



## Govt okays draft NGO law amid BNP's objection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Advisory Council yesterday approved the draft "The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025" amid strong objections from the BNP.

On Friday evening, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir in a statement said they have learned from reliable sources that the interim government was rushing to pass two laws: the "Police Commission Act" and the "NGO-related act".

"We believe the move to enact these laws ahead of the election indicates a different intention on the part of the government, which will hinder the democratic transition," he said.

It would not be appropriate to hurriedly pass such important laws without a public mandate.

"We believe these laws should be framed through proper debate in the next national parliament. We urge the government to refrain from taking such steps," the statement added.

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A farmer scatters potato seeds on a field in Baya of Paba upazila, Rajshahi, yesterday. The seeds (pieces of potatoes) will be planted in rows before furrows are dug for irrigation. Growers say they have reduced potato cultivation this season as plummeting potato prices left them with losses.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## Rab-15 CO among 300 transferred

Rab says transfers tied to polls; some also face yaba-related allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reshuffle, more than 300 members of Rapid Action Battalion-15, including its commanding officer Lt Col Kamrul Hasan, have recently been transferred from the unit responsible for Cox's Bazar and Bandarban.

Rab's media wing said the large scale transfers were part of routine annual reshuffles carried out in November-December, but expanded this year due to operational needs ahead of the upcoming national election.

It also acknowledged that several officers had been implicated in allegations involving drug seizures and other irregularities, which are now under investigation.

Documents from five Rab Headquarters circulars show that 634 personnel of all ranks, from cooks and sweepers to subedars, havildars, SIs, ASIs, corporals, nayeks, constables, sepoy, and soldiers, have been transferred.

Two orders on November 19 reassigned 198 and 200 members; another 100 were moved on November 17; 62 on November 12; and 74 more on November 27.

A review of the orders shows over 300 of them were serving at Rab-15, making the scale of changes within a single unit unprecedented in recent years.

After completing a year as Rab-15 commander, Lt Col Kamrul Hasan has been attached to headquarters. He has been replaced by Lt Col Mohammad Neyamul Halim

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## Gaza death toll surpasses 70,000

Two more children killed in Israeli airstrike

AGENCIES

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza on Saturday said more than 70,000 people have been killed since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted more than two years ago.

The milestone comes as a fragile US-brokered ceasefire largely holds, but with both sides accusing the other of violating the terms of the deal.

In a statement, Gaza's health ministry said the death toll from the war had risen to 70,100.

The ministry said that since the ceasefire came into effect on October 10, 354 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli fire.

They include two children who were killed in an Israeli attack yesterday.

The children's uncle said an Israeli drone fired on Fadi and Goma Abu Assi, brothers aged 10 and 12, while they were gathering firewood to help their wheelchair-bound father east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

"They are children...what did they do? They do not have missiles or bombs, they went to gather wood for their father so he can start a fire," Mohamed Abu Assi told Reuters as their funeral took place.

At the funeral, the children's father wept over the body of one of the boys whose white shroud had been peeled back to show his face.

It noted that the spike from the last death toll was due to the fact that the data relating to 299 bodies had been processed and approved by the authorities.

Despite the ceasefire, the Palestinian territory remains in a deep humanitarian crisis.

According to the terms of ceasefire, Hamas has released all the living hostages and returned the remains of 26 dead hostages.

## Frequent shake-ups 'erode confidence in field admin'

BAHARAM KHAN

Frequent reshuffles of deputy commissioners (DCs) just months before the national election have sparked unease in the field administration, raising concerns about election preparedness.

Between November 8 and 15, the government reshuffled DCs in at least 54 districts. Of them, 10 DCs were transferred to other districts, while 44 districts received first-time DCs. Orders involving at least six of these appointments or transfers have since been cancelled.

Typically, deputy secretaries serve as DCs and act as returning officers during national elections.

Officials say the decision to bar officers who served in the last three polls from election duties has narrowed the pool of experienced candidates, forcing the government to rely on less seasoned officers and fueling doubts about the administration's capacity to manage the upcoming vote.

Before the latest changes to the DC post early this month, the public administration ministry has had to reshuffle DCs multiple times in recent months.

According to public administration ministry officials, DCs work with at least three intelligence agencies at the district level. Alongside coordinating development activities and handling core administrative duties, they manage VIP protocol and navigate pressure from political parties.

Officials say the ministry has been appointing DCs without setting clear criteria, often under pressure from various quarters.

As a result, many efficient officers are now reluctant to take up the post, while some comparatively less competent officials have secured appointments through lobbying, forcing the government

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FIROZ MIA  
Ex-DC and public admin expert

to revise the transfers repeatedly, they said on condition of anonymity.

The instability has been evident across several districts. In Chattogram, for example, its then DC Farida Khanom was withdrawn on September 21 and Naogaon DC Mohammad Abdul Awal was named as her replacement. The order was soon cancelled. Later, Feni DC Saiful Islam took charge of Chattogram on October 19, only to be replaced 24 days later by Zahidul Islam Miah.

In recent months, a similar pattern was seen in other districts, including Chapainawabganj, Madaripur, Noakhali, Barguna, Meherpur, Bhola and Gazipur. In all cases, DC's were appointed, called back and then posted elsewhere.

A joint secretary of the Cabinet Division said that although DCs are government officers, the position is almost "quasi political" in nature. Those with solid field-level administrative experience should be prioritised for the role.

"Seven to eight lakh officials are involved in an election," he said. "Is it possible to keep all of them away from election duties? If not, why should such restrictions apply only to deputy commissioners and police superiors?"

According to Firoz Mia, a public administration expert, different districts require officers of different caliber, and it should be assessed accordingly before posting. He said the recent reshuffle indicates the ministry did not have such evaluations.

"Indecision at the top does not reflect an efficient administration," said the former DC, adding, "When the central administration hesitates, field officials lose confidence."

Public Administration Secretary Ehsanul Haque declined to comment on the matter when this correspondent approached him at his secretariat office through his public relations officer. He also did not respond to calls and text messages.

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## BAUL ABUL SARKAR Jamaat sees unrest plot behind protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday demanded "appropriate punishment" of Manikganj baul Abul Sarkar for "hurting religious sentiments", describing him as an "ally of the absconding Awami League".

The party said its highest policymaking body Majlish-e-Shura in a meeting discussed the issue, among others. The leaders observed that certain groups were trying to create unrest in a planned way by siding with Abul Sarkar.

The Shura demanded that the government put an end to such "malicious activities", warning there are fears of deterioration in the law and order situation if the people run out of patience.

The Shura's annual session was held at the Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's Moghbazar, with Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman in the chair. The remarks came in a proposal adopted after reviewing the "overall situation prevailing in the country".

According to the proposal circulated by Jamaat's central publicity wing, Abul Sarkar had made "blasphemous and obscene remarks"

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## Human washing machine goes on sale in Japan

AFP, Tokyo

After wowing World Expo visitors, a human washing machine is now on sale in Japan, a company spokeswoman said Friday.

Users lie down in the pod, close the lid and get cleaned like clothes in a washing machine -- but without the spin -- while music plays.

A prototype of the device, called the human washer of the future, attracted long queues at the six-month Expo that wrapped up in Osaka in October after welcoming over 27 million people.

Made by Japanese firm Science, the device is an update of a product displayed the last time Osaka hosted the event, in 1970.

"Our (company) president was inspired by that as a 10-year-old boy at the time," Science spokeswoman Sachiko Maekura told AFP.

The machine "not only washes your body but also your soul," she added, while also monitoring users' heartbeats and other vital signs.

After a US resort company contacted Science to see if the prototype would be commercialised, the firm decided to produce it for real.

A hotel in Osaka bought the first machine and is preparing to offer the service to hotel guests, the spokeswoman said.



Although CNG-run autorickshaws are banned on Dhaka-Mawa expressway, the vehicles rampantly use it to transport passengers from Jurain level crossing to Keraniganj. The slow-moving three-wheelers, which are supposed to use the road below this flyover, raise the risk of being hit by buses and trucks. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Hallmark MD Tanvir Mahmud dies

He had been serving a life sentence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tanvir Mahmud, managing director of Hallmark Group, who was jailed in a fraud case, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night.

Mahmud had been serving a life sentence at Dhaka Central Jail for his involvement in the Sonali Bank loan scam.

Assistant Inspector General of Prisons Md Jannatul Farhad confirmed the death to The Daily Star, noting that Mahmud had long-term health issues.

"Tanvir Mahmud had been suffering from various diseases for years, including kidney disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure," Farhad said.

"He also had asthma, and urinary complications."

His condition reportedly

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