Beware of plots against polls

Tarique tells BNP leaders, activists

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged party leaders and activists to remain alert against any conspiracy aimed at preventing people from exercising their voting rights in the next national election.

"We want this message to reach everyone that we want around 12.5 crore voters of Bangladesh in the coming days to be able to express their opinions through the ballot. We must stay alert so that no one can conspire against this," he said.

Addressing the council of BNP's Patuakhali district unit virtually from London, he said, "You often hear whispers and rumours about attempts to obstruct the election. As followers of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia, all our leaders and workers across Bangladesh must remain aware of these issues."

Tarique said many leaders and activists sacrificed their lives, were maimed, persecuted and tortured to establish the people's right to vote over the last 17 years. "So, we must make sure that no one can conspire against this right. We must stay alert."

He also expressed hope to see the leaders and activists on the country's soil soon.

He urged them not to do anything that could harm the party's image.

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Girls receive treatment for wounds sustained in an Israeli strike on a camp sheltering displaced Palestinians, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

BNP leader shot, then hacked to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of assailants shot and hacked BNP leader Harunur Rashid to death in Dhaka's Dohar upazila yesterday, police said.

The incident took place near Bahra Habil Uddin High School around 6:00am while he was out for a walk after morning prayers.

Harunur, 60, widely known as Harun Master, was a senior teacher at the school and the former president of the BNP's Nayabari Union unit in Dohar. He was a resident of Bahra village.

Dohar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Hasan Ali told The Daily Star that the body bore four bullet wounds and three injuries caused by sharp weapons. "We suspect the attackers shot him first and then hacked him to make sure

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Navy to run New Mooring terminal for six months

Saif Powertec's six-month extension ends on Jul 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recommended appointing the Bangladesh Navy as the temporary operator of the New Mooring Container Terminal at Chattogram port.

The Chattogram Port Authority will now appoint the Bangladesh Navy as the terminal's operator and the necessary deal will be signed soon, said Shipping Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain yesterday.

It is a temporary solution as the existing contract with Saif Powertec will expire on July 7, he said in a briefing at the secretariat.

"It is the end of the company's six-month extension. We are not renewing it as they got the contract in a direct purchase method during the previous government's tenure," he said, adding that the port authority will now operate the terminal for six months or longer within a defined budget.

The navy, which already operates dockyard facilities within the port area, is regarded as experienced in port operations and has its own operator capabilities, he said.

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Trump's push for Gaza truce raises hope

43 killed as Israel presses on with attacks

AGENCIES

Word from US President Donald Trump that Israel has agreed to the conditions needed to finalise a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza raised hopes in the enclave, where health officials said at least 43 people had been killed in Israeli attacks yesterday.

A "final" proposal would be delivered by the mediators, Qatar and Egypt, to Hamas, Trump said in a social media post on Tuesday evening, after what he described as a "long and productive" meeting between his representatives and Israeli officials.

Gaza people said even a temporary pause would bring relief. "I hope it would work this time, even if for two months, it would save thousands of innocent lives," Kamal, a resident of Gaza City, said by phone.

There is growing public pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and end the nearly two-year-long offensive, a move strongly opposed by hardline members of his right-wing ruling coalition.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar wrote on X yesterday that a majority within the coalition government would back an agreement that would see the release of the remaining hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, reports Reuters.

"If there is an opportunity to do so - we must not miss it!", he wrote on X. Of 50 hostages still held, around 20 are believed to be still alive.

For Gaza people, who have fled multiple times and face daily struggles to find food 21 months into Israel's military campaign, the statements provided a glimmer of hope.

"Everyone is hopeful that it would work this time, there is no room for more failures, every day more costs us our lives," said Tamer Al-Burai, a businessman.

- Israel agrees to ceasefire conditions, says Trump
- Most cabinet members back a deal: Israeli minister
- Palestinians hope a 60-day truce will lead to end of offensive

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TEESTA MASTER PLAN

Won't accept any implementation delay: Nahid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday said his party would not accept any delay or political maneuver over implementing the Teesta master plan.

The NCP leader made the remarks while speaking at a rally in front of Ghoshpara Liberation War Memorial in Kurigram town.

Nahid also stressed that the master plan must be realistic, inclusive, and tailored to meet the needs of Kurigram's vulnerable communities.

"Kurigram stands for the struggles of landless char dwellers, the sorrow of border killings, and the unfulfilled promises of water-sharing treaties," he said.

The district also represents both historical defiance and deprivation, from Taramon Bibi's fight to the July uprising, he said.

"If we want a just and inclusive Bangladesh, we must uphold the dignity of Kurigram," Nahid said.

He also said, "Even though the fascist regime has collapsed, the fascist structure

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Canada turns to drones for reforestation

AFP, *Chibougamau*

A large aerial drone flies over the charred remains of Canadian forests devastated by wildfires, bombarding the ground with seed capsules to accelerate reforestation.

This area of northern Quebec province was ravaged by megafires in the summer of 2023 and for the second year in a row a pilot project has been using drones to plant new black spruces and jack pines.

Rather than simply dropping seeds from high above, the company Flash Forest, which is leading the initiative, uses seeds protected in capsules that also contain water and nutrients, as well as fungi, to maximize their growing potential.

"There is a niche that's appropriate for drone reforestation which we've spent the last five years narrowing in on," Flash Forest cofounder Cameron Jones explained.

The company focuses its efforts on forests that were scorched in the last year or two and excludes older burn sites that already have vegetation that can crowd out new seeds.

It also has projects in another Canadian province, Alberta, and in Colorado in the United States. Each drone can deliver seeds to plant 50,000 trees per day.

A seven-year-old dengue patient rests after nine days of treatment at the children's ward of Mugda Medical College and Hospital in the capital. *Inset*, a general ward designated for dengue patients at the hospital. The photos were taken yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Govt makes August 5 public holiday

BSS, *Dhaka*

The government has declared August 5 a public holiday in honour of those who sacrificed their lives during the July uprising last year.

The day will be marked as "July Mass Uprising Day", said a gazette notification published by the Cabinet Division yesterday.

From now on, August 5 will be observed every year across the country.

It has been decided to include the date as a "Ka" category day in the observance of national and international days, according to the gazette, signed by Mohammad Khaled Hasan, additional secretary of the Cabinet Division.

The categories determine the level of formality and resources allocated to each observance.

"Ka" covers days of major national significance, often marked by extensive ceremonies, official participation, and possible

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