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**Tax return deadline extended**



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**The man behind the public persona**



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**Tunnel rescue: Indian workers say hope kept them alive**



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**Can BCB's probe reach the root of rot?**

## Cyber Security Agency exists only in name

Five years gone by but govt yet to make it functional

MAHMUDUL HASAN

In December 2018, when the Digital Security Agency was formed under the Digital Security Act, it was hoped that the cybersecurity of important government sites with critical citizen data such as the Election Commission's national identity database and the Office of the Registrar of Birth and Death would be robust.

Five years on, the government sites remain vulnerable to cyberattacks and data breaches, and the agency, which has since been renamed to the National Cyber Security Agency, cannot be blamed at all for the incidents and the compromised cybersecurity of the sites.

Documents pieced together by The Daily Star show the Digital Security Agency was not provided with the equipment or the manpower to perform this critical role, in what can be viewed as sheer apathy of the government in protecting citizens' data.

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### CYBER SECURITY AGENCY AT A GLANCE

Government failed to build the agency in five years

Couldn't appoint a single regular employee

Lacks infrastructure capability

Six directors left in 11 months



A man openly carries a shotgun in Murapara area of Narayanganj as supporters of Golam Dastagir Gazi, minister for textiles and jute, march towards the assistant returning officer's office in Rupganj for the submission of his nomination form yesterday. Tarabo municipality AL General Secretary Golam Rasul told The Daily Star that his bodyguard Zaman is the man with the gun which is licensed. The assistant returning officer said openly carrying a firearm not only violates the electoral code of conduct but also firearms laws. Police seized the firearm last night.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## NATIONAL POLLS Deadline for nomination submission ends today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The deadline for submitting nomination forms to the election commission expires today, and as the BNP has not backtracked on its decision to boycott the election, it is not likely that the deadline will be extended.

Several political parties requested that the deadline be extended. The election commissioners on several occasions last week said the polls schedule could be revised if the BNP joined the polls.

When a reporter asked Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal yesterday if the last day of nomination submission would be deferred, the CEC did not give an answer.

Only the Awami League, its allies, little-known and recently formed parties

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## Raushan won't run for JS

Blames JP chief for ignoring tested leaders; party picks candidate for her seat

RASHIDUL HASAN

Leader of the opposition in parliament Raushan Ershad has announced she will not participate in the national election because tested leaders of her party have been undermined.

"I took part in the 2014 and 2018 national elections in the interests of the country and democracy. This time, I also welcomed the announcement of the polls schedule and took preparations for the election," the chief patron of Jatiya Party told a press briefing at her Gulshan home last night.

"Tested leaders of the party were not nominated due to non-cooperation from Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader and Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun," she said.

JP sources say Rahgir Almahe Ershad, better known as Saad Ershad, may also not run for parliament as the deadline for collection and submission of nomination papers ends today.

However, Raushan's followers are waiting for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "guidance" for resolving the crisis facing JP, Golam Moshir, political secretary to Raushan, told The Daily Star last night.

Raushan sought an appointment with the PM around a week ago to discuss JP's participation in the polls and other election-related issues, he said.

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## Over 20,000 opposition men arrested since Oct 28

Says pro-BNP lawyers' forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum, a body of pro-BNP lawyers, yesterday alleged that 20,326 opposition leaders and activists were arrested in more than 837 "fabricated and ghost cases" filed after October 28.

It demanded the immediate release of all the arrestees, including lawyers, and withdrawal of the cases.

At least 73,123 opposition activists were accused in the cases and over 8,249 were injured in attacks and police action, it said.

"Seventeen people, including a journalist, were killed and 636 were sentenced to different terms in 35 cases over the last three months."

During a press conference

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## 37 BNP, Jamaat men jailed

342 BNP leaders, activists jailed in 3 weeks; Shahjahan gets bail, Abbas, Altaf, Alal denied

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP and Jamaat leaders and activists continue to be on the receiving end of a conviction spree in cases filed years ago over political violence.

Over the last three weeks alone, 342 leaders and activists of the BNP have been sentenced to different terms in prison in cases filed between May 2013 and September 2018 in Dhaka.

The 342 excludes 37 leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat who were jailed yesterday in two cases lodged in December 2012 and September 2018 over political violence in the capital.

They have been convicted for illegally gathering on the streets, vandalising vehicles, and assaulting law enforcers and obstructing them in their duties.

In the case filed in December 2012, at least 15 BNP leaders and activists, including BNP executive committee member Habibur Rashid Habib, were jailed for 30 months in connection with violence in Sabujbagh area.

None of the 15 were present yesterday when Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam delivered the verdict.

According to the case statement, a group of BNP leaders and activists gathered in front of China Park under Khilgaon Flyover around 9:25am on December 9, 2012. They torched a double-decker, assaulted policemen, and obstructed them from performing their duties.

The bus driver filed the case with Sabujbagh Police

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## LABOUR ISSUES

## Govt, businesses play down prospects of US trade penalties

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government and business leaders have played down the significance of the diplomatic note from the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC to the commerce ministry about possible measures like trade penalties and visa restrictions over labour issues.

"The letter is not an alert – it is normal communication," Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh told The Daily Star yesterday.

The diplomatic note referred to the US memorandum on advancing worker empowerment, rights and high labour standards globally.

While announcing the memorandum on November 16, Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, cited Kalpona Akter, a Bangladeshi garment worker and activist, as an example of the type of people that the policy is intended to safeguard.

"Though the memorandum appears to be a global policy, applicable for all countries, there are reasons to believe that Bangladesh may be one of the targets," said the letter signed by Md Salim Raza, minister (commerce) at the

Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC.

Labour issues in Bangladesh were specifically quoted by the secretary of state and acting secretary of labour, it said.

**"If the US takes any action, it will be quite extraordinary because Bangladesh does not get any tariff preferences or market access benefits from the US."**

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque  
Chairman of RAPID

As per the memorandum, the US foreign mission would directly interact with or deal with labour issues; the policy may encourage interested US diplomats or missions to interfere in many internal or domestic issues, the letter said.

It seems that there are scopes for this policy to be imposed at the individual,

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Traders unloading truckloads of cauliflowers, which came in from different parts of the country, at the Jatrabari wholesale market yesterday. As the cold season settles in, people eagerly wait to get their hands on the freshest of winter vegetables, which include different gourds, spinaches and much more.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Today's issue of The Daily Star comes with a special 8-page supplement on education.

**TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION: Private Universities Shaping the Future of Bangladesh**



## LEST WE FORGET

Please join us in our prayers.  
30 November, after Maghrib at  
**Gulshan Society Jame Masjid,**  
Road no 63, Gulshan 2,  
Dhaka 1212.

REMEMBERING ANNIS  
Annisul Huq, 1952-2017