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## 9 assaulted, handed over to police

**Suspected AL activists held at Dhanmondi 32, party's office**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesters opposing the Awami League's "Lockdown" programme yesterday detained and handed over at least nine people, including a teenager, to police on suspicion of being linked to the party in Dhaka's Dhanmondi 32 and near the AL's central office in Gulistan.

Law enforcers took up positions in Dhanmondi 32 early in the morning, setting up barricades and checking all entry points.

Around 11:00am, several Jamaat-e-Islami activists gathered near the area, reportedly to resist any Awami League activity, which remains banned.

Soon after, members of Islami Chhatra Shibir, National Citizen Party, and others identifying themselves as "July Joddha" joined them.

Witnesses said many protesters,

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## Some parties slam EC over RPO changes

**EC says decisions on referendum after official govt order**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several political parties have criticised the Election Commission for amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO) and drafting the electoral code of conduct without prior consultation.

They also demanded a free, fair, and credible election and called on the EC to ensure the safety of voters and prevent the influence of criminal elements and black money before, during, and after the polls.

Meanwhile, the EC sought cooperation from the political parties ahead of the election and urged them to comply with the electoral code of conduct.

The remarks were made during a dialogue held yesterday in two phases, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, between EC officials and 12 political parties at the Election Commission headquarters in Agargaon.

This is the first time the EC sat with registered political parties ahead of the 13th national election. Representatives from 12 parties attended the talks, where the commission engaged them on 11 issues.

The agenda covered party and candidate responsibilities, adherence to the code of conduct, preventing AI misuse and misinformation, promoting communal harmony, and avoiding discrimination or the use of religion in politics.

At the dialogue, the political parties pressed the commission to announce the election schedule soon and to take immediate steps to ensure a secure and level playing field for all candidates.

The EC, on its part, repeatedly reminded the parties to comply with the electoral code of conduct, saying that



### A STORM OF YELLOW

**A One-spot Grass Yellow, four Broad-bordered Grass Yellows, and two pale green Mottled Emigrants – all different species of butterflies – pause together to sip minerals from the sand in Fatikchhari's Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary. These gentle wanderers range widely across South and Southeast Asia, drifting through forest edges, open fields and sunlit clearings. Adults feed on nectar from small flowering plants, while caterpillars rely on legumes (Grass Yellows) and Senna species (Emigrant). They shelter low in shrubs and light woodland, rarely still for long. All three are listed as "Least Concern" by the IUCN, yet habitat loss, pesticides and disappearing host plants quietly threaten their future.**

PHOTO: SHAMEEM HASAN

15-year-old beaten to death over 'theft'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 15-year-old boy was allegedly tortured to death on suspicion of theft in Dhaka's Mir Hajirbag area under Jatrabari.

The victim, Bappi, son of rickshaw-puller Md Shahjahan, lived with his family in Dholaipear's Prem Goli area and worked at a local factory alongside his mother.

Around 2:00am on Tuesday, three local youths – Rasel, Molla Shubho and Shakib – came to Bappi's house and took him away, said his elder brother Md Parvez.

They accused him of stealing cash and a prepaid electricity meter card from Fouzia Rowshan Akter Priti's residence.

"They confined him in a club room at Abu Hazi Mosque lane and beat him throughout the night. The next morning, they brought Bappi back home and told him to return the stolen items. When they didn't find anything, they took him away again."

Bappi's mother followed them to plead for his

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## Pak president, army chief get lifelong immunity

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament yesterday approved a sweeping constitutional amendment granting lifetime immunity to the president as well as the current army chief, a move critics warned would erode democratic checks and judicial independence.

The 27th amendment, passed by a two-thirds majority, also consolidates military power under a new Chief of Defence Forces role and establishes a Federal Constitutional Court.

The changes grant army chief Asim Munir, promoted to field marshal after Pakistan's clash with India in May, command over the army, air force and the navy.

He and other top military brass will enjoy lifelong protections.

Under the amendment, any officer promoted to field marshal, marshal of the air force, or admiral of the fleet will now retain rank and privileges for life, remain in uniform, and enjoy immunity from criminal proceedings.

Such protections were previously only reserved for the head of state.

"This constitutional amendment will increase authoritarianism and whatever little semblance of democracy existed in this country will fade away," said Osama Malik, an Islamabad-based lawyer.

"It will not only remove civilian oversight from the military's activities, it will also completely destroy the military hierarchy where all service chiefs were considered equal under the joint chief system," he told AFP.



**US President Donald Trump displays the signed bill package to reopen the federal government in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, on Wednesday. Congress ended the longest shutdown in US history – 43 days that left hundreds of thousands unpaid and paralyzed Washington amid partisan blame games.**

## Judge's son 'strangled to death' at home

**Injured wife, suspect in hospital**

STAR REPORT

The son of a judge was stabbed inside their home in Rajshahi city's Dabtola area yesterday.

Police have detained the alleged assailant, who was also injured during the incident.

Tawshif Rahman Sumon, 18, son of Rajshahi Metropolitan and Sessions Judge Abdur Rahman, was killed around 3:00pm on the fifth floor of a building.

Abdul Latif, who lives in the same building, said, "I found two boys -- the victim and the suspect -- lying in a pool of blood. Madam [the judge's wife] came out from their home and fell to the ground. I took all three to the hospital [Rajshahi Medical College Hospital]."

Doctors at RMCH declared Sumon dead on arrival. The judge's wife Tasmin Nahar and the suspect is undergoing treatment at the hospital

The building's caretaker, Meser Ali, said that when the young man entered the building around 2:30pm, he wrote his name as "Milon" and his address as Shahe Bazar in the caretaker's register.

He introduced himself as Judge Abdur Rahman's brother and went up to the fifth-floor flat carrying a bag.

About 30 minutes later, a woman who works in the flat as a domestic helper came running to inform Meser Ali that the judge's wife and son had been attacked with a

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**23 districts get new DCs ahead of polls**

**Four new divisional commissioner also appointed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-two districts yesterday got new deputy commissioners as part of a reshuffle in the field administration ahead of the national election.

Only Narayanganj DC Mohammad Zaidul Islam Minya was transferred to Chattogram.

The government also appointed four new divisional commissioners to Khulna, Rajshahi, Barishal and Mymensingh.

The appointments were announced through separate notifications issued by the public administration ministry.

The new DCs were appointed to Lakshmpur, Munshiganj, Netrakona, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Khagrachhari, Comilla, Pabna, Dhaka, Rangpur, Jessor, Meherpur, Noakhali, Gazipur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Madaripur, Moulivibazar, Barishal, Barguna, Rangamati, and others.

With the new orders, the government has now reshuffled DC positions in 50 districts in three phases ahead of the 13th national election, likely to be held in the first half of February.

In the national election, divisional and deputy commissioners serve as returning officers. As a result, the positions are considered highly important in the run-up to the polls.

**Ali Riaz now CA's special assistant**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has appointed Ali Riaz as a special assistant to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Riaz, who was vice-chairman of the National Commission, will hold the status of an adviser, as per the gazette notification from the cabinet division.

On September 18 last year, the government named Riaz as head of the Constitution Reform Commission, replacing Supreme Court lawyer Shahid Malik.

A Bangladeshi American, Riaz is a distinguished professor of politics and government at Illinois State University in the US. He chaired the Department of Politics between 2007 and 2017.

He is a non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council and currently serves as president of the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies.

