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JP to introduce provincial govts if voted to power

Divisions to be turned into provinces, says the party in its 24-point manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party will introduce provincial governments if it comes to power, JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnu said yesterday.

He said this while unveiling the party's 24-point manifesto, titled "Change for Peace, Jatiya Party for Change", for the 12th parliamentary election slated for January 7, at a press conference at the party chief's Banani office.

According to the manifesto, the party will split the existing divisions into eight provinces, and the names will be changed to "Uttar Banga" (Rangpur), "Barendra" (Rajshahi), "Jahangirnagar" (Dhaka), "Jalalabad" (Sylhet), "Jahanabad" (Khulna), "Chandra Dip" (Barishal), "Moynamoti" (Cumilla) and "Chattala" (Chattogram).

The party also announced that the central government would be known as the federal government.

Most of the promises incorporated in the manifesto were introduced before the 2018 election, while some new ones were added.

Of the newly incorporated promises, JP said it would not form any law against the Quran and Sunnah.

"If the party goes to power, it will form an Islamic Commission, with the Islamic scholars, which will advise the government."

A new paragraph on migrant workers has been added to the manifesto, which said the party will focus on language education to enhance the skills of migrant workers and will introduce a "safe environment" for female migrants.

JP also said it wants to increase residential facilities for female professionals and wants to include trans people into the mainstream.

Besides, the party wants to increase employment, beginning with listing down unemployed persons from

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CROWN OF ASH

A male Ashy-crowned sparrow lark about to fly off with some dried grass to build a nest for his family on an open land in Sylhet's Moulvibazar. A petite marvel in the realm of birds, the Ashy-crowned sparrow lark sports a beautiful full-bodied beak. As a true wanderer, it ventures into open lands and is found in such places across South Asia. It spends most of its time on the ground, where it feeds, nests and roosts. When startled or disturbed, the bird will take a crouching position before flying off, which is why in some Hindi dialects, it is referred as "dabhak churi" – meaning crouching sparrow.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN



SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

AL coordinated, BNP less so

FB users join pages, groups without knowing affiliation: TGI report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Awami League uses a highly-coordinated network of social media handles – profiles, groups and pages – to disseminate information on Facebook, but over 80 percent of those do not declare their political affiliation.

Only 19 percent of the pages, verified profiles, or groups that shared the Awami League's top links had "Awami League" in their name.

For the BNP's highly shared links, the figure was 64 percent.

Tech Global Institute (TGI) yesterday released a report, titled "How Facebook Has Become a Political Battleground in Bangladesh", unveiling these findings.

TGI is a policy lab with a mission to reduce equity and accountability gaps between technology platforms and the Global South. It works at the intersection of private technology companies, civil society and government.

Calling this network "highly sophisticated", TGI in its report said, "It appears that Awami League's content is more frequently shared on [Facebook] groups or pages with names that reflect cultural or political affiliations other than the party's own name."

The report analysed nearly half a million posts shared across 14.4 million followers, resulting in 97.5 million interactions. It also investigated the

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SPORT

Tigers look to avoid whitewash

Bangladesh will take on New Zealand in the final ODI of the three-match series at McLean Park in Napier tomorrow at 4:00 am (Bangladesh time), hoping to evade a whitewash. The Tigers have lost the first two ODIs which extended their winless run in the format in the country to 18 games.

STORY ON PAGE 11



Palestinian women cry beside a collapsed building where one of their relatives is believed to be trapped in debris following Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli troops 'summarily killed' Palestinians

Scores of targets in Gaza bombed amid truce talks

AFP, Jerusalem

The United Nations human rights office said it had received reports that Israeli troops "summarily killed" at least 11 unarmed Palestinians in a possible war crime in Gaza.

The OHCHR office in the West Bank city of Ramallah said the killings were alleged to have been carried out in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City this week.

It said on Wednesday it had received "disturbing information alleging that Israeli Defence Forces (the Israeli army) summarily killed at least 11 unarmed Palestinian men".

The incident "raises alarm about the possible commission of a war crime", it said, adding the men were killed in front of their family members.

The report said troops also ordered women and children into a room "and either shot at them or threw a grenade into the room, reportedly seriously injuring some of them, including an infant and a child".

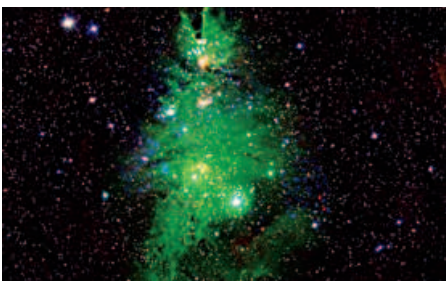
An Israeli official rejected the claims as "nothing but blood libel". The Israeli army did not immediately comment.

Israeli troops have previously been accused of deliberately targeting and killing civilians, according to the office.

Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed at least 20,000 people, most

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Nasa images reveal 'Christmas Tree Cluster' in space



CNN ONLINE

New images captured by two of Nasa's space telescopes showcase how the light from young stars can deck the cosmos with holiday cheer.

Groupings of stars resembling a Christmas tree aglow with lights and a scintillating snow globe shine in new observations taken by the Chandra X-ray Observatory and the Hubble Space Telescope, respectively.

NGC 2264, which is about 2,500 light-years from Earth, is also called the "Christmas Tree Cluster," where a group of young stars surrounded by the gaseous cloud of a nebula call to mind a cosmic evergreen decorated with twinkling lights.

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