



## BNP to finalise 200 candidates by this month

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP will finalise candidates for 200 constituencies within this month ahead of the national polls in February, party insiders said.

The party said there are no major problems in about 150 constituencies where candidates are mostly settled, while around 100 remained “problematic” due to internal rivalries and multiple nomination seekers.

Meanwhile, BNP will decide through discussions how to handle the remaining 50 seats.

These issues were discussed at a Standing Committee meeting on Monday night at the party chairperson’s Gulshan office, attended by senior leaders.

Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman joined the meeting virtually from London.

Several members urged the party to announce the list soon to end grassroots confusion, warning that delays could weaken campaign preparations. Multiple aspirants are still competing for nominations in nearly every constituency, they said.

To expedite the process,

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## MPO-listed teachers, staff call off strike

Accept govt’s decision to increase house rent allowance to 15%

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of MPO-listed non-government educational institutions yesterday called off their 10-day strike after the government agreed to increase their house rent allowance to 15 percent of their basic salary.

According to a Finance Division order, they will receive 7.5 percent, with a minimum of Tk 2,000, from November 1, rising to 15 percent, also with a minimum of Tk 2,000, from July 1 next year.

Later, the Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar handed over copies of the official order to protesting teacher leaders at a meeting at the Secretariat.

At a rally around 2:00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar, Delwar Hossain Azizi, member secretary of the Alliance for Nationalisation of MPO Institutions, said, “We have decided to withdraw all our programmes from today. From tomorrow [Wednesday], we will return to classrooms.”

Delwar said teachers could not hold classes for eight days during the protest and announced that educational institutions would remain open on Saturdays until the annual exams to make up for lost class time.

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## JULY CHARTER NCP, 4 leftist parties dig in

Say they won’t sign unless all demands met

STAFF REPORTER

The National Citizen Party and four leftist parties yesterday reiterated that they will not sign the July Charter unless the National Consensus Commission meets their respective demands.

The NCP has three demands – resolving the notes of dissent through a referendum and sharing the full texts of the charter’s implementation process and the draft referendum order before submission to the government.

“Our demands are clear. If these three issues are not addressed, we will not sign,” NCP Joint Convener Javed Rasin told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the party is preparing an amended proposal to submit to the commission.

In response, a member of the commission’s legal experts’ team, requesting anonymity, said the notes of dissent would be included in the referendum. The proposed question is likely to be: “Do you support the agreed-upon proposals [including notes of dissent] related to the constitution that have emerged from the National Consensus Commission?”

The dual role of the next parliament will also be part of the referendum, he added.

The official said the commission expects to finalise

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Pedestrians scale a high central reservation to cross the Airport Road in the capital's Khilkhet area. A banner put up at the site states that the footbridge will remain closed from October 17 to 25, for emergency repairs and urges pedestrians to use another footbridge, some hundred yards away. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Roads deadly, committees silent

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Until the change of government following last year’s mass uprising, at least four key committees or task forces had been entrusted with overseeing road safety – a critical issue long neglected, costing hundreds of lives annually.

They met occasionally – mostly after major road crashes or when protests erupted over road safety issues. In those rushed meetings, they would arrive at nearly identical conclusions about reforming the road sector. But for years, little ever changed.

As a result, road crashes kept rising, claiming thousands of lives and leaving many more with life-altering injuries.

Since the change of government, none of these committees has held a single meeting. They have not even been reconstituted.

There had been a “National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan” for reducing road crashes, which, though never effectively implemented, expired last December, and it was not renewed in the last 10 months.

The only visible step this government has taken regarding road safety was limiting the economic lifespan of the commercial vehicles. But the drive lost momentum allegedly due to pressure from transport owners and workers – the same old story from the last regime.

As a result, the roads remain deadly.

Citing media reports, Bangladesh

### NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY DAY



Road safety committees inactive since Aug last year

Strategic action plan expired and was not renewed

There has been no visible reforms by interim govt

Jatri Kalyan Samity said 1,16,726 people were killed and 1,65,021 others injured in 67,890 road crashes between January 2014 and September 2025. Of them, 5,323 people were killed in 5,171 road crashes this year till September, it said

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Jatri Kalyan Samity told a press conference yesterday that severe shortcomings in strategic transport planning and the failure to address indiscipline led to a sharp rise in road crashes and fatalities under the

previous government.

He added that despite a change in the government following last year’s July uprising, the policies and strategies of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, and Traffic Police Division have remained largely unchanged.

“As a result, there has been no visible progress in curbing road crashes, reducing traffic congestion, or restoring order on the roads.”

Against the backdrop, the National Road Safety Day is being observed today in its ninth annual iteration, with the theme “Standard Helmets, Safe Speed to Reduce Loss of Life and Property”.

The National Road Safety Council (NRSC) was formed in 1995. Road minister is its chairman, while several other ministers, including those of home and railways, top government and police officials and transport leaders are its members.

The council, a top policymaking body on road safety, is supposed to sit every six months or as called by the chairman.

After the change in government, the committee was supposed to be restructured, especially since many members from the transport association had already been replaced. However, that revision was not carried out, a senior BRTA official said.

In February 2014, the government

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## IMF’s sixth tranche to come after polls

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

The sixth instalment of International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) loan programme of \$4.7 billion may not arrive by the end of the year, as the donor agency wants to work with the new political government for smooth continuation of reform programmes.

“The next instalment might come around March or April – this will have no negative impact on Bangladesh. In fact, it will be good,” Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, who is in Washington, DC to attend the annual meeting of the World Bank-IMF, told The Daily Star over the phone.

The instalment’s release will be decided when the IMF mission comes to Dhaka on October 29 for a two-week review of the progress made until June.

The IMF wants to defer the sixth instalment and provide both sixth and seventh instalments amounting to about \$800 million at once.

Earlier, the third and fourth instalments were provided together in June due to failing to meet the prior conditions for the third instalment.

The review for the sixth instalment may not be completed by December, Ahmed said, adding that all the conditions for unlocking the tranche have been fulfilled except for the revenue collection target.

The reason for delaying the instalment came up as the donor agencies want to be reassured that the reform activities placed by the interim government will not be

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## ICT CASE AGAINST HASINA Defence denies crimes against humanity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and ex-home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal are not personally liable for offences committed during the July uprising, Amir Hossain, their state-appointed defence counsel, told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Placing closing arguments for the second consecutive day, he also dismissed the prosecution’s charges as unproven and said the prosecution’s call for maximum punishment is unacceptable.

Former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who has turned approver, is the third accused in the case.

As the tribunal referred to the killings of 1,500 people and the wounding of over 25,000 during the July uprising, the lawyer said, “It was the personal responsibility of police personnel. The prime minister cannot take responsibility for individuals’ actions.”

He also claimed that his clients did not commit any crimes against humanity.

The lawyer argued that drones were used to identify large crowds to prevent destruction and loss of life, and deployment of helicopters does not mean that those were used to shoot protesters.

“There is no evidence to suggest people were specifically targeted and killed from helicopters,” he said.

On Hasina’s phone calls, Amir questioned its authenticity, noting that the CID’s forensic test lacked international validation. The tribunal cited a BBC report confirming the call’s authenticity, but Amir insisted, “The CID report should have been cross-checked.”

He also cited official records stating that 3,11,000 bullets were fired nationwide during the uprising, including 95,313 in Dhaka. Thousands of police personnel were deployed against protesters, yet the number of

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Waste being dumped by Savar municipality trucks into a wetland beside the Dhaka-Aricha highway in the Boliapur area. Despite a landfill in Aminbazar nearby, garbage continues to be dumped there. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Takaichi makes history as Japan’s first female PM

REUTERS, Tokyo

Hardline conservative Sanae Takaichi was elected Japan’s first female prime minister



yesterday, shattering the political glass ceiling and setting the country up for a decisive turn to the right.

An acolyte of former prime minister Shinzo Abe and an admirer of Britain’s Margaret Thatcher, Takaichi is expected to return to Abe-style government stimulus as she attempts to jumpstart an economy saddled with slow growth and rising prices.

While her victory marks a pivotal moment for a country where men still hold overwhelming sway, she named just two women to her cabinet, far fewer than what she had promised.

Takaichi is also likely to usher in a sharp move to the right on issues such as immigration and defence,

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