

## Govt employee stabbed to death in BCL infighting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of the Department of Social Services was stabbed to death because of an internal feud between two groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League in the capital's Agargaon early yesterday.



Firoz Ahmed

Firoz Ahmed, 25, was a BCL activist before joining government service in 2020.

Firoz and his friend Sakib Hossain were ambushed near the National Museum of Science and Technology around 3:30am.

"We are supporters of Ward 28 unit BCL president Murad Hossain. A group of BCL men led by Nazmul Hasan Talha, president of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar BCL unit, first attacked Murad's house but he fled immediately," said Sakib who is currently being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"Around 3:00am, we helped Murad reach his home and were heading back when around 20 BCL men led by Talha attacked us, leaving both Firoz and me critically injured."

They were rushed to DMCH, where doctors declared Firoz dead around 5:00am.

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station OC Utpal Barua said they came to know that the murder took place due to a rivalry between two BCL groups.

"We have got some names of the attackers and we are trying to arrest them," he said.

Murad and Talha could not be contacted for comments.

## 7 suffer bullet wounds in clash between AL men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 11 Jubo League and Chhatra League men were injured, seven of them bullet-hit, as two groups of ruling Awami League men clashed over holding a fair in Chattogram's Mirsharai early yesterday.

Locals and police said the Mirsharai unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, a platform of freedom fighters, held a 10-day Bijoy Mela at Joraganj High School ground marking the month of victory.

The fair began on December 22 and ended on Saturday night.

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A serviceman collects fragments of a missile in a crater left by a Russian strike in front of a residential building in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## New Year blasts rock Ukraine

Russian raids kill four, wound dozens; Kyiv claims shooting down 45 drones

AFP, KYIV

A fresh round of explosions rocked Kyiv less than an hour into 2023, after Russia had attacked Ukraine with missiles targeting the capital and other cities ahead of New Year's Eve celebrations.

Kyiv said the Russian New Year assaults left four people dead and wounded dozens.

The Ukrainian capital and other cities came under fire from missiles and Iranian-made drones on Saturday, killing three people.

At least one drone had the Russian words "Happy New Year" scrawled on it in red, according to a picture released by Ukrainian authorities.

A new attack yesterday killed one person in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia and wounded another three, authorities said.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, stressed that Russia's New Year attacks targeted downtown areas of large cities and pointed to a change in Moscow's tactics.

"Russia no longer has any military goals and is trying to kill as many civilians

as possible and destroy more civilian facilities," he tweeted. "A war to kill."

In a New Year's attack in the southern region of Kherson, a 13-year-old boy came under Russian attacks twice, the second time when he was in intensive care, officials said.

The attacks came as President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine enters its 11th month.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Zelensky's office, said two people died in Kyiv and the southern region of Kherson and another 50 were injured on Saturday.

A 22-year-old woman was badly wounded in the western city of Khmelnytskyi and later died from her wounds, governor Sergiy Gamaly said.

On New Year's Eve, Russian artillery hit the village of Naddniprianske outside the city of Kherson, severely wounding a 13-year-old boy, Yaroslav.

"The boy was taken to a hospital in a serious condition where doctors literally brought him back from the dead," wrote governor Yaroslav Yanushevych.

Then the Russian army struck the hospital where the boy was lying in intensive care, smashing the windows in

the ward.

"The boy was evacuated to Mykolaiv where doctors are continuing to fight for his life," Yanushevych said on messaging app Telegram.

The Russian pounding damaged the Kherson hospital and also left the city and the surrounding settlements without electricity.

Russian forces in November withdrew from Kherson, the only regional capital that was held by Moscow, but have continued to batter the city.

The Ukrainian air force said 45 Iranian-made drones had been destroyed overnight. Thirteen were shot down at the end of 2022 and another 32 after midnight.

Kyiv police chief Andriy Nebitov released a picture of wreckage of a downed drone that featured the words "Happy New Year" in Russian.

"That is everything you need to know about the terror state and its army," he said.

In the eastern region of Donetsk, pro-Russian separatist authorities said Ukrainian shelling killed a civilian in the town of Yasynuvata.

## EC not legally bound to bring parties to polls

Says Election Commissioner Anisur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman said they were not legally obligated to ensure that all political parties participate in the upcoming national polls.

"It is not our responsibility to include all political parties in the next general elections. We have urged for their participation and hope that they will."

He said this while talking to reporters at the Election Commission office in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

"It's our job to create a conducive environment for a fair election, and we will work towards that goal starting this year," said Anisur.

The national polls will be held by the end of December this year or the first week of January next year, he added.

Anisur made the comments after the BNP and several other political parties announced that they would not take part in the upcoming parliamentary polls.

The parties have taken to the streets to press home their 10-point demand, which includes the formation of an impartial caretaker or interim government, as well as the formation of a neutral election commission to ensure a level playing field for all parties.

They are also demanding an end to the use of EVMs.

Anisur said, "The BNP has not accepted us since day one. Let them join the polls and then say that the election is not fair."

"They questioned the appointment of election commissioners although this incumbent Election Commission was constituted for the first time under law," he added.

## Bangladeshi cattle trader shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force along Burimari border in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila yesterday.

The victim was Biplab Mia, 22, of Dhabalsuti Gatiarvita village of the upazila.

According to BGB and police, a patrol team of Changrabandha camp under BSF Battalion-98 in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal fired three to four bullets when eight-10 people crossed the border to bring cattle from India around 4:00am.

Biplab, who was shot in the chest, was brought back to Bangladesh by his fellows. He died later.

Confirming the incident, Burimari BGB camp Commander Ekramul Haque said a protest letter was sent to BSF.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said Omar Farooq, officer-in-charge of Patgram Police Station.

## Road crash victims can now legally claim it Old faces reign as members too

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The victims' chances of getting compensation were narrowed after the ordinance was repealed when the act came into effect in 2019. In rare instances, victims file writ petitions with the High Court seeking compensation.

As per the act, the government will create a fund for compensating and treating road crash victims and the fund will be created with a one-time or annual "contribution" from vehicle owners.

According to the rules, the owner of a bus, truck, lorry and semi-trailer truck will pay Tk 1,500 a year for the fund, while the fee is Tk 750 for a minibus, minitruck and pickup; Tk 500 for a car, SUV and microbus; and Tk 300 for a three-wheeler. A motorcycle owner must pay a one-time fee of Tk 1,000, read the rules.

The vehicle owners who fail to pay the fee on time will pay a fine of Tk 50 for each month of delay. With government permission, the trustee board may change the fees at times, it reads.

HOW TO GET COMPENSATION

Those seeking compensation will

have to fill out a form and submit it to the trustee board chairman within a month of the road crash.

The chairman will form a probe committee within 10 days of receiving the application, and the committee will submit a report on the damages in a month, read the rules.

The board will take steps to compensate the victim within 30 work days of receiving the report.

An individual can file an application for review of the board decision within 30 days. The board, upon receiving the review prayer, will issue a notice for a hearing within a week and the board will make its decision within a month.

An aggrieved person can even file an appeal against the board's decision in a month and the secretary of road transport and highways division, will hear and resolve the issues in a month.

If anyone is aggrieved with the appeal decision, a search committee will pick an arbitrator who is a retired secretary or a district judge or an individual of a similar status, to solve the issue in 45 days.

The rules stipulated 13 offences

for which a driver may incur demerit points.

A driver may lose two points for overloading and intentionally obstructing movement of other vehicles and one point each for 11 other offences.

A mobile court or a BRTA official not below the rank of motor vehicle inspector or police official not below the rank of sub-inspector sergeant can deduct the points. The official must have a photo or video footage of the offence and inform the driver and the authority immediately after deducting a point.

A driver can seek review of the decision within a month by paying a fee and the authorities will make a decision within a month.

If a driver does not violate any rules for six months, the authority can give back two points following an appeal.

But drivers will not be allowed to appeal for points for two years if they lose eight points.

BRTA Spokesperson Mahbub-E-Rabbani said the authority will start implementing the rules after putting in place the system.

## Old faces reign as members too

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treasurer, 21 secretariat posts and 28 executive members.

The four new faces that were inducted into the central committee as members are Tarana Halim, Mohammad A Arafat, Nirmal Chatterjee and Tarik Sujat.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader announced the names at the entrance to the Gono Bhaban after attending a meeting of the party's parliamentary board.

There were only six new faces in total among the 78 names announced yesterday. The two others are Jebunnesa and former Bangladesh cricket captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

Besides the central committee, five new faces were inducted into the party's advisory council, the think-tank of the party.

They are immediate past committee's presidium member and sports secretary Abdul Mannan Khan and Harunur Rashid, DU professor Sadeka Halim, former Jahangnagar university VC Prof Farzana Islam and former ambassador Majeda Rafiqunessa.

Meanwhile, AL chief Sheikh Hasina's brother-in-law Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, also MP of Faridpur-3, was dropped from the party's advisory council.

AL Joint General Secretary Bahauddin Nasim was made a member of the party's local government nomination board.

The meeting of the party's parliamentary board decided to give party nominations for the by-polls to three constituencies and leave the two seats for 14-party alliance members Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu). The AL did not give nominations for one other constituency.

The elections to parliamentary seats of six constituencies, which fell vacant after the resignations of the BNP MPs, will be held on February 2.

## BB CYBER HEIST CID gets 69th date to submit probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked the Criminal Investigation Department to submit the probe report in Bangladesh Bank cyber heist case by February 14, 2023.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after Raihan Uddin Khan, additional superintendent of police and also the case's investigation officer, failed to submit the probe report by yesterday.

CID has now taken 69 dates to complete its probe into the case filed over the heist of \$101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account with Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February 2016.

At least \$81 million was transferred to the accounts in Manila based RCBC, from where it disappeared into casinos in Philippines.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Director (accounts and budgeting) Zobayer Bin Huda filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on March 15, 2016.

So far, Bangladesh retrieved \$15 million from RCBC and recovered another \$20 million sent to a bank in Sri Lanka.

On February 1 last year, Bangladesh Bank sued Rizal Bank in US court to recover \$66m of stolen funds.

## Univ student

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it, killing Sumi and Masum on the spot. Johura died at Jashore General Hospital.

Sumi's husband Mohtasim Billah, who is also a student of the university, and Johura's husband Amjad Hossain were injured in the accident.

The passengers boarded the rickshaw-van in front of the university campus for going to Churamonkati Bazar, police said.

Tajjul Islam, officer-in-charge of Jashore Kotwali Police Station, said the injured were admitted to Jashore General Hospital and the three bodies sent to the hospital morgue for autopsies.

## Experts sound alarm as four cases detected

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(DGHS) reported 17 new cases and a positivity rate of 1.07 percent, indicating a rise over the past week.

The positivity rate was 0.44 percent on December 25.

"Ensuring everyone maintains health rules is important to avoid loss of lives from Covid-19," Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant of the IEDCR, told The Daily Star.

The BF.7 is said to be much more transmissible than earlier coronavirus strains and has better immune escape capability and a shorter incubation period, according to experts.

The new coronavirus subvariant has caused a surge in cases in China leaving its health system under stress.

Health officials have urged people to take booster shots and wear masks in crowded places and instructed the

officials concerned to strengthen screening at all entry points to the country.

The hospitals have been instructed to be ready in case there is a fresh surge.

Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general of the DGHS, said, "We have already beefed up our surveillance. We will take necessary measures considering the future trend of virus transmission."

ANOTHER OMICRON SUBVARIANT DETECTED

Three Covid-19 cases of omicron subvariant XBB.1 have been detected in the country, according to the global genome sequence database GISAID.

The XBB.1 causes serious harm, but spreads less. "Because it infects the lung directly, it cannot be

detected by testing nasal swabs and is five times more lethal than the Delta variant," said vaccine specialist Tajul Islam A Bari.

"If the XBB.1 variant spreads in the community, it will put vulnerable people at greater risks," said Bari, also a former programme manager at the health directorate's Expanded Programme on Immunization.

"So, we have no alternative to maintain health rules. Because, it is highly likely that Omicron's new subvariants will cause a new wave of Covid-19 soon," he said.

IEDCR Director Prof Tahmina Shirin said a few other cases of XBB.1 were detected.

"But we have not seen a large-scale transmission yet. Maintaining the health rules is the key and we have to focus on it," she added.