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## TIB slams bureaucratic control over the NHRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed deep concern and disappointment that the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025 places the commission under bureaucratic control.

TIB said this will completely destroy the possibility that had emerged for constituting a genuinely independent human right watchdog from government influence.

The organisation cited the fact that stakeholders involved in drafting the ordinance were kept in the dark, which illustrates how bureaucratic rigidity and even sabotage hold the long-anticipated reform process hostage.

The cabinet secretary was included on the selection committee solely to confirm government control of the process by maintaining authoritarian practices. Furthermore, the organisation described these developments as embarrassing examples of the government's

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A Palestinian worker involved in a rubble management project maneuvers a digger to shift debris of destroyed buildings and houses in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BNP assures its allies of fair number of seats

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP yesterday assured more than two dozen of its allies that they will not field candidates in a reasonable number of seats to give those parties a fighting chance in the upcoming national election.

The development comes after its allies, who participated in the BNP's movement to restore democracy over the years, expressed dissatisfaction over the party's announcement of candidates in seats they had hoped to field candidates themselves.

The BNP has so far announced candidates in 272 out of 300 seats.

A distance has been created with the BNP regarding the issue of seat-sharing, said Saiful Haque, general secretary of Biplobi Workers Party, one of the 29 parties that joined in the BNP's movement during the previous regime's tenure.

"Misunderstandings have been created -- there have been questions on whether the BNP is running alone," he said.

Subsequently, at a meeting yesterday with leaders of the 29 political parties, the BNP leaders have assured their allies that the issue will be resolved by December 18, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the discussions.

The party will meet with the alliance members

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## Humans made fire 350,000yrs earlier than we thought

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



The earliest known evidence of human fire-making has been discovered in the UK, dating back over 400,000 years, in a new groundbreaking discovery.

Fire-cracked flint, hand axes and heated sediments have been found at a disused clay pit near Barnham, Suffolk, pushing the timeline back 350,000 years from the previous record of 50,000 years ago in northern France.

Crucially, two fragments of iron pyrite – a spark-striking mineral – were also found at the site, which is located between Thetford and Bury St Edmunds.

Geological studies confirm pyrite's local rarity, suggesting deliberate transport for fire production.

It took four years for a team, led by researchers at the British Museum, to demonstrate that the heated clay was not caused by wildfire.

## Jail term to be scrapped for prescribing banned drugs

Draft ordinance proposes easing some punitive measures against doctors for rules violations

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government plans to ease punitive measures against doctors for violating rules, with a draft ordinance seeking to scrap jail terms for prescribing banned medicines.

The draft of the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Ordinance 2025 also proposes reducing the jail term from three years to one year for doctors found guilty of practising medicine without registration with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC).

According to the existing law, a doctor may face up to three years in prison or a fine of Tk 1 lakh, or both, for prescribing banned medicines.

The draft, however, proposes imposing only a fine of Tk 5 lakh.

➔ "Medical tribunals" to handle cases of professional misconduct

➔ Jail term of up to 5yrs for unauthorised use of "Dr" title

➔ Search committee to select BMDC president, senior VP

➔ Mandatory annual inspection of health facilities by BMDC

To deal with allegations against doctors, one or more "medical tribunals" will be formed under the ordinance, which will replace the existing BMDC Act 2010, said ministry officials.

As in the existing BMDC Act, the draft ordinance states that only holders of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degrees can use the title "Dr" before their names.

Formed in 1972, the BMDC is responsible for registering new doctors, dentists, and medical technologists; renewing their licences; handling disciplinary issues; formulating undergraduate and postgraduate curricula; and accrediting public and private medical and dental colleges and institutes.

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## Govt to provide firearm licence to candidates

July warriors to get security; govt to start Operation Devil Hunt phase-2

BAHARAM KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The government has decided to provide personal security to individuals who played key roles in the July uprising in the wake of several shooting incidents, including the Friday attack on Sharif Osman Hadi, an independent MP aspirant from Dhaka-8.

Intelligence agencies have been instructed to compile a list of high-risk individuals after thorough scrutiny.

Additionally, the government will offer a firearm licence to candidates in the upcoming election, in a departure from previous policies that allowed only government employees to possess firearms.

To address the growing threat of illegal arms and criminal activities, Operation Devil Hunt - Phase 2 will be launched, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, told a press briefing after a core committee meeting on law and order at the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday, where the decisions were taken.

Earlier on February 8, the government launched Operation Devil Hunt- phase 1 to combat terrorism.

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Inqilab Moncho staged a rally that marched from Shahbagh to Raju memorial sculpture at Dhaka University, protesting the shooting of its spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi, an MP aspirant for Dhaka-8. Inset, BNP held a similar demonstration in the capital's Nayapaltan area, home to its central office. Both photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN

## THAI-CAMBODIA ROW Fighting rages on despite Trump's ceasefire claim

AFP, Bangkok

Cambodia shut its border crossings with Thailand yesterday, after Bangkok denied US President Donald Trump's claim that a truce had been agreed to end days of deadly fighting.

Violence between the Southeast Asian neighbours, which stems from a long-running dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre border, has displaced around half a million people on both sides.

At least 25 people have died this week, including four Thai soldiers the defence ministry said were killed in the border area yesterday.

The latest fatalities were followed by Phnom Penh announcing it would immediately "suspend all entry and exit movements at all Cambodia-Thailand border crossings", the interior ministry said.

Each side blamed the other for reigniting the conflict, before Trump said a truce had been agreed.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said Trump "didn't mention whether we should make a ceasefire" during their Friday phone call.

The two leaders "didn't discuss" the issue, Anutin told journalists on Saturday.

Trump had hailed his "very good conversation" with Anutin and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Friday.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord" agreed in July, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

## SHOOTING OF HADI 'Arrest attackers within 48hrs'

STAR REPORT

Protesting the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, an aspiring candidate for the Dhaka 8 constituency and spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, several political parties and platforms demonstrated across the country yesterday.

In Dhaka, Inqilab Moncho held a protest rally titled "Aggrieved Citizens' Assembly and Mass Resistance", where they issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the government to arrest those responsible for the shooting.

Speakers at the rally described Hadi's attack as an assault not only on an individual but also on Bangladesh's independence and the July movement. They announced plans for an all-party rally at the Central Shaheed Minar on December 15.

Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator of the southern region of the National Citizen Party, said, "The bullet fired at Osman Hadi did not just pierce his head; it pierced the head of every citizen of Bangladesh."

Echoing the sentiment, Daily Amar Desh

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**BANGLADESH TERRY TOWEL & LINEN MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION**

Following distinguished members have elected Office Bearers and Board of Directors for the tenure: 2026-2027

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