



Meghna enters heavy tyre production

B1



Code violations cloud run-up to Rucsu polls

P3



Traffic chaos plagues Trishal

P4



Clash of fire and nerves as India face Pakistan

P11

Polls delay could even threaten nat'l security

Say noted citizens, urge political parties to unite for reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians and eminent citizens yesterday stressed that there is no alternative to the government playing a stronger role in holding the next election in February, warning that any delay could plunge the country into serious turmoil.

They also urged political parties to set aside their divisions and reach consensus on implementing proposed reforms, not only for the nation's progress but also to ensure fundamental changes that would prevent any future resurgence of autocratic rule.

The remarks came at a roundtable discussion titled "Path to Political Consensus for Elections" organised by Prothom Alo at its office.

Speaking at the programme, Prof Ali Riaz, vice president of the National Consensus Commission, said, "If the election is not held in February, Bangladesh will face not only internal instability but also threats to national security. I am not entertaining any ifs or buts. That is why political parties must now stand together and face this challenge."

He noted differences of opinion among parties regarding constitutional reforms aimed at restraining executive power, establishing accountability, and ensuring that the system reflects people's aspirations.

"This election is unlike previous ones. It is an opportunity for democratic transition, not just a change of power, but a move toward consolidated, sustainable democracy. That's the goal. That's the urgency," he said.

Prothom Alo Editor Matir Rahman, opening the discussion, said now that all parties agree on the need for reforms, it is essential they find a way forward. "If we stall at the point of implementation, then the long-standing discussions, past movements, struggles, uprisings, and sacrifices will all be in vain. There is fear the country may once again fall into uncertainty," he said.

"We believe certain groups are trying to create this uncertainty. But we do not want such instability." He expressed hope that politicians would show foresight, step beyond partisanship if necessary, and choose consensus. "We want all parties to participate in the February election. We hope you, all of you together, will reach consensus on reforms."

Former caretaker government adviser and economist Hossain Zillur Rahman described prevailing uncertainty as a major challenge. Pointing to rising poverty, unemployment, and primary school dropouts, he said the country is moving in the wrong direction. "One of the key drivers behind this deterioration is uncertainty," he said.

"We rightly emphasise structural reforms. But beyond that lies a more critical dimension, the lived realities of people's everyday lives. This aspect has been largely absent from discussions," he noted.

"Why hasn't there been a clear proposal to combat corruption? For ordinary citizens, this issue is even more pressing and deserves explicit attention."

Zillur warned of dangers within Bangladesh's continuities -- state, constitutional, and economic. "Within these lies the danger of adventurism. Its unanticipated consequences may turn out to be even more severe than the anticipated ones."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Once a vital artery for agriculture and aquatic life, the Salta river now lies on its deathbed. Years of encroachment and sediment buildup have distorted its natural course, reducing it to a narrow channel. Due to the authorities' failure to protect this lifeline, the region's ecological balance is now in jeopardy. The photo was taken recently in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Shibir bags most of Jucusu posts too

Wins 20 of 25 posts; voter turnout 68%

SAKIB AHMED, MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

For the very first time in the history of Jahangirnagar University, Islami Chhatra Shibir has swept the central student union polls, winning 20 of the 25 posts.

While Swantantra Shikkharthi Sommilon's Abdur Rashid Zitu was elected vice-president, Shibir-backed Samonnito Shikkharthi Jote's Mazharul Islam secured the general secretary post.

Zitu received 3,334 votes and his Shibir-backed rival Arif Ullah Adib 2,392.

Mazharul, a master's student of English and office secretary of JU Shibir, bagged 3,930 votes, while Bangladesh Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad candidate Abu Tauhid Mohammad Siam got 1,238.

A master's student of comparative literature and culture, Zitu was a central coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination platform, which spearheaded the July uprising. Before that, he was an executive member of JU Chhatra League, which was banned as organisation in October last year.

After becoming VP, Zitu vowed to end all



"We have seen that different candidates complained in the media about the election. But to the Election Commission, no such irregularities were found."

Jucusu EC Member Secretary
Prof AKM Rashidul Alam

forms of party-backed political activities on campus.

At a post-result briefing, he said, "Our first task will be to put an end to partisan political practices at Jahangirnagar University. We've seen how such activities disrupt students' academic lives. We'll work to ensure a fully safe and education-friendly campus."

He added that he would work to make the campus inclusive for all, regardless of caste, creed, or colour.

Newly elected GS Mazharul said they want to build a "dream campus", free from domination and dictatorship, for the students. "We don't think this election has lost its credibility in any way. There were no errors or irregularities in the vote counting process. An election where almost 70 percent of votes were cast is surely a successful one."

A total of 67.93 percent of votes were cast. An analysis of the final list shows that out of 315 posts across 11 male and 10 female halls, 131 were uncontested while 68 remained vacant.

Students voted for 25 posts in Jucusu and 315 posts across 15 halls, with 177 candidates vying

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Road crashes claim 22 lives every day

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity citing data of last 11 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 86,690 people were killed and 1,53,257 injured in 62,619 road crashes across the country over the last 11 years, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

This means, on average, 22 people lost their lives and 38 were injured on the roads every day during this period.

Citing a World Bank estimate, the organisation also said unbearable traffic congestion in the capital alone leads to a daily loss of 3.2 million working hours, amounting to an annual economic loss of Tk 98,000 crore.

Against this backdrop, the Samity urged political parties contesting the upcoming national election to include concrete plans to reduce traffic congestion and curb the yearly loss of thousands of lives on the roads through the introduction of modern public transport in their manifestos.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Jucusu's newly-elected VP Abdur Rashid Zitu from Swantantra Shikkharthi Sommilon; GS Mazharul Islam, AGS (male) Ferdous Al Hasan and AGS (female) Ayesha Siddiq Meghla -- all from Shibir-backed Samonnito Shikkharthi Jote -- raise their hands in celebration after the polls results were announced at Jahangirnagar University's Senate Bhavan yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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