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## BNP's demand for polls irks some people

### Says Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of people become unhappy whenever the BNP raises the issue of the upcoming national election, party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told a rally in Panchagarh yesterday.



"We want to reclaim our voting rights. I want to cast my vote and give it to whoever I please. But when we talk about this, some people become dissatisfied and question why we keep bringing up the issue of voting," Fakhru said this while addressing the gathering at Sakoa High School ground.

"Yes, we demand voting rights because if we can cast our votes, we will be able to elect the right people for ourselves. Those representatives will work for our welfare."

Fakhru said the concept of reforms is not well understood by many in the country.

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Occupying the street and footpath from Banglamotor to Moghbazar intersection, cars are accessorised and repaired by motor parts shops and garages. It causes congestion on one of the busiest streets in the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 30,000 foreigners staying here with expired visas

Most of them from India, China, say intelligence, immigration officials

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

At least 30,000 foreign nationals, mostly from India and China, are currently residing in Bangladesh with expired visas and have yet to apply for extensions or renewals of their documents.

The matter came to light after speaking to sources at an intelligence agency and the visa wing of the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP).

On December 8, the Ministry of Home Affairs advised foreign nationals, who are living in Bangladesh without valid visas, to promptly take necessary action as per existing regulation, warning that the failure to do so would result in legal repercussions.

Over the past month, 15,000 applications have been filed by foreigners seeking visa extensions or renewals.

According to available data, Indians make up the largest group of foreigners in the country with expired visas.

As of December 13, around 45,000 Indians were living in Bangladesh, with most of them here in professional capacity and the rest being students.

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## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

### Man found near Indian border

Family claims he was taken by Rab 16 months ago; victim tells cops he was pushed into India, served 7 months there

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 20-year-old man from Dhaka's Dhamrai, who had allegedly been forcibly disappeared since August 29, 2023, showed up yesterday at a police station close to the border between Bangladesh and India in Chapainawabganj.



Rahmatullah

Rahmatullah was picked up from his home by men in plainclothes. Those who picked him up used a vehicle that had "Rab-4" written on it, the family told a press conference in February this year.

Yesterday afternoon, Rahmatullah appeared at Gomastapur Police Station in Chapainawabganj and told the police personnel there that he had been pushed across the border into India after he had been forcibly disappeared for nine months.

Superintendent of Chapainawabganj Police Md Rezaul Karim said that Rahmatullah told police that he served seven months in an Indian prison for illegal entry into that country. Prior to that, he was moved around different locations during his nine months of detention in Bangladesh.

Nine months after he was taken, Rahmatullah was dropped off at the Jashore border one night by two men on a motorbike and was told to walk towards India, the SP said quoting him.

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## Summit Group accused of Tk 1,112cr tax evasion

Company denies any wrongdoing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue has alleged that two entities under Summit Group failed to deduct taxes at source on dividend payments, resulting in about Tk 1,112 crore in unpaid taxes.

Summit Corporation Limited, one of the country's largest conglomerates, is accused of not deducting the mandatory 15 percent tax at source when it paid dividends to Summit Power International, a Singapore-based company and its parent entity.

Additionally, Summit Power Limited allegedly failed to withhold the required tax on dividends paid to Summit Corporation Limited, which holds a majority stake in the company.

Summit Group has refuted the allegations, asserting its commitment to legal compliance.

The Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) of the NBR conducted a probe into the tax practices of Summit Group as part of a broader examination of industrial giants, including Bashundhara Group, Beximco, Nassa Group, Orion Group

and S Alam Group, and Third Wave Technologies (Nagad).

The investigations were launched following the installation of an interim government in August.

"This is one of the largest tax deduction at source (TDS) cases we've encountered," said a senior CIC official. The probe, which spanned over six weeks, involved an extensive review of shareholdings, dividend declarations, and payment records of Summit Power Limited.

Summit Power, with a paid-up capital of Tk 1,067 crore, has a diverse shareholder base, including Summit Corporation (63.19 percent), Euro Hub Investments Limited (3.65 percent), institutional investors (18.52 percent), and public investors (14.64 percent).

Under Section 117 of the Income Tax Act, companies registered in Bangladesh are required to deduct taxes at source on dividend payments. However, investigators found that Summit Power failed to comply with this obligation for dividends paid to Summit Corporation.

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## Dense fog hampers road, river transport

One killed, at least 24 injured in accidents

STAR REPORT

Poor visibility caused by dense fog led to two accidents yesterday – a 10-car pileup in Munshiganj and a collision between two ferries in Chandpur – leaving one dead and two dozens injured.

In Munshiganj, a man was killed and around 15 others were injured in a series of crashes involving multiple vehicles on the Dhaka-Mawa highway early in the morning.

The deceased was identified as Forhad, 40, driver of a private car. He was a resident of Daiyar village in Faridpur's Bhanga upazila, said police.

The accident took place in Shologhar area under Sreenagar upazila around 6:00am, said Abdul Quader Jilani, officer-in-charge (OC) of Hasara Highway Police Station.

The chain of crashes began when a lorry struck a private car from behind. Subsequently, a bus, a microbus, and several other vehicles also hit the private

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## CONFLICT IN RAKHINE

### Dhaka cannot engage with non-state actors

Says Touhid

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has called on Myanmar to address the ongoing crisis in the Rakhine state and its borders, stressing that it cannot engage in negotiations with non-state actors, such as the Arakan Army.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain conveyed this message to Myanmar during an informal consultation held on Thursday in Thailand.

During the meeting, Touhid also emphasised that peace and stability in the region would remain elusive without a resolution to the Rohingya crisis.

Senior representatives from Bangladesh, Myanmar, India, China, Laos, and other nations attended the consultation focused on Myanmar.

"I informed Myanmar that the border is no longer under your control. Non-state actors like the Arakan Army are controlling it. As a state, we cannot engage with them. Myanmar must find a way to resolve the issues related to the border and Rakhine," Touhid yesterday told reporters in the capital, sharing details of his discussions at the consultation.

In reply, Myanmar said they are trying to regain control of the border.

Touhid said that the meeting focused on a few key issues regarding Myanmar, including the border, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking, and its political future.



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## Israeli strikes kill 28 in Gaza Strip

### Four children among dead; military orders evacuation of Kamal Adwan Hospital

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 28 Palestinians, eight of them at a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City, medics said, as the Israeli military ordered the evacuation of Kamal Adwan Hospital in the north.

Palestinian medics said eight people, including four children, were killed in the Musa Bin Nusayr School that sheltered displaced families in Gaza City.

The Israeli military said in a statement the strike targeted Hamas members operating from a command centre embedded inside the school. It said Hamas fighters used the place to plan and execute attacks against Israeli forces.

Also in Gaza City, medics said four Palestinians were killed when an airstrike hit a car. At least five other Palestinians were killed in two separate airstrikes in Rafah and Khan Younis south of the enclave.

Civil agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said in a statement that at least 13 people were killed in an air strike on a house in central Gaza's Deir el-Balah.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, where the army has operated since October, Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, said the army ordered staff to evacuate the hospital and move patients and injured people toward another hospital in the area.



A youth searches for survivors at the site of an Israeli strike that targeted a house in the Deir el-Balah area in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## EVMs won't be used in future polls

Says chief of electoral reform commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

No election will be held using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Badiul Alam Majumdar, chief of the Electoral Reform Commission, said yesterday.



After a meeting with different stakeholders at the Chattogram Deputy Commissioner's office, he said, "We all know what happened before. Everybody has knowledge about that. If there is any new information, we have asked for it to be submitted."

"The electoral system was sent into exile. Now everyone is determined to ensure that crimes like killings and crimes against humanity are not repeated. We have sat with political parties and they also emphasised on holding a free and fair election by presenting several recommendations," he added.

Badiul said their proposals for correcting the errors in the voter list would

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