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As the sun begins its descent on the horizon, casting a warm golden hue across the sky, the tranquil waters of Kuakata beach shimmer with its reflected light. Amid this, a line of engine-powered boats, manned by fishermen from nearby coastal villages, prepares to set out for an evening of fishing. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## 8,543 killed on roads in 2024

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity; motorbikes account for one-third of accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of road crashes and fatalities in Bangladesh increased last year, with motorcycle-related incidents accounting for nearly one-third of all crashes and casualties, according to the Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

At least 8,543 people were killed and 12,608 injured in 6,359 road crashes across the country in 2024, the organisation reported.

The organisation said 2,570 people were killed in 2,329 bike-related crashes last year, which accounted for 36.62 percent of total crashes and 30.08 percent of deaths.

The sharp rise in motorcycles and battery-run auto-rickshaws, along with the illegal operation of both speedy and slow-moving vehicles on highways, were blamed for the rise, said the organisation's secretary general Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury while revealing the annual report at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

The report comes amid a series of recent accidents on the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway. On December 27, at least six people lost their lives when a bus rammed into three other vehicles at the expressway's toll plaza in South Keraniganj.

It was later found that the bus had no legal documents, including fitness clearance and route permit, while the driver had no valid licence.

The Samity identified 22 causes of road crashes, including unfit vehicles, reckless driving, and unskilled

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## AL accepted Indian subservience to secure power: Sarjis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The younger generation should understand that India's participation in Bangladesh's Liberation War was primarily to protect its own interests, particularly the Seven Sisters region, said Sarjis Alam, chief organiser of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, yesterday.

He also said the Awami League accepted Indian subservience to secure power.

Speaking at a roundtable organised by Islami Andolan Bangladesh at Railway Pologround Field in Chattogram, he said,



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## Students should unite, focus on their studies

Say Mirza Fakhrul

AGENCIES

BNP leaders have called on students to unite and focus on their studies to build a prosperous and discrimination-free Bangladesh, while reflecting on the lessons from the downfall of autocratic regimes.

They emphasised the need for knowledge and dedication to lead the nation towards a brighter future.

Speaking virtually at a rally organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (Thakurgaon district unit) marking its 46th founding anniversary, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged students to remain united and prioritise education.

"At this moment, everybody should remain united. Students should also focus on their studies to come out successfully and become self-reliant," he said.

Fakhrul called on students to work for the wellbeing of the country, adding, "An opportunity has come before the nation after the fall of the fascist Awami League regime. BNP aims to free the country from corruption and protect democracy, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press."

He accused the Awami League government of destroying the country's education system, economy, and electoral process while violently suppressing anti-discrimination movements.

Meanwhile, BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan, speaking at a civic reception in Morrelganj, highlighted the



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## Do not want to hear words like majority, minority

Says Jamaat ameer

UNB, Kushtia

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman has vowed to build Bangladesh based on equality.

"We no longer want to hear about the minority or majority in this country. All those born in Bangladesh are proud and dignified citizens of this nation, irrespective of their religion or caste," he said.

The jamaat leader made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a member conference at the Kushtia Government College grounds yesterday.

He said people in this country will not face any obstacles in practicing their respective religions, and Islam cannot be forced on anyone.

Shafiqur said after independence, until 5 August of last year, those who treated the Liberation War and the independence of this



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## Reforms and elections must complement each other

Says Zonayed Saki

UNB, Dhaka

Ganosahti Andolan's Chief Coordinator

Zonayed Saki yesterday said reforms and elections are intrinsically linked, stating that both are necessary for a meaningful political change.

"Just as there will be no elections without reforms, many reforms without elections will not be possible," Saki said during a public dialogue titled "Establishing a New Political Settlement for the Democratic Transformation of the State" at Jatiya Press Club.

Saki stressed that the next election date should be determined through



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## Cold bites, warmth eludes Char people in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat suffer without adequate winter clothes

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The char people in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat are enduring severe suffering due to a biting cold wave that has persisted for two consecutive weeks.

These areas, situated in the basin of 26 rivers, including the Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar, and Gangadhar, are home to around 500 chars, with 400 in Kurigram and 100 in Lalmonirhat.

More than six lakh people live in these remote and vulnerable regions, struggling to cope with the extreme cold using old, worn-out clothes.

The inability to afford winter clothing exacerbates their hardship, and while government, NGO, and private initiatives distribute winter clothes, these resources often fail to reach the remote char areas.

In the impassable Char Ghughumari on the Brahmaputra riverbed in Saheber Alga Union of Ulipur upazila, Kurigram, the situation is particularly dire. Located about 20 kilometers from the mainland, residents are shivering due to a lack of blankets.

Suruj Mia, a 62-year-old farm labourer from

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## TABLIGH JAMAAT Protest on Jan 10, confce on Jan 25

Says Zubair faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Zubair Ahmad will hold a nationwide demonstration on January 10 to seek a ban on the activities of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi's followers.

An ulema (Islamic scholars) conference will also be held on January 25, said Hefazat-e-Islam Vice President Mufti Nazmul Hasan Qasemi at a press conference at the Kakrail Mosque in Dhaka yesterday.

He made the announcement on behalf of Ulema-Mashayekh Bangladesh and Tablighi Jamaat Companions.

He said all activities of Saad supporters should be banned, and they should be held accountable for the killings in 2018 and 2024.

In a written statement, Qasemi said, "If the government fails to take

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## 'Bangladesh open for business'

Special envoy to chief adviser tells British entrepreneurs

UNB, Dhaka

Lutley Siddiqi, special envoy to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, yesterday urged British entrepreneurs, including Bangladeshi-origin investors, to capitalise on Bangladesh's widespread reforms designed to attract foreign direct investment.

"We are open for business. We are keen to answer your questions. Please keep on asking them. Please keep on visiting to take a look for yourselves. And if you like what you see and hear, please help spread the word," Siddiqi said during a meeting with a delegation from UKBCCI at the State Guest House Jamuna.

UKBCCI Chairman Iqbal Ahmed and UKBCCI President MG Moula Mia are leading the delegation that is currently on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

The special envoy appraised the delegates on positive developments on the macroeconomic front – exchange rate, reserves, exports, port handling rates, etc – and steps already taken across the government to create a more conducive experience for investors.

Siddiqi answered questions about labour reforms, the RMG sector, the law-and-order situation and the overall reform journey.

He expressed gratitude for the engagement and support of the Bangladeshi diaspora.

BIDA chairman Ashik Mahmud Chowdhury, senior secretary for SDG affairs Lamiya Morshed, and UK parliamentarian Rupa Huq were among others present on the occasion.



At least four steps on the stairway of the Paribagh footbridge have been missing for six months, creating a significant safety hazard for commuters. The other ramp is also in a deteriorated state (not in picture). A mother and her son stare at the gaping hole from above as commuters face the danger of falling from this height, particularly at night. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN