



American International University Bangladesh yesterday held its 19th convocation on its campus in the capital's Kuril. A total of 4,504 graduates of academic years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 received their degrees. Education Minister Dipu Moni presided over the event, while Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury and University Grants Commission Chairperson Prof Kaz Shahidullah were special guests. Former Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith was the convocation speaker.

Ban gender detection

FROM PAGE 3 Citing the writ petition, Ishrat told The Daily Star that most people desire baby boys. If unborn babies are not in accordance with the desire of parents in the detection test, pregnant mothers become frustrated and have a mental and physical impact,

which affect flourishing of babies. Thus, gender detection of the unborn babies is a violation of gender equality, right to life and right to protection of law guaranteed by the constitution, Ishrat said in the petition. She said the HC may hold hearing on her petition any day this week.

SC asks HC

FROM PAGE 5 Yusuf Ali later told this newspaper that Noab's petition was filed seeking stay on the gazette implementation. The Appellate Division has ordered the HC to expeditiously dispose of the appeal and rule, he added.

On October 15 last year, the HC issued a rule questioning legality of the gazette notification, following a supplementary appeal on a writ petition.

The HC will hear on the rule now, Yusuf Ali said.

However, Attorney General Mahubey Alam said the status quo issued by the High Court remains stayed. The SC disposed of the state's leave to appeal by keeping the previous stay order in effect. There is no bar to implement the 9th wage board for now, he opined.

The information ministry on September 12 last year published a gazette notification on the new wage scale.

Road crashes

FROM PAGE 5 Meanwhile in Faridpur, a man was killed and another was injured at Oyabda Mor area under Boalmari upazila in a truck accident early yesterday, reports our Faridpur correspondent.

The accident occurred around 1:30am when a truck lost control and turned over on the road, killing driver Faruk Ali (40) and injuring another, quoting locals, OC Aminur Rahman of Boalmari Police Station said.

The injured was taken to Faridpur Medical College Hospital. A case was filed.

Swaying voters on the digital

FROM PAGE 3 Tabith Awal told this newspaper over phone last week that instant feedback from the public is a big advantage of social media campaigning. He has been posting videos on his Facebook page, where he responds to comments. "It is easier to target voters through digital campaigning. We can reach the Bangladeshi diaspora, future voters, as well as international stakeholders and influencers. Most importantly, it is a two-way medium, constantly giving me something to work on according to the electorate's response," said the BNP-backed DNCC mayor candidate.

Echoing the comment on instant feedback, Toufiq Zahidur Rahman, who works with Atiqul on his campaign, also mentioned the environmental benefits of online campaigning. "It reduces waste to a great extent, and largely extends our reach beyond traditional campaign methods," he told this newspaper.

A LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD?

On one hand, there are reports of attacks on candidates and supporters' rallies, while voters are also growing increasingly weary of traditional campaign methods that involve the nuisance of loudspeakers, laminated posters, biker gangs, and more.

Against such a backdrop, adapting to the digital age not only seems to provide a more level-playing field, but also to capture the large youth population online.

Both AL and BNP candidates of

DNCC mentioned the huge reach of social media and environmental benefits of online campaigning as major advantages. On the internet, all candidates can sponsor posts with specific groups of voters in mind, without having to worry about their physical security or exhaustion. This medium also allows the audience to access a large pool of information about the candidates with just a few clicks. As the polls draw nearer, number of sponsored posts from all candidates have also increased.

The Election Commission, which imposes rules on campaign code of conduct, has not specified rules for social media - like allowed dimensions for visuals, or bar on advertisements - giving candidates more flexibility in terms of time and audience targeting.

On the topic, Toufiq Zahidur Rahman said, "It is more important to remain civil and not attack each other, regardless of specific regulations."

Tabith Awal highlighted the importance of data collection for online campaigning, and said the regulation should be brought on data, instead of restrictions on online campaigning.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The power of social media in electoral promotions first truly came to light during the 2018 national election, after a song titled "Manik Bhai-er Salam Nin" took Facebook and Youtube by storm. Although the aspirant -- Hasibur Rahman Manik -- failed to secure Awami League's nomination for a

seat in the parliament, the eclectic song remained on people's mind for the entire campaign period.

The ruling party's "Joy Bangla, Jitbe Ebar Nouka" also made a strong impression at the time. Not only was it a meme favourite on Facebook and a popular track for videos on the TikTok platform, it even gained popularity as "gaye holdu" dance numbers, with the polls coinciding with the wedding season.

BNP took a different route at the time, releasing a video featuring its Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in a rousing call to action, specifically targeted to first-time voters, urging them to exercise their franchise.

THE VIRAL HIT OF THE SEASON

As some candidates build their online presence and others fall behind, there has been one person this election season who has harnessed the power of social media at its greatest. Aleya Sarwar Daisy, a councillor candidate for DNCC's ward-31, produced a hip-hop track that outlines her plans for the area that has been all over social media.

"I want to work for the young generation, and I focused on them with this song," Daisy told The Daily Star. "I wanted to do something unique."

With over 6,000 shares on the original video and countless reposts, "Daisy apa-r salam nin" is the track that will define this election season as the youth's chosen groove, regardless of the election result.

Advertisement for Islamic Bank Bangladesh. Includes text: 'ইসলামী ব্যাংক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড', 'স্বাধীন সেবা বিভাগ', '২০ দিলকুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০'. Also features a table of vehicle models and prices.

I'm the luckiest person

FROM PAGE 5 His daughter and wife spending time with the prime minister from the day before.

In another Facebook post, Shakib's wife Umme Ahmed Shishir said she was over the moon after being sent food by the country's prime minister.

"Couldn't be more blessed, what more ways to satisfy my cravings when our honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took out the time from her busy schedule to cook for me herself. When she asked me what my favourite food was when we visited her yesterday, she said she will cook it with her own hands and send it to me! I am truly over the moon right now, best lunch ever in my life. I can't thank our honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina enough for this lovely gesture with so much love and care," she wrote on her Facebook.

Labour court grants bail

FROM PAGE 3 The three other accused are Grameen Communications Managing Director Naznin Sultana, Director Abdul Hai Khan and Deputy General Manager Gouri Shankar.

On January 13, the labour court issued the summons separately to each of them to appear before it on February 6. On November 3 last year, the same labour court granted bail to Dr Yunus after he surrendered before it seeking bail in five other cases filed over sacking five employees of Grameen Communications.

On July 3, three former employees of Grameen Communications - Abdus Salam, Shah Alam and Emranul Haque -- filed three cases with the court against Dr Yunus, Naznin Sultana and Khandaker Abu Abedin, alleging that they were sacked for participating in the formation of a union at work.

Two other staffers of the company -- Abdul Gafur and Hossain Ahmed -- were sacked on the same charges in July last year. They filed two more cases against the three on August 26.

Naznin Sultana and Khandaker Abu Abedin were earlier granted bail in five cases.

No level-playing field

FROM PAGE 3 discuss the electoral code of conduct.

Another meeting is scheduled for January 28 and the city corporation election is not on the agenda for that meeting either, he added.

"No discussion was held on the complaints submitted by the political parties and candidates regarding the election," he said. "We want to protect the independence and dignity of the commission, so our work should be visible," he said.

Mahub further alleged that he sought information from the returning officer and EC senior secretary of Dhaka north and south city corporations polls regarding the list of complaints lodged with the returning office, but the officials did not respond.

Mahub said he in an unofficial note on January 16 sought the information by January 20.

Meanwhile, EC Senior Secretary Md Alamgir said returning officers were bound to send the information to the commission. "But they are not bound to send information to one commissioner directly. If they send the information, they will have to send it to five commissioners," he told reporters.

"I do not know what he [Mahub] tries to portray by saying these," Alamgir said while replying to a query about his allegation that there is no level-playing field within the EC.

A safe Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3 The city corporation will make sure that landlords do not raise rent more than once a year. He also pledged hostels for working women and labourers, and daycare centres in all wards.

He also promised to increase treatment facilities; set up holiday markets for hawkers before evicting them from streets; ensure separate public toilets for men, women and transgender persons; increase facilities for people with autism; preserve historical sites to attract tourists; recover parks and playgrounds from grabbers; uphold secularism and ensure accountability of mayor and ward councillors.

When asked about electioneering, Rubel alleged that the Election Commission is playing a biased role. "The EC has not been able to take any step to ensure that the polls will be free and fair," he said.

"We will still participate in order to continue our fight for establishing democracy," the mayor aspirant said.

CPB President Mujahidul Islam Selim was present at the event, among others.

Vacancy Announcement for Super Industrial Park Ltd. Table with columns: Sl No., Position, Education Qualification, Position, Location. Lists 10 positions including CEO, GM, Marketing Manager, etc.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Develpment Bank (BDBL). Title: 'বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড'. Includes text about recruitment and contact information.

Advertisement for Pubali Bank Limited. Title: 'পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড'. Includes text about tendering and contact information.

Advertisement for Pubali Bank Limited. Title: 'INVITATION FOR TENDER'. Includes text about tendering and contact information.

Advertisement for Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution System Ltd. Includes text about gas supply and contact information.