



Advisory council meetings unlikely after Nov: Mahfuj

Info ministry to announce minimum wage for journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam hinted yesterday that the advisory council meetings are unlikely to continue past November.

He said the ministry has taken initiative to implement around 13 recommendations out of a total of 23 “urgent and feasible” recommendations from the Media Reform Commission.

“These measures need to be approved by the cabinet or enacted through issuing ordinances or regulations. After November, we will no longer be able to do this, as the cabinet will close and no further cabinet meetings may take place,” the adviser said while speaking at a Dhaka Reporters’ Unity programme.

Mahfuj said the information ministry

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Hilsa trading resumes at the wholesale fish market in Barishal city’s Port Road area as the 22-day ban on fishing ended yesterday. The ban was imposed to boost hilsa production.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

ASEAN SUMMIT

Rights bodies urge focus on Rohingya crisis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Global and regional rights bodies have urged the leaders attending the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur to confront the worsening human rights situation in Myanmar and address the Rohingya crisis affecting Bangladesh and regional countries.

In separate statements ahead of the summit, they also called for rejecting Myanmar junta’s planned sham elections due on December 28.

About two dozen world leaders, including US President Donald Trump, along with top leaders of the member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – are attending the three-day summit and multiple other meetings on the sidelines.

Together, the ten countries have a population of 678 million and a GDP of \$3.9 trillion, but also face two crises: the Thailand-Cambodia border conflict and Myanmar’s civil war which displaced over 3.5 million people.

More than a million Rohingya have fled from Myanmar since 2017 and continue to do so amid clashes between the Myanmar junta and the rebel group Arakan Army.

Bangladesh has been calling for a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis as the country faces serious funding

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

BNP seeks symbol sharing within alliances

Criticises RPO amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has opposed the recent amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) that requires political alliances to contest the next national election using each party’s own symbol, instead of a single alliance symbol.

Ismail Zabiullah, BNP chairperson’s advisory council member, shared the party’s stance with reporters yesterday following a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin and EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed at the EC headquarters in the capital.

Former acting EC secretary Mohammad Zakaria was with the two-member BNP delegation.

On October 24, the advisory council approved major changes to the RPO, 1972.

In the past, smaller partners in alliances led by major parties like the Awami League and BNP were able to run with the larger party’s symbol.

Zabiullah said that in previous polls, political alliances in Bangladesh have always been free to either use their own symbols or contest under the symbol of an alliance partner, a process that, he said, caused no complications and was both democratic and widely accepted.

“This has always been a political and democratic right. No problems ever arose under this system.”

He noted that there had never been any demand to amend this provision, and that during discussions with the Election Reform Commission, the BNP clearly opposed any change to article 20 of the RPO, a position that was conveyed to both the commission and the government.

Zabiullah said the BNP had been assured during high-level talks with the government that no such amendment would be made.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

GAZIPUR SAFARI PARK

At least 37 animals dead or missing in five years

Rights activists slam mismanagement

MONJURUL HAQUE and NAZIBA BASHER

The number of animals at Gazipur Safari Park has dropped sharply in recent years amid allegations of mismanagement, negligence, and theft.

Park officials say at least 37 animals have died or gone missing over the past five years. To prevent further losses, 32 CCTV cameras have been installed and staff strength raised from 69 to 93.

The issue drew attention after the park’s last giraffe, an ageing female from Africa, died on October 23 while undergoing treatment.

An autopsy found tuberculosis as the cause of death, said Safari Park Wildlife Inspector Raju Ahmed.

Despite repeated attempts, the park’s veterinary surgeon, Hatem Sajjad Mohammad Zulkarnain, could not be reached for comments.

Officer-in-Charge Tarique Rahman said several thefts and escapes have occurred in recent years. Two green-winged macaws were stolen in November 2024, three lemurs in March this year, and a nilgai escaped in January. Another of the same species fled in 2021.

Environment ministry sources, however, said the macaws and one lemur were later recovered and returned.

Tarique said work on strengthening the boundary wall has yet to begin but will be carried out gradually across

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

CHALLENGES IN POLICING 2

Living conditions appalling at some police barracks

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In one of Dhaka city’s most affluent neighbourhoods, the barrack of Banani Police Station stands in stark contrast to its surroundings.

Amid high-rises and luxury apartments, the police personnel tasked with guarding the posh area live in conditions barely fit for habitation.

The ground floor of the three-storey structure on Banani Road-7 houses the offices of the officer-in-charge, duty officer, two inspectors, the armoury, and the custody cell. There is no separate space for female detainees.

Trunks and bags are piled up on the staircase landings. On the first floor, a hand-written sign reads “Offices of ASI and SI”.

But inside, there are no desks or chairs – only narrow camp beds with threadbare mosquito nets overhead.

“This is our office. We prepare case reports and store evidence here. Unlike other stations, we have no desks. We do paperwork, sitting on beds,” said a sub-inspector (SI), seeking anonymity.

“Mosquitoes are not the main problem here, bedbugs are,” said a constable.

The second floor, with a tin roof just seven to eight feet high, is crammed with 42 beds.

They have just two toilets on this floor,



and a common bathroom.

In an around 600-square-foot cramped space on this floor, about 20 constables sleep shoulder to shoulder on beds packed tightly together, leaving no space in between.

Suitcases, trunks and other belongings like towels and lungis are stacked in the corners.

It feels suffocating inside, as there are no overhead fans.

“Installation of overhead fans is not possible due to the low height of the ceiling. Several of us have to share

one stand fan,” a constable told these correspondents during a visit to the station on October 5.

“There are no cleaners. We sweep and wash the floors and clean everything after duty hours. Only then we can rest,” said another constable.

Constable Rashidul Haque said he, along with 10 other police members, had to sleep on the floor of the around 200-square-foot prayer room on the second floor after he joined the station in October last year.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Bias in police postings will be probed

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dismissing concerns over bias in police postings, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the government is committed to ensuring a level playing field for the upcoming national election.

He made the comment while speaking to the media after the 15th meeting of the Law and Order Advisory Council at the Secretariat.

Sources said the issue of favouritism in police promotions and transfers was discussed at the meeting, where the adviser instructed the inspector general of police to take strict action against officers involved in such practices.

Jahangir told the media, “As for us, the level playing field has always been there and will remain in future. Many times, we receive requests, but we verify them before making decisions. If we don’t act on a request, some may accuse us of favouritism or spread false news, but we must prevent these issues.”

“Let me be clear: if there is any evidence of a recruitment or posting trade, we will investigate.”

The adviser also talked about several key concerns discussed at the meeting. One of

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

A Palestinian woman carries wood for a fire in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. The devastating conflict between Israel and Hamas reduced swathes of Gaza to rubble, displaced the vast majority of its population and crippled public services.

Army recovers firearms, explosives from train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army recovered a large cache of foreign firearms and explosives from the Banalata Express, a train that runs on the Dhaka–Rajshahi route, during a special operation at the Airport Railway Station in Dhaka yesterday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the seized items include eight foreign-made pistols, 14 magazines, 26 rounds of ammunition, 2.39kg of gunpowder, and 2.2kg of plastic explosives.

The operation was conducted by the 46th Independent Infantry Brigade between 11:15am and 12:00pm, based on intelligence reports suggesting that arms and explosives were being smuggled aboard the Rajshahi-bound intercity train, officials said.

Army officials, working in close coordination with the Dhaka Railway Police, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1