

Tap global e-commerce for jute startups

President urges the youth

UNB, Dhaka



Referring to this year's National Jute Day theme, "Build the Jute Industry, Create Employment," President Mohammed Shahabuddin called on the country's youth to explore startups and innovation in the jute sector and utilise global e-commerce platforms to expand Bangladesh's jute products in international markets yesterday.

"There will be a call to the creative young generation to open new horizons in the jute sector by promoting 'Made in Bangladesh' branding through startups and innovation and by connecting with global e-commerce platforms," said the president.

He made the remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of National Jute Day 2026 and the opening of a nine-day Jute and Diversified Jute Products Fair at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

Extending greetings to entrepreneurs, farmers, researchers, and businesspeople

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Prime Minister Tarique Rahman speaks before an iftar hosted in honour of diplomats at State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday, calling for deeper international partnerships rooted in trade, investment, and people-to-people ties. He also sought support for Bangladesh's candidacy for the UNGA presidency. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Tarique launches training workshop for BNP lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday started a training workshop for its lawmakers ahead of the first session of the 13th National Parliament, scheduled for March 12.

The programme was inaugurated at 10:30am at the party chairperson's office in Dhaka's Gulshan by Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman.

Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman confirmed the development, saying Tarique was personally attending the workshop.

The opening session was attended by LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, and senior leaders, including Standing Committee members MP Abdul Moyeen Khan, Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Liberation War Affairs Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, and Social Welfare Minister AZM Zahid Hossain.

Tarique delivered the welcome address, while his daughter Zaima Rahman was also present.

Party leaders explained that the workshop is designed to brief newly elected MPs on parliamentary procedures, code of conduct, bill drafting and review, budget analysis, and the functioning of parliamentary committees.

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Taqi murder probe lingers after 13 years

Mourners demand swift submission of charge sheet

STAR REPORT

Family members and leaders of various political, social, and civic organisations visited the grave of Tanwir Muhammad Taqi yesterday morning, marking the 13th anniversary of the teenager's murder in Narayanganj.

Expressing frustration over the lack of justice even after more than a decade, they demanded the investigation be completed and the charge sheet filed without further delay.

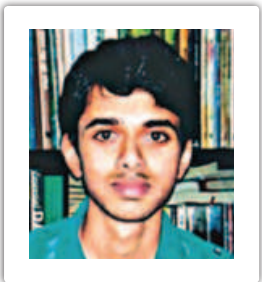
Around 10:00am, mourners visited Taqi's grave at Siraj Shah's shrine in the Puran Bandar area and offered prayers seeking eternal peace for his soul.

Prior to this, several organisations laid wreaths at the grave to pay tribute. These included Shantrash Nirmul Taqi Mancha, Narayanganj Sanskriti Jote, Khelaghar Ashor, Ganosamhati Andolon, Kranti Khelaghar Ashor, Somomona, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Udichi Shilpigosthi, and Anubhob.

Those present included Taqi's father, cultural activist Rafiur Rabbi, his younger son Rakib Muhammad Saki, member secretary of Shantrash Nirmul Taqi Mancha Halim Azad, former president of Narayanganj Sanskritik Jote Ziaul Islam Kajol, general secretary Dina Tajrin, former general secretary Dhiman Saha Jewel, district coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon Tariqul Suzon, executive coordinator Anjan Das, city convener Niamur Rashid Biplob, district president of the Communist Party Hafizul Islam, NAP general secretary Awlad Hossain, among others.

Taqi was abducted on March 6, 2013, and his body was recovered two days later from a canal connected to the Shitalakhyia River. A year later, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) disclosed details of the killing at a press conference, outlining where, how, and on whose orders the murder was carried out.

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Firewood market heats up as LPG costs stay high

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Narvin Begum, a day labourer supporting a four-member family, uses LPG for quick morning cooking and firewood for other meals.

Earlier, she used to pay Tk 15 per kilogramme of firewood. Now she has to pay Tk 20.

"A maund used to last nearly a month. Now expenses are higher, but gas alone is still beyond our reach," said Narvin, a resident of Mirpur.

With rising cylinder costs and supply disruptions creating volatility in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) market, a lot of households are adjusting their cooking habits.

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As a result, even households and small businesses that rarely rely on LPG are feeling the effects of the recent price volatility.

Although LPG supply has been increasing steadily, cylinders are



still selling for Tk 400-500 more than the government-fixed rate. LPG is now being sold at Tk 1700-1800 per 12kg cylinder.

Meanwhile, firewood prices remain elevated, putting pressure on low-income families and small eateries that depend on wood as their primary cooking fuel.

During visits to Bhasantek, Damalkot, Mohammadpur Geneva Camp, Mirpur-13, Korail, Mohakhali's Sat Tala slum, Duaripara, and Karwan Bazar, The Daily Star found firewood selling for Tk 15-25 per kilogramme depending on quality – noticeably higher than rates seen just months ago.

Traders say the surge began when gas cylinder shortages and higher LPG prices prompted many households and restaurants to temporarily switch fuels.

"At that time demand jumped

overnight," said a firewood trader at Mohammadpur Geneva Camp. "Prices rose quickly, and they have not come down because supply is limited and buyers are still there."

At the camp, shuttering wood – considered a durable fuel – now sells for around Tk 25 per kilogramme, while sawmill offcuts cost about Tk 20. Tree branches sell for roughly Tk 15 per kilogramme.

Traders said good quality wood was selling for Tk 10-15 per kilogramme before the spike.

For restaurants using clay stoves and street food vendors, the price increase has translated into higher operating costs.

Asif Billah, manager of the local eatery Shamim Hotel, which operates around the clock, said the restaurant uses about five maunds of firewood daily, in addition to LPG.

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Publish white paper on interim govt's tenure

Demands Gonotantrik Jukta Front

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Gonotantrik Jukta Front yesterday called for the publication of a white paper detailing the activities and decisions of the interim government during its time in office.

The statement said there has already been much discussion and criticism from different groups about the activities of the interim government.

After the July uprising, the government was given responsibilities such as ensuring justice, carrying out reforms, and organising elections.

"It was also expected to control rising prices, improve law and order, and establish

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165 repatriated from Libya

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 165 Bangladeshi nationals have been repatriated from Libya with the assistance of the Bangladesh Embassy in Libya, the foreign affairs ministry, the expatriates' welfare ministry, the Libyan government, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

They returned to Bangladesh on a Buraq Air flight at 5:30am yesterday.

Of the returnees, 143 had been detained at the Ganfouda Detention Centre in Benghazi, while the remaining 22 were distressed, vulnerable and physically ill Bangladeshis who had been living in Benghazi and nearby areas and expressed willingness to return home voluntarily.

According to officials, most of them had entered Libya attempting to reach Europe illegally

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Decay threatens 250-yr-old Lalmonirhat mosque

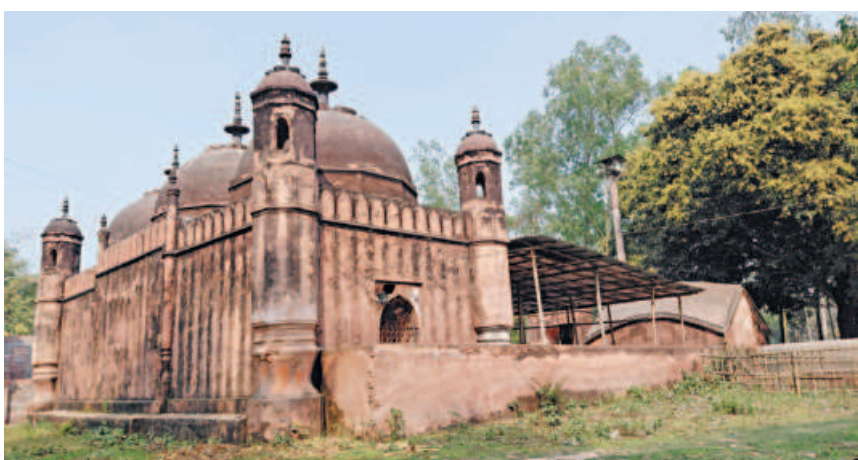
Archaeology department says work can begin if committee seeks formal approval

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Worshippers at Nidaria Jame Mosque, a protected 18th-century monument in Lalmonirhat, are facing safety risks as parts of the boundary wall and a tin-shed veranda remain in a fragile condition due to a lack of renovation.

Declared a protected archaeological monument in 1994 by the Department of Archaeology, the over 250-year-old mosque at Kismat Nagarband village under Panchgram union has seen little visible repair work in recent years, locals and mosque authorities said.

They urged the immediate need for steps to ensure safe prayer facilities



while preserving the historic structure.

According to the Department of Archaeology, the three-domed mosque was built in 1762 by Mansur Khan, son of Masud Khan, as indicated by a Persian inscription engraved on a black stone on the front wall.

The rectangular structure features

octagonal corner towers and three mihrabs on the western wall, reflecting Mughal-era architectural style.

Locals said the main structure has remained largely unchanged since its construction and has not undergone significant renovation for many years.

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PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

A mother looks through children's books at a stall of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, holding her little one in her arms. The photo was taken yesterday.