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## JP unrelenting in its demand for free ride

### Urges AL to pave way for its candidates' win in 30-35 seats

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party is pressing the Awami League to withdraw its nominated and "independent" candidates from over 30 constituencies so that the JP contenders do not have to face tough battles.

The main opposition in parliament made the demand during a meeting with an AL delegation on Saturday.

AL leaders Jahangir Kabir Nanok, Mahbulul Alam Hanif, and Mirza Azam, and JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnu and Senior Co-chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud were present at the meeting.

After the meeting, the JP delegation held a meeting with the party's co-chairmen and informed them about the development on the seat-sharing issue with the AL.

"In the meeting, we have told the Awami League that the party will have to ensure that no AL candidates will contest in at least 30 to 35 seats," said a JP co-chairman yesterday.

"Besides, we also demanded that no independent candidates of the Awami League run there," he said, wishing anonymity.

During the meeting, AL delegates agreed with the JP's demand for withdrawing AL nominees, said another JP co-chairman, seeking anonymity.

JP leaders think it would be difficult to win polls against the "AL independents".

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A Palestinian child wounded in Israeli strikes is rushed into Nasser hospital in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Bangladesh needs urgent climate funds

### PM says in opinion piece for Thomson Reuters Foundation

UNB, Dhaka

As the climate crisis mirrors the unpredictable and fast-flowing waters of the Padma River, the response to the emergency remains sluggish, particularly in the realms of mitigation, finance, and adaptation.

This observation comes from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as expressed in an opinion piece for Context, a Thomson Reuters Foundation media platform.

The prime minister emphasises the importance of making significant progress in these areas at COP28. Key objectives include maintaining the 1.5C warming limit, ensuring the Global Stocktake results in heightened ambition, and the urgent mobilisation of finance, especially for vulnerable countries like Bangladesh, she writes.

Bangladesh, while contributing only



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## BUSINESS

### A \$12b question hangs over export data mismatch

Bangladesh is no stranger to data mismatches, but a \$12 billion gap between export shipments and actual receipts from abroad points to potential capital flight just before the January 7 election.

In 2022-23, the mismatch between the actual realisation reported by Bangladesh Bank and the Export Promotion Bureau's (EPB) shipment figure was \$12.08 billion, the highest in at least eight years.

EPB data showed that goods and services exports stood at \$63.05 billion in FY23 whereas the central bank reported that Bangladesh received \$50.97 billion in the same year.

Traditionally, the gap between the EPB and BB figures hovers around \$4-5 billion.

STORY ON B1

## Hunger causing social breakdown

### Say aid agencies as fears of exodus into Egypt grow; fighting between Israel, Hamas intensifies

AGENCIES

Fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified across Gaza yesterday, and Palestinians and international relief agencies said public order was disintegrating as hunger spread, fuelling fears of a mass exodus to Egypt.

The narrow coastal strip has been under a full Israeli blockade since the start of the conflict more than two months ago and the border with Egypt is the only other way out.

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes and residents say it is impossible to find refuge, or increasingly food, in the densely populated enclave, with at least 18,205 people already killed and 49,645 injured.

Gazans said people forced to flee repeatedly were dying of hunger and cold as well as bombardment, describing desperate attacks on aid trucks and sky high prices.

"Had any of us expected that our people may die of hunger, had it crossed anyone's mind before?" said Rola Ghanim, among many expressing bewilderment on social media.

Aid trucks risked being stopped by desperate residents if they even slowed down at an intersection, Carl Skau, said deputy executive director of the UN World Food Programme.

"Half of the population are starving, nine out of 10 are not eating every day," he told Reuters on Saturday.

One Palestinian told Reuters he had not

eaten for three days and had to beg for bread for his children.

Yesterday, Hamas fighters and some residents said fighters were preventing Israeli tanks moving further west through the city and there were also fierce clashes in parts of northern Gaza, where Israel had said its tasks were largely complete.

☛ Gaza death toll rises to 18,205, with 49,645 injured

☛ Hamas armed wing says it hit Israeli tanks, forces in Khan Younis

☛ UNGA likely to vote today on draft resolution demanding ceasefire

Israelis fled to shelters after new warnings of rocket fire into from Gaza, including in Tel Aviv. The armed wing of Hamas said it was bombarding the city in response to "the Zionist massacres against civilians".

In the northern Gazan city of Jabalia, Palestinians ran to escape smoke bombs fired near tents and other homes and Hamas said they were clashing with Israeli troops.

Philippe Lazzarini, the commissioner

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## EC plans to deploy armed forces from December 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is planning to deploy the armed forces for 13 days from December 29 to January 10, said sources.

The 12th national election is scheduled to be held on January 7.

The armed forces will work as striking forces and act as per instruction of the Election Commission.

However, the sources said all decisions regarding the deployment will be finalised if President Mohammed Shahabuddin approves the proposal.

"Deployment of armed forces members from December 29 to January 10 was in the discussion [at today's meeting with EC]," Armed Forces Division Principal Staff Officer Lt Gen Waker-Uz Zaman told reporters after the meeting at the EC office.

"The Election Commission will request the president for deployment. The armed forces will be deployed in the election if the president

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## Ancient prison bakery found in ruins of Pompeii

AFP, Rome



Archaeologists excavating the ancient Roman city of Pompeii have uncovered a "prison bakery" where slaves and blindfolded donkeys were kept locked up underground to grind grain for bread, officials said this week.

Underneath a house in the ruins they found "a cramped room with no view of the outside world and with small windows high in the wall, with iron bars, to let the light in", the Archaeological Park of Pompeii announced.

Archaeologists deduced they had found a "prison bakery", the Unesco World Heritage Site near Naples, southern Italy, said on its website.

They also discovered "indentations" in the floor "to coordinate the movement of the animals, forced to walk around for hours, blindfolded".

The house, on the 44-hectare site that is currently under excavation, was divided into a residential area "decorated with exquisite Fourth Style frescoes" and a "productive quarter", the bakery.

Three skeletons were discovered in one room of the bakery, showing that the house was inhabited. The bakery, where slaves and animals were forced to perform the backbreaking task of turning the millstones, had no doors or communication with the outside world.

"It is, in other words, a space in which we have to imagine the presence of people of servile status whose freedom of movement the owner felt the need to restrict," wrote Pompeii director Gabriel Zuchtreigel in a scholarly article.

## 'BNP activists in prisons at risk of death'

### Alleges Rizvi; 36-hr blockade begins; Rajshahi BNP leader dies in jail custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has alleged that its leaders and activists behind bars are at risk of death due to a lack of medical treatment.

"Party leaders and activists are being treated inhumanely in prisons. Prisoners are being killed without being provided treatment," BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said at a virtual press briefing yesterday afternoon.

The opposition party is enforcing a 36-hour nationwide blockade of roads, rails, and waterways from 6:00am today.

This is the 11th round of blockade being imposed by the BNP and its allies since October 30 demanding resignation of the government and general election under a neutral non-party administration.

Terming the prisons "torture cells for political prisoners", Rizvi yesterday said, "Each of the 68 prisons in the country is a

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With winter setting in, people yesterday thronged the roadside shops in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar to get their hands on warm clothes at cheaper prices. According to the Met office, night temperatures will start dropping from tonight, and may dip further by one to three degrees Celsius tomorrow.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Mercury likely to dip further tomorrow

### Mild cold wave may sweep some parts of the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mercury dropped across the country yesterday and a mild cold wave may hit some parts of the country tomorrow.

"The temperature across the country may fall one to three degrees Celsius tomorrow [today] and chilly weather will continue until December 18 as temperature will drop further," said Md Abul Kalam Mallik, meteorologist at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The temperature in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, and Khulna divisions and parts of Dhaka division will start to go down from today, and some places in the divisions will experience a mild cold wave tomorrow, he said.

Though cold waves did not sweep over the country yesterday, many parts of the country witnessed a chilly weather due to some reasons mainly because of less gap between the highest and lowest temperatures, said Mallik.

"Dhaka had the highest 25 degrees Celsius and lowest 16.6 degrees Celsius

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