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SHAH CEMENT

They won't boycott polls

Salahuddin Ahmed says about parties threatening to pull out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday brushed aside any concern about the upcoming national polls amid boycott calls by some political parties.

Asked if he is concerned that Jamaat-e-Islami and other parties may boycott the election, the BNP leader said political parties which are now vocal about boycotting the polls "directly or indirectly are risking their political capital."



"Those saying there will be no election without all their demands met – reforms and justice – are just making street talks," he told reporters at his Gulshan residence.

"I don't think that a new political party and two other parties, who are giving various speeches and statements, will take such a decision to boycott polls," he added.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



WALTZING IN THE WETLANDS

A pheasant-tailed jacana, known as 'jol moyur' in Bangla, soars over a tranquil wetland in Chuadanga. Found across South and Southeast Asia, it thrives in shallow freshwater habitats with floating vegetation. In breeding season, its golden nape and elongated tail feathers make it unmistakable, as do its long toes that allow it to walk on lily pads -- a trait that has earned jacanas the nickname "Jesus birds". It feeds on aquatic insects, invertebrates, and seeds. Interestingly, this species has reversed gender roles: females are larger and polyandrous, while males incubate eggs and raise chicks. Listed as Least Concern by the IUCN, its populations are still threatened by wetland degradation.

PHOTO: MONJUR MORSHED

EXTORTION ALLEGATION

Asif Mahmud denies any involvement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A video clip has gone viral in which an expelled Bangladesh Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsaad leader is seen confessing to extorting money from former Awami League MP Shammi Ahmed.

In the video, the leader, Jane Alam Opu, claimed that on the day they took money from the former MP's house in Gulshan, he had met Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain in Gulshan.

However, Asif Mahmud yesterday denied having any involvement.

Police arrested Opu, who was a joint convener of Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsaad, on August 1 from Wari in the city over the extortion allegation.

In the 35-minute video, which surfaced on social media Wednesday night, Opu also said Riyad, a now-expelled leader of the same organisation, was involved in the extortion incident. Riyad has been arrested in the same case.

Speaking to BBC Bangla, Asif said he has known Opu since 2022, when Opu was involved with the Chhatra Odhikar Parishad.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

'ANTI-STATE' CONTENTS

BTRC moves to punish social media platforms

Tk 300cr fine, jail time proposed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BTRC has drafted an ordinance to enable the government to punish social media platforms for activities deemed harmful to national unity, security, and public order.

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has included this provision in its draft of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

Under the newly proposed section "66-ka", any person using telecommunication or wireless equipment, or any digital or electronic medium, to transmit signals, messages, calls, or content that is considered anti-national, seditious, or capable of inciting hatred, division, unrest, or fear among the public, or harmful to Bangladesh's sovereignty, defence, foreign relations, public security, public order, rule of law, or economic interests, will be committing an offence.

The penalty would be up to five years in prison, or a fine of up to Tk 300 crore, or both.

The clause also extends liability to any intermediary or social media intermediary that engages in or facilitates such acts.

According to the draft, a "social media intermediary" means an intermediary primarily or solely used for online communication between two or more users and that allows such users to create, upload, respond to, disseminate, or modify user-generated content on the platform.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

ACC sues Joy over sketchy bank account transactions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has found suspicious transactions amounting to Tk 57.5 crore in two bank accounts belonging to Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.



The anti-graft agency also found that Joy illegally acquired Tk 60.14 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Based on these findings, the ACC has filed a case against Joy, who served as Hasina's ICT adviser.

ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain disclosed this information during a press conference at the ACC headquarters yesterday.

He said between 2000 and 2025, suspicious transactions worth Tk 57.5 crore were recorded in Joy's two accounts at Sonali Bank's Gono Bhaban branch.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Israeli forces step up Gaza bombardment

Several districts hit by aerial, tank fire; 23 Palestinians, including 10 aid seekers, killed

AGENCIES

Israeli forces demolished houses in eastern areas of Gaza City yesterday, with aerial and tank fire killing at least 23 people, according to local health authorities, as the Palestinian group Hamas told mediators it was ready to resume ceasefire talks.

Residents and medics said eight people were killed when Israeli tank shelling hit a house in Zeitoun neighbourhood, while a man was killed in an airstrike on a building in the nearby Shejaia suburb. Two other people were killed in tank shelling in Tuffah, a third Gaza City suburb.

Local health authorities said they had received desperate calls from families trapped in the Zeitoun area, including from people saying they were wounded, and that ambulance vehicles could not reach them. "The explosions are almost non-stop in eastern Gaza areas, mainly Zeitoun and Shejaia. The occupation (Israel) is erasing homes there, as we hear from some friends who live nearby," said Ismail, 40, from Gaza City.

"At night, we pray for our safety as the sounds of explosions get louder and closer. We hope Egypt can secure

a ceasefire deal before we are all dead," he told Reuters via a chat app.

More than 22 months into Israel's military offensive in Gaza, residents have also been grappling with a worsening hunger crisis, reports Reuters.

- Gaza ministry records four more hunger-related deaths
- Egypt making latest push for ceasefire talks
- NGOs say new Israeli rules keep them from delivering aid

Four more people died of starvation and malnutrition in the territory in the past 24 hours, Gaza's health ministry said yesterday. That took the total to 239, including 106 children, since the offensive began, it said.

In an effort to avert the planned military escalation, Egypt has been trying to revive a push for a ceasefire in Gaza, hosting a Hamas delegation led by the group's chief negotiator

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

CA's Malaysia tour boosts Dhaka-KL ties

Labour welfare remains sidelined

PORIMOL PALMA

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's visit to Malaysia has opened new areas of cooperation – both bilateral and regional – especially in the efforts to address Myanmar conflicts and Rohingya crisis, as the two countries committed to building a future-oriented strategic partnership.

However, analysts say, labour welfare took a backseat to other priorities, despite the fact that over 1.2 million Bangladeshis work in Malaysia.

NEWS ANALYSIS

In the first state visit by a head of the government since 2014, the two countries signed five MoUs and three Exchange of Notes in the areas of defence, energy, education, investment, diplomatic training, business, research etc.

Malaysia has committed to working with Bangladesh and other ASEAN countries for peace in Myanmar and Rohingya repatriation. Malaysia will coordinate a delegation of ASEAN foreign ministers in the next few weeks for peace and humanitarian aid for the Rohingya and other communities in Myanmar.

This is a significant move provided that Bangladesh faces the burden of sheltering more than 1.2 million Rohingya, and that the foreign aid is declining fast. Moreover, nearly

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Smoke rises following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. The Israeli military has approved a framework for a new offensive in the region. PHOTO: REUTERS

JET CRASH

Another teacher of Milestone dies of injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teacher, who suffered critical injuries in the air force jet crash at Milestone School and College in Uttara's Diabari, died yesterday at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, 24 days after the incident.

Mahfuza Khatun, 45, breathed her last around 12:45pm at the intensive care unit, said Shaon Bin Rahman, resident surgeon of the burn institute.

With this, the number of deaths at the institute has risen to 19, while the total death toll stands at 35 as per the health ministry.

Earlier, two teachers – Maherin Chowdhury and Masuka Begum – died after being injured in the jet crash.

At least 23 survivors, mostly children, are still undergoing treatment at the burn institute, while 14 others have been discharged after receiving treatment so far, hospital sources said.

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