chittagong. In exchange, Bakla got cartazes to send four ships to Goa, Hormuz and Melaka. Given this flux, it is unclear as to what extent Chittagong could retain its status as a great regional port.

**Reading Chittagong**

In true mandala fashion, borderlands like Chittagong are often claimed as part of some regional problematique, but always from the centre's viewpoint. But which centre we privilege—Bengal, Arakan, or the Mughal Empire—is the main issue here. The 'Bengal' lens shows a borderland oscillating between it, Tripura, Arakan and the Mughal Empire. For Arakan, which was re-networking its coast, it was an integral part of its territory. For the Mughals, Chittagong was the last frontier.

Before the 1666 conquest, the Mughal frontier retreated to nearby Bhalwa, where a cultural and political cohesion was visible. Portuguese was spoken, customs were 'Moorish', and Arabic-speaking rulers and Portuguese guards dominated. So, instead of seeing these polities as composed of concentric, mandala-like circles of power that occasionally included Chittagong, it makes more sense to see it as an autonomous port-city coming under multiple sovereignties, negotiating many cultural realms throughout its millennium-plus history, sometimes oscillating west towards India and at other times southeastward to Arakan.

Another reason for our inadequate understanding of Chittagong is over-dependence on European sources. Europeans living within early modern Europe's state system knew of sovereignty as operating within strictly defined borders. They little understood how regions were constituted in Asia: where one polity's borders ended and another's began, which spaces overlapped, which were the tributary states and what were their realms of jurisdiction, and what the different forms of rulership implied. So, they were quite unable to comprehend the bewildering array of 'little' states existing between China and India.

The Mughal Empire was seen as South Asia's paramount state, and all polities were subject to, or in the process of subjection to, that state. Those that occupied an indeterminate space were badly understood. Ultimately, Chittagong became a borderland within a larger peripheralised region, and Arakan's expansive seventeenth century was lost to the traveller's gaze in a baffling assortment of rivers, central towns, polities, tributaries, states and satellites in eastern South Asia. Clearly, Chittagong challenged European notions of territoriality.

**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).**

## Giant killers Zim face perfect WI

AGENCIES

After knocking out Australia from the group stage and marching onto the second round as group champions, Zimbabwe will face off against fellow unbeaten side West Indies in their Super Eights Group 1 opener in Mumbai today.

Zimbabwe, who could not even qualify for the 2024 edition, sprung stunning victories against former world champions Australia and Sri Lanka in the first round to finish atop of Group B.

Under the inspiring leadership of all-rounder Sikandar Raza, Zimbabwe has already surpassed all expectations and will be daring to continue breaking new ground when they take on the Caribbean side, who also have been dominant so far, with four wins in the group stage, including a 30-run win over England.

Before the match, West Indies coach Darren Sammy spoke highly of Zimbabwe as opponents, and termed their star pacer Blessing Muzarabani an "X-factor".

"We plan for every single player. Not only him. He's an X-factor," Sammy told reporters yesterday about



Muzarabani, who had taken 4-17 in Zimbabwe's 23-run win over Australia.

"You've got to respect the opposition. We know the threat they bring against us but we also know what we have to do in order for him not to be threatening against us," he added.

India and South Africa are the other two teams in Group 1, who had also finished atop their respective groups in the first round. As the Super Eights were pre-ceeded before the tournament, all four group winners were placed in the same group while the runners-up were placed in Group 2.

The format has brought accusations of a lopsided second phase with two group winners certain to miss the semi-finals. However, Sammy spoke in support of the format. "I do understand from the logistic standpoint, trying to give the fans the surety, flights, whatever," said Sammy.



## JACKS OF ALL TRADES

Will Jakes rescued England with a decisive all-round display as they beat Sri Lanka by 51 runs in a low-scoring Super Eight match at the T20 World Cup in Pallekele yesterday. England struggled to 146-9 in the Group 2 clash, with Jakes contributing a quickfire 21 off 14 balls. Jakes then turned the match with the ball, taking 3-22 as England bundled out Sri Lanka for 95 in 16.4 overs.

● Sri Lanka's 95 was the lowest team total of this edition of the T20 World Cup.

● The win marked England's 12th straight T20I victory over Sri Lanka, a run dating back to March 2016, and their sixth win in seven T20 World Cup meetings between the sides.

## BCB bans Monjurul after harassment probe

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday banned former women's team selector and manager Monjurul Islam from all cricket-related activities following the findings of an Independent Inquiry Committee which probed the harassment allegations brought by women's team cricketer Jahanara Alam.

The decision was announced through a press release following a board of directors' meeting yesterday.

"Based on the findings of the Independent Inquiry Committee formed by the BCB to examine the complaint lodged by former Bangladesh Women's National Team Captain Jahanara Alam, the Board has decided to impose a

banned on former national cricketer Monjurul Islam from all forms of direct or indirect employment and/or cricket-related activities under the jurisdiction of the Bangladesh Cricket Board," the press release read. "The BCB is reviewing the recommendations of the Committee and will take any additional measures deemed necessary in light of the report."

The BCB, however, did not specify any duration of the ban.

The decision follows the findings of a five-member Independent Inquiry Committee formed to investigate allegations brought by the former Bangladesh women's team captain on last year's November.

The committee submitted its report to BCB president Aminul

Islam Bulbul on February 2 after reviewing four specific allegations raised by Jahanara.

While two of the allegations were not substantiated by available evidence, the committee found prima facie -- or sufficient initial -- evidence of inappropriate conduct concerning the remaining two.

Monjurul is currently not employed under the BCB. His contract had ended on June 30, 2025.

The board recently announced the formation of a complaint committee in accordance with a 2009 High Court Division judgment. The committee is headed by BCB director and women's wing committee chairperson Rubaba Dowla as part of efforts to strengthen institutional safeguards.



South Zone's Mustafizur Rahman, Ruyel Miah and Soumya Sarkar appear in a jovial mood during a practice session at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday, ahead of the opening day of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) today. The domestic tournament's ODI version returns after more than a two-year gap, aiming to help the national side -- which missed out on playing in the ongoing T20 World Cup -- prepare for next month's home ODI series against Pakistan. The opening day will see South Zone take on Central Zone in Rajshahi, while North Zone face East Zone in Bogura in the four-team tournament.

PHOTO: BCB

## 'Massive': City gain ground in Premier League title race

AFP, Manchester

Pep Guardiola labelled Manchester City's 2-1 win over Newcastle on Saturday as a "massive" moment in the Premier League title race.

Guardiola's second placed side closed the gap on leaders Arsenal to just two points with their tense victory at the Etihad Stadium.

Nico O'Reilly put City ahead in the first half and restored the lead before half-time after Lewis Hall had equalised.

City weren't at their best in the second half, but they held on to pile pressure on spluttering Arsenal, who played Tottenham away from home last night.

Guardiola knew it was essential to make Arsenal sweat.

"Massive. Newcastle is an incredible team, awesome in physicality and speed they have up front. Physicality in the middle. Really tough but the team was unbelievable," he said.

"It's coming in best part of the



season. Every single game will be similar to today."

After finishing without a trophy last season, City are back in the hunt for the seventh English title of Guardiola's reign.

They will have a game in hand on Arsenal after this weekend and are guaranteed to win the title if they win their last 11 league matches.

Guardiola has embarked on an

expensive overhaul of City's squad in the last 12 months, shedding ageing stars like Kevin De Bruyne, Ederson and Kyle Walker and bringing in the likes of Marc Guehi, Antoine Semenyo and Rayan Cherki.

The Spaniard is well aware that his new generation largely lacks the experience of winning under the pressure of a title race, which made their gritty success against Newcastle even more meaningful.

"70 percent of the players have never been in that situation, and I don't play. So we have to live it, they know that every game will be like this," he said.

"Especially at home, with five home games left. Today was the best crowd of the year, it was unbelievable with our people, really proud to be manager of these incredible people and fans.

"Of course in terms of points it's important, but we have to improve to have chance to compete until the end. Now we deserve three more days off. Then another battle in Leeds."

### MASTUL Foundation

# Zakat Calculator

And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.  
-Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:19)

**On whom is Zakat obligatory?**  
Zakat is obligatory upon a Muslim adult of sound mind and freedom who possesses wealth equal to or above the Nisab, in excess of basic needs and debts, for one complete Hijri year. The prescribed rate of Zakat is 2.5%.

**Rules for Zakat Calculation:**

- If a person possesses only gold, the nisab is 7.5 bhori (87.48 grams)
- If a person possesses only silver, the nisab is 52.5 bhori (612.36 grams)
- If someone owns a small amount of gold (for example, 2 bhori) along with cash or business assets, the gold nisab is not applied; instead, the silver nisab is applied.

**Zakat Guideline**

- 1 Add up the current market value of gold, silver, cash on hand, and business goods
- 2 Subtract the amount of debt taken for your basic needs
- 3 If the remaining amount is equal to or exceeds the value of 52.5 bhori of silver, then give 2.5% (one-fortieth) of it as Zakat

**Those Who Are Entitled to Receive Zakat**

1. The Poor
2. The Needy
3. Those employed to collect and distribute zakat
4. Those Whose Hearts are to Be Reconciled
5. For the Emancipation of Slaves
6. The debt-ridden
7. In the Cause of Allah
8. The Wayfarer

**Types of Wealth**

- Cash (Cash in hand/Cash at bank)
- Gold/Silver: Market value of used or unused jewelry
- Investment: Stock market or goods purchased for business
- Receivables: Money guaranteed to be recovered

**Zakat Calculation**

Zakatable Assets = Total Assets - Debt

Amount of Zakat = Zakatable Assets x Rate of Zakat (2.5%)

Your Zakat =

**Zakatatable Wealth:**

- **Cash:** Cash in hand, bank deposits, GP funds, or prize bonds, all are included.
- **Gold and Silver:** Ornaments, bars, or pieces; Zakat must be paid in all cases, whether they are used or kept unused.
- **Business Assets:** Any goods or land/plots purchased with the intention of sale.
- **Grazing Livestock:** Animals that graze on pasture for most of the year and are kept for breeding or milk.

**Projects of MASTUL Foundation**

- Zakat Shabolombi
- Emergency Relief
- Burial Service
- MASTUL Mehmankhana
- Gaza Project
- Old age home & Orphanage

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In accordance with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) SRO, all donations, Zakat, and Sadaqah contributed to the MASTUL Foundation are tax-exempt. Consequently, donors are eligible for a tax rebate on their contributions.

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**Lt General Mainur made new chief of general staff**  
Changes made in other key posts too  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army has reshuffled several key posts at the top level, including the chief of general staff (CGS), principal staff officer (PSO) and director general of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).



According to a source at the defence ministry, Lt Gen Mainur Rahman, general officer commanding (GOC) of the Army Training and Doctrine Command (ARTDOC), has been made the Army's CGS. The previous CGS, Lt Gen Mizanur Rahman Shamim, recently retired.

Maj Gen Mir Mushfiqur Rahman, GOC of the 24 Infantry Division in Chattogram, has been promoted to lieutenant general and appointed PSO at the Armed Forces Division. The incumbent PSO, Lt Gen SM Kamrul Hasan, has been transferred to the foreign ministry for his next posting as an ambassador.

Brig Gen Mohammad Kaisar Rashid Chowdhury has been named the new DG of DGFI. He was

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Trade deal chains Dhaka to US tech orbit

Officials fear it may deprive Bangladesh of tax revenue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Digital trade rules embedded in Bangladesh's new agreement with the US may deprive Bangladesh of tax revenues and also limit the expansion of digital economy, say experts.

Under Section 3 of the trade deal, Bangladesh has agreed not to impose customs duties on "electronic transmissions" that refer to digital products and services delivered online. They include software downloads, music and video streaming, e-books, mobile apps, online gaming and cloud-based services.

Simultaneously, Bangladesh is pledge-bound to support the US push for a permanent global ban

**Under the agreement, Bangladesh has pledged not to introduce a digital services tax that "discriminates against US companies." That may effectively protect US tech companies from local taxation on sales revenue generated from Bangladeshi users, limiting a future revenue source for the government.**

on customs duties on electronic transmissions, an issue that is likely to resurface at the 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation to be held in Cameroon on March 26-29.

Trade officials in Dhaka fear this provision could further restrict Bangladesh's tariff policy in the digital sector.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, suggested that Bangladesh, a net importer of digital services, should bring the issue to the table during the possible review of the trade deal

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



**RIDERS IN THE DISTANCE...** Three young horse riders pause in the heart of a Shimul grove, where the red silk-cotton trees are in full bloom. In the sudden clearing, they take a break from offering rides to tourists all day and let their horses rest under the canopy of crimson blossoms. The photo was taken recently in Tahirpur, Sunamganj.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

## 13th JS convenes on March 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th Jatiya Sangsad will go into its maiden session on March 12.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed disclosed the information yesterday while speaking to reporters after a meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat.

Ordinances promulgated during the tenure of the interim government will be placed before the House on the first sitting of the maiden session of the 13th parliament.

The home minister said a summary

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## PM sets strict punctuality tone at Secretariat

BAHARAM KHAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has begun his time at the Secretariat with a strict focus on administrative discipline, monitoring whether ministers, state ministers, and secretaries have been maintaining office hours since assuming office



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## India ready for people-centric cooperation

Verma tells Khalilur; China vows strong, unaffected ties with Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India have expressed their willingness to build a progressive relationship based on mutual interests.

The matter came up during a meeting between Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and Indian High

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



South Africa's Dewald Brevis celebrates with Keshav Maharaj after catching India captain Suryakumar Yadav during the Proteas' 76-run win in an ICC T20 World Cup Super Eights clash in Ahmedabad yesterday. David Miller's 63 and brisk cameo from Brevis (44) and Tristan Stubbs (44\*) lifted South Africa to 187-7 before they bundled out defending champions India for 111 in 18.5 overs, ending the hosts' 12-match World Cup winning streak. Left-arm quick Marco Jansen claimed 4-22, while left-arm spinner Maharaj took 3-24 for the Proteas.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian drones, missiles pound Ukraine

P5

**HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING**  
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**PRAYER TIMING**  
FEBRUARY 23

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-12	12-45	4-30	6-00	7-30
JAMAAT 5-22	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING**

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
5	23		6:00
6	24	5:08	6:00
7	25	5:08	6:01

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## MILITANT TARGETS Pakistan air strikes kill 18 in Afghanistan

Taliban vow response

AFP, Afghanistan

Overnight air strikes by Pakistan on Afghanistan yesterday left at least 18 people dead including children, Taliban sources said, although Islamabad put the death toll at "more than 80 militants".

The strikes were the most extensive since border clashes in October that killed more than 70 on both sides and wounded hundreds.

Islamabad said it hit seven sites along the border region targeting Afghanistan-based militant groups, in response to suicide bombings in Pakistan.

A Pakistani security source told AFP yesterday that the strikes killed "more than 80" militants, adding the death toll was expected to rise.

AFP journalists in Afghanistan were not able to verify the toll, which was rejected by an Afghan security source.

"The figure of 80 martyrs given by the Pakistan regime is false and imaginary," the source told

## Car in MP's motorcade hits, kills 8-year-old

Police seize vehicle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An eight-year-old boy was killed yesterday afternoon after being hit by a vehicle in the convoy of Cox's Bazar-2 (Maheshkhali-Kutubdia) MP Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuzullah Farid in Chakararia upazila of Cox's Bazar.

The deceased, Md Khaled Bin Walid, was the son of Amanul and Sumaiya, of Kabirer Ghat in Techchipara, police said.

He was a class two student at a local madrasa.

The accident occurred around 4:30pm near Badarkhali Fazil Madrasa in Badarkhali. Khaled was taken to Badarkhali General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

সবার আগে বাংলাদেশ

নেতৃত্বের প্রেরণায়  
সমৃদ্ধ আগামী গড়ার প্রত্যাশা

**অভিনন্দন**

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার -এর মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী

"জনাব তারেক রহমান"

আপনার বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্বে  
সমৃদ্ধ আগামী নির্মাণে আমরা আছি একসাথে

পারটেক্স স্টার গ্রুপ-এর পক্ষ থেকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা

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