



# UNBOWED

Mobs vandalise, torch The Daily Star, Prothom Alo offices in nightlong mayhem; 28 Star journos rescued after being trapped for hours on rooftop



The first two floors of The Daily Star in flames early yesterday. A mob first vandalised the office, then set fire to it and obstructed the rescue of newspaper employees trapped inside, and looted valuables.

PHOTO: STAR

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a vicious assault on press freedom, mobs launched coordinated attacks on the head offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo in Dhaka early yesterday and vandalised the offices, looted valuables, set the buildings ablaze, and trapped journalists and staff of the English daily inside for hours.

At The Daily Star's office on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, they forced their way into the building around midnight and unleashed vandalism and looting.

They smashed furniture and glass doors, destroyed office equipment, tore down posters of July uprising martyrs Abu Sayed and Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho, and set fire to the ground and first floors where photographs of the uprising were on display.

Furniture and stacks of newspapers were set alight on the ground floor, with the blaze spreading up to the second floor. Another group dragged furniture onto the road in front of the building and burned it there.

The attackers entered the first through sixth floors, smashing computers and furniture and looting electronic equipment, including computers, cameras and hard drives. Food items from the office canteen were also taken.

As the fire intensified, flames and thick black smoke choked corridors and stairwells. At least 28 journalists and staff fled upward and took shelter on the rooftop, but breathing there also became increasingly difficult.

"I can't breathe anymore. There's too much smoke. I'm inside. You are killing me," investigative journalist Zyma Islam posted on Facebook around 1:00am.

Outside, friends, families and colleagues of those trapped waited in anguish. "Are they safe? When will they come out? When will they be rescued?" asked one relative.

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## A dark day for independent journalism

They can burn our office, not our resolve

It was one of the darkest days for independent journalism in Bangladesh when two of its largest newspapers — The Daily Star and Prothom Alo — were attacked.

Our colleagues, trapped on the roof, feared for their lives as a mob vandalised one floor after another and set fire to the lower floors. Although at one point it became difficult for them to breathe because of the smoke, no one has been hurt and everyone has returned home safe thanks to the efforts of the fire service, police and army.

Earlier, alarmed by the

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## Unite against all kinds of mob violence: Govt

We're with you, CA tells Star, Prothom Alo

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has urged the people of the country to resist all forms of mob violence committed by a few fringe elements.

"We strongly and unequivocally condemn all acts of violence, intimidation, arson, and destruction of property," said a statement issued by the chief adviser's press wing yesterday.

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# Osman Hadi brought home, funeral today

Janaza at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 2:00pm; nation erupts in protests for justice

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho and one of the frontliners of the July uprising, reached the country yesterday.

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying his coffin landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 5:48pm.

Hadi's brother-in-law, Amirul Islam, and Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber received his body at the airport.

An MP aspirant from Dhaka-8, Hadi, sustained a critical head injury on December 12 after being shot by assailants in the capital's Paltan area.

After receiving initial treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Evercare Hospital, he was airlifted to Singapore on December 15 for advanced medical care.

He passed away at Singapore General Hospital on Thursday night.

As per official instructions, Hadi's body was taken to the mortuary of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, to be kept overnight, said hospital Director Prof Abdul Wadud Chowdhury.

From the mortuary, his body will be taken to his funeral today, Prof Abdul told this newspaper last night. Hadi's namaz-e-janaza will be held at 2:00pm today at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Chief Adviser's Press Wing made the announcement and requested attendees not to carry bags or heavy items.

Flying drones in and around the parliament complex will remain strictly prohibited during the programme.

Inqilab Moncho, in a Facebook post, said in line with the family's wishes, Hadi will be buried beside the grave of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam near the Dhaka University Central Mosque.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, in his address to the nation on Thursday following the death of Hadi, announced today a day of state mourning.

Hadi, born in Jhalakathi and a prominent leader of last year's July uprising, was 32.

## PROTESTS ERUPT NATIONWIDE

Hadi's death sparked protests in the capital and other parts of the country

on Thursday night, with demonstrators demanding the immediate arrest of the culprits.

Following Hadi's death, Dhaka University students brought out mourning processions from TSC and residential halls around 10:30pm on Thursday.

At Shahbagh, former adviser Asif Mahmud arrived at 11:30pm, followed by National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam at 11:45pm.

Nahid led slogans against Indian aggression and the Awami League, saying Hadi's sacrifice would inspire countless others.

The protests continued overnight and into yesterday, with Shahbagh emerging as the centre of demonstrations. Crowds grew steadily as the day progressed, drawing people from different walks of life.

After Juma prayers yesterday, protesters joined the gathering in small processions from Dhaka University, Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and several nearby mosques. A section of the demonstrators also performed Juma prayers under the open sky at Shahbagh.

By midday, the Shahbagh intersection was sealed off, halting all public transport movement. Students and members of the public occupied the crossing, chanting slogans in two groups. School and college students were also seen among the protesters.

In the afternoon, a protest rally was held at Shahbagh, where Ducus Vice-President Shadik Kayem announced that Shahbagh would henceforth be known as "Shaheed Osman Hadi Chattar".

"We will not return home until the killers of Osman Hadi are brought to justice," Shadik said, calling on all anti-fascist forces to unite.

In Chattogram, separate protest marches, token coffin processions and rallies were held after Juma prayers at different points of the city.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir's Chattogram city unit brought out a protest march and held a rally after Juma prayers at the Jamiatul Falah Mosque premises.

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# UN, int'l rights groups condemn attack on media

## DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations, diplomatic missions and international rights organisations have condemned the attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo and the violence that erupted following the death of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Sharif Osman Bin Hadi on Thursday.

They said such acts of violence and intimidation, that strike at the heart of press freedom and the public's right to be informed, are unacceptable.

They called for swift and impartial investigations and holding to account those responsible.

The offices of the two leading media houses came under attack, arson, vandalism and looting early yesterday. New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, also president of Editors' Council, was also harassed while going to visit the journalists stuck amid fire at The Daily Star office.

In a statement from Geneva, UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk called everyone to remain calm and to refrain from violence.

Mentioning that he was deeply troubled by the killing of Hadi, Türk urged the authorities to conduct a prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation into the attack that led to Hadi's death, and to ensure due process and accountability for those responsible.

"Retaliation and revenge will only deepen divisions and undermine the rights of all," he added.

Several protests erupted at different locations across the country after Hadi's death was announced on Thursday, six days after he was shot.



Leaders of political parties and others receive the body of July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday evening after it reached Bangladesh from Singapore.

PHOTO: STAR

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## The attacks reflect state's negligence

Say Editors' Council and Noab

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council and the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) have expressed deep concern, anger, and strong condemnation over the attacks, vandalism, and arson at the offices of leading dailies Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

"This attack is not just on the media; it is an attack on our society and democratic values. Above all, it is an attack on Bangladesh," read a statement signed by Editors' Council President Nurul Kabir and Noab President AK Azad yesterday.

During the late-night assault on Thursday, in addition to significant damage to the infrastructure and assets of the two institutions, the lives of journalists were put at risk.





## STRIKE AT THE HEART OF PRESS FREEDOM

Anti-clockwise from top right: A mob vandalises the inside as fire burns outside a Prothom Alo building in Karwan Bazar on Thursday night. Later, they also looted valuables. Yesterday, employees of Prothom Alo, including the Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, formed a human chain in front of their office to protest the attack, vandalism, and arson. Charred debris lay strewn across the ground and first floors of The Daily Star Centre on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue after a mob torched the building early yesterday. The attackers also vandalised and looted the upper floors. Yesterday, Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam inspected the damage. PHOTO: STAR



## Unbowed

FROM PAGE 1  
Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus spoke to Matiur Rahman and Mahfuz Anam, editors of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star respectively, to express deep sympathy and assure them of government support, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said.

The protesters blocked a fire service vehicle when it attempted to reach the office, forcing it to retreat and delaying rescue operations, witnesses said. Protesters remained in front of the building from around midnight until about 4:30am. During the four-hour siege, police, army personnel and firefighters tried repeatedly, mostly in vain, to calm the attackers.

"As the fire spread from the ground floor and spiraled upward, 28 of our employees took shelter on the roof and locked the iron door from inside. They were all rescued by members of the army and firefighters around 5:00am today [yesterday]," said Mahmudul Hasan Khan, head of human resources at The Daily Star.

"However, the attackers have caused extensive damage... There is no electricity, water and gas supply in the building at the moment," he said.

The Daily Star could not bring out its print edition yesterday, a first for the 34-year-old paper.

The attack came hours after news broke of the death of Sharif Osman Hadi, a July uprising frontliner and February election aspirant from Dhaka-8, who died around 9:45pm at a hospital in Singapore, one week after being shot in the head in Dhaka's Paltan in broad daylight.

Outside The Daily Star building during the attack, protesters blamed the two newspapers for "setting the ground" for Hadi's killing, calling them "Delhi's lapdog" and "Sheikh Hasina's enabler"—claims that both The Daily Star and Prothom Alo vehemently deny.

"Delhi or Dhaka; Dhaka, Dhaka", "Sycophancy or movement; movement, movement", "We have shed blood; we will shed more," they roared, while demanding punishment for Hadi's killers.

Hearing of the attack, New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, eminent photojournalist Shahidul Alam, National Citizen Party leaders Nahid Islam, Nasiruddin Patwary, Samantha Sharmin, Nahida Neeva and Monira Sharmin, former information adviser Mahfuz Alam, and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain rushed to the spot and

tried to persuade the attackers to stop the violence.

They succeeded on the third attempt, according to a Facebook post by NCP leader Saleh Uddin Sifat. During the chaos, Nurul Kabir was harassed and verbally abused, witnesses said.

A police team led by Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam visited the scene yesterday morning. The full extent of the damage is yet to be determined.

Contacted last night, Tejgaon Police Station Officer-in-Charge Kya Shi Nyu Marma said no one had been detained in connection with the attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam visited The Daily Star office again yesterday. "The incident will be recorded in history as a collective failure," he said.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shahidul Alam described the assaults as "one of the country's worst mob attacks and arsons on media outlets".

"To all my friends, I am deeply sorry that I failed you," he wrote on Facebook.

### HOW IT BEGAN

At Prothom Alo's Karwan Bazar headquarters, a parallel assault unfolded as an all-night spree of destruction reduced a four-storey building to ruins.

Around 11:15pm, after news of Sharif Osman Hadi's death spread, a group of 30-35 people marched from Shahbagh to Prothom Alo's office. Their first attempt to attack the building failed after police blocked them.

The group remained outside, chanting slogans and threatening to burn down Prothom Alo and attack anyone associated with it. Some made phone calls asking others to join, searched people's mobile phones, attacked shopkeepers and hawkers in Karwan Bazar, and attempted to kill two individuals who were later rescued by police and local traders.

After nearly 45 minutes, with no reinforcements from Shahbagh, the group moved under the Karwan Bazar metro station and blocked the main road. Meanwhile, some YouTubers and individuals living abroad incited attacks on Prothom Alo through social media.

Eventually, several hundred people from two groups converged and launched a full-scale attack. They hurled bricks and stones, shattered the building's glass façade, broke through the main gate and stormed inside. Furniture, tables, chairs and sofas were thrown down, piled

together and set on fire, one item after another feeding the flames.

The attackers systematically destroyed the building's fire safety system. Fire safety boxes were smashed, extinguishers looted and CCTV cameras vandalised. Another section of the mob carried out floor-by-floor looting, stealing more than 150 computers and laptops, multiple cash lockers, cash and personal belongings on employees' desks. Books were taken from the Prothoma Prokashon showroom.

Nothing remained intact on the ground, first and second floors.

As looting continued, the fire intensified and spread inside the building. The attackers set fires indoors, chanting slogans and celebrating as the flames rose.

By 1:00am, the fire threatened neighbouring buildings and nearby electrical connections. Prothom Alo repeatedly contacted law enforcement agencies and the Fire Service, but road blockades and fear of the mob delayed access.

Around 1:45am, the first Fire Service unit reached the area under the Karwan Bazar metro station but was attacked and forced to retreat.

When a section of the mob moved towards The Daily Star, the crowd thinned. Around 2:00am, the army, police, Rab and BGB secured the road, and at 2:30am, firefighters began operations.

By then, parts of a neighbouring building had already caught fire. Firefighters managed to save surrounding structures and gradually brought the blaze under control.

### EMPLOYEES, FIREFIGHTERS INJURED

Two firefighters – Md Alamgir and Md Shafiqul Alam – were seriously injured by electrocution and admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where they are currently receiving treatment.

Several Prothom Alo employees were injured. One employee, attempting to escape, jumped from the roof to a neighbouring building, fell and sustained serious injuries. He is being treated at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Due to the destruction, Prothom Alo's Friday print edition could not be published—the first such disruption in the newspaper's 27-year history. Online operations were also suspended for a prolonged period.

## Unite against all kinds of mob violence: Govt

FROM PAGE 1  
"This is a critical moment in our nation's history when we are making a historic democratic transition. We cannot and must not allow it to be derailed by those few who thrive on chaos and reject peace."

The upcoming national election and referendum are not merely political exercises. They are a solemn national commitment. This promise is inseparable from the dream for which Shaheed Sharif Osman Hadi gave his life. Honouring his sacrifice and memory demands restraint, responsibility, and an abiding commitment to reject hatred.

"To the journalists of The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, and New Age: we stand with you. We are deeply sorry for the terror and violence you have endured. The nation has witnessed your courage and tolerance in the face of terror. Attacks on journalists are attacks on truth itself. We promise you full justice," the statement said.

"We wholeheartedly condemn the lynching of a Hindu man in Mymensingh. There is no space for such violence in 'New Bangladesh'. The perpetrators of this heinous crime will not be spared," it added.

At this critical hour, the government called upon every citizen to honour Shaheed Hadi by rejecting and resisting violence, incitement, and hatred.

Meanwhile, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus spoke by phone on Thursday night with the editors of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star following the brutal attack on the newspapers' offices.

Expressing deep sympathy to Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, he said the shocking assault on the institutions and their journalists had deeply saddened him and assured that the government stands by them.

Calling the incident an attack on free media and a serious setback to democratic progress and independent journalism, the chief adviser assured full security and necessary support for the editors and their organisations, and said he would meet them soon, said the chief adviser's press wing in a press release yesterday.

## Osman Hadi brought home

FROM PAGE 1  
In Sylhet, around a hundred protesters gathered at Chowhatta after Juma prayers, demanding that those responsible for Hadi's killing be brought back from India and punished.

Speakers alleged the killing had been carried out "at the behest of India" and blamed the Awami League and its affiliated bodies, particularly the banned Chhatra League.

Protests were also held in Patuakhali and Bandarban, Feni, Barguna, Faridpur, Sherpur, Khulna, Narayanganj, Jhalakathi, Sunamganj, Tangail and Lakshmipur.

Meanwhile, Transparency

International Bangladesh (TIB) has slammed the government for its failure to to arrest all those involved in Hadi's murder.

The interim government cannot evade responsibility. We demand swift and exemplary punishment of Osman Hadi's killers," TIB said.

In a statement, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust also demanded a proper investigation into the shooting and killing of Hadi and punishment of those responsible.

BNP, Jamaat, Islami Andolon, Gono Forum, a faction of the Jatiya Party, and Chhatra Dal, mourned the death of Hadi and demanded justice for his murder.

## A dark day

FROM PAGE 1  
developments at Shahbagh followed by a procession towards Prothom Alo offices in Karwan Bazar, TDS management had called all the authorities concerned and they had duly promised all help. We are thankful to the authorities for their assistance on the ground. However, we also note with concern that a better coordinated response would have meant less trauma for our trapped colleagues who spent several hours in grave uncertainty in a mortal fear.

Even while we remember Sharif Osman Hadi's role in the July uprising as one of its frontline activists and are deeply saddened by his untimely demise, we note with concern that certain elements and quarters have exploited the public anger to incite mobs against two newspapers that have always stood for objective journalism. It appears that this is another attempt at creating an environment of instability in the country to derail the forthcoming election. We further point out with grave apprehension that this attack on newspapers will reflect badly on Bangladesh's freedom of speech and erode the country's image across the globe.

We urge the government to take necessary steps to investigate this incident, identify the culprits as well as their instigators, and bring them to book. This senseless act of violence against certain institutions that had

nothing to do with Hadi's shooting, which we categorically condemn, must be dealt with in all seriousness.

Thankful as we are, we cannot help but take note of the government's relaxed attitude towards the safety and security of news outlets despite previous threats and efforts to disrupt their operations. Both The Daily Star and Prothom Alo have been under repeated threats from different quarters but they were neither dealt with seriously nor investigated. We express our sincerest gratitude to all those who came forward to support us in solidarity despite grave risks – some braving physical assault.

This attack of Thursday night that continued through the early hours of Friday is not merely an attack on two newspapers. It is an attack on independent journalism, freedom of speech, and the sanctity of private property. This must not be taken lightly.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our readers, our advocates as well as our detractors, that we shall continue. We shall continue with unabashed conviction in democracy and freedom of speech. We shall continue with unflagging commitment to hold power to account. We shall continue with unrelenting dedication to independent and objective journalism.



# As deepfakes blur reality, voters must learn to doubt what they see



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SM REZWAN-UL-ALAM

The most significant threat to democracy today no longer comes from ballot-box manipulation or overt displays of brute force. It enters quietly, almost invisibly, through the screen of a smartphone—an AI-generated video so realistic that it can upend voter perceptions within seconds. The signs are already there as Bangladesh’s upcoming parliamentary election risks becoming a warning sign for others, demonstrating how generative artificial intelligence, particularly deepfake technology, can be weaponised to distort public opinion, undermine political opponents, and create widespread confusion at a pace that overwhelms traditional safeguards.

During the last election cycle, the country witnessed a relatively small but calculated deployment of deepfakes. Videos surfaced showing opposition leaders “saying” things they had never said, their faces manipulated to deliver extreme positions designed to erode public trust. AI-generated news anchors appeared to broadcast fabricated propaganda. Perhaps most dangerously, on the eve of the polls, sudden false announcements circulated claiming that specific candidates had withdrawn from the race. These were not accidental errors or harmless rumours; they were deliberate, coordinated attacks intended to make voters doubt what they see and hear. These threats have since multiplied. In the new reality, the old phrase “seeing is believing” no longer holds. It must now evolve into “seeing is suspecting.”

In the absence of reliable large-scale detection technology, the responsibility for identifying deepfakes now falls heavily on individual citizens. The speed and volume of social media circulation have rendered automated systems insufficient. Every voter must

therefore rely on a combination of intuition, careful observation, and basic digital forensic awareness. Deepfakes often reveal themselves through tiny imperfections of human expression, details that advanced algorithms still struggle to replicate. But by closely observing how light reflects on a face, how shadows form, or whether skin tones across the face, neck, and hands align naturally, viewers can detect subtle anomalies.

Another significant giveaway lies in the mismatch between lip movements and voice. In several manipulated videos, it has been observed that mouth movements failed to fully align with the spoken words. At times, the speech rhythm felt unnaturally smooth, lacking the pauses, breaths, and imperfect cadences characteristic of human speech. These are clear indicators of an artificially generated voice track layered over a synthetic video.

Deepfake detection, however, is not limited to technical cues alone; contextual behaviour provides equally powerful signals. If a video portrays a political leader delivering a message that sharply contradicts their known stance, history, or temperament, it should immediately raise suspicion. Deepfakes are deliberately crafted to provoke emotional responses, such as shock, anger, and outrage. The moment a viewer experiences an instant emotional surge is precisely when scepticism becomes most necessary. Such content is often accompanied by urgent prompts such as “share this immediately!”—a tactic designed to bypass judgment and accelerate the spread of falsehoods.

Bangladesh has not been totally blind to this emerging threat. The Election Commission (EC) has publicly acknowledged that artificial intelligence may pose a greater danger than traditional forms of electoral violence. In response, the EC has

proposed establishing a centralised cell dedicated to combating AI-generated disinformation. This unit is intended to work in coordination with the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the ICT Division, and national cybersecurity agencies to enable the rapid removal of harmful content. The EC has also recommended amendments to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) to formally regulate the misuse of AI and social media during elections.

These domestic initiatives have been reinforced through

Bangladesh’s electoral information environment. Collectively, these efforts signal that both state and international stakeholders recognise the seriousness of the digital threat and are committed to resisting it.

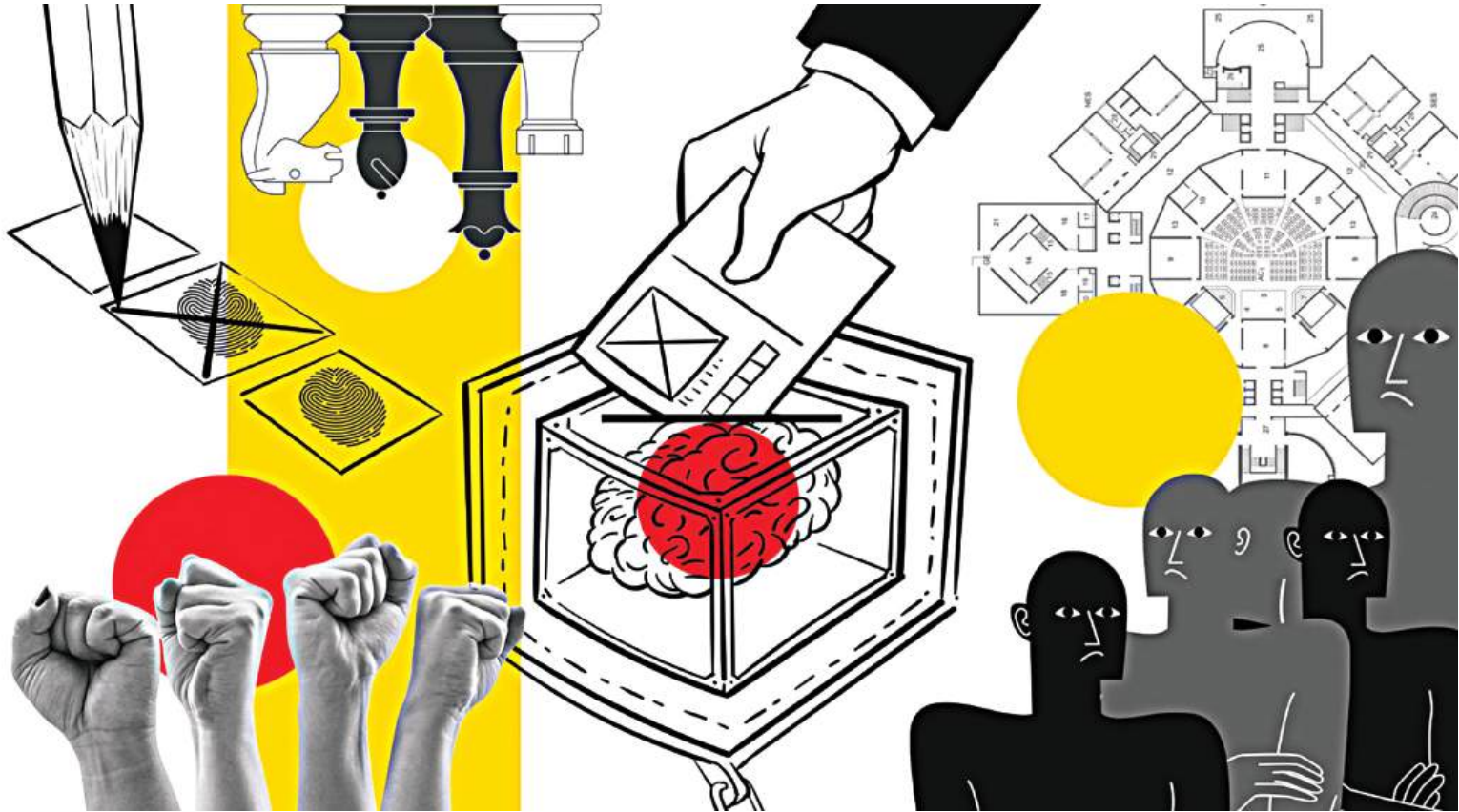
Yet, significant structural challenges persist. Most deepfake detection tools available globally are trained on English-language datasets, creating a substantial gap when verifying Bangla-language audio and video. As a result, viral Bangla deepfakes cannot be quickly or reliably authenticated through automated systems. Independent

official statements and independent fact checks through partisan lenses, weakening counter disinformation efforts. Digital literacy also remains uneven, particularly in rural and low-connectivity areas, where citizens are less equipped to identify subtle signs of manipulation.

To bridge these gaps, a coordinated, citizen-centric strategy is essential. When voters encounter suspicious content, they must take immediate and structured action. The first step is to report the material directly on the relevant platform—Facebook, YouTube, or TikTok—

Police Cyber Crime Unit, when the content clearly violates electoral regulations or incites harm.

The struggle to protect Bangladesh’s democratic process now extends far beyond physical polling booths. It is unfolding within the quiet, personal space of each citizen’s mobile screen. Deepfakes are not merely pieces of misinformation; they are psychological weapons engineered to confuse, provoke, and destabilise. Our democratic resilience, therefore, relies on a combination of state-led frameworks, international cooperation, and most critically, the



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

‘In the absence of reliable large-scale detection technology, the responsibility for identifying deepfakes now falls heavily on individual citizens.’

international collaboration. Under the leadership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the BALLOT Project—implemented in partnership with UN Women and Unesco—has taken shape. Unlike routine monitoring initiatives, this project prioritises building local capacity, strengthening civic awareness, and integrating global best practices to protect

fact-checking organisations, such as Rumor Scanner and Dismislab, continue to face chronic shortages of funding, skilled personnel, and AI forensic capacity, limiting their ability to respond effectively to high volumes of misinformation. This challenge is compounded by a growing trust deficit in the media ecosystem in general, with many citizens now interpreting both

using built-in options such as “False Information” or “Impersonation,” enabling moderation systems to respond promptly. The second step is to submit the content to independent fact-checkers for verification, ensuring that an authoritative and non-partisan assessment enters the public domain. The third step is to notify relevant authorities, such as local EC offices or the Bangladesh

vigilance of ordinary voters.

To safeguard electoral legitimacy, voters must transform their screens into tools of verification rather than channels of manipulation. Democracy in the digital era will survive not through blind trust, but through informed suspicion and responsible civic engagement. Only then can democratic choice rest on truth rather than deception.

# Washington just rewrote the geopolitical rules. Is Bangladesh ready?



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SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

In November 2025, Washington did something extraordinary, silently codifying the end of the world order that had shaped global politics since the end of the Cold War. The Trump administration’s National Security Strategy (NSS) is not just another policy document; it is a demolition notice—and Bangladesh is standing in the rubble wondering where the exit sign went. It also marks the beginning of a phase of geoeconomic warfare that will hit export-dependent democracies the hardest.

For 30 years, we navigated international politics under the convenient assumption that America’s self-interest broadly aligned with promoting democracy, open trade, and rules-based institutions. We could hedge between powers, court Chinese investment while exporting to Western markets, and assume Washington would maintain the basic architecture of globalisation. As Henry Kissinger famously observed, “Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac,” and we have been happily hedging between suitors. That world is over, and so is our pendulum swing between suitors.

The Biden administration’s 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) promised a region that was “free and open, connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient.” It explicitly tied US engagement to democracy, human rights, and international norms.

This is basically the language we had learned to speak—and manipulate—for three decades. But the NSS opens by calling that entire project a catastrophic mistake. It accuses post-Cold War elites of betting on globalism and “so-called free trade” that apparently gutted America’s factories and allowed US interests to be manipulated by international institutions. This is not campaign rhetoric; it is now official doctrine.

The document also defines American strategy in starkly simple terms: protecting core national interests, period. Foreign policy will be judged by what it delivers to American workers and factories, not by how many democracies Washington “supports” or how many international norms it upholds. Democracy promotion, deradicalisation, humanitarian intervention, and the progressive power of international law are all quietly sidelined, at least for now.

The IPS relied on multilateral frameworks as force multipliers. The NSS, by contrast, describes many of these bodies as infected by “transnationalism” and “anti-Americanism”. Every relationship is assessed through a cost-benefit lens: who pays for defence? Who maintains trade surpluses with America? The slogans of “fairness”, “no free riding”, and “pro-American worker” appear throughout like a tax accountant’s

fever dream.

Even on China—where Biden and Trump agree on the threat—the approaches diverge significantly. The Trump administration’s strategy is openly mercantilist, featuring tariffs, industrial policy, and geo-economic tools for technology, energy, rare earths, and supply chains.

I wrote in an AMCHAM Bangladesh journal in 2021 that the line between geopolitics and geo-economics was rapidly blurring, with economics becoming a primary tool of strategic

unfettered globalisation”, and signals that tariffs and investment screening will be the primary strategic tools. Interdependence is something to be weaponised or unwound, not a pacifying force. For export-dependent economies like ours, this means interdependence is no longer a guarantee of mutual benefit. So, we’d better get our acts right!

The strategy even embraces what it calls “flexible realism”, affirming that there is nothing hypocritical about maintaining close ties with non-

the private sector, the tariff threat remains real. We export billions of dollars’ worth of garments to America, built on wafers-thin margins and competitive access. Our export model is acutely vulnerable.

For the government, the China dilemma intensifies. Our infrastructure bears deep Chinese footprints in ports, power plants, and telecom networks, while our export engine runs on Western markets. Washington is likely to press for reduced reliance on Chinese technologies. This we cannot afford to comply, but we cannot afford not to comply either. It is the geopolitical equivalent of choosing between your lungs and heart.

As for non-governmental priorities, climate, refugees, and democracy risk becoming blind spots. For one of the world’s most climate-vulnerable states, the NSS’s rejection of “Net Zero” ideologies is deeply troubling. If US climate finance dries up, we face greater adaptation pressure with fewer resources. And reduced scrutiny over democracy could mean unchecked political realities, whether it be in the form of extremist populism or more refugees waiting at the borders of states.

Clearly, the comfortable era of “friend to all, enemy to none” is ending. We are entering what I described at a recent event in Phnom Penh as “Engage All, Alliance with Balance”. A world of geo-economic blocs will be unforgiving. Bangladesh must therefore move from reactive hedging to deliberate strategic statecraft. Yes, that means making difficult decisions. The way I see it, it requires three fundamental shifts.

First, treat economic policy as security policy. Trade agreements, supply chains, digital standards, and port operations are now security

concerns. We need a coherent vision for Bangladesh’s place in emerging supply chains.

Second, engage major powers without becoming their subordinate. Build coalitions with other middle powers to keep rational options open. Professionalise strategic communication with Beijing, Islamabad, Delhi, and Washington to establish clear red lines on sovereignty and strategic autonomy, and think creatively about new regionalism beyond mere geographical proximity. The NSS, after all, allows Washington to court both Delhi and Islamabad simultaneously; Delhi to share the security “burden” in the Indo-Pacific, and Islamabad for its access to Middle and Central Asia.

Third, upgrade strategic thinking at home. Our 20th-century debates about non-alignment, aid dependency, and reliance on a narrow export basket are no longer sufficient. We need a genuine political and social consensus that places economic transformation and technological upgrading at the centre of foreign and economic policy.

The 2025 NSS delivers a Machiavellian truth: states will increasingly abandon the idea that values, norms, and interests can comfortably coexist. Liberal internationalism is giving way to transactional multipolarity, and weaker states will have to navigate without the shelter of protective norms. For Bangladesh, 2026 will determine whether it adapts or suffers the consequences of pretending otherwise. The old rulebook offered shelter in international law and multilateral institutions. The new one offers specific, conditional, and revocable deals. Bangladesh must learn to negotiate them.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The National Security Strategy of the USA released in November 2025.

defence. That future has now arrived, and frankly, it has come on schedule. The NSS affirms America’s economy, industrial base, and technological edge as the core of its national power, asserting that economic security is inseparable from national security. The US has the right to defend that principle, and Alexander Hamilton’s warning about dependency, as cited in the NSS, captures a truth every state should heed.

The NSS calls for “balanced trade”, rejects what it terms “faith in

democracies if they serve American interests. That candour is refreshing. But it also means that Washington will work with anyone who advances its industrial goals, regardless of their democratic credentials.

For Bangladesh, 2026 will be a complicated concoction of post-LDC graduation, the global rise of protectionism, and intensifying US-China economic rivalry. It is like graduating from school only to discover your degree is worthless—and the economy has collapsed. For



# The Narsingdi earthquake shook us—are we listening?

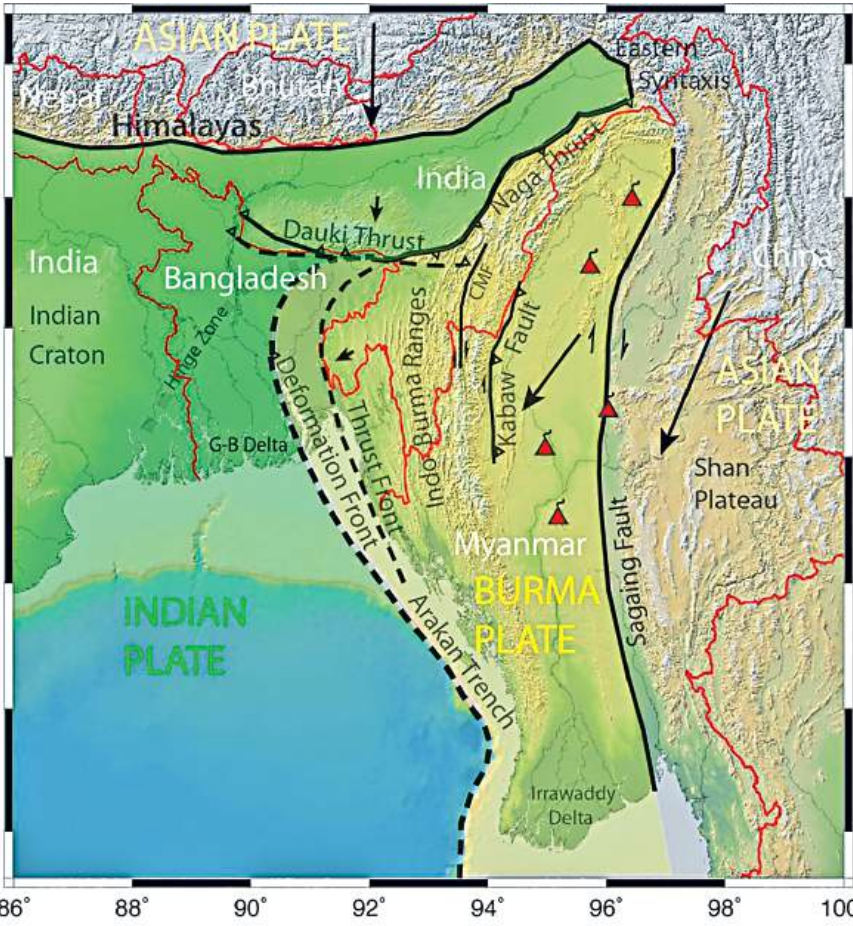
MICHAEL S. STECKLER, S. HUMAYUN AKHTER, MD. MOHIMANUL ISLAM, LEONARDO SEEBER, CECILIA MCHUGH, ABDULLAH AL MARUF, MD. HASNAT JAMAN, AND LIN SHEN

Bangladesh is a dynamic land where chars appear and disappear, rivers shift, and the coast grows and erodes over human lifetimes. The Earth is similarly dynamic, but over a much longer timescale. The rigid outer shell of our planet is divided into a number of rigid tectonic plates that slowly collide, separate, or slide past each other. Most earthquakes occur at the boundaries between the plates. The largest earthquakes happen where two plates move towards each other. These boundaries do not move smoothly; they get stuck, accumulate strain over hundreds to thousands of years, and then release that stored motion suddenly in a major earthquake. The collision of the Indian plate with Asia produced the Himalayas and Tibet, and generated the Nepal earthquake of 2015 and the Assam earthquake of 1950. On the eastern side of the Indian plate, the Indian Ocean subducts, or plunges, beneath Southeast Asia. The 2004 Sumatra earthquake and tsunami occurred along this boundary, rupturing a 1,200 km length. Another large earthquake ruptured a 500 km length of the Arakan coast of Myanmar up to Chittagong in 1762.

This plate boundary continues farther north into Bangladesh, but the main fault, the megathrust, is buried beneath the sediments of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta. The hills of Sylhet, Tripura, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are the result of the deltaic sediments above the megathrust being folded up and faulted. The megathrust is a very broad and flat interface between the Indian and Burmese plates. It is completely buried by kilometres of sediments and is not visible at the surface.

We have been studying this plate boundary to try to understand its potential earthquake hazard. We have used many kinds of data to do this. One of the most vital is GNSS (GPS), with precision instruments that can measure movements to less than 1 mm/yr. These data show that the entire Indo-Burma Ranges are being squeezed, potentially building stress on the megathrust that will be released in a large earthquake. However, we do not know when the last one occurred in the Sylhet-Chittagong segment, or how frequently the megathrust ruptures. We cannot tell if it will be next year or not for another 1,000 years. Hopefully, there is sufficient time to prepare.

The other major tectonic boundary is between the Indian state of Meghalaya, or the Shillong Massif, and the Surma Basin. In Sylhet, Shillong is being thrust over Sylhet, uplifting the Massif and downbending the basin. The main fault here is known as the Dauki Fault. It is believed to mark the beginning of a shift southward of the Sikkim-Bhutan segment of the Himalayan plate boundary. This region was the



**Figure 1: Regional topographic map showing the major tectonic features around Bangladesh, including faults (black lines) and dormant volcanoes (red triangles). The three major plates are labelled, with the Indian Plate shaded green and the Burma Plate shaded yellow. Most earthquakes are associated with the boundaries between the plates.**

source of the Great Indian Earthquake of 1897, estimated to be a Mw 8.0, although the latest investigations indicate that it was not the Dauki Fault that ruptured.

There are other faults in the region, such as those underlying the hills of Sylhet and the CHT, but they would only give rise to smaller earthquakes. The megathrust separating the Indian plate from the Burma microplate and the Dauki Fault remain the two structures capable of producing the largest and most damaging earthquakes.

The recent Mw 5.5 earthquake between Dhaka and Narsingdi was not on either of these two fault zones. It occurred within the Indian plate as it begins to bend as it enters the subduction zone. It neither significantly relieved the stress that is accumulating on the megathrust, nor is it likely to have made a potential megathrust earthquake more likely to occur. The earthquake magnitude scale is logarithmic; for each increase in magnitude, the earthquake releases 32 times more energy. Thus, a Mw 7.5 earthquake is 1,000 times more powerful than a Mw 5.5 event. While it was a minor earthquake compared to potential events on the megathrust or the Dauki Fault, it killed 10 people, injured scores more, and caused considerable damage. It is a reminder that even moderate shaking can be deadly when construction practices, as well as public

awareness, are weak.

The recent earthquake should be considered a wake-up call to start making Bangladesh safer, if effective preparedness is undertaken. The typical construction of reinforced concrete columns and slab floors that is commonly built in Bangladesh generally performs quite poorly in large earthquakes. However, engineers know how to make buildings more resilient. For example, the addition of diagonal elements, shear walls, or other features can improve the safety of buildings. In 2011, while the unexpectedly large tsunami that occurred during the Tohoku, Japan Mw 9.0 earthquake caused immense devastation, no buildings collapsed from the earthquake itself. Earthquake engineering works. For an additional 5-10% in cost, a new building can be made much safer.

However, retrofitting existing buildings can be very expensive. Retrofitting should be reserved for absolutely critical buildings, such as hospitals and KPIs (Key Point Installations). Meanwhile, if people can afford to pay a little more and also follow building codes, new buildings can be more resilient and, over time, Dhaka can become safer for future generations. Bangladesh decreased deaths from cyclones from 300,000-500,000 in the 1970 Bhola cyclone to just 28 in Cyclone Amphan through investments made over the past 50 years. Making Bangladesh safer for earthquakes will similarly take decades or longer. Slowly, as buildings are replaced with safer structures and effective planning is undertaken to support people in the aftermath of an earthquake,

Bangladesh will become more prepared to handle future disasters.

The recent earthquake also resulted in multiple buildings tilting. This highlights the risk of liquefaction throughout Bangladesh. The shaking from an earthquake can cause weak soils to temporarily lose strength. This is particularly a risk during the monsoon, when soils are saturated with water. The foundations of buildings must be deep enough for structures to remain secure, even if soils near the surface lose strength. There has been only limited research into near surface effects, such as amplification of ground motion or liquefaction, in Bangladesh. Research into local variability in expected ground shaking throughout cities can be used to improve seismic zonation and adjust building requirements to local conditions.

Bangladesh is a country that faces a significant risk of a major earthquake, despite being categorised as a very low-to-low earthquake-prone country compared to its neighbours. Because the risk is low but highly uncertain, there is no clear answer to how much resource Bangladesh should allocate towards earthquake hazard reduction when there are so many other pressing problems requiring attention. However, any effort will pay off in the future by decreasing the impact of an earthquake.

This recent earthquake has raised public awareness of the hazard. That support should be capitalised on to improve emergency response and to plan land use and construction in a more risk-sensitive manner. Government officials need to demonstrate humility in the face of the complexities and capriciousness of nature while making realistic policies that the public can accept. The public needs education and greater awareness of earthquake hazards and the means to reduce them. It is important for everyone to understand what could happen in an earthquake and what to do if it happens, without panicking. Education can be disseminated in schools and community gatherings through short films, regular practice drills, and other forms of information. The government and the public must also be willing to bear the

extra costs that reducing risk will entail.

Bangladesh should continue research in earthquake hazards and earthquake engineering, and support improved training for architects, engineers, planners, policymakers, and construction professionals. It should modify building codes and seismic zoning to take into account local variability in ground shaking and potential liquefaction. Bangladesh should do all it can to enforce building codes and incentivise safer new construction. It will be challenging to change societal norms and practices. Still, over time, these efforts can significantly reduce the impact of the next major earthquake. Earthquake risk cannot be eliminated, but robust risk management is both possible and achievable.

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**S. Humayun Akhter**, *Former Professor, Department of Geology, Dhaka University, and Former Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University.*

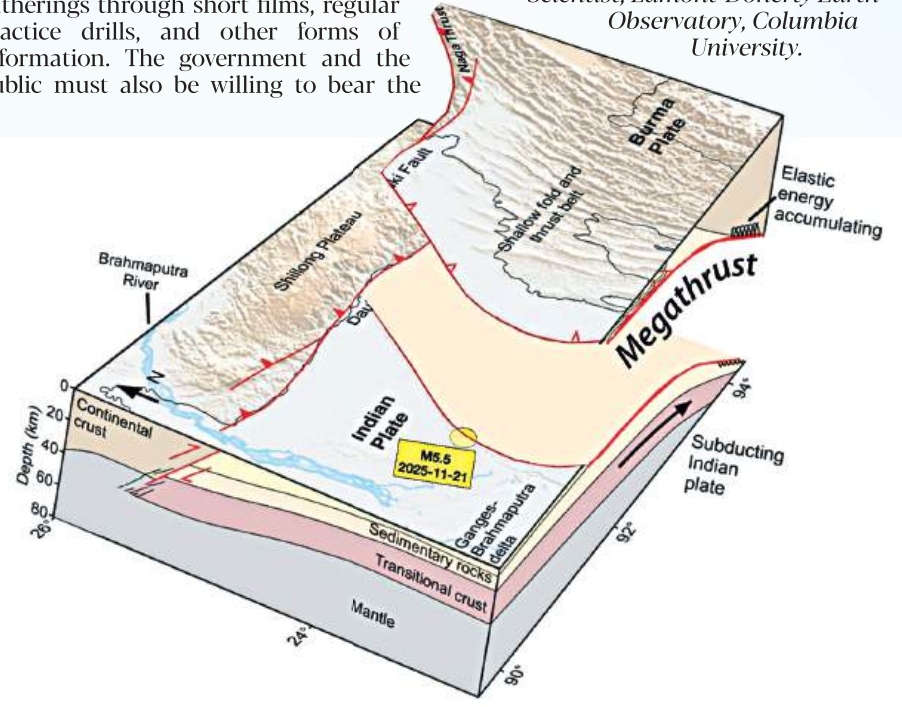
**MD Mohimanul Islam, PhD**, *Visiting Research Associate, Department of Geological Sciences, University of Missouri.*

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**Figure 2: Figure separating the overriding Burma Plate from the subducting Indian Plate along the megathrust. This broad, flat surface is a potential source for a large earthquake. The recent M5.5 earthquake (yellow circle) occurred below the sediments on the bending Indian Plate. Modified from Mallick et al. (2020) and Hubbard et al. (2025).**



**Figure 3: A photo showing the typical rectilinear construction in Bangladesh, consisting of reinforced concrete columns and slab floors which are then filled in with bricks. This style of construction performs poorly during the side-to-side shaking experienced in an earthquake.**



# A grieving street dog and reflections on environmental humanities

The headline that ignites public outrage—“Cruel housewife kills eight puppies”—is really just the tip of a long, submerged pyramid of stories. Beneath it are cascading layers that draw us into the tangled realities of human and more-than-human lives, all sharing the same streets, seasons, and scarcities.

IFTEKHAR IQBAL

On a wintry Sunday night in late November 2025, in the northern Bangladeshi district of Ishwardi, a housewife and mother of a four-year-old boy gathered eight beautiful newborn puppies, wrapped them in a sack, and drowned them in a nearby pond. The mother of these street puppies was not around when this “inhuman” act took place. When she returned, she was not only visibly distressed and disoriented, but also in physical pain, her body heavy with unweaned milk—a visual display of this agony is circulating on social media.

This human-made tragedy, however, was partially remedied by “humans” themselves. A young man brought two newborn puppies from his own pet dog and gently introduced them to the grieving mother. He let her milk soak the puppies’ fur so that they would not smell unfamiliar, then placed them beside her. After some hesitation, she accepted them. The next day, by coincidence, a dog in a neighbouring district died, leaving behind two puppies. They, too, were brought to the mourning mother. With this second adoption, her family, in some fragile way, was restored.

Beyond the immediate question of what counts as “human” or “inhuman”, this story opens onto themes that we get to know little of. It was later learned that the housewife—whose act of clandestine



FILE PHOTO: TOUKIR AHMED TANVEE



PHOTO: COLLECTED.

A street dog mourns beside the bodies of her drowned puppies in Ishwardi, Bangladesh—an image that sparked outrage.

violence was testified to by her own young son—had acted on the advice of a beggar who walked that neighbourhood daily. For a mobile street beggar, a lane free of dogs is a territorial issue: fewer animals to compete with for scraps, fewer sudden threats on the road. That territorial anxiety is rooted in a chronic scarcity, for both men and dogs, that ebbs and flows with the seasons.

November—or Aগ্রহায়ণ, in the Bengali calendar—is the time when paddy is harvested; there is relatively more food, a bit of spare cash, a little more abundance, and a little more waste. Street dogs with new litters and itinerant beggars seeking extra leftovers are both responding, in different ways, to this seasonal opening.

So the headline that ignites public outrage—“Cruel housewife kills eight

puppies”—is really just the tip of a long, submerged pyramid of stories. Beneath it are cascading layers that draw us into the tangled realities of human and more-than-human lives, all sharing the same streets, seasons, and scarcities.

How, then, do we locate this story within the emerging field of environmental humanities? It clearly illuminates interspecies relations and care, the psychology of fear and scarcity, questions of animal welfare, and the silences or ad hoc reactions of local governance. But it also exposes the epistemic boundaries of the discipline itself. Like many powerful ideas of the last few centuries, environmental history and environmental humanities were incubated primarily in the Global North. It is encouraging that institutions and scholars in the Global South—from

South Asia to Latin America and Africa—are now entering these conversations. Yet the epistemic gap remains: how much does the Global North really know, or want to know, about the everyday ecological and ethical worlds of the Global South?

That gap is not just about knowledge; it is built into the material conditions that shape the vulnerability of non-human species and the historical construction of global spatial inequality. If environmental humanities is serious about interspecies ethics, it has to remain open to questions of inequality, poverty, and precarity, especially under climate change, which adds new territorial and existential contests that see a slow erosion of empathy across species lines. This emerges from a situation in which humans—good,

bad, and the nonchalant—are left with limited choices for being and becoming in relation to nature.

Late twentieth century environmental history in the United States, where the discipline took shape, was criticised for sometimes reflecting a largely middle-class conservation sensibility. One hopes that environmental humanities, with its enormous critical potential, will avoid a similar censure. Long live an environmental humanities that dares to think with grief, with poverty, and with mummy dogs in places like Ishwardi—an unknown town in a small country in the Global South.

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## Digging deeper into Barind’s water crisis

YSTIAQUE AHMED

The recent death of a two-year-old who fell into an abandoned tube well shaft in Rajshahi’s Tanore upazila is a profound tragedy. It also exposes a landscape shaped by years of unchecked groundwater extraction, where dry shafts lie open and danger has become routine. In the Barind region, what was once a seasonal scarcity of water is now hardening into a permanent crisis.

The Barind region sits on the northwestern part of Bangladesh, stretching across Dinaipur, Rangpur, Bogura, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Pabna, and Rajshahi. It is simultaneously one of the hottest regions during summer and one of the coldest during winter. For decades, the area has been marked as one of South Asia’s major drought-prone zones. Now, the warnings feel less like projections and more like an imminent reality.

Most rivers, canals, and wetlands in Barind dry up during the winter. Shallow pumps that once served farmers are no longer able to reach the receding water table. Deep tube wells have taken their place. This shift comes at a cost: farmers must use more electricity to lift water from deeper layers, and constant pumping gives aquifers no time to recharge.

“Over-extraction is the main problem,” said Professor Dr Khondkar Emamul Haque of Rajshahi University’s Geology and Mining Department. “In the Barind belts, the surface water level is already insufficient, so people are forced to extract groundwater for both irrigation and drinking. Because of this constant pressure, the aquifer doesn’t get enough time to recharge properly.”

“Unlike other floodplain areas, Barind is an elevated plain, and because of this it can’t form land reclamation. The grains and finer particles that help recharge aquifers aren’t available here. We can’t even call it grain; we call it Barind clay. The deposition is not good at all, so natural recharge remains low year after year,” shared Dr Haque.

When pumping exceeds the rate at which aquifers can replenish, the soil loses support below ground and begins to sink. Haque warned that “overuse of deep tube wells in these regions can result in land subsidence,” a slow sinking of land that can damage roads and homes and make future water storage even more difficult.

Jahid Hossain, Principal Scientific Officer

at WARPO (Water Resources Planning Organisation), described it as a combination of overuse and rainfall deficit. “If you look at the average rainfall of Bangladesh and compare it to these areas, you will see it is naturally much lower. The aquifer volume is comparatively low too. These areas are renowned for paddy cultivation, and farmers are naturally dependent on groundwater because rainfall is low and surface water isn’t sufficient.”

“We are planning to launch an irrigation development project,” said Arifur Rahman Ankur, Executive Engineer of the Rajshahi Water Development Division, BWDB. The idea is simple: bring water from the Padma River and distribute it to fields in Tanore, Poba, and other pockets of the region. “We had several studies done, but none of them led to an actual project.”

Ankur said the main challenge is that rivers and canals, which used to carry water into Barind’s plains, are themselves drying up. Without flowing canals, farmers fall back on tube wells again. The cycle repeats.

He sees two key alternatives. “First, we need to reinvigorate the rivers in those Barind areas.



FILE PHOTO: STAR

A deep tube well in the low-lying area of Uchadanga in Rajshahi’s Tanore upazila, where large stretches of farmland develop cracks during the dry season.

Then the canals will have enough water so farmers can use them during the dry season. That will also help recharge groundwater. And we need to promote rainwater harvesting projects. During the monsoon, we must conserve water for the dry season.”

Farmers speak from lived experience, and their stories reveal the uneven spread of



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Onlookers watch from the embankment as rescue workers and an excavator operate deep within a pit on December 11, 2025. The 32-hour mission came to a heartbreaking end when the body of two-year-old Sajid was recovered from the abandoned shaft.

crisis across the region. Nur Islam, a farmer from Dinaipur Sadar, grows potatoes, paddy, eggplants, and tomatoes. His community has been struggling for the past three to four years; neighbouring districts, he said, for nearly a decade. “After the month of Magh, the rivers dry up, leaving no water for irrigation.” He relies on both shallow pumps and deep tube wells. He manages occasionally, but more often he cannot.

Others feel less pressure, though the warning signs are already visible. Md Milon Islam, an onion farmer from Birol, said the problem remains an inconvenience for now. “Sometimes water doesn’t come up during the day, so we have to wait until night.” He views the abundance of deep tube wells in his area as a buffer for the coming years. Yet the fact that water rises only at night signals that the local aquifer is slipping beyond the reach of daytime pumping.

In Vatina village, Zillur grows potatoes, bananas, and paddy. Winter is especially difficult. “Water doesn’t come without a submersible pump,” he said. He also worries

about the shortage of affordable shallow machines and rising input costs. His frustrations extend to what he sees as a lack of government attention. “Right after winter, we face a water crisis, and the signs are already there,” he added.

The experiences differ from village to village, but the trend is clear: dry seasons are arriving earlier, staying longer, and demanding more groundwater than the land can comfortably give.

The Groundwater Foundation, a US-based non-profit organisation working on groundwater conservation and education, outlines a grim set of consequences if over-extraction continues: reduced surface water, permanent loss of aquifer storage, land subsidence, and declining water quality. In some parts of the world, subsidence has sunk land by metres. Barind could face similar risks if the soil continues to give way.

A 2025 study published in the journal Global Food Security, titled “Revisiting the Drought–Food Insecurity Nexus: A Social–Ecological Systems Perspective”, warned

that if climate pressures persist and water management continues to lag, food security in northwestern Bangladesh could decline by more than half. Barind’s farmers already bear higher costs for water, diesel, and fertiliser. A falling aquifer adds yet another layer of risk to their livelihoods.

The solutions proposed by scientists and engineers point in a common direction: reducing dependence on groundwater and restoring the surface water network. Professor Haque echoed this view, stressing that deep tube wells should be reserved for drinking water, not irrigation. “Surface water use needs to increase. Reviving canals is essential,” he said. He pointed to examples in Godagari, where farmers pump water directly from the Padma for irrigation, and to parts of Satkhira, where rainwater harvesting has become a routine practice.

Yet each of these options demands sustained investment, political commitment, and patient engagement with farmers. WARPO, the government’s Water Resources Planning Organisation, itself struggles with manpower shortages, while the agencies responsible for implementation often fall short in terms of funding and coordination.

Still, the path forward is clear. Aquifers need time—around 90 days of rest to recharge, according to Professor Haque. Canals require dredging and regular maintenance. Rainwater must be stored. Crop choices need to adapt to the region’s changing climate.

Like clockwork, the Barind water crisis returns to the headlines each dry season, when the damage becomes visible enough to demand attention. Yet meaningful precaution rarely follows. One year, shallow pumps begin to fail; the next, deep tube wells require ever more powerful motors. Rivers shrink. Canals narrow. Farmers wait until night to draw water. What was once a seasonal hardship is steadily hardening into a permanent condition.

The region now stands at a crossroads, where the choices made today will determine whether Barind remains a productive agricultural heartland or slips into a future marked by chronic water stress.

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## Attacks on media outlets

FROM PAGE 8  
Imdadul Haque Milon, who was shot dead on December 18. Dhaka Reporters Unity demanded thorough, impartial and swift investigations, saying, “Such actions [attacks] run completely counter to media freedom, the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and the rule of law.”

PROTEST PROGRAMMES  
Meanwhile, a group of Jahangirnagar University students staged a protest against Hadi’s killing and condemned attacks on media outlets and cultural organisations. They also demanded the resignation of the home adviser.

Employees of Prothom Alo formed a human chain in front of their office in the capital’s Karwan Bazar, where they termed the day a dark one for the country’s media, freedom of expression and democracy.

It’s Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif said “Prothom Alo believes that a vested interest group carried out this planned attack by exploiting the killing of Osman Hadi, a face of the July uprising. This organised attack was carried out in a planned manner.

“We have reasonable grounds to believe that this incident was orchestrated to derail the upcoming election and to damage the image of Bangladesh and the government globally.”

The newspaper’s Editor Matiur Rahman, Managing Editor Anisul Hoque, and employees from all departments were present, while journalists from various media outlets joined the human chain.

## Direct assault on press freedom

FROM PAGE 8  
The Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) strongly condemned the attacks, describing them as “planned disinformation and hate campaigns.” BLAST said these campaigns, following the death of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho, incited unlawful attacks, vandalism, and arson targeting media and cultural institutions.

BLAST demanded prompt, independent investigations into all incidents related to Hadi’s killing and the subsequent violence, and said those responsible must face the full force of the law.

Reminding the government of its constitutional obligations, it said the safety and access to justice of victims’ families, journalists, cultural activists, and ordinary citizens must be ensured. Dissenting views must be respected, and clear boundaries enforced to prevent hate speech and incitement to violence, it added.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi also slammed the attacks, linking the violence to attempts to exploit Hadi’s death.

In a statement, Udichi Central Parliament Acting President Mahmud Selim and General Secretary

Amit Ranjan Dey said dark reactionary forces are conspiring to turn Bangladesh into a failed state. They said the targeting of media and cultural institutions, despite having no connection to Hadi’s death, showed that the attackers did not want peace, security, or democratic order to return to the country.

Condemning the incidents, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Sazzad Alam Khan Tapu and General Secretary Akhtar Hossain, said vandalism, arson, and looting of media offices could never be justified.

The statement also condemned the attack on Nurul Kabir and the killing of journalist Imdadul Haque Milon, president of the Sholua Press Club in Dumuria upazila of Khulna, demanding swift justice. Milon was shot dead on December 18.

Dhaka Reporters Unity strongly protested the attacks and demanded thorough, impartial, and swift investigations.

DRU President Abu Saleh Akon and General Secretary Mainul Hasan Soheli said the media is the fourth pillar of the state and a key foundation of democracy. “Violence, intimidation, attacks, or harassment aimed at

silencing the media are unacceptable. Such actions run completely counter to media freedom, the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and the rule of law,” they said.

Among others, Reporters Against Corruption, the Jahangirnagar University Journalists’ Association, a coalition of newly formed media outlets – Centrist Nation TV, Dhaka Stream, The Delagram, The Dessent, and The Post – as well as the Rajshahi University Journalist Association, Dhaka University Journalist Association, Economic Reporters’ Forum, Jagannath University Journalists’ Association, and Reporters for Rail and Roads, strongly condemned the attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star and the harassment of Nurul Kabir.

Meanwhile, a group of Jahangirnagar University students staged a protest against Hadi’s killing and condemned nationwide attacks on media outlets and cultural institutions. They also demanded the resignation of the home adviser for failing to ensure state security and called for those involved in Hadi’s murder to be brought to justice immediately.

## The attacks

FROM PAGE 1

This incident clearly reflects not only the “severe deterioration of law and order but also the state’s negligence and lack of responsibility,” the statement said.

The Editors’ Council and Noab believe that this is not an isolated incident.

“From the beginning, the ongoing failure of the government to prevent mob violence (organised violence) has been evident, and the latest incident is yet another horrific example. The attack on media offices proves that the law enforcement agencies have completely failed to play an effective role in controlling crime,” the statement added.

At the same time, the Editors’ Council and Noab condemned and protested the attack on Chhayanaut yesterday.

The statement urged that the government take responsibility for the attack and its failure to maintain law and order.

The Editors’ Council and Noab demanded the immediate arrest of the attackers once identified, insisting that mere statements or assurances are not enough. They also called for exemplary punishment for those involved in the harassment of Editors’ Council President Nurul Kabir.

Finally, they called on professional organisations, business groups, civil society, political parties, and journalists’ organisations to stand in solidarity with this demand.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ফার প্রপ, বাড়ি # ১১ রোড # ১২, ব্রুক-এফ নিউকেন, গুলশান, ঢাকা। প্রধান কার্যালয়ে প্রশাসনিক পদে নিয়োগের জন্য অবসরপ্রাপ্ত পুলিশ অফিসার (ক্যাডার) বা সেনা অফিসার (কমিশন্ড) এর কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। যোগাযোগঃ-  
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Nurul Kabir harassed

FROM PAGE 8  
It was my moral responsibility to stand by my fellow journalists at The Daily Star after hearing reports of attacks on the newspaper office,” Kabir told New Age. Kabir expressed concern that attacks on the country’s two leading media houses could have an adverse impact on Bangladesh’s global image. Demonstrators took to the streets late Thursday night following the announcement of the death of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson and

prominent July uprising leader Sharif Osman Hadi, who had been shot and was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Singapore. During the protests, the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star were vandalised and set on fire.



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স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.৭৫২.১৮.০০১.২৫.২৩৬ তারিখঃ ১৭/১২/২০২৫খ্রিঃ


e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের গ্রিড সার্কেল খুলনা দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Title of Works	Last date & time of document selling	Tender Closing Date and Time
1187696	Supply of Maintenance Tools and Materials for Amtali 400 kV Switching Station, Gopalganj 400/230/132 kV Substation & Payra 400/132/33 kV Substation	04-Jan-2026 At 14:00	04-Jan-2026 At 15:05

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ হুমায়ুন কবীর আকাছী  
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, গ্রিড সার্কেল, খুলনা



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক  
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)  
প্রধান কার্যালয়  
মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর-১৬৫/২০২৫ তারিখঃ ০২ পৌষ, ১৪৩২  
১৭ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৫

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-এ ২০২২ সাল ভিত্তিক 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ডাটাবেইজ এডমিনিস্ট্রেটর' (৯ম জেড) (Job ID: 10208) এর ১০টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে অনুষ্ঠেয় MCQ Test ও লিখিত পরীক্ষার সময়সূচি, প্রশ্নপত্রের Content ও নম্বর বিভাজন সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি-এ ২০২২ সাল ভিত্তিক 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ডাটাবেইজ এডমিনিস্ট্রেটর' (৯ম জেড) (Job ID: 10208) এর ১০টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে এ সচিবালয়ের বিপত ১৫/০১/২০২৪ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ০৬/২০২৪ মোতাবেক আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে যোগ্য বিবেচিত প্রার্থীদের MCQ Test (১ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী) এবং লিখিত পরীক্ষা (২ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী) এক দেশেলে আগামী ০৯/০১/২০২৬ তারিখ, শুক্রবার (সকাল ৯টা-দুপুর ১২টা পর্যন্ত; মোট ৫ ঘণ্টা) অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। উক্ত MCQ Test ও লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রশ্নপত্রের Content ও নম্বর বিভাজন সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য এবং পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইট (https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd) এ আপলোড করা হয়েছে।

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৫-৩৩৯১  
তারিখঃ ১৮/১২/২০২৫

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

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Mob kills man over ‘hurting religious sentiments’

FROM PAGE 8  
The police official added that they were aware of the allegations from different quarters, but the allegations have yet to be verified as no audio or video has been found in this connection. Victim’s brother Apu Chandra Das yesterday filed a case with Bhaluka Police Station, accusing 140-150 unnamed persons, but no one was arrested yet, said the official, adding, “Police drives are on to arrest the perpetrators.”

The body of Dipu, father of a three-year-old girl, reached at his Mukamiakanda village home in Tarakanda yesterday afternoon, said Tanbir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Tarakanda Police Station. Meanwhile, the government, in a statement yesterday, strongly condemned the killing, stating such violence has no place in “new Bangladesh”. No one involved in this heinous crime will be spared, the statement added.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 2114 OF 2025

Abdul Gaffer Miah -----Petitioner  
-VERSUS-  
Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms, & another. -----Respondents

Notice is hereby given that an application under section 81(2) read with section 85(3) of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting (AGM) of **Bunian Builders Ltd.** for the Calendar Year 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 was moved before the Hon’ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner. Upon preliminary hearing **Mr. Justice Ahmed Soheli** was pleased to admit the said application on 30.11.2025. Any one desirous of opposing the matter may appear before the Hon’ble court either personally or through his/her Legal Counsel before the Hon’ble Court. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary costs.

**Afrin Jahan Khan**  
Advocate, The Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Room No-4020, Supreme Court Bar Association Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 2250 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF: An application under Section 81(2) and 85 (3) of the Company Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding the annual General Meeting for the year 2023 and 2024 of Hajji Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) alongwith Section 396 of the said Act for exoneration of the Board of Management of the Association from penal liability and IN THE MATTER OF: Farid Ahmed Mazumder, Son of Mokbul Ahmed Mazumder and Anowara Begum, Proprietor of Golden Bengal Tours and Travels, Hajji License No:0213, Sama office complex, 66/A, Nayapaltan, (9th Floor), Dhaka-1000;

-VERSUS-

1. Hajji Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) having its office at Sattara Center (15th Floor), 30/A, Naya Paltan, VIP Road, Dhaka-1000, and another and  
2. Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Kawan Bazar, TCB Bhaban (6th Floor), Dhaka-1215.

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2) and 85 (3) of the Company Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meeting for the year 2023 and 2024 of Hajji Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) alongwith Section 396 of the said Act for exoneration of the Board of Managements of the Association from penal liability was moved on behalf of the petitioner submitted on 15th December, 2025, before the Company Judge of the High Court Division of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing of the petition Justice Mr. Ahmed Soheli was pleased to admit the application on the same day. If anyone is interested to oppose the said application, he may appear before the Hon’ble Court by himself or by his Advocate on the date fixed. Copy of this application will be available with the undersigned on payment of necessary cost.

Mohammad Saddam Hossen, Advocate, Supreme Court , Room No.342, Bar Building (Old) Supreme Court Bar Association, Ramna, Dhaka-1000

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Md. Golam Rabbani, state that our company, M/S Chorka Textile Ltd., Olipur, Shahjibazar, Shaestaganj, Habigonj-3332, Bangladesh, imported chemicals from M/S Global Chemicals (China) Co., Ltd., Hong Kong. The original shipping documents sent by FedEx to Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC, Foreign Exchange Branch, Motijheel, Dhaka, under AWB No. 885114179132, were destroyed by fire at Dhaka Airport on 18 October 2025. Shipment details: LC No. 296725010812 (dated 07 September 2025), Shipping Agent: Maersk Bangladesh Ltd., Vessel: MCC DANANG, Voyage: 538W, BL No. - 259569008. A GD has been lodged at the Airport Police Station (GD No. 2010 dated 27 November 2025).

Sd/-  
Md. Golam Rabbani  
For and on behalf of  
M/S Chorka Textile Ltd.  
Bangladesh



Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)  
BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100

Invitation for International Tender

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh				
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources/ Energy and Mineral Resources Division		
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)		
3	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)		
4	Procuring entity code	Not applicable		
5	Procuring entity district	Chattogram		
6	Invitation for	Tender for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Services and Marine Services for the BPC Installation “Single Point Mooring (SPM) with Double Pipeline System, Bangladesh”.		
7	Invitation Ref No.	BPC SPM O&M 02/2025		
8	Date	19-11-2025		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and source of funds	BPC own fund		
11	Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12	Project / programme code (if applicable)	Not applicable		
13	Project / programme name (if applicable)	Not applicable		
14	Tender Package No.	BPC SPM O&M 02/2025		
15	Tender package name	Tender for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Services and Marine Services for the BPC Installation “Single Point Mooring (SPM) with Double Pipeline System, Bangladesh”.		
		Date		
16	Tender publication date	19-12-2025		
17	Tender last selling date	29-01-2026		
		Date	Time	
18	Tender closing date and time	01-02-2026		12:00pm
19	Tender opening date and time (within one hour of tender closing at primary place)	01-02-2026		12:15pm
20	Name & address of the office(s)			
- Selling tender document (principal)	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh (Cash Section)			
- Downloading tender document (This is optional. If permitted by the Procuring Entity; mention the web address where the electronic version of TD will be available. Specify the detail procedures for payment of the cost of TD by the Tenderers)	The Tender Document (PW7A, Annexure 1, Annexure 2) will be sold as both hard copy & electronic copy subject to signing by the prospective bidder a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with BPC. Annexure 3 (Drawings & Specifications) shall be available only in an Electronic Data Room. The link and the password to the Electronic Data Room will be provided to the prospective bidder once the Tender Document is purchased.			
- Receiving tender document	Office of General Manager (Planning & Development), Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh			
- Opening tender document	Board Room, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh			
21	Place / date / time of	Place	Date	Time
	Pre-tender meeting (optional)	Board Room, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh	06-01-2026	11:00am
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
22	Eligibility of tenderer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The minimum number of years of general experience in Operation and Maintenance shall be: <b>7 (Seven) years</b> (years counting backward from the date of publication of Invitation for Tender in the newspaper and BPC’s website).</li><li>The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor or Subcontractor or Management Contractor of at least 1 (One) contract of O&amp;M Services and Marine Services (as described in Annex 2) successfully completed within the last <b>7 (Seven) years</b> (years counting backward from the date of publication of Invitation for Tender in the newspaper and BPC’s website) or ongoing contracts of which at least <b>3 years</b> have been completed, each with a value of at least <b>US Dollar 75 (Seventy-Five)</b> million.</li><li>The required average annual turnover shall be minimum <b>USD 35 (Thirty-Five) million</b> over the last <b>3 (Three) years</b>.</li><li>The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderers shall be <b>USD 14 (Fourteen) million</b> from an international bank of repute or scheduled bank in Bangladesh.</li><li>Maximum number of partners in the Joint Venture shall be <b>2 (Two)</b>.</li><li>Other required eligibility criteria and conditions are stated in the Tender Data Sheet (TDS) of the Tender Document.</li></ul>		
23	Brief description of works	Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Services and Marine Services for the BPC Installation – “Single Point Mooring (SPM) with Double Pipeline System complete with all its Auxiliaries and Ancillaries in both On-shore and Off-shore parts as defined and detailed in Annex 2”.		
24	Brief description of physical services			
25	Price of tender document	BDT 35,000 (BDT Thirty-Five thousand only) will be given by Pay Order/Cash in favor of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation. The original money receipt of purchasing tender document must be submitted with the technical offer.		
26	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount
	1	BPC SPM O&M 02/2025	Kutubdia-Maheshkhali (Cox’s Bazar district) & Anowara-North Patenga (Chattogram district), Bangladesh	USD 1 (One) million
EMPLOYER DETAILS				
27	Name of official inviting tender	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)		
28	Designation of official inviting tender	General Manager (Planning & Development)		
29	Address of official inviting tender	BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chattogram-4100, Bangladesh		
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: +8801755-587626, Fax: +8802-320645 email: <a href="mailto:bpcplanning@gmail.com">bpcplanning@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:gm_planning@bpc.gov.bd">gm_planning@bpc.gov.bd</a>		
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) This Tender Notice will also be available at 1) Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), website: <a href="http://www.bpc.gov.bd">www.bpc.gov.bd</a> and 2) BPPA website: <a href="http://bppa.gov.bd">bppa.gov.bd</a>.</li><li>(b) If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.</li><li>(c) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.</li></ul>			





## An attempt to derail polls

Parties condemn attack on Star, Prothom Alo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major political parties yesterday condemned the attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo, describing the violence as a threat to democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law, and an attempt to derail the upcoming national election.

Condemning the nationwide violence, vandalism and arson following the death of Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir warned that a certain quarter was deliberately pushing the country towards anarchy.

"This group is conspiring to jeopardise the process of democratic transition," he said after an emergency Standing Committee meeting at the party chairperson's Gulshan office.

Some leaders at the meeting expressed concern that a faction within the government might be allowing those responsible for the attacks.

"They have put the lives of working journalists at risk. Nurul Kabir, the editor of New Age and a prominent figure in the anti-fascism July movement and all democratic movements in the country, was attacked. Cultural institutions such as Chhayanaut were also targeted. We strongly condemn and express our disgust at these hateful acts," Fakhrul added.

He said there was no alternative but for all political and social forces opposed to anarchy to unite and resist the conspiracy.

Referring to the upcoming polls and the expected return of Tarique Rahman on December 25, party leaders warned that the violence was part of a planned effort to disrupt both processes. They cautioned that failure to maintain law and order could further threaten the election.

Earlier, responding to journalists, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed also termed the attacks as a ploy to obstruct the polls.

"The government should have anticipated this. There should have been intelligence reports. Preventive measures should have been taken earlier."

Jamaat-e-Islami termed the attack on the media an attack on democratic practice, freedom of expression and the rule of law, though it did not name any media outlet.

In a statement, the party said the anger and emotion among students and the public were "understandable" after the martyrdom of Hadi, who died at a Singapore hospital on Thursday night, six days after being shot in Dhaka.

"But if any group tries to use this anger for their own interests, it cannot be accepted," it said.

The National Citizen Party-led Gonotantrik Songskar Jote said the attacks were carried out by those seeking to derail the polls.

In a separate statement, the NCP said, "Hidden collaborators inside the country want to create extreme chaos. They want to create a situation like a civil war."

Addressing a protest march in Shahbagh earlier, NCP Convener Nahid Islam said those who attacked and set fire to Prothom Alo and The Daily Star did not support Hadi. Claiming the incident was "planned internationally" to divert the issue and create division, he urged the government to identify and arrest those involved.

In a statement, the Biplobi Workers Party of Bangladesh blamed the government for the attacks and demanded the immediate arrest and trial of those involved in setting fire to Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Chhayanaut and other institutions.

Ganosamhati Andolon demanded the resignation of Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury for failing to ensure the security of media organisations.

The National Democratic Front said the attacks posed an obstacle to freedom of expression, alleging that under the guise of protest, vested groups attacked media offices, assaulted Nurul Kabir, targeted the Chhayanaut building and "severely damaged the country's image".

Islami Andolan Bangladesh Joint Secretary General and party spokesperson Maulana Gazi Ataur Rahman said, "No matter what the situation is, setting fire to media offices can never be an acceptable form of protest."

A faction of the Jatiya Party and the National Democratic Front also strongly condemned the attacks on The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and New Age editor Nurul Kabir.

## Mob kills man over 'hurting religious sentiments'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A garment worker was beaten to death by a mob in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila on Thursday night over allegations of "hurting religious sentiments".

The victim, Dipu Chandra Das, 27, of the district's Tarakanda upazila, was an employee of Pioneer Knitwears, police said.

Abdullah Al Mamun, additional superintendent (admin and finance) of police Mymensingh, said a factory official told the Bhaluka police that a group of workers started beating up Dipu inside the factory over allegations of "derogatory remarks about holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH)" around 8:00pm.

Factory sources said the attackers took Dipu out the factory and locals also joined them, killing him on the spot. They also set the body on fire, leaving it partially burnt.

Police later recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

SEEPAGE 7 COL 4



Polyethylene bags washed in the Buriganga are left to dry on the bank so that they can be recycled. Even though the government has banned the use of such bags, they are widely available. Most bags end up polluting the soil for years.

PHOTO: STAR

## No compromise on Ukraine: Putin Says EU's 'daylight robbery' of Russian assets failed

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin offered no compromise on his terms for ending the war in Ukraine yesterday and accused the European Union of attempting "daylight robbery" of Russian assets.

Putin set out the Kremlin's stance on the war in the opening moments of his annual end-of-year press conference, a marathon event that typically runs for some four hours.

He said he did not see readiness on the Ukrainian side to agree a peace deal, but there were "certain signals" it was willing to engage in dialogue.

"The only thing I want to say is that we have always said this: we are ready and willing to end this conflict peacefully, based on the principles I outlined last June at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by addressing the root causes that led to this crisis," Putin said.

He was referring to a speech 18 months ago in which he demanded that Ukraine abandon its ambition of joining the Nato military alliance and withdraw entirely from four regions that Russia has claimed as its own territory. Kyiv refuses to give up land that Moscow's forces have

failed to capture in nearly four years of war.

Putin was speaking hours after European Union leaders set aside a plan to use frozen Russian assets as backing for a loan to Ukraine, deciding instead to borrow cash to help fund Kyiv's defence against

**Putin said the bloc had backed away from the original scheme because it would have faced serious repercussions, and it had damaged its status as a safe place to store assets.**

Russia for the next two years.

The EU leaders said they reserved the right to use Russian assets to repay the loan if Moscow fails to pay war reparations to Ukraine.

Putin said the bloc had backed away from the original scheme because it would have faced serious repercussions, and it had damaged its status as a safe place to store assets.

"Theft is not the appropriate term... It's daylight robbery. Why

can't this robbery be carried out? Because the consequences could be grave for the robbers," he said.

"This isn't just a blow to their image; it's an undermining of trust in the euro zone, and the fact that many countries, not just Russia, but primarily oil-producing countries, store their gold and foreign exchange reserves in the euro zone."

After nearly four years, the war stands at a delicate juncture as US President Donald Trump pushes for a peace deal on terms that Ukraine and its European allies fear will be slanted towards Russia.

Russia says it is waiting to hear from Washington how its draft peace proposals have been modified following consultations between the United States, Ukraine and the Europeans.

The state of the conflict - and the question of when it will end - dominated the first phase of the "Direct Line" event, which Putin has held in different formats most years since 2001.

He typically uses it to field dozens of questions on everything from nuclear weapons to the price of eggs. Some are posed by journalists and others by ordinary Russians, who can submit them online or by phone.

## Attacks on media outlets, cultural orgs spark outrage

Journalists, rights bodies, civil society protest violence

STAR REPORT

Journalist organisations, rights bodies, cultural groups and members of civil society yesterday strongly condemned the attacks, arson and looting at the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, and the vandalism of cultural organisation Chhayanaut, saying they were a direct assault on press freedom and the public's right to information.

They also demanded that those responsible be identified and brought to justice.

Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the aggressive and vengeful conduct of some forces, claiming victory after the fall of authoritarian rule, is giving rise to new forms of repression. "The direct victims of this are free media, dissent, and freedom of expression... The government has failed to take effective measures to confront or prevent such situations."

He added that vandalism and arson attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, the harassment of New Age editor Nurul Kabir, the attack on Chhayanaut, and the lynching of Dipu Chandra Das, followed by the burning of his body on allegations of hurting religious sentiments, must not be treated as isolated incidents.

The Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) described the attacks as "planned disinformation and hate campaigns". In a statement, it said these campaigns, following the death of July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho, incited unlawful attacks, vandalism and arson targeting media and cultural institutions.

BLAST demanded prompt and independent investigations into all incidents linked to Hadi's killing and the subsequent violence.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi, whose office was also attacked with arson yesterday, linked the violence to attempts to exploit Hadi's death. In a statement, it said dark reactionary forces are conspiring to turn Bangladesh into a failed state, adding that the targeting of media and cultural institutions, [despite having no connection to Hadi's death, shows the attackers did not want peace, security or democratic order to return to the country.

Dhaka Union of Journalists said attacks on media offices can never be justified. They also condemned the attack on Nurul Kabir and the killing of Khulna journalist

SEEPAGE 7 COL 1

## Announcement

We express solidarity with the government's recent announcement of mourning over the death of July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi.

In light of this, we have decided to postpone the bti-The Daily Star Stellar Women Season 2 gala, scheduled for today, until further notice.

We will announce the revised date for the event later.

A JOINT INITIATIVE BY



The Daily Star



People protest the murder of July frontliner Sharif Osman Hadi at the Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday. Hadi was shot on December 12 and he died on Thursday in Singapore while receiving treatment there.

PHOTO: STAR