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B3 Fish farming with YouTube tutorial



P7 US not seeking conflict with China: Biden



P6 Tasnia Farin on her silver screen debut



P5 The death of Tangail's red hillocks

"We are defending against the most anti-European force of the modern world -- we are defending ourselves, we Ukrainians on the battlefield, along with you."

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky tells EU leaders



DRAFT VOTER LIST 2023 Number of voters rises 5pc in a year

EC says it's normal but experts term the increase unusual, call for review

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

An unusual increase in the number of voters has raised eyebrows among election experts and demographers. The latest draft voter list saw a 5.10 percent increase which is unusual as the list grew by 1.75 percent and 1.40 percent in 2020 and 2021, according to Election Commission data.

The finalised voter list is scheduled to be published on March 2 and it will be followed in the coming national election.

Unveiling the draft list last month, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam said the number of voters was 119,061,158 as of January 15 this year, up from 113,287,010 on March 2, 2022.

He added that this marked a 5.10 percent growth.

When asked, Ashok Kumar Debnath, EC additional secretary, said, "After seeing such a rise, we thought this could not be normal. Then we reviewed and checked the data and found it to be right."

People who usually live abroad were in Bangladesh when the data was collected, resulting in the rise, he added.

NUMBER OF VOTERS

2022	11.32 lakh
2023	11.90 lakh

ANNUAL GROWTH

2020	1.75%
2021	1.40%

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Bangladesh footballers drape themselves with the national flag right after they beat Nepal 3-0 in the final of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship in Kamalapur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Unelected govt no longer possible

Says PM in parliament, clarifies phone tapping aimed at curbing militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there would never be an unelected government in Bangladesh.

"[Unelected government] will never happen. And those who want to go to power should come forward. Whomever the populace elects will rule. The Awami League will never interfere," she said.

While delivering her closing speech for the 21st session of the 11th parliament, she urged the people who have dreams about an unelected government to wake up.

"The country is developing because the democratic process is continuing... People are benefiting."

Some people are saying that if an unelected government runs the country for two or three years, there will be no harm, she said.

"Do those who say such things really want the welfare of the people? They prioritise their personal gains. The people will have to be aware of them and stay alert," she said.

Hasina said Bangladesh is an internationally recognised development model, but this is not noticed by these people. It is unfortunate, she said.

She said during the rule of unelected governments, people saw the "destruction of trade and business development" that hampered the

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SAFF U-20 FOOTBALL Girls cement South Asian dominance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh women footballers stood tall once again in the South Asian region as they emerged undefeated champions with a convincing 3-0 victory over Nepal in the final of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

One goal apiece from Shaheda Akter Ripa, Shamsunnahar Junior and Unnoti Khatun was good enough for Bangladesh to lift the trophy for the third time out of four editions of the age-group competition, having been crowned champions in the U-18 format in 2018 and the U-19 format in 2021.

Prior to the all-important final match in front of an almost capacity crowd, Bangladesh were confident enough to beat Nepal, with a record of five

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TURKEY-SYRIA QUAKE

Hopes turn to despair

Crucial 72-hour window passes since the disaster struck

AGENCIES

Hopes of finding more survivors faded yesterday after the earthquake that killed over 20,000 people in Turkey and Syria, as the first UN aid reached Syrian rebel-held zones.

Bitter cold has hampered the four-day search of thousands of flattened buildings and threatened the lives of many quake victims who are without shelter and drinking water.

Relatives were left scouring body bags laid out in a hospital car park in Turkey's southern city of Antakya to search for missing relatives, an indication of the scale of the tragedy.

"We found my aunt, but not my uncle," said Rania Zaboubi, a Syrian refugee who lost eight members of her family as other survivors sought loved ones' bodies. Chances of finding

survivors have dimmed now that the 72-hour mark that experts consider the most likely period to save lives has passed.

The 7.8-magnitude quake struck as people slept early Monday in a region where

civilians without going through areas controlled by Syrian government forces.

A decade of civil war and Syrian-Russian aerial bombardment had already destroyed hospitals, collapsed the economy and prompted electricity, fuel and water shortages.

Temperatures in the Turkish city of Gaziantep plunged to minus five degrees Celsius (23 degrees Fahrenheit) early yesterday, but thousands of families spent the night in cars and makeshift tents -- too scared or banned from returning to their homes.

Parents walked the streets of the city -- close to the epicentre of Monday's earthquake -- carrying their children in blankets because it was warmer than sitting in

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19 BANGLADESHI STUDENTS TAKEN TO ANKARA FROM QUAKE HIT ZONE -- SEE PAGE 2

DEATH TOLL
20,723

many people had already suffered loss and displacement due to Syria's civil war.

In a potentially life-saving development, an aid convoy reached rebel-held northwestern Syria yesterday, the first since the quake, an official at the Bab al-Hawa border crossing told AFP.

The aid passage through the crossing is the only way UN assistance can reach

CHILD'S DEATH Family alleges negligence by doctors at city hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of a 10-year-old boy, who died at a city hospital last night more than 96 hours after a surgery, have alleged that the doctors' negligence led to his death.

But doctors at Green Life Hospital refuted the allegation. They said the boy died from "side effects" of the anaesthetic drug used before the surgery, and that it was an accident.

The boy, Ali Ashraf Nazir Ayan, a fourth grader of a school in the capital's Mirpur, had a congenital disorder of the urethra. Surgeons at the hospital performed the penile reconstruction surgery on him from 4:30pm to 7:00pm on Sunday to correct the disorder, according to hospital records.

After his heart stopped functioning properly,

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Scores of people scrambling to board a Dhaka-bound train at the Joydebpur railway station yesterday morning. Due to several ongoing development works on the Joydebpur-Tongi road, vehicles plying the route take around five hours to reach their destinations. Most commuters are now resorting to the railway, resulting in the trains being overcrowded.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Murder in guise of road crash

PBI finds about 18 months after 2 persons were killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death of two people in an apparent road accident in Narsingdi around one and half years ago was actually a planned murder, the Police Bureau of Investigation has found.

Following a business feud, one Mamun Mia along with eight of his associates managed a microbus and hit a motorcycle carrying Shahan Shah Alam Biplob and Monir Hossain in Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila on August 12, 2021. The two were dead on the spot.

Highway Police recovered the bodies of the two and filed a case under the Road Transport Act, 2018, against the unidentified driver of the microbus.

An investigation by Highway Police Sub-Inspector Khwaja Mainuddin found it to be a road accident and submitted charge sheet against one Masum -- the owner of the microbus, who had been absconding since the incident.

Following a court order, the PBI investigated the case and found that Masum was a part of the plan, PBI Chief Banaj Kumar Majumder told a press conference at his office yesterday.

Four people -- Mamun Mia, Biplob's former cable network business partner and the one who masterminded the planned murder; Masum, owner of the microbus; and Mamun's two associates Sohag Mia and Masud Mia -- have so far been arrested. Mamun, Sohag and Masud have already given their confessional statements before a

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32ND ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS

The Daily Star has been bringing out a series of diverse and informative supplements around this time of the year for quite some time. This year too, we are pleased to bring out a five-part 216-page special supplement series, beginning FEBRUARY 11, on the occasion of the newspaper's 32nd anniversary.

THE FIVE SEGMENTS ARE:

- "TOWARDS A SMART BANGLADESH"
 - "THE CHANGING MIDDLE-CLASS STORY"
 - "WHERE SHOWBIZ MEETS THE INTERNET"
 - "IN WITH THE NEW: LIFESTYLE CHRONICLES"
 - "CELEBRATING OUR INSPIRERS"
- Make sure you grab a copy of this collector's item free of charge from your hawkers!

the BUSINESS

BB injects \$330m into forex market since IMF's loan

STORY ON BI