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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Bright red mailboxes, once central to postal exchanges, now stand rusting in silence at places that once bustled with people eagerly sending or awaiting letters. With handwritten messages fading into memory amid the rise of technology, these boxes remain quiet relics of a bygone era. The photo was taken at Kulti Post Office in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Jamaat sets sights on voters beyond borders

Party ramps up outreach to Bangladeshi diaspora

MAMUNUR RASHID and AHMED DEEPTO

Despite uncertainty over how effective the Election Commission's costly initiative to bring expatriate Bangladeshis into the voting process will be, Jamaat-e-Islami has been actively working to woo this voter base.

According to party leaders, Jamaat has already held meetings, both online and in person, with expatriate Bangladeshis in at least 40 countries. They said discussions have also been held with local community leaders to mobilise expatriates to register and vote.

Jamaat leaders claimed their members and supporters were active in 11 countries – including the US, UK, and several Middle Eastern nations – during the EC's voter registration and NID card distribution drives for expatriates. Party activists are

JAMAAT ACTIVITIES
Leaders say engagement with diaspora 'political responsibility'
Party held meetings in at least 40 countries to mobilise overseas voters
Using online, in-person campaigns to boost registration
Pledges parliamentary representation for diaspora if elected
EXPAT VOTING
EC launches Tk 400 crore project to enable expatriate voting
61,119 registration applications received; 25,711 approved so far
Voting to be conducted through postal ballots

still campaigning to educate expatriates on how to register, collect ballots, and return them. During his visit to the US, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur

Rahman urged expatriates to vote while addressing receptions in New York City and Buffalo. He pledged that Jamaat, if elected, would ensure parliamentary representation for the diaspora.

Earlier, Jamaat Nayebe-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher also called on Bangladeshi expatriates in the US to take part in the upcoming national polls as part of their democratic responsibility.

The EC has launched a Tk 5 crore project to develop new apps and systems for expatriate voting, with an estimated total cost of Tk 400 crore for logistics, including overseas ballot distribution and retrieval. EC officials have also travelled abroad to install equipment and train embassy staff to deliver NID services.

As of October 28, the EC's

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Taqi murder probe may end soon: Rab

UNB, Dhaka

The long-delayed investigation into the murder of Tanwir Muhammad Taqi is expected to conclude very soon, said Rab-11 Commanding Officer Lt Col HM Sajjad Hossain yesterday.

"We have already made considerable developments [on the probe]," he said at a press briefing at the Rab Media Centre in the capital's Karwan Bazar.

"Once the investigation concludes, all details will be disclosed," he said.

He said Rab maintains regular communication with Taqi's family.

Taqi, son of cultural activist and rights campaigner Rafiur Rabbi of Narayanganj city, was abducted on March 6, 2013, while heading to a local library from his Shahesta Khan Road residence.

Two days later, his body was found floating in the Shitalakkhya River.

'Pledge equal inheritance, land rights for women'

Speakers urge political parties to include women's rights in election manifestos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged all political parties to include clear commitments in their election manifestos to ensure women's equal rights in family inheritance, land ownership, agricultural resources, and access to natural resources.

They called for revising the current land allocation policy to remove discriminatory conditions, such as requiring widows or divorced women to have adult sons to qualify for khas (state-owned) land.

Participants also demanded priority allocation of agricultural khas land to landless women and indigenous families.

The event, titled "Women's Rights to Land, Agriculture, and All Natural Resources and Property: The Role of Government and Civil Society," was jointly organised by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Stand for Her Land (S4HL) at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

Keynote speaker Rowshan Jahan Moni, deputy executive director of ALRD, urged political parties to reform family laws and ensure equal inheritance rights for women of all religions, ethnicities, and social groups.

She called for legal safeguards for women of diverse gender identities and the mandatory

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reform family laws to remove gender bias

Prioritise khas land for landless women, indigenous families

Recognise women as farmers with equal access to loans, training

Guarantee fair wages, welfare for tea workers

Include women in disaster management committees

Protect indigenous, Dalit women's rights, safety

inclusion of women's names in land records.

She proposed quotas for women in smart agriculture cards and local databases, climate-resilient agricultural training,

disaster compensation funds, recognition of women fishers with ID cards, and protection for women dependent on forest resources.

She also highlighted the need for fair wages and land rights for tea garden workers, welfare for their families, and support for female-headed households affected by climate change. She urged mandatory inclusion of women in local disaster management committees.

Shireen Huq, chief of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, said with elections approaching, November is a crucial time to push for inclusion of women's demands in party manifestos.

Tamanna Singh Baraik from Sreemangal highlighted inhumane wages for tea garden workers, saying women are paid less due to underreporting of plucked leaf weights and that many have been landless for over 200 years. She stressed including these issues in election manifestos.

Jayanti Rani Mandal from Satkhira said Dalit women, being the most marginalised, must have their rights guaranteed and called for their representation in the upcoming election.

Falguni Tripura, general secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network,

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Implement 9th wage board, ensure fair pay

Journos place 39 demands

UNB, Dhaka

Journalists across the country staged protest rallies yesterday to press home 39-point demand, including the immediate implementation of the ninth wage board, formulation of a journalist protection law, and introduction of two weekly holidays.

The protests were organised under the banner of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) to ensure press freedom and journalists' welfare.

At a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, BFUJ Secretary General Kader Gani Chowdhury presented the demands.

Other demands include the formation of the tenth wage board for journalists, along with a unified wage board for print, electronic, online, and multimedia journalists; enforcement of the "No Wage Board, No Media" policy to ensure fair pay and benefits; establishment of a separate labour court for journalists; and speedy trials for all journalist murder cases, including that of Sagar and Runi.

Saint Martin's reopens to tourists, ships yet to set sail

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Bangladesh's only coral island, Saint Martin's, officially reopened to tourists yesterday, but not a single ship departed as operators suspended services, citing a government ban on overnight stays.

According to the Sea Cruise Operators Owners Association of Bangladesh, ship owners found little interest among tourists in day-long trips without the option to spend the night on the island.

"It is not possible to operate ships at a loss," said Hossain Islam Bahadur, the association's general secretary. "If the government allows overnight stays in November, we will resume operations within the month."

Under new government guidelines, a maximum of 2,000 tourists will be allowed to visit the island per day in November, though overnight stays will remain prohibited. In December and January, the same number of visitors will be permitted to stay overnight.

Authorities said ships must now depart from Cox's Bazar, as services from Inani in Ukhiya are not permitted.

Two vessels were scheduled to operate from the BIWTA jetty at Nuniachhara yesterday but later withdrew. Bahadur said with travel time taking seven to ten hours

each way, it was "impossible" to complete a round trip in one day.

Saint Martin's had been closed to tourists since February 1 to protect its ecosystem.

Md Shahidul Alam, additional deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, said ship owners were free to decide whether to operate but stressed that the 12 government-issued travel guidelines would be strictly enforced.

PHOTO: STAR

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has launched a registration app for visitors, while ship operators will handle travel permissions.

Many tourists expressed disappointment. Md Sadik Molla, a visitor from Gazipur, said he and six friends cancelled their plans after learning they would have to return the same day. "Travelling eight to ten hours and coming back the same evening is too exhausting," he said.

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver pushes his vehicle through a waterlogged section of Green Road in the capital around 8:00pm yesterday. A sudden downpour caught city dwellers off guard and flooded many streets in Dhaka, causing severe traffic congestion.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

November rain drenches the capital

UNB, Dhaka

A depression formed over the Bay of Bengal brought widespread rainfall across Bangladesh, including the capital, yesterday.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), Dhaka recorded 32 mm of rainfall between afternoon and 6:00pm, while the highest rainfall of the day, 166 mm, was recorded in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall occurred in five divisions -- Dhaka, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Rangpur, while light to moderate rain or thundershowers were reported in parts of Chattogram, Khulna and Barishal divisions.

Yesterday, the first day of November, Dhaka's sky remained cloudy since noon. By late afternoon, dark clouds blanketed

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