

Stop making excuses, don't delay election
Says Salahuddin, urges govt to take criticism gracefully



STAFF CORRESPONDENT
BNP standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed has said while a new political party is always welcome, it should be formed independently of government support. "You'll be an advisor and do politics from within the government. And you'll form a party and waste time for the sake of it and keep making excuses until you are ready for elections - people understand what you are doing," he said yesterday while addressing



IT'S A NEW DAY, A NEW DAWN... As soon as the sun rises, Matur Rahman gets busy collecting date palm sap. After collecting the juice, he boils it down to produce jaggery, a popular winter delicacy, which he sells for Tk 350-400 per kg to buyers from all around Khulna city. The photo was taken in the Daulatpur area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The year of BNP's possible second coming

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It is often said that patience pays off. For BNP, 2024 is the year its 17 years of perseverance started showing signs of bearing fruit.

However, 2024 started bleakly, with the Awami League helping itself to a fourth consecutive term in an election shunned by the BNP.

The BNP had banked that the Western nations would reject the results given the election was not free, fair and participatory and follow through with punitive measures. Ultimately, the Western world came around, stretching the BNP's bid to come to power by perhaps another five years.

But by the middle of the year, with soaring inflation, a fraught economy and routine reports of AL men amassing vast amounts of wealth illegally, the public sentiment against the Sheikh Hasina-led government began to sour and the BNP sensed an opening to jumpstart its activities.

Before the BNP could get back on the field to mobilise the aggrieved masses came the university students' protests centring on quota reform in government jobs.

The protests snowballed into a mass uprising and ultimately toppled the Hasina regime on August 5 - and turned the tide for the BNP. The party said at least 422 of its activists lost lives in the 36 days.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Get ready to bring reforms to education system

Jamaat ameer tells Chhatra Shibir; Sarjis says Shibir directly backed July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday urged Islami Chhatra Shibir to prepare for a "new battle" for reforming the country's education system.

He described the initiative as crucial to addressing the "substandard and purposeless education system" in Bangladesh.

"Education, being the nation's backbone, has been targeted the most. The current system lacks research, excellence, morality, and alignment with global standards. Everything has been destroyed."

He made the remarks as the chief guest at a members' council organised by Chhatra Shibir at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

The event was inaugurated by Md Musleh Uddin, father of Ali Raihan, organising secretary of Rajshahi Metropolitan Islami Chhatra Shibir,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Bangladesh thriving in meat, fish production

PINAKI ROY and SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh is now in a comfortable position in fish and meat production, bringing comfort to the government in ensuring food security.

For instance, the country has moved up from third to second place globally in freshwater fish production, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024 report.

Bangladesh produced 1.32 million tonnes (13.22 lakh tonnes) of freshwater fish, accounting for 11.7 percent of global production, it said.

The growth came particularly in the last two years thanks to the expanded production of species such as hilsa, pangas, boal and air.

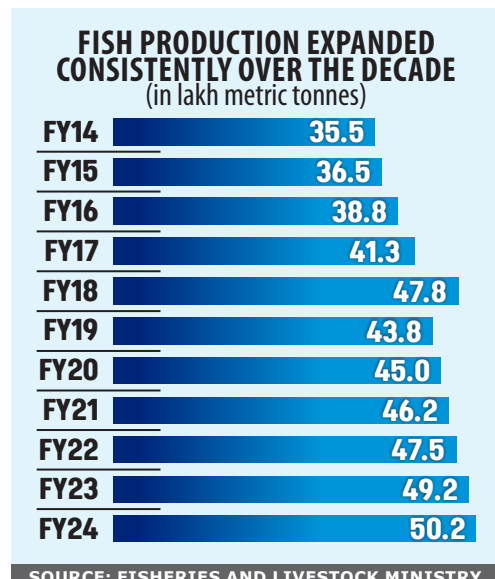
Bangladesh also leads 11 countries in hilsa production, thanks to government measures.

In the 2002-03 season, hilsa production slumped to 1.99 lakh tonnes, creating a nationwide crisis of the fish. This prompted the government to take on a project to conserve jatka fish in 2004.

In the 2022-23 season, hilsa production reached 5.71 lakh metric tonnes, which is about 12 percent of Bangladesh's total fish production.

Globally, the country ranks 8th in Crustacean (crab and shrimp) production, 14th in coastal and marine fish production and fourth in Tilapia production, according to FAO data.

The government aims to produce 65 lakh tonnes of fish by 2030 and 85 lakh tonnes



by 2041.

In the 2023-24 season, fish production was 50.2 lakh tonnes.

The daily average fish intake per capita has increased to 67.8 gm, exceeding the daily per capita demand of 60 gm.

Meanwhile, livestock production has also risen by 24 percent in the last decade to 4.53 crore animals, as per data from the Department of Livestock Services.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

'MARCH FOR UNITY' 11 injured as students and locals clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least 11 people, including eight students, were injured in a clash between students and locals over overtaking on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Bagerhat's Mollahat upazila yesterday morning.

The students from Khulna were on their way to Dhaka to participate in the "March for Unity" programme. They were travelling on a bus in a convoy of 25.

The incident, which occurred near the Madrasa Ghat area around 11:30am, disrupted traffic on the highway for about two hours.

Witnesses said the bus carrying the students attempted to overtake another one. When the bus ahead refused to leave space, the students became angry.

At one point, both buses pulled over in the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Uncertainty over Chinmoy's legal representation

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

With the bail hearing in a sedition case set for January 2, uncertainty looms over the legal representation of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari.

The complications arose after a lawyer named Saiful Islam Alif was killed amid clashes between Chinmoy's supporters and police in the court area when Chinmoy was denied bail on November 26.

Saiful's father later filed a murder case, while his brother started a case on charges related to explosives, attacks on justice-seekers and vandalism. Police also filed three cases and arrested dozens of people over the deadly violence.

Many of the nearly 60 counsels who had argued for Chinmoy during the hearing on November 26 have been made accused in the case filed by Saiful's brother.

The Daily Star contacted six of these lawyers and another who stood for Chinmoy.

They said that although there is no direct threat, they would not represent Chinmoy in court on January 2 since they came under attack on social media.

Chattogram District Bar Association said it asked its members not to defend the accused in the Saiful murder case, but there was no bar on them to represent the accused in any other case.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PHOTO: BCB

Pace sensation Nahid Rana celebrates a wicket during Rangpur Riders' 34-run win over Sylhet Strikers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Rana starred with four wickets for 27 runs, removing Sylhet's key batters to restrict them to 121 for nine after Rangpur posted 155 for six.

Electrical spark triggered fire at Secretariat

Finds probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fire at a building of the Secretariat last week originated from an electrical spark, according to the preliminary findings of the government committee formed to investigate the incident.

These findings were revealed during a press conference at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

Earlier, the committee submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The committee members also disclosed that no evidence of use of explosives was found during primary investigation. They also said the structural damage caused by the fire is repairable.

Senior Secretary Nasimul Ghani of the home ministry, who is leading the probe, said the investigation involved multiple teams, including specialists from Buet, Fire Service and Civil Defence,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

আমরা শোকাহত

আলহাজ্ব আবু নাসের মোহাম্মদ ইয়াহিয়া

আমরা অত্যন্ত দুঃখের সঙ্গে জানাচ্ছি যে, আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর সাবেক ভাইস চেয়ারম্যান, পূর্বাচল স্টিল মিলস লিঃ এর চেয়ারম্যান ও ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, পূর্বাচল ডিলার্স লিঃ, পূর্বাচল এক্সক্লুসিভ লিঃ এবং বেকো ফিড লিঃ এর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক আলহাজ্ব আবু নাসের মোহাম্মদ ইয়াহিয়া; ৩১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪, মঙ্গলবার দুপুরে রাজধানীর একটি হাসপাতালে ইন্তেকাল করেছেন (ইয়ালাল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স হয়েছিল ৫৪ বছর। তিনি স্ত্রী, ২ ছেলে, ১ মেয়ে সহ বহু আত্মীয় স্বজন ও অসংখ্য গুণগ্রাহী রেখে গেছেন।

এই মহান উদ্যোক্তা ও সমাজসেবক ব্যক্তিত্বের বিদায়ে আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পরিচালনা পর্ষদ এবং সমগ্র আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত। আমরা তাঁর শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি সমবেদনা প্রকাশ করছি। মহান আল্লাহ রাক্বুল আলামীন মরণহুমকে জামাতুল ফেরদৌস নসিব করুন, আমীন।

আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.