

Newly formed Editors' Council committee holds first meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly elected executive committee of the Editors' Council has held its first meeting at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the New Age, formally assumed the role of president of the council at the meeting on Tuesday, the council said in a press release yesterday.

During the meeting, the council's outgoing president Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, was honoured by the executive committee members with a crest in recognition of his bold leadership and effective role in the council.

The meeting was attended by Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo; Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor of the Manab Zamin; Shamsul Haq Zahid, editor of The Financial Express; Tasmima Hossain, editor of The Daily Ittefaq; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor of the Bonik Barta; AMM Bahauddin, editor of The Daily Inqilab; and Rusko Mahmud, editor of the Suprobhat Bangladesh. Md Mozammel Haque, editor of Karatua, joined the meeting virtually.

At November 13 meeting, the council elected its new executive committee for a 2-year term, with Kabir as president and Hanif Mahmud as general secretary.



Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star and outgoing president of the Editors' Council, was honoured by the members of the Editors' Council executive committee with a crest in recognition of his bold leadership and effective role in the council during the first meeting of the newly elected committee at The Daily Star Centre on Tuesday.

PHOTO: EDITORS' COUNCIL

Woman sent to jail for killing 8 puppies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday sent a woman to jail over the killing of eight puppies in Ishwardi upazila on Monday.

The accused is Nishi Rahman, wife of Hasnur Rahman Nayon, an official of the upazila office of the government's Small Farmers Development Foundation.

Earlier on Tuesday night, Nishi was arrested from a residence in Ishwardi municipal area.

The case was filed by the upazila Livestock Officer Aklima Khatun under Section 7 of the Animal Welfare Act, 2019, which prohibits the killing or forcible relocation of stray animals and requires them to be vaccinated and sterilised instead.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Ishwardi Circle) Pranab Kumar confirmed the filing of the case.

Nishi is accused of drowning eight newborn puppies in a pond on the premises of Ishwardi Upazila Parishad on Monday -- an incident that went viral on social and mainstream media and sparked nationwide outrage.

She was produced before the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-1 yesterday afternoon.

After a hearing, Senior Judicial Magistrate Torikul Islam sent her to jail, said Rafikul Islam, general recording officer of Pabna Court Police.

Earlier, the accused and her family left their government residence after they were directed to vacate the house over the allegation.

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Khaleda's condition unchanged

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The former prime minister remained under close observation at Evercare Hospital in the capital.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus visited Evercare Hospital last night to enquire about Khaleda's health. He stayed there for nearly 30 minutes.

Khaleda's personal doctor, AZM Zahid Hossain, at 3:00pm stated that her condition remained the same.

BNP Standing Committee member Zahid requested everyone to keep praying for Khaleda's swift recovery.

The BNP chief was admitted to the hospital on November 23 on the advice of her medical board after being diagnosed with infections affecting her heart and lungs.

The 80-year-old veteran politician is also suffering from pneumonia and is currently receiving treatment in the hospital's Coronary Care Unit.

Meanwhile, advisers Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury and Farida Akhter, Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen, and BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other party leaders visited the hospital.

Sharmila Rahman Sithi, wife of Khaleda's late son Arafat Rahman

Koko, also visited the hospital.

Following a visit to the hospital, Syed Mohammad Faizul Karim, senior Nayeb-e-Amir of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, said, "We have enquired from those who are responsible. It is the same as before ... They have not been able to inform me of any significant changes."

SECURITY, CROWD

Two platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh were deployed in front of the hospital yesterday morning.

One platoon has been stationed at the main hospital gate, while the other is patrolling the surrounding area.

Police set up a barricade in front of the hospital and took positions at the main gate. Members of the Special Security Force (SSF) were present inside the hospital.

Despite party instructions not to crowd, party leaders and activists gathered outside the hospital.

They began arriving at the hospital gate in the morning, in small groups, and stood near the gate.

BNP leader Didar Hossain from Gazipur said, "We understand the party's instructions, but we wanted to be here to show our support for

Madam [Khaleda]. We are praying for her recovery."

Jubo Dal leader Akash Hossain from Dhanmondi said, "Our concern for Khaleda Zia's health has brought us here. We hope for her swift recovery and return to lead the party."

Party activist Dulal Hossain said, "It's hard to stay away when our leader is unwell."

PRAYERS

At different parts of the country, special prayers were offered for Khaleda's quick recovery.

Speaking at a prayer event in Nayapalton, BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan has said that despite being a national leader, Khaleda built her political legacy on the streets alongside millions of supporters, not from any position of comfort or privilege.

"Khaleda Zia never practised palace politics. She walked the streets with her people," UNB quoted him as saying.

At a separate prayer event, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi alleged that Khaleda's deteriorating health was largely the result of actions taken by ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Brazen killings stoke fear ahead of polls

FROM PAGE 1

Kibria multiple times inside a shop went viral on social media, sending a shockwave across the nation.

This week, two men linked to a criminal gang were gunned down outside the Khulna Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court. Days earlier, listed top criminal Tariq Saif Mamun was shot dead near Dhaka's busiest court area, and earlier last month, Chattogram's underworld figure Sarwar Hossain Babla was killed during a voter outreach event.

Law enforcement has struggled to regain footing since the fall of the Awami League government.

Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) reports at least 120 deaths in political violence between January and November. In November alone, it recorded 96 violent political incidents that left 12 people dead and around 874 injured, compared to October's 64 incidents, 10 deaths, and 513 injuries.

The organisation notes sharp rises in intra- and inter-party clashes, turf battles, extortion, intimidation, and disputes linked to nominations for the 13th national election.

Police Headquarters data also paints a grim picture. Over the past 15 months, at least 4,809 murder cases were filed nationwide, including 3,236 in the first 10 months of 2025, up from 3,029 in the same period in 2024 and 2,563 in 2023.

In the 15-month period, Dhaka Metropolitan Police registered 551 murder cases. Many of these were tied to incidents from the August 5 changeover or earlier but filed only recently.

Data gathered by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) showed that the monthly average of murder cases fell to 322 in the first half of 2025, from 343 in the same period last year, though still far higher than the averages of 252 in 2023, 260 in 2022, and 268 in 2021.

Police Headquarters data shows on an average 325 murder cases were filed every month from July to October this year, compared to 261 in 2023. Last year's average, however, spiked to 374 due to killings during the uprising. In August 2024 alone, 626 murder cases were filed. Cases over some of the murders that occurred during that period were also filed in 2025.

Adviser Jahangir on November 23 said there is "no risk" of law-and-order deterioration ahead of

the national election, adding that the overall security environment is steadily improving.

"As the election approaches, the number of rallies and processions by different political parties will naturally increase. When we assumed office, the situation had already begun to deteriorate. Over the past year and a half, our efforts have helped bring significant improvements," he said.

RISING GUN VIOLENCE

A CGS analysis shows a 30 per cent rise in firearms-related offences, with over 150 incidents reported every month on an average until June.

Compounding the crisis, more than 1,300 firearms looted from police stations during the July uprising remain missing, many believed to be fuelling the recent surge in violent crime.

Although the government has announced rewards for information regarding the stolen arms, progress has been minimal.

Gun violence was shocking in November.

On November 30 in Khulna, Fazle Rabbi Rajon, 35, and Hasib Hawlader, 31, were shot dead outside the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

On November 2, Tuhin Dewan, 22, was shot dead in Munshiganj amid a feud between two BNP groups. Arif Mir, 35, was killed eight days later in a clash linked to the same dispute, while injured Raihan Khan, 22, died on November 11.

That same day in Khulna's Arongghata, teacher Imdadul Haque, 55, was shot dead near the BNP office.

On November 15 in Lakshmipur, ward BNP general secretary Abul Kalam was hacked and shot dead, with his wife accusing a Chhatra Dal activist.

On November 27 in Brahmanbaria, former Chhatra Dal leader Saddam Hossain, 35, was taken from his home at midnight and shot dead.

On November 5 in Chattogram, a known criminal Sarwar Hossain Babla, 43, was killed during a shooting at a campaign event for BNP's candidate hopeful Ershad Ullah. Police in the port city linked Babla's murder to clashes between rival factions vying for territorial control.

On November 13 in Chattogram's Rangunia, Shramik Dal leader Abdul Mannan was shot dead.

On November 17 in Dhaka's Mirpur, assailants entered a shop and shot dead Golam Kibria, 47, member

secretary of Pallabi Thana Jubo Dal.

The violence followed multiple killings tied to political or local rivalries reported across the country in October, many involving firearms.

Just as December began, an auto-rickshaw driver, Pappu Sheikh, 26, was shot dead in Dhaka's Jurain area, reportedly over previous enmity.

Speaking to this newspaper recently, criminologist Omar Faruk said every citizen "is now living with a sense of insecurity".

With the election nearing, tensions will likely deepen as political groups may deploy released underworld criminals to display strength, conduct armed shows of force, and intimidate rivals, said Faruk, professor of criminology and police science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University.

He urged the government and police to re-arrest identified criminals and recover illegal firearms through focused operations.

"Otherwise, the upcoming election is unlikely to be peaceful or fair, and incidents of killing and violent crime may rise sharply," he warned.

Security analyst Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, echoed the concern, saying that police presence and effectiveness remain below expectations.

"The political leadership at the home ministry, along with senior police officers, must take the necessary steps to boost the force's morale so that they can operate more effectively and efficiently," he said.

Contacted last night, Bangladesh Police spokesperson AHM Sahadat Hossain told The Daily Star that ahead of the election, police are working with more confidence than they had in the months after the July uprising.

About preventing targeted killings, he cited difficulty in anticipating such incidents.

"What we often observe is that political rivalries and personal grudges operate at an individual or group level. And at that level, it is difficult to detect or prevent such incidents," he said.

"But we act when there are some signs. For example, when a criminal is released from jail, we place them under watch through our intelligence units. If something occurs, police can step in early or take immediate legal action," he said.

Exams disrupted as teachers declare full shutdown

FROM PAGE 1

in private tuition for my child, only to have the exams disrupted by the strike. It's shameful to hold students' futures hostage to fulfil demands."

In Jhenidah, only 446 of 908 schools conducted exams, confirmed Md Amjad Hossain, assistant primary education officer.

Meanwhile, 479 of 805 primary schools in Kushtia held exams.

District Primary Education Officer Mofizul Islam said exams were conducted in schools with headteachers present. However, 326 schools had to suspend assessments.

Saidul Islam, acting headteacher of Swastipur Government Primary School, said, "Once our demands are met, we'll hold the exams on time."

In Rajshahi, exams proceeded in most schools with the help of headteachers, office staffers, and guardians.

Md Ashraful Islam, assistant primary education officer in the district, said that after some initial disruptions, exams were conducted smoothly.

However, several teachers, including Farjana Rahman of Railway Government Primary School, expressed frustration over conducting exams with little workforce. "Our demands are legitimate, and the government should resolve these issues quickly."

In Sylhet, all 5,054 primary schools held exams, with support from assistant teachers and other staffers.

Similarly, in Tangail, all 1,623 primary schools conducted exams with support from local communities, confirmed District Primary Education

Officer Md Sahab Uddin.

In Mymensingh, 1,840 of 2,140 primary schools held exams with guardians' help. Md Obaidullah, district primary education officer, said headteachers of those schools coordinated with guardians to ensure exams continued.

In Gaibandha, all 1,463 primary schools held exams with support from local authorities. District Primary Education Officer Lakshman Kumar Das said exams proceeded smoothly with help from the upazila nirbahi officer and assistant commissioner (Land).

In Bogura, exams were held in all 1,603 primary schools.

Md Rezwan Hossain, district primary officer, said, "Local communities stepped in to ensure exams went ahead. However, in Dupchanchia Model Primary School, guardians reacted aggressively when teachers refused to take the exams. The situation was later resolved through discussions."

Guardian Masud Parvez, whose child is a fifth-grader, said, "The children are not able to sit for their exams properly, which is harming them. The government should quickly resolve this issue, or the students will suffer long-term effects."

In Kishoreganj, 390 of 1,327 primary schools could not hold exams. District Primary Education Officer Mojib Alam said officials and guardians helped maintain the schedule in the other schools, though parents expressed anger over the disruptions.

In Chattogram, Narayanganj, and Munshiganj, all primary schools held exams as scheduled.

MINISTRY'S WARNING

In its warning issued yesterday, the primary and mass education ministry urged striking teachers to resume duties immediately and ensure timely completion of exams.

While acknowledging teachers' concerns, it stressed that disruptions to students' education are unacceptable.

The statement further said that despite measures taken, several teachers' organisations have continued to disrupt exams. "In some cases, teachers willing to conduct exams have been physically assaulted. Such actions, which jeopardise students' education, are in violation of government service laws, conduct regulations, and criminal law."

Meanwhile, leaders of the protesting teachers last night declared that the ongoing "complete shutdown" across the country will continue indefinitely until their demands are met.

The announcement came in a joint press release issued by the Prathomik Shikhhok Dabi Bastobayon Parishad and the Bangladesh Prathomik Sahakari Shikhhok Sangathan Oikya Parishad.

The teachers' three-point demand includes raising the pay scale to grade 10, resolving complexities in obtaining higher grades after 10 and 16 years, and ensuring 100 per cent departmental promotion to headteacher posts.

Teachers' current salaries start at Grade 13. There are over 65,000 government primary schools, with more than 1 crore students.

the UK, China and other countries.

Yunus, who has been regularly monitoring the updates on Khaleda's health condition, reiterated the government's assurance of providing all necessary support.

He stayed at the hospital for about half an hour. National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman accompanied him during the hospital visit.

The BNP chief was admitted to Evercare on November 23 after being diagnosed with infections in her heart and lungs. Her condition deteriorated on November 27, after which she was shifted to the CCU.

The 80-year-old three-time prime minister has long been battling multiple health complications. She has a pacemaker and has previously undergone stent implants in her heart.

Yunus visits Khaleda at hospital

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head of medical board Shahabuddin Talukder, her younger son's wife Syeda Sharmila Rahman and her younger brother Shamim Eskandar.

Khaleda's medical team briefed Yunus about her condition, stating that her treatment is being conducted under the supervision and assistance of specialist doctors from the US's Mount Sinai and Johns Hopkins as well as from