



THE KANCHPUR-MEGHNA-GUMTI BRIDGES ARE BEING BUILT WITH HIGHLY DUCTILE GRADE 420 BSRM ULTIMA BARS



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City hotels feel the polls heat

SHARIFUL ISLAM AND SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Police have stepped up monitoring of city hotels and messes as they are strictly checking the identities of guests and boarders ahead of Sunday's national election.

The number of guests and boarders came down due to the move which was launched early this month, said staffers of some hotels and messes in Mirpur, Farmgate and East Tejgurbazar areas.

Besides, police were also visiting flats and homes in Mirpur area to check the identities of the dwellers, said locals.

Law enforcers asked landlords to submit tenant information forms to them soon after filling those out.

Police, however, didn't give any specific reason for such a move.

Talking to The Daily Star on Friday, a staff of Royal Grand Hotel in East Tejgurbazar said, "We have been seeing a sharp drop in the number of guests since the beginning of this month."

Almost all the 60 rooms of the five-storey hotel used to be occupied by guests around the year. But it was having fewer guests since for over two weeks as it refused many who failed to produce proper documents, particularly the national identity (NID) card.

"Since early this month, the number of occupied rooms has come down to between 30 and 35 daily," said the staff on condition of anonymity.

The hotel staffers and mess managers said as per recent instructions by police, they didn't rent out any room to people without NID cards and other relevant documents.

"Earlier, police were not so strict about the identities of people. So, we used to rent out rooms to customers having no NID cards," said the manager of another hotel.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Election materials are being sent across the country. The photo was taken outside the BG Press in Tejgaon in the capital yesterday.

Ensure free movement of media vehicles

Editors' Council urges EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) yesterday urged the Election Commission to ensure free movement of media vehicles across the country from the day before the polls to the day after.

A letter to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda was handed over to the EC in this regard, officials said.

Take the measures necessary to ensure that journalists and media employees can move freely with their vehicles from the day before the election to the day after, read the letter signed by council General Secretary Mahfuz Anam, also the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

The council also urged the law enforcement agencies to help reporters and others working for the media and their vehicles move freely.

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FROM CAMPAIGN TRAIL

LALMONIRHAT

CHATTOGRAM CITY

BNP wants to plant flag on JP stronghold

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and S DILIP ROY

Though Lalmonirhat-3 has been a stronghold of the Jatiya Party, a partner in the Awami League-led grand alliance, since 1991, the Jatiya Oikyafront, led by the BNP and several other parties, is eyeing a win this time.

Oikyafront leaders said they are confident about victory as the opposition alliance fielded a well-known face in the constituency -- Lalmonirhat BNP President Asadul Habib Dulu.

Dulu will face JP Co-chair GM Quader, who was elected lawmaker twice from the constituency in 1996 and 2008. JP leader Riaz Uddin Ahmed won in the seat in 1991 and Dulu in 2001. AL leader Abu Saleh Mohammad Sayeed managed a victory in the 2014 polls when the JP fielded no candidate.

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3 city seats with 3 unique factors

M NURUL HAYAT CHOWDHURY, Ctg

Blue-collar constituents, sympathy vote, and parochialism are likely to play a pivotal role in the city's three major constituencies, Chattogram-9, -10 and -11.

In Chittagong-11 (Port-Patenga), factory workers would be the major factor as the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), Karnaphuli Export Processing Zone (KEPZ), and the Chattogram Port are located there.

According to the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority sources, there are about two lakh workers in CEPZ and 75,000 in KEPZ and 6,000-7,000 work in and around Chattogram Port.

Local sources said Chattogram-11 has the highest number of voters, a little over five lakh, and more than two lakh of them are factory workers.

Incumbent and Awami League-led alliance candidate MA Latif and Oikyafront candidate Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury, former law maker from the constituency, are optimistic of getting the blue-collar vote.

Khashru, also a former minister, told The Daily Star, "Apart from expanding the activities of the port during our rule, we created huge job opportunities establishing the CEPZ and KEPZ."

"I was elected from this constituency four times and have done everything possible for the wellbeing of the workers. I am sure they will cast their votes again for me if they can go to the polling centres," he added.

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Not CEC, Dr Kamal should quit: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's Gonoforam chief Dr Kamal Hossain, not Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, who should quit after accepting his failure, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

He made the comment while addressing an election rally at Latifunnessa High School ground in Cumilla's Choudhagram.

The Jatiya Oikyafront leader failed to demonstrate his leadership, Quader claimed.

"Dr Kamal's words are even more poisonous than formalin. Not the CEC but you [Kamal] should resign," Quader said.

He also asked why Dr Kamal went to meet the CEC if he demanded his resignation.

People will vote for "boat", the AL's electoral

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India's 'Rapunzel' sets world record



NDTV ONLINE

Ten years ago, Nilanshi Patel from Gujarat decided, after a bad haircut, to not cut her hair again. Today, the 16-year-old has earned a Guinness World Record for the longest hair on a teenager - thanks to her locks that measure 5-foot and 7-inches!

"I got my hair cut, a really bad haircut. So, then I decided that I won't cut my hair. I decided that when I was six and have not cut it since," she explains to Guinness World Records.

Nilanshi, who has been nicknamed Rapunzel by her friends, says she washes her hair once a week. "My mother helps me to braid and to comb my hair," she says.

"People think that I face so many problems with my hair, but I don't face any problems, I do sports

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Ershad back home from Singapore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad returned home last night after a two-week "medical checkup" in Singapore.

JP Presidium Member SM Faysal Chisti told The Daily Star that Ershad, also a special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 9:00pm by a Singapore Airlines flight.

Faysal, who is coordinating Ershad's campaign in Dhaka-17, said the party chief is now physically sound and is expected to start campaign today.

Earlier, Ershad's return to Dhaka was deferred thrice. He was scheduled to come back home on December 20 and then December 22 and lastly on December 24.

Ershad is contesting in Dhaka-17 under his party banner. He also runs for

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

Law enforcers on a speedboat intercept BNP candidate Mojibor Rahman Sarwar's boat in the middle of the Kirtankhola river as he was campaigning yesterday. The policemen in plainclothes are seen trying to take his supporter, second from left, into custody while the candidate of Barishal-5, left, is having a heated exchange with the law enforcers.

Shutdown to last until wall funded

Says Trump, plans Jan visit to new section of wall at US-Mexico border

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump vowed Tuesday he would not reopen the government until he gets \$5 billion to fund his border wall, as the partial government shutdown dragged into a fourth day.

Trump's demand for a physical barrier on the US-Mexico border -- a pillar of his election platform -- has been rejected by Democrats and some Republicans. In retaliation, Trump refused last week to sign a wider spending bill, temporarily stripping funding from swaths of the government.

"I can't tell you when the government is going to be open," the Republican president told reporters at the White House after his annual Christmas teleconference with US troops.

"I can tell you it's not going to be open until we have a wall, a fence, whatever they'd like to call it."

Trump reaffirmed a claim made on Twitter Monday that he had approved a contract for the construction of 115 miles (185 kilometers) of wall in Texas, although the White House has not offered any details on the project.

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PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-27 7-00
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-30 7-30

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