

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 25.5 L 15.6	H 25.6 L 13.9	H 26.3 L 14.8	H 27.5 L 13.0	H 24.2 L 09.5	H 26.0 L 12.4	H 25.5 L 11.8	H 25.6 L 10.8	H 26.7 L 16.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB quoting Met office. Night temperature may fall slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am.**



Laminated posters of Awami League-led grand alliance candidate Rashed Khan Menon hang from ropes at Bangla Motor in Dhaka. Although there is no clear instruction from the Election Commission on use of plastic lamination in campaign materials, green activists are concerned about the environmental impact of the non-biodegradable substance. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# ELECTION CAMPAIGN

## The perils of plastic laminated posters

**SOHEL PARVEZ**

Contestants for the 11th parliamentary polls have been using laminated posters in the campaign, which are harmful for the environment.

Such posters can be seen across Dhaka city and the country, displaying faces and electoral symbols of candidates, mostly of the Awami League grand alliance, Left Democratic Alliance, and Islami Andolon Bangladesh. They are also using PVC sheets, which are equally harmful.

Candidates said they were laminating posters with plastic to protect those from the elements, and that it was not a violation of electoral rules.

However, Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said, "This is bad news. These plastics will eventually block the drainage system in urban areas, and canals in rural areas."

Politicians usually do nothing to protect the environment, he said. "Now, it appears that they are acting against the environment. This is reprehensible."

As many as 15 crore posters could be printed for the upcoming election, Shahid Sernebat, chairman of Printing Industries Association of Bangladesh (PIAB), told The Daily Star.

During the 2008 election, six crore posters were printed, according to PIAB estimates.

Mohammad Aslam, owner of New Bangladesh Laminator at Fakirapool, Dhaka, said several candidates used laminated posters during the union parishad and city corporation elections. "But that was on a limited scale," he said.

This election, some candidates are laminating two to three lakh posters, he claimed.

With the increased demand for lamination, the cost of plastic film has gone up since the beginning of the month, said Md Mustafizur, proprietor of Popular Lamination at Fakirapool, a printing hub in the capital. He has already laminated 50,000 posters and is expecting more orders.

Bapa's Matin demanded that the Election Commission ban the use of laminated posters.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu, who is contesting in Kushtia-2, said he is using laminated posters to protect them from dew, and it saves cost. "Otherwise, I would have to print posters daily."

Inu also said it is legal.

Asked about the harm to the environment, he said he had no idea about the matter.

"Environmental experts can answer that."

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## ELECTORAL MANIFESTO

### BSD pledges non-partisan polls-time govt

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), a partner of Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), yesterday pledged to restore a non-partisan election-time government to ensure a free and fair election, if voted to power.

"Both police and ruling Awami League are now working for 'boat', and the Election Commission is also playing a biased role. So, no fair election can be held under a party-led government," BSD General Secretary Khaliqzaman claimed as he unveiled the party's 17-point manifesto for the 11th national election, from a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the capital.

He said a constitutional amendment will be made to bring back non-party government, and election will be held as per proportional representation (PR) through which people from different constituencies will only cast votes for party symbols, and parties will then nominate parliament members as per voting percentage.

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## VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS

### 'Political delinquency' to blame: speakers

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Laws to protect human rights in Bangladesh are not being implemented properly due to "political delinquency", for which people are suffering the most, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

They also alleged that the government has not excluded Section 57 from the Digital Security Act, despite the commitment they had made before adopting the law.

Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) organised the discussion at Jatiya Press Club in the capital, marking the 70th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Terming the recent shutdown of 58 websites by the government "human rights violation", they also urged the government to withdraw the ban immediately.

Prof Lailufar Yasmin of Dhaka University's International Relations

department was the chief speaker, while Advocate Sigma Huda, chairperson of BSEHR, presided over the programme.

Prof Yasmin described the context of UDHR on November 10, 1948 and double-standards in its implementation in the world: "There is also politicisation of understanding of UDHR... We can see how children are dying in US custody... whether we are talking about Rohingyas or people dying in Syria... all of these need to be taken into consideration [in light of UDHR]."

Advocate Sigma Huda said, "The judiciary in Bangladesh has turned blind; it is only for the rich... we have to make the people aware of their rights."

Moderated by Tarik Haider, former district judge and a member of BSEHR, a number of human rights activists spoke at the programme.

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A man tidying up Christmas party accessories at his store in Farmgate area. These shops have started selling trees, costumes, gifts, and outdoor decorations as Christians prepare to celebrate their largest religious festival this week. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Editors Guild emerges

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Editors Guild, Bangladesh has started its journey, with an aim of "protecting editorial freedom and promoting responsible journalism in the country".

The new organisation is composed of editors and leaders from news publications and outlets across media. Its first committee was formed on December 21, with bdnews24.com's Editor-in-Chief Toufique Imrose Khalidi as its convener, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Janakantha Executive Editor Swadesh Roy and Gazi Television and sarabangla.net Editor-in-Chief Syed Ishtiaque Reza have been elected joint conveners.

The first meeting of the organisation was hosted by Zulfikar Russell at the offices of Bangla Tribune in Dhaka.

Ekatort Television Editor-in-Chief Mozammel Babu, DBC Television Editor-in-Chief Manzurul Islam, ATN Bangla Chief Executive Editor ZI Mamun, ATN News Chief Executive Editor Munni Saha, Asian Age Editorial Board Chairman Shoeb Chowdhury and Bangla Tribune Editor

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