



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



PROUD CONSTRUCTION PARTNER OF PADMA BRIDGE

Two BNP candidates attacked

Jubo League man killed in Chattogram's Patiya

STAR REPORT

Hours before the nation goes to polls, a Jubo League leader was hacked and beaten to death allegedly by BNP-Jamaat activists in Patiya upazila of Chattogram last night, police said.

Dil Mohammad, 35, was attacked and killed in his neighbourhood in Kushumpur area around 9:15pm, Afruzul Huque Tutul, additional superintendent of police in Chattogram, told The Daily Star.

Police are raiding the area to arrest the attackers, he added.

Doctors at Chattogram Medical College Hospital declared him dead after he was taken there around 9:45pm, said Alauddin, in-charge of the police outpost at the hospital.

Meanwhile, two BNP candidates in Manikganj and Moulvibazar have allegedly been attacked since Friday night.

BNP men in several other districts alleged that they were harassed by police and potential polling agents were arrested.

Motorcades and campaigns of at least 58 candidates, mostly from the BNP, had been attacked, some 1,190 injured and over 950 BNP-Jamaat arrested since the election campaign started on December 10, according to media reports.

Khondaker Akter Hamid Dablu, BNP candidate for Manikganj-1, alleged that armed gangs opened fire on his

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A handful of cars in an otherwise empty Sonargaon roundabout in Dhaka yesterday. The streets of the capital have become deserted as many city dwellers left for their village homes to cast votes.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

14 agents of BNP candidates detained

PORIMOL PALMA and BULBUL AHMED, *Natore*

Police picked up at least 14 polling agents of BNP candidates in three constituencies of Natore yesterday, creating fear among the party's leaders and activists on the eve of today's election.

Sabina Yasmin Chhobi, BNP candidate in Natore-2, said four BNP polling agents -- Zahir Uddin, Anam Ali, Nurul Daktar and Abdur Razzaq -- were picked up from different villages of Natore Sadar.

The six other polling agents of the party -- Ashraf Ali Dewan, Abdul Kuddus, Lutfar Rahman, Abdul Qaim, Rahidul Islam and Azizul Islam -- were picked up from Naldanga upazila, she claimed.

"We have informed the superintendent of police and he said he would look into it. I don't think he will do anything," she said.

She alleged that the ruling Awami League men were

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Press passes for ruling party men!

Allegations emerge, EC unable to say number of cards issued so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the Election Commission not being able to give the number of press passes it has issued for today's election, there are allegations that many ruling party men managed the cards.

On the other hand, journalists of some mainstream media houses in Cumilla and Lalmonirhat alleged that they did not receive their press passes. Cumilla correspondents of television channels Maasranga and Ntv did not get those either, they claimed.

EC secretariat and returning officers in every districts issue cards to media personnel before election and, by using the cards, journalists can enter the polling centers to collect information.

While visiting the EC secretariat around 4:00pm yesterday, a correspondent of The

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Fear grips rural Noakhali voters

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, *from Noakhali*

As voting for the 11th parliamentary election starts this morning, voters of some remote villages in Noakhali are passing days in fear as they doubt if they will be able to vote freely.

Many of them claim Awami League men warned them not to go to polling centres while police harassed and picked up those known to be opposition supporters.

In Noakhali-3 (Begumganj upazila), a number of locals alleged that ruling party men vandalised some 40 to 50 houses in at least five villages under Rajganj union around Thursday afternoon.

AL's Mamunur Rashid Kiron and BNP's Barkat Ullah Bulu are running for the constituency.

"Ruling party men, some of them wearing helmets", wreaked havoc in Aladinagar, Bilalpur, Rajalyapur, Hossainpur and Hakimpur, villagers said. Divided in three to four groups, each consisting of 30 to 40 men, they carried iron rods, machetes and firearms and destroyed whatever was found in the tin-built houses, they added.

This correspondent visited Aladinagar, Bilalpur and Rajalyapur yesterday and found signs of vandalism as doors, windows and household items like television at some 15 houses were broken.

Alamgir Hossain, a grocer who lives in Aladinagar, alleged that ruling party men carried out the attack. The villagers went to local police station but "police refused to take any case just because they are BNP men".

"I am not directly involved in politics. They vandalised my house because I just support BNP."

Alamgir, however, said the villagers are united and they will go to the polling centres together this morning to cast vote in protest of the attack.

Firoz Molla, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Police Station, said a minor

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BNP alleges ballot box stuffing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan last night alleged that ruling party activists were stuffing ballot boxes in some centres of Dhaka-9 and -14 hours before the polls opened.

The Daily Star could not verify the allegations.

Nazrul, chief of the BNP's election coordination committee, said, "They [ruling party men] have been provided with an additional ballot boxes which they are stuffing now. They will show the other empty box to voters in the morning."

"We received information from different sources that ballot boxes and papers reached different voting centres tonight and those are being filled up," he said during a press conference at BNP chief's

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Epic food fight

Festival in Spain holds flour-and-egg battle



AP, Ibi

Every year since Roman times, it's been a pitched battle for control of the Spanish town of Ibi.

Friday's events included a chaotic fight using thousands of mostly rotten eggs and packages of flour, topped off by hundreds of wildly exploding fireworks.

This is the topsy-turvy world of the "Enharinados" (the "floured") where for one day a year the underdogs are in control of this town in the eastern region of Alicante.

Every December 28, the citizens of Ibi are divided into two groups, the "Enharinados" — the "floured" — who try to take control for a day and the opposition, which aims to restore order.

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BTRC shuts down mobile internet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The telecom regulator shut down mobile internet around 10:50pm last night.

The decision came several hours after the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission shut down 3G and 4G services.

The move has been taken to "curb the spread of rumors" during the election, said a BTRC spokesperson requesting anonymity.

The services would resume after 1:00am tomorrow.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 30

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

3 killed as bus ploughs into passengers in Chattogram

Angry colleagues torch three buses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Three garment employees were killed and at least 40 others injured when a bus ploughed into staffers getting off another bus at Korean Export Processing Zone in Anwara upazila yesterday.

Incensed, garment workers torched three buses, including the two involved in the accident, inside the KEPZ, said police.

The EPZ authorities later suspended operations of all factories for the day.

The dead were identified as Md Irfan, 27, from Lohagara, Sultana Razia, 35, from Kushtia's Daulatpur, and Abdul Latif, 50, from Tangail, all employees of Youngone Group.

Mohammed Alamgir, office-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station, said the accident took place around 8:30pm.

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A thick cloud of smoke billowing from buses set on fire allegedly by grieving garment workers after one of their colleagues was run over and killed by a bus in the KEPZ area of Chattogram yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DEADLY TOURIST BUS BLAST IN GIZA Egypt kills 40 'terrorists'

AFP, Giza

Egyptian police killed 40 alleged "terrorists" in a crackdown yesterday after a roadside bomb hit a tour bus claiming the lives of three Vietnamese holidaymakers and an Egyptian guide.

The suspects were killed in separate raids in Giza governorate, home to Egypt's famed pyramids and the scene of Friday's deadly bombing, and in the restive Sinai Peninsula, the interior ministry said.

Thirty "terrorists" were killed in two raids in Giza and the remaining 10 were killed in the North Sinai, a statement said without directly linking them to the tour bus bombing.

It said authorities had received information the suspects were preparing a spate of attacks against state and tourist institutions and churches.

"Information was received by the national security that a group of terrorists were planning to carry out a series of aggressive attacks targeting state institutions, particularly economic ones, as well as tourism, armed forces, police and Christian places of worship," the ministry said.

A security source said the raids took place early Saturday morning, hours after Friday evening's roadside bombing which officials said hit a tour bus in the Al-Haram district near the Giza pyramids killing the three Vietnamese holidaymakers and their Egyptian guide.

Eleven other tourists from Vietnam and an Egyptian bus driver were wounded, the public prosecutor's office said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, the first attack to target tourists since 2017.

Saigon Tourist, the company that organised the trip, said the Vietnamese tourists were "on their way to a restaurant for dinner" when the bomb exploded.

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