

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

BSRM Ultima



SAUDI CABINET RESHUFFLE

King keeps power in son's hands

Close associates of crown prince promoted amid backlash over Khashoggi killing, Yemen war

AGENCIES

King Salman of Saudi Arabia shook up the kingdom's Cabinet on Thursday, naming new ministers and security chiefs but keeping the levers of power firmly in the hands of his son and designated heir, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Saudi Arabia and its 33-year-old crown prince have been under heavy international scrutiny since a team of Saudi agents killed and dismembered the Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in October.

Western intelligence agencies have concluded that Mohammed bin Salman knew about and most likely ordered the plot to kill Khashoggi.

And the prince has directed the Saudi military campaign in Yemen that has contributed to a humanitarian crisis and drawn growing opposition in the West.

But the Saudi monarch, almost 83 years old, has shown no signs of lessening his son's near-total control over the kingdom. The Cabinet shake-up Thursday was no exception, as many of those promoted were close associates of Mohammed bin Salman.

New officials were named to lead the National Guard, the General Directorate of Public Security and the Information Ministry, reported The Straits Times Online.

Salman also ordered the creation of a national space agency to be led by another of his sons, Prince Sultan bin Salman, who was the first Arab astronaut.



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Polls materials are gathered at Barishal Sadar Upazila Parishad, above, and Munshiganj Sadar Upazila Auditorium, left, to send those to polling stations. Right, election officials boarding an army helicopter in Laxmichhari of Khagrachhari to fly to two voting centres.

PHOTO: STAR/COLLECTED



ASSAM NRC UPDATE

India extends deadline to June next yr

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian government has extended by six months to complete the exercise of updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam state by June 30 next year.

In a notification, the Registrar General of India said the decision has been taken as the exercise to enumerate Indian citizens in the NRC could not be completed within the specified date of December 31 this year.

"The central government has considered it necessary and expedient in the public interest to complete the said enumeration in connection with the updation of the National Register of Citizens, 1951, by the 30th day of June 2019," said the notification issued on Thursday.

This is the sixth time that the deadline for updating the draft final NRC, which left out an estimated 4.7 million people of Assam of the list of Indian citizens, has been extended.

On December 6, 2013, the government had issued the first notification setting a deadline of three years for completion of the entire NRC process. Since then, five extensions were given

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World watches as Bangladesh goes to polls

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Major global media outlets and the international community, including the UN and the US, are set to keep their eyes on tomorrow's parliamentary election in Bangladesh.

However, compared to previous elections, the curiosity of the international media and community seems to have decreased even though the polls are said to be held in an inclusive manner this year.

The international media, while pointing at the crackdown on the opposition alliance, attacks during the polls campaigning and governance issues in the last 10 years, has also put focus on the political stability, economic growth, socio-economic development and the halt of political violence.

Reports quoting businessmen said the political stability must continue as it had greatly helped businesses to grow. There was indication in reports that Sheikh Hasina was widely expected to win tomorrow's national election.

However, amid concerns regarding weeks of widespread violence, mistrust and clashes between the ruling and

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'Don't stay home'

BNP candidate for Jashore-3 asked party men during campaign to avoid police harassment

PINAKI ROY and AMANUR AMAN

"I am requesting all leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations and alliance partners not to stay at home or go to work. Also, don't sit at any tea stall or any crowded place near the streets and campaign after evening until further instruction."

Aninda Islam Amit, BNP candidate in Jashore-3, wrote this on Facebook a few days ago fearing police harassment ahead of tomorrow's national polls.

Amit said he took to social media to warn his supporters as he believed they might be arrested if they showed their allegiance in public.

At his home in Ghope area of Jashore town Wednesday morning, these correspondents saw a small crowd of women. All of them were relatives of recently arrested BNP men. They came seeking Amit's help for their bail.

Some came for their husbands, some for their sons and some others for their grandchildren.

"So far, more than 100 leaders and activists of the BNP and its associate bodies have been arrested. If all of them get arrested like this, who would work for the 'sheaf of paddy' on the election day?" a frustrated Amit told The Daily Star.

"The situation is very difficult.... My activists can't accompany me on the campaign trail fearing arrest."

He also alleged that ruling party men beat up his supporters and tore posters of his campaign.

"You won't see any of my posters in the entire Jashore town."

He then took out his phone and played CCTV footage of some people tearing BNP posters off the walls at night.

He said he had lodged at least 20 complaints with the returning officer, talked to an EC member and the superintendent of police in the district. "But nothing worked."

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Probe attacks on journos, activists

Amnesty urges Dhaka Staff Correspondent

Amnesty International yesterday urged the Bangladesh authorities to look into the "ongoing violent attacks on journalists and activists" ahead of the 11th parliamentary polls.

In a statement, the international human rights watchdog asked the authorities to immediately release those activists "arrested arbitrarily".

Condemning the recent attacks on journalists and activists, Amnesty International South Asia campaigner Saad Hammadi in the statement said, "The authorities must impartially investigate these attacks and bring the perpetrators to justice. Such incidents are detrimental to a peaceful atmosphere for people to exercise their civil

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

Japan town pays cash for kids



CNN ONLINE

When Katsunori and Kaori Osaka had their first child, they were living in a cramped flat in Nagoya, a city of more than 2 million people in central Japan.

Like many other young couples, they tried to raise their child in the city but found life among the apartment blocks too crowded and expensive, with few child care options. Eventually, they gave up.

"When people are in their 20s and 30s, they can't really afford to live in a bigger space in a city," Katsunori said. "We knew that if we wanted to have more kids, we couldn't do it there."

Fourteen years later, the Osakas moved to Nagi, where Katsunori grew up. The sleepy agricultural town in western Japan has become a success story in the country's efforts to boost its declining birth rate.

With a population of about 6,000, Nagi feels a

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One dead, 3 missing after 2 speedboats overturn

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A youth was killed and three children went missing in the Jamuna as two speedboats overturned after colliding head-on near Aricha ghat in Manikganj's Shivalaya yesterday.

The victim is Iqbal Hossain, 42, of Pabna's Santhia upazila.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Shivalaya Police Station, said the

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 29

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Minority voters hold key in Khulna

Some 5,00,000 of the 18,00,000 electorates in the 6 seats are from minority communities

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The voters from minority communities will play a major role in the six constituencies of Khulna during tomorrow's polls as they hold a large stake in the area's vote bank.

In Khulna-1, around 49 percent of the total voters -- 124,000 among 269,465 to count precisely -- belong to the minority communities, said Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad and Khulna Pujya Uddjapan Parishad.

Khulna-5 has 35 percent of its voters from the minority communities, Khulna-6 has 25 percent, Khulna-4 has 21 percent, Khulna-2 has 19 percent and Khulna-3 has 16 percent.

Khulna chapter President of the Oikya Parishad Biman Bihari Roy told The Daily Star that the voters from the minority com-

munities were mostly known as a selected vote bank for a particular political party in the area. However, the situation may turn around this time as they were victimised and tortured nationwide throughout the years.

Backing Biman's statement, Khulna Pujya Uddjapan Parishad President Shyamal Kumar Halder said, "It is very difficult to feel the pulse of the minority community voters this time. Who they cast their votes for is totally up to them."

"But they should cast vote in favour of the right men who always stayed with the community at difficult times."

Meanwhile, the correspondent saw many candidates applying tactics during their electioneering to woo the minority voters.

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একাদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন-২০১৮

নির্বাচনী তথ্য কনিকা-২৫

নির্বাচনের দিন ভোটকেন্দ্রে মোবাইল ফোন ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত


আগামী ৩০ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৮ একাদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। নির্বাচনের দিন ভোটকেন্দ্রে শুধুমাত্র ঐ কেন্দ্রের দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত প্রিজাইডিং অফিসার এবং কেন্দ্রের আইনশৃঙ্খলা বাহিনীর দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা মোবাইল ফোন ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন। এছাড়া অন্য কেউ ভোটকেন্দ্র বা বুথে মোবাইল ফোন ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন না।

কেউ মোবাইল ফোন বহন করলে তা বন্ধ করে ভোটকেন্দ্রে ঢুকতে হবে। কোন অবস্থাতেই কক্ষের ভেতর মোবাইল ফোন ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন না। এর ব্যত্যয় হলে আইনশৃঙ্খলা বাহিনী আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করবে।

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