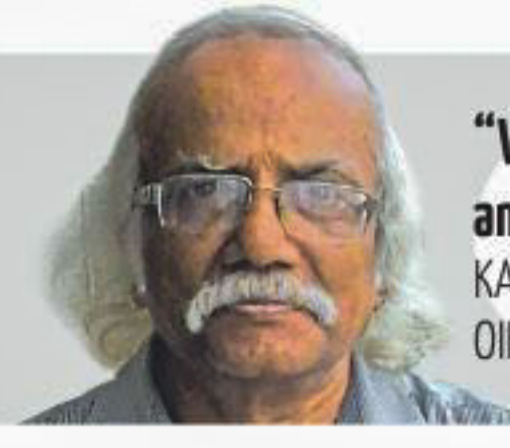


"I am optimistic that someone from Bangladesh will receive Nobel Prize in science by 2030."
NATIONAL PROFESSOR JAMILUR REZA CHOWDHURY AT A RECEPTION (PAGE 3)



"We don't want the minorities to be used in political blame game anymore. It is the state's responsibility to protect them."
KAJAL DEBNATH, LEADER OF BANGLADESH HINDU BOUDDHA CHRISTIAN OIKYA PARISHAD, ABOUT RECENT ATTACKS ON MINORITIES (PAGE 3)



"OK, it's all yours. We are done."
TRUMP TOLD ERDOGAN ABOUT PULLOUT OF US TROOPS FROM SYRIA (PAGE 8)

7 candidates attacked

All contesting with 'sheaf of paddy'; 140 hurt in polls violence; 2 shot dead in Khagrachhari, police blame conflict between groups

STAR REPORT

Seven candidates running with the "sheaf of paddy" electoral symbol were attacked allegedly by ruling party men yesterday while 130 supporters of the Awami League and the BNP were injured across the country in polls violence.

In Khagrachhari, minutes after a campaign office was attacked about a kilometre away, two people were shot dead at a market in Panchhari upazila in broad daylight. It could not be confirmed immediately whether the killings were election related.

Late last night in Nawabganj of Dhaka-1 constituency, at least 12 journalists were injured when they were attacked by masked men at a guest house.

BNP candidates Moudud Ahmed was attacked in Noakhali-5, Miah Nuruddin Apu in Shariatpur-3, Shaheed Uddin Chowdhury Annie in Lakshmipur-3, Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad in Tangail-3, Sabina Yesmin Chhobi in Natore-2, Sunсила Jabin Priyanka in Sherpur-1, and 20-party candidate Monir Hossain was attacked in Narayanganj-4, reports our correspondents.

Annie and Apu were hurt in the attacks.

A clash erupted between supporters of Annie and AL men at Shantihat Bazar area of Lakshmipur Sadar. Annie and around 25 BNP and 10 AL men were wounded.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A team of army personnel patrols Dewanhat Overpass area in Chattogram city. Members of the armed forces started election duties across the country yesterday. Inset, soldiers stand guard outside a temporary camp set up at the capital's Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN/AMRAN HOSSAIN

Army will act to maintain law, order

Says CEC about its role in December 30 polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said army personnel deployed for election duty would take any measures required to maintain law and order.



KM Nurul Huda

"If any situation that needs to be controlled arises in front of the army, they will go there on their own and bring the situation under control," he said.

The army personnel have been deployed to restore voters' confidence, Huda said, urging all the political parties to maintain a congenial atmosphere for the December 30 election.

He made the comments while visiting a trial voting session on using electronic voting machines (EVM) at Dhaka Residential Model School and College.

Army personnel started discharging election duties yesterday to help ensure a peaceful atmosphere and maintain law and order across the country for the polls.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

ARMY WARNS AGAINST FAKE WEB PAGES IN ITS NAME - PAGE 3



The Daily Star has prepared a four-part infographic on the candidates of major parties for the December 30 polls as well as winners and runners-up in their constituencies in two previous participatory elections in 2001 and 2008. This may help our readers have an insight into past voting behaviour. Today, we are running the first part of the series on 72 constituencies in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions.

SEE PAGE 10

Dec 30 polls crucial for development

Says Hasina at AL campaign rally in Kamrangirchar

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the December 30 general election is very important to keep Bangladesh on the higher trajectory of development.

"Bangladesh is now on the higher trajectory of development ... the next election is very important to continue this trend of development," she said.

Addressing an election rally at Kamrangirchar Hospital ground, she said the AL government had been able to change people's fate as it was in power for two consecutive terms. "The living standard of the people has changed and it's changing."

The PM said her politics was not to build her own fate, but to build the fate of the people.

She mentioned that if the AL formed the government through the next election, there would be no poor in the country. "Each and every person will be able to lead a beautiful life as we've drawn up that plan."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Army given a tough task

Says Dr Kamal on armed forces' role in creating a congenial atmosphere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army has been entrusted with a tough task to create an atmosphere for holding a free, fair and inclusive election, said Jatiya Oikyafront Convener Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday.

He also hoped the army would stand by the country's people at this moment.

Election atmosphere has not improved till now although BGB has been deployed in different parts of the country, the eminent jurist told a press conference at the Oikyafront's central office in the capital.

"It's a matter of hope that the army is on the field. We are proud of our army, which played an extraordinary role in the Liberation War and is now discharging the duties in the peacekeeping missions across the globe successfully," he said.

The nation expects a role from the army

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

MAKING UP FOR LOST CANDIDACY

BNP to back partners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will extend support to Gonoforum candidates in three constituencies where its own nominees were cancelled by the Supreme Court.

In other constituencies where the BNP is facing a similar crisis, it is likely to extend its support to independents or candidates from other parties.

A total of 19 BNP candidates, including its chairperson Khaleda Zia, lost their candidacy following orders from the appellate and high court divisions of the Supreme Court in the last one week.

The candidates were rejected by the court on different grounds including defaulting on loans and holding an office of profit. Some were rejected because their resignations from the posts of upazila chairmen were not accepted by the government.

Gonoforum candidates in Jamalpur-1, Sylhet-2 and Manikganj-3 will get BNP support, insiders said.

The BNP leaders held a meeting at Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office and took these decisions yesterday, they added.

In Sylhet, the Gonoforum held a rally in the evening.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



GREETINGS
The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, patrons, well-wishers and advertisers a Merry Christmas

Christmas today

UNB, Dhaka

The Christian communities in the country and elsewhere across the world will celebrate the Christmas Day today, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Star journo, son sued in Jhenidah

Complainant doesn't know how case was filed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jhenidah correspondent of The Daily Star and his son, who is also a local reporter of another national daily, have been made accused in a case though the complainant doesn't know them at all.

The case filed for vandalising a campaign office of Awami League in the district's Kaliganj upazila mentions 19 named and over 50 unnamed persons as the accused.

But Akter Hossain, the complainant, said he neither filed the case nor knew any of the accused including Azibor Rahman and his son Sohag Hossain, Kaliganj correspondent of daily Jugantor.

Akter claimed he is one of the four persons who were asked by police to sign a paper as witnesses to the alleged attack.

"The OC just took my signature on a paper. But I

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Jubilant students of Bangladesh Mahila Samity Girls High School and College in Chattogram city flash V-sign after the results of Junior School Certificate examination were out yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Girls outshine boys in PECE, JSC exams

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Girls have outperformed boys in all indicators in the two biggest public examinations this year which saw the success rates in both the tests rise after a significant fall last year.

The indicators -- participation rate, success rate and grades achieved -- showed that girls were well ahead of their counterparts, according to the results of Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) and Junior School Certificate (JSC) Examinations, which were published yesterday.

For the last several years, female participation and grades in class-V and class-VIII terminal exams have shown an upward trend. Earlier, girls had lagged behind in one or two indicators like pass rate or GPA-5.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

PECE results

| Division | Pass Rate 2018 | Pass Rate 2017 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dhaka | 98.25 | 95.15 |
| Rajshahi | 97.07 | 94.96 |
| Khulna | 98.05 | 95.44 |
| Chattogram | 98.11 | 96.11 |
| Barishal | 97.72 | 96.22 |
| Sylhet | 94.76 | 91.46 |
| Rangpur | 98.20 | 94.90 |
| Mymensingh | 96.30 | -- |
| Average | 97.59 | 95.18 |