

CITY

2,116 political activists held last month

Says Human Rights Support Society

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 2,116 political activists including 2,090 BNP and Jamaat leaders and activists were arrested in November, said Human Rights Support Society yesterday.

The organisation came to this figure by monitoring news published in different media, as well as data collection by their own investigation unit.

During the same period, a total of 112 cases were filed naming 3,564 opposition leaders and activists and 9,663 unnamed others, they said in a report.

The houses of more than a hundred opposition party leaders were attacked and vandalised, they stated.

According to HRSS, seven people were killed and at least 629 injured in 84 incidents of political violence.

There have been incidents of obstruction of 117 meetings, rallies and gatherings of opposition parties by law enforcement agencies and government party leaders and activists.

A large number of political cases, arrests and attempts to suppress political opposition through the disruption of rallies were observed throughout the

month. A large number of political arrests, including discriminatory treatment of political parties, have come to the fore, as has the potential politicisation of law enforcement agencies," said the report.

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"The current situation portrays a one-party political culture that hinders fair elections, and the behaviour of administrative and law enforcement agencies is often allegedly akin to the behaviour of ruling party activists," it added.

They also found that over 200 workers have been arrested and over 34,000 have been charged in at least 62 cases related to the garment workers' wage hike movement.

TRUCK TORCHED

Injured helper dies after 6 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck helper succumbed to burn injuries yesterday, six days after unidentified arsonists set his vehicle on fire in Guimara upazila of Khagrachari on November 26 during a blockade enforced by BNP.

Belal Hossain, 35, died at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery around 3:00pm, said Tariqul Islam, a resident doctor.

He was receiving treatment at the institute with 80 percent burns, the doctor added.

Belal's younger brother Abu Bakar Siddique said miscreants obstructed the truck in Hafchari area by placing logs. They then set it on fire.

The truck was carrying rice for Taindong Government Food Warehouse in Matiranga from Chattogram.

Truck driver Ishaq Mia, 28, also suffered burn injuries.

MUNSHIGANJ-2

'ARO leaking voters info to AL candidate'

Alleges independent aspirant, the official dismisses claim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Independent aspirant for Munshiganj-2 constituency and joint general secretary of Munshiganj Awami League Sohana Tahmina alleged yesterday that Upazila Nirbahi Officer and Assistant Returning Officer Md Raseduzzaman is leaking voters' confidential information to her political rivals.

It is mandatory for aspirants to provide signatures of one percent voters of their constituencies to the Election Commission while submitting nomination papers.

"I submitted the signatures to the UNO yesterday (December 1). Raseduzzaman provided the names of my supporters to Tongibari Upazila Parishad Vice Chairman Nahid Khan from the list," claimed Sohana at a press conference at the local press club.

Nahid is a follower of AL nominated aspirant for Munshiganj-2 constituency Sagupta Yasmin Emily, she told this newspaper.

"Nahid has been locating my supporters from the list and threatening them in different ways," she alleged.

Contacted, Raseduzzaman said, "The allegation is completely false and baseless. I don't know anything about it. I will inform the higher authorities that she is making false allegations."

Nahid said, "Incumbent MP Sagupta is very popular in our area. She doesn't need underhanded tactics to win. What Sohana said is completely fabricated." Nahid is also the joint general secretary of Tongibari AL.

A momentous win for Tigers

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middle-order batter was the first to get dismissed, for 58, on the day as spinner Nayeem Hasan intervened.

Tajul, who grabbed the catch that led to Mitchell's fall, then removed skipper Tim Southee to register his 12th five for. The 31-year-old then bagged Ish Sodhi as his final victim, concluding with figures of six for 75 as New Zealand could not stretch their second innings beyond 181.

Having demonstrated his class when it mattered the most, escaping from Shakib's shadow as well, Tajul went on establish his reputation in spearheading the spin attack.

For the Tigers, the best part of this win would likely reside in the manner they hunted, making the whole appear larger than the sum of parts.

Mahmudul Hasan Joy's 86-run knock was pivotal, and so were the few cameos from the batters that contributed to their 310-run total in first innings. Despite a few errors in the field, Shanto and Co ensured that the visitors did not build a substantial lead, courtesy of Tajul's four-wicket haul and Mominul Haque, who arrived as the unlikely hero with the ball as the part-time spinner bagged three wickets.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Nayeem, and lone pacer Shoriful Islam all played crucial roles on the bowling front in both innings, while debutant Shahadat Hossain Dipu showed promise with the willow.

Skipper Shanto, meanwhile, led from the front by all means possible. His leadership on the field garnered praise and a brilliant century under pressure in the second innings, supported by fifties from veteran Moshfiqur Rahim and Miraz, enabled Bangladesh to leave a target steep enough for the winners of the inaugural WTC.

110 nations rally

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forms of energy.

"The future will be powered by solar and wind, but it won't happen fast enough unless governments regulate fossil fuels out of the way," said Kaisa Kosonen, the head of Greenpeace's COP28 delegation.

Jaber also announced a pledge by oil and gas companies representing 40 percent of global production, including his UAE firm ADNOC and Saudi giant Aramco, to decarbonise their operations by 2050.

But the pledges do not include emissions when the fuels are used by their customers, and were criticised for repackaging previous, nonbinding commitments.

"This charter is proof that voluntary commitments from the oil and gas industry will never foster the level of ambition necessary to tackle the climate crisis," said Melanie Robinson of the World Resources Institute, a nonprofit research body.

Least prepared as spectre

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awareness programmes alongside long-term preparedness initiatives are needed."

According to Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, who teaches civil engineering at the Buet, an earthquake of over magnitude 7.0 happened in 1869. The tremor is known as the Cachar earthquake.

In this region, there is a history of major earthquakes, and it has been over 150 years since the Cachar earthquake. That's why a devastating quake may not be too far away, he says.

According to him, yesterday's quake could have been disastrous if it struck at a deeper location. Earthquake-resistant buildings are an immediate need of the country.

Contacted, Enamur Rahman, state minister for Disaster Management and Relief, said Bangladesh is going to be an earthquake resilient country.

The US Environmental Protection Agency announced earlier that it would tighten curbs on methane emissions from its oil and gas industry.

The new standards would phase in the elimination of routine flaring of natural gas produced by oil wells, and require comprehensive monitoring of methane leaks from wells and compression stations.

The announcement came ahead of an expected methane summit led by the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters -- the United States and China -- along with the United Arab Emirates at COP28.

China agreed for the first time to include all greenhouse gases in its next national climate pledge for 2035 in an agreement with the United States last month.

Methane is responsible for about one-third of the warming from greenhouse gases occurring today, second only to CO2.

Field-level officials 'discontent' with

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would be a wholesale transfer.

"We heard the election commissioners saying on several occasions that no major reshuffle of officials would take place during the election period. So, I am stunned by the decision of transferring all UNOs and OCs," said an UNO from Sylhet division.

A couple of weeks ago, two election commissioners said that there would be no major reshuffle of the field-level administration and police officials.

But the EC on Thursday asked for the transfer of all UNO and OCs.

The commission asked the government for proposals in the first phase for the transfers of those UNOs serving at their stations for over a year and for those OCs serving at their stations for over six months. The government was asked to submit the proposals by December 5.

Of the total 495 UNOs across the country, 207 have already spent at least one year at their current stations, officials said.

Usually, the offices of the divisional commissioners deal with the transfer of the UNOs. These offices have informed the public administration ministry about the current status of the UNOs and they were waiting for the ministry's decision in this regard, at least four divisional commissioners told this newspaper.

"The UNOs have already visited the polling centres. They have an idea about their respective upazilas. But after their transfers, they will need to

rearrange their plans within a short time," said an UNO from Rajshahi division.

Bangladesh Administrative Association Secretary General SM Alam said the EC can take any decision regarding the elections. He said the association cannot make any comment on the matter.

A superintendent of police from Barishal division said, "There is certainly some dissatisfaction among the OCs over the Election Commission's decision."

An OC of a police station in the capital said, "There is no point in making such a decision. Causing hassles for so many officials would not be right."

He said a new OC requires at least a month to have an idea about the local situation and streets.

An EC official said the commission decided to transfer the UNOs and OCs as many MPs, who are running again, have developed good relations with those field-level officials who have been at their stations for a long time.

The EC has asked the government for the transfer of the UNOs and OCs based on information received by the election commissioners during their recent visits outside Dhaka, Ashok Kumar Debnath, additional secretary at the commission secretariat, told reporters at the EC office yesterday.

He, however, refused to give details on the information.

Enquired whether the EC or the

government decided to transfer the officials, Ashok said, "The Election Commission has asked for it."

2 DCs TRANSFERRED The public administration ministry yesterday transferred two deputy commissioners.

Sunamganj DC Didar-E-Alam Mohammed Maksud has been transferred to Mymensingh. Deputy Secretary of the Parliament Secretariat Md Rashed Iqbal Chowdhury has been made the DC of Sunamganj.

Mymensingh DC Mostafizur Rahman has been made the deputy secretary of the Health Services Division.

PM pushing

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Rizvi slammed the Election Commission's announcement of the polls schedule, saying, "The farmers and workers of Bangladesh, along with people of various professions, are starving today."

He alleged the EC and PM have plans to waste Tk 2,000 crore of public money "just for the sake of a one-sided election event."

He went on to say, "18 crore people will prevent the upcoming polls through movement."

Rizvi further alleged that Awami League leaders and activists were being trained to attack BNP men.

He claimed at least 225 party leaders and activists were detained, and eight cases were filed against 915 named and many unnamed party activists in 24 hours till Friday evening.

3 BUSES TORCHED

Unidentified miscreants set fire to three buses in the capital's Gabtoli, Agargaon, and Sayedabad areas last night, on the eve of BNP's 48-hour blockade.

In Gabtoli, a bus was torched in front of the bus terminal around 11:00pm. In Agargaon, a Bhuiyan Paribahan bus was set afire around 11:00pm near the Passport Office area. Meanwhile, another bus was set ablaze near Sayedabad Bus Terminal around 11:00pm.



With national polls right around the corner, businesses renting out these loudspeakers are now on high demand. Besides, these sound carriers are the heartbeat of winter weddings and picnics. The photo was taken from the port city's Ice Factory area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Is dengue situation really improving?

Last 7 days see single-digit deaths, experts say it's too early to tell

DIPAN NANDY

The country recorded one dengue-related death in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. The lone death was recorded in Dhaka, according to DGHS data.

The last time the country recorded only one death was 134 days ago, on July 21.

To put things into perspective, the last time the country saw no dengue related death was on June 29.

In the last one week, from November 26 to December 2, the country saw 34 dengue related deaths. Not a single time during this timeframe did the fatalities cross double-digit.

This is an improved scenario if compared to the data with the first week of November, when the country recorded 71 deaths.

Fatalities crossed double-digit four times out of the first seven days of November, while it shifted between 7

and 8 on the other three days.

Contacted, public health expert Mushtaq Hossain, said, "It is too early to comment [on whether the situation is improving]. If we see less or no deaths for at least one week, then we can answer this question."

Public health expert Dr Lenin Chowdhury said, "There were no dengue related deaths last year in December. So, one death on December 2 is nothing to be happy about."

"Besides, the data was derived based on lists provided by hospitals on Friday. Many of these facilities operate on limited manpower on Friday. So this cannot be taken as an example."

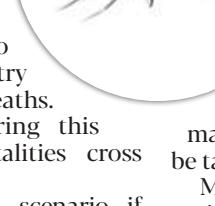
Meanwhile, at least 605 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24-hour period.

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