

NATIONAL POLLS  
Armed forces  
to be on  
ground duty  
from Jan 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed forces will be deployed on the ground for eight days from January 3 to January 10 to perform election duties.

A letter from the Armed Forces Division in this regard reached the Election Commission yesterday.

The 12th national polls will be held on January 7.

Earlier, the home ministry circular issued on December 21 said armed forces personnel will carry out duties for 13 days from December 29 to January 10.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath said earlier it was decided that the Armed Forces Division will be deployed from December 29 including the time of their travel from the cantonment to the ground.

The letter mentioned the deployment date on the ground deducting the time of the travel time.



These two women, along with numerous others, gathered near Abahani field in Dhanmondi around 8:00am yesterday for a TCB truck. However, the truck rarely arrives on time, sometimes coming as late as 2:00pm. With the cost of living spiraling, many have no choice but to wait for hours in hopes of purchasing their daily necessities at subsidised rates.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Internet won't  
be slowed on  
polls day: EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will not instruct anyone to slow down the internet speed during the upcoming general polls slated for January 7.

"Why will the internet speed be slowed down?" said Election Commission additional secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath in response to journalists' questions.

The previous EC faced huge criticism after instructing relevant authorities to slow down mobile internet by shutting 3G and 4G services on polls election day in December 2018.

According to BTRC, there are around 13 crore internet subscribers. Of which, around 9 crores are using 4G internet.

PRAYER  
TIMING  
DECEMBER 27

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:27	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:30	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PRE-POLLS VIOLENCE  
*Tension rises in  
the north*

KONGKON KARMAKER

The pre-polls environment is heating up in the northern districts of the country, with threats and sporadic violence taking place between Awami League candidates and their independent counterparts.

Tension seems to be rising in Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Naogaon, Gaibandha, and Rangpur districts, with candidates issuing threats, attacking their opponents' supporters, and vandalising their campaign offices ahead of the upcoming January 7 national election.

In Panchagarh, the situation has escalated over the last week, following the removal of Anwar Sadat Samrat from his post as general secretary of Panchagarh district AL.

Nurul Islam Sujon, railway minister and Panchagarh district AL's president, removed Samrat from his position on December 20. Samrat, in return, charged Sujon of making such decisions for the party while being absent from the scene for majority of the last five

years.

Samrat, an independent candidate for Panchagarh-1, is contesting against AL candidate Nuruzzaman Bhuiyan, while Sujon is running from Panchagarh-2 with an AL ticket.

Nuruzzaman Nuru, Amorkhana

of people who would not cast votes in the polls.

In Lalmonirhat-1, incumbent lawmaker and AL candidate Motahar Hossain's personal assistant and Goddimari UP chairman Abu Bakkar Shyamal declared that only the supporters



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UP chairman and supporter of Panchagarh-1 AL candidate, allegedly issued threats against Samrat and his supporters on December 24.

Meanwhile, Sujon was show-caused by the election committee following his speech during a public rally on December 23, where he said he would make lists

of "boat" (AL's electoral symbol) would be allowed to conduct electioneering.

Election campaigns of Aatur Rahman, AL independent in that constituency, faced attacks following the declaration of Shyamal.

During a meeting at Chamtahat

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'Allegations  
not true'

Says DB Wari division  
about 'torture' of  
trader in custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Wari Division of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday said the allegations against some of its officers of torturing and forcing a man to write a cheque are untrue.

On December 10, Jasim Uddin, 51, a trader from Dhaka's Ashkona, filed complaints with the home ministry and DMP Headquarters against four members of the DB Wari team, claiming that they had tortured him in custody and forced him to write a cheque for Tk 3.60 crore.

In a statement yesterday, the Wari DB said Jasim is a fraudster.

A jeweler named, Manas Das, filed a case with Jatrabari Police Station on October 13, accusing Jasim of pretending to be a gold trader and taking Tk 4.10 crore with false promises of supplying him with gold.

Later, both parties reached a negotiation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

36 BNP, Jamaat  
men jailed over  
political violence

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Another 36 leaders and activists of BNP-Jamaat and their front organisations were sentenced to different jail terms yesterday, in two cases filed in 2011 and 2018 over political violence in Dhaka.

With this, at least 1,313 BNP-Jamaat activists have been jailed since November 7 this year in 75 cases lodged between November 2010 and December 2018 on charges of illegal gathering on the streets,

**With this, at least 1,313 BNP-Jamaat activists have been jailed since November 7 this year in 75 cases lodged between November 2010 and December 2018.**

rioting, damaging properties, arson attacks on vehicles, vandalism, and assaulting police and obstructing them from discharging duties.

In a case filed with Ramna Model Police Station in August 2018, 16 BNP members were sentenced to 27 months' imprisonment each by a Dhaka court yesterday.

No convicts were present in the courtroom when Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mosharraf Hossain delivered the verdict.

During the trial, five prosecution witnesses testified.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

EC to brief int'l  
observers, media  
on January 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will brief the international observers and media on January 6, the day before the upcoming national polls.

The briefing will take place to inform them about the election process, along with their dos and don'ts while monitoring the election.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath yesterday said the briefing will take place at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital.

So far, a total of 183 international observers and 81 foreign journalists have expressed interest in monitoring and covering the national election, said EC sources.

Information the international observers was sent to the home and foreign ministries for vetting, said EC officials.

EC sources said they invited 114 members and chiefs of election commissions from 34 countries and heads of four associations -- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia, and the Association of World Election Bodies.

The European Union, Commonwealth, and US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), as

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Storm in a tea cup  
Local stalls abuzz amid polls campaign in Barishal-6

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Winter is here, so is the national election.

As the chilly winds sweep across Barishal, they bring not

popular places of "adda" have become the epicentre of political discourse.

Some predict a participatory election, while dissenting voices argue otherwise.

**At least 10 tea stalls adjacent to Shahid Khan Bridge are remaining open from afternoon till late at night.**

only the familiar nip in the air but also the fervour of the polls.

So, business has picked up at the local tea stalls as these

With steam rising from cups of hot tea, supporters of competing candidates passionately make their cases, while rebuttals coming

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## We Deeply Mourn

The passing of  
**Mr. Fazlur Rahman**  
(1947-2023)

country's prominent industrialist  
and Chairman & Managing Director  
of City Group