

NAT'L ELECTION
Khaleda Zia
expected
to contest
from Feni-1

UNB, Feni

Former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been included as a member of Fulgazi upazila BNP committee in Feni district, her ancestral home.

She has repeatedly been elected MP from Feni-1 constituency (Fulgazi upazila).

Full committees were announced for six unions under Fulgazi upazila on Thursday night. Upazila BNP Convener Fakhrul Alam Swapon and Member Secretary Abul Hossain Bhuiyan approved the committees.

Khaleda Zia has been made the No-1 member of the Fulgazi Sadar union committee.

She is expected to contest the election from this seat, said Convener Fakhrul.



Three children -- Ayesha, Sharmin, and Mursalin -- collect snails from a swampy wetland in Madhobkathi village, Khulna, yesterday. During monsoon, villagers earn extra income by selling snails at Tk 25 per kg, and the children usually gather 3–4kg a day. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Social media rife
with polls-related
misinformation
Say experts; stress cyber
awareness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political propaganda targeting both prominent figures and emerging faces is surging on social media ahead of the national election, cybersecurity experts said yesterday.

Government and private institutions, including political parties, should launch cyber awareness campaigns to mitigate security risks, they said at an event organised by the Cybercrime Awareness Foundation (CCAF) at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

"False information spread on social media often serves a political purpose. Many political parties or individuals spread propaganda and misleading content to undermine



their opponents," said CCAF Adviser Syed Zahid Hossain.

Mushliqur Rahman, member secretary of the National Committee on Cyber Security Awareness, said a lot of misinformation is being spread through the use of artificial intelligence to create photo cards, which should not be shared without verification.

According to data from the Cyber Police Centre (CPC) of the Cyber Crime Investigation Department (CID), 1,74,830 victims filed complaints there between January 2020 and August 26, 2025.

Of these, 2,789 complaints were accepted for investigation, out of which only 40 cases have been

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

TONGI FIRE
Another dies
at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shop employee, who sustained critical burn injuries in the chemical warehouse fire at Gazipur's Tongi, died while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The victim, Al Amin Hossain Babu, 22, succumbed to his injuries around 10:30am at the hospital's burn unit, said Inspector Md Faruk, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost.

Doctors said Al Amin had suffered 95 percent burns.

Earlier, two firefighters critically burnt in the blaze lost their lives.

Al Amin's co-worker, Anwar Hossain, said they worked at a nearby shop that had a warehouse in the affected market. "We went there to save some goods after hearing about the fire. That's when Al Amin got trapped and was burned."

RAPE OF EIGHTH GRADER
'Arrest, punish
perpetrators'

Protest rallies held in Dhaka,
Khagrachhari

STAR REPORT

A protest march and rally were held yesterday on Dhaka University campus, demanding the immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of those involved in the gang rape of an eighth-grade Jumma student in Khagrachhari, and protesting the arrest and assault of an indigenous student leader.

The programme, organised under the banner of Adivasi Chhatra Janata, took place at the base of the Raju Memorial Sculpture.

Speaking at the rally, Dipayan Khisa, central committee member of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti, urged legal action against those who abducted and harmed protesters and criticised media narratives that portray indigenous people as criminals.

The rally was presided over by Numongpru Marma, president of Bangladesh Marma Students Council Dhaka Metropolitan branch, and chaired by Shantimoy Chakma, general secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad, DU branch.

It ended with a march around Shahbagh and back to the Raju Sculpture.

Meanwhile, in Khagrachhari, hundreds of students and indigenous community members held a mass rally protesting the rape and ongoing violence against

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Case backlog
piling up in SC



- Over 37,000 cases pending at Appellate Division
- Appeals in BDR carnage, N'ganj 7 murders stuck for years
- Total pending cases across courts reach 46.52 lakh
- Shortage of judges blamed for growing backlog

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The backlog of pending cases, including appeals in some sensational murder trials, is growing at the Appellate Division (AD) of the Supreme Court due to the slow pace of hearings and disposals.

As of June 30, pending cases at the AD surged to 37,002, up by more than 8,000 from the previous year, according to the latest SC case disposal statement.

The cases include appeals in connection with the BDR carnage, Narayanganj's seven murders, and the killings of Awami League lawmaker Ahsan Ullah Master and Bishwajit Das.

The appeals filed against the High Court verdicts in these much-talked-about criminal cases have remained pending with the AD for years, unheard and undisposed.

Meanwhile, across all tiers of the judiciary, the total number of pending cases stood at 46.52 lakh, compared to 44.43 lakh a year

earlier.

At the HC, the backlog grew to 6.16 lakh, while the lower courts alone are burdened with nearly 40 lakh cases.

From April 1 to June 30 this year, the AD disposed of 2,072 cases, the HC settled 10,161 cases and the lower courts resolved 2,96,469 cases. In the same period, 4,093 cases were filed with the AD, 27,486 with the HC and 3,63,000 with the lower courts.

The AD and HC, however, disposed of several constitutional and political cases during this period amid initiatives to bring reforms to the judiciary.

SC sources said the main reason behind the rising backlog is the shortage of judges. There are seven judges, including the chief justice, in the AD, 111 in the HC and 2,187 in the lower courts.

Among the 111 HC judges, four have been kept away from judicial functions since October 16 last year as the Supreme Judicial Council is probing allegations against them,

while three others are on personal leave, according to the sources.

The government has been implementing the e-judiciary project in recent years to improve case management by bringing the lower courts under a digital network. Under the initiative, courts, police stations, jails, investigators, witnesses, lawyers and defendants will be connected to the network.

The Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2024, was issued in January to ease pressure on courts and ensure faster delivery of justice.

Under the new ordinance, two HC judges were elevated to the AD on March 24, raising the number of SC judges to seven, and 25 judges were appointed to the HC, SC spokesperson Md Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed has also formed 13 monitoring committees led by HC judges to accelerate case disposals in the lower courts, he added.

DURGA PUJA
'Security can't be
for 5 days, it must
be for 365 days'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Hindu community does not want to see attacks on idols and temples during the upcoming Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindus, said leaders of two organisations yesterday.

They said even while preparations for the Puja are going on, incidents of vandalising temples and idols have already taken place in 13 districts. In these cases, law enforcement forces acted quickly and arrested the accused.

"If we want to build a discrimination-free Bangladesh, we should not only think about security for five days of Puja, we have to think about security for all 365 days," said Jayanta Kumar Deb, president of Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee.

The issue was raised at a press conference jointly organised by the Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee and Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad at the Dhakeshwari National Temple auditorium in Dhaka.

Reading out a written statement, Jayanta said before the Puja, they demanded the withdrawal of false and baseless cases filed against religious and ethnic minority leaders and innocent people.

Puja Udjapan Parishad President Basudev Dhar said many people of the Hindu community have become victims of these fabricated cases. He requested the government to allow them to take part in the Puja.

Subrata Chowdhury, the Puja Udjapan Parishad's adviser, said those involved in vandalising idols and temples should be punished in accordance with the law.

At the press conference, the leaders also urged that during the Puja the metro rail should remain open until 11:00pm to facilitate smooth movement.

According to the Puja Udjapan Parishad, this year Puja is being held at 33,355 mandaps across the country, 1,894 more than last year, and at 259 mandaps in Dhaka city, seven more than the previous year.

Musicians, poets
decry attacks on
Baul traditions



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An event honouring legendary Lalon singer Farida Parveen in Mymensingh yesterday turned into a cultural protest against recent attacks on Baul culture and practices.

The programme, organised by cultural organisation "Porompura" at Baroitola, on the banks of the Brahmaputra river, honoured the late singer with songs, poetry, and tributes.

Alongside music, artists and activists raised their voices against the ongoing cultural aggression, including the forced shaving of an elderly man's hair and beard and desecration of shrines.

In a symbolic act, Porompura president and poet Shamim Ashraf cut his own hair at the beginning of the programme.

Farida Parveen, known as the "Lalon Konya" for her lifelong dedication to Lalon's music, passed away on September 13.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Battery- and CNG-run auto-rickshaws ply a damaged road in the Rayerbazar area of the capital yesterday. Due to rain and lack of maintenance, this section of the Gabtoli–Sadarghat–Beribadh road is in a dilapidated state, causing slow vehicle movement and traffic congestion.