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Bangladesh is now moving forward on the path to democracy. We are hopeful that the election will be held in early or mid-February 2026 without any hassle. Most political parties have declared their candidates. The election atmosphere has already started across the country.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR

BNP Secretary General

Will disclose names if anyone pressurises us

Says ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen yesterday warned that the names of anyone attempting to influence or obstruct corruption investigations will be made public.

Responding to a question about whether the ACC faces undue pressure, Momen said, "If anyone tries to apply undue pressure on the ACC in the future, we will reveal their names."

He made the remarks at a views-exchange meeting at the ACC headquarters in Dhaka's Segunbagicha, marking the commission's founding anniversary.

He stressed that the commission must protect its independence and prevent external interference. "We have many limitations, and we are trying to overcome them," he added.

Regarding action against politicians, the ACC chief

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People wait in front of an OMS truck to buy rice and other essentials at subsidised rates on Ring Road near Shyamoly in Dhaka. Many had been waiting for more than three hours for the vehicle to arrive. Amid rising living costs, such services remain a lifeline for low-income families. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Living on the edge

How neglect putting thousands of students living in DU dormitories at risk

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

For years, experts have warned about the vulnerable condition of Dhaka University's residential halls, but those warnings have gone unaddressed.

Since 2008, multiple expert teams have inspected the old buildings and recommended comprehensive repairs. However, only emergency fixes were carried out, The Daily Star has found.

As a result, thousands of students have long lived in fear of a potential disaster, officials said.

Friday's earthquake intensified those concerns as fresh cracks appeared in buildings of at least 12 dormitories. Plasters also peeled off in many areas, according to hall union representatives.

The 5.7-magnitude quake left at least 10 students injured in four halls. In response, the university authorities announced a two-week vacation to repair the dormitories.

University engineers confirmed that Sir Salimullah Muslim Hall is currently at the highest risk, followed by Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall, Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Huq Hall, Surja Sen Hall, and Shamsunnahar Hall.

Zahurul Huq Hall, Surja Sen Hall, and Shamsunnahar Hall.

They said a Buet team inspected Mohsin Hall in 2008, and another team reviewed Mohsin, Zahurul Huq, Surja Sen, and Shahidullah halls in 2014.


DU engineer Md Moin Uddin said the experts had recommended

has been made yet," he said.

Engineers blamed chronic underfunding for the lack of regular maintenance.

"The government allocates money for development, but not for maintenance. It has become a tradition," said Meraj.

He said if the halls and other



University engineers confirmed that Sir Salimullah Muslim Hall is currently at the highest risk, followed by Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall, Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Huq Hall, Surja Sen Hall, and Shamsunnahar Hall.

major overhauls for Mohsin Hall and Surja Sen Hall. However, only partial strengthening of the footings and beams was completed. Both halls have now developed fresh cracks.

Another DU engineer, Md Meraj Uddin, said a Buet team inspected Sir Salimullah Muslim Hall in 2021 and recommended evacuation for major repairs. "But no progress

academic and administrative buildings were maintained regularly, the situation would have been better.

Acting Chief Engineer Kazi Md Akram said all old DU buildings require regular maintenance, but due to a low budget, only emergency work is done.

He said the expert teams' full

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NOISE POLLUTION

Now traffic police can fine offenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To curb noise pollution, traffic police will now be authorised to fine offenders — a power previously held only by magistrates.

Under the Noise Pollution (Control) Rules, 2025, issued Monday by the environment ministry, traffic police officers of at least sergeant rank can impose on-the-spot fines for illegal horns, loud sound systems, and other noise violations.

Officials say this added enforcement authority will strengthen monitoring on the ground, which had long been hindered by manpower limitations.

The new rules replace the Noise Pollution (Control) Rules, 2006, which officials described as outdated and lacking clarity on several regulatory issues.

The updated 2025 rules aim to address those gaps by reflecting current needs, practical realities, and technological changes.

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Enforce existing laws to curb digital violence against women

Say speakers during launch of 16 Days of Activism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh has strong laws to combat cybercrime, weak enforcement is allowing offenders to act with increasing impunity, said Sharmeen S Murshid, adviser to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

She said various initiatives were underway, but preventing cyber violence is not the responsibility of any one ministry. It requires coordinated action from all relevant state agencies.

Before, a girl couldn't go out on the street without thinking of eve teasing; now you cannot enter your cyberspace without being stalked. Technology will keep moving, but our attitude will determine its course.

Sharmeen S Murshid

Women and Children Affairs Adviser

Digital violence knows no borders, with between 16 and 58 percent of women and girls worldwide facing online abuse. Such violence often spills into offline spaces and restricts women's participation in public life.

Gitanjali Singh

UN Women Representative

Whenever girls feel unsafe, they should seek assistance from law enforcement and pursue legal action if necessary, she said, adding, "Victims may also inform the ministry, whose quick response team will reach them within 24 hours."

The adviser made the remarks at the launch of the 2025 global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, jointly organised by the ministry, the Local Consultative Group on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality, and the UN at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka.

This year's theme is "UNITE to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls".

Highlighting the gravity of the issue, she said, "Before, a girl couldn't go out on the street without thinking of eve teasing; now you cannot enter your cyberspace without being stalked. And the stalking world has become huge... It's not just a boy from a neighbourhood — it's anybody anywhere in the world. Technology will

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A woman carrying her child walks along the narrow edge of a footpath where drainage work is underway. With the area dug up and left unprotected, pedestrians are forced to navigate the risky spot at the edge of the road. The photo was taken in the Lakshmi Bazar area of the capital recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

POLLS MONITORING

Don't appoint politically-linked people

CEC tells local observers


STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday directed local election observer organisations not to appoint anyone with political links to monitor the upcoming national election.

The Election Commission sat with 81 organisations at its office as part of a dialogue ahead of the upcoming 13th parliamentary election.

The CEC reiterated that journalists and observers act as the commission's "CCTV cameras," ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the process.

CEC Nasir also instructed the organisations to provide proper training on election laws, rules, regulations, and other relevant issues to those who will monitor the polls on the ground.



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