



## Election process must stay on track

Political parties say at Star elections dialogue



“The country is suffering because the ‘AL question’ has not been resolved through a Truth Commission.”  
**Nahid Islam**,  
convener of National Citizen Party



“Sitting in an air-conditioned room at the Planning Commission to make plans will achieve nothing. Plans must rise from the bottom.”  
**Mujahidul Islam Selim**,  
presidium member of Communist Party of Bangladesh



“Many said the BNP is hungry for power. Now it is being proven that delays have created space for incidents that could sabotage the election.”  
**Mirza Fakhruddin Alamgir**,  
secretary general of BNP



“We will introduce a tax relief system... Instead of paying 100 percent tax, businesses will pay 50 percent every third year as an incentive.”  
**Hamidur Rahman Azad**,  
assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of four political parties yesterday pledged to build a society free from corruption, protect the rights and safety of people of all walks of life, and promote good governance and balance of power at the highest levels of the government. They also pledged to ensure full independence of the judiciary and the press and participation of women in the political sphere.

They came up with the pledges at the Star Elections Dialogue, titled “Your Party, Voters’ Questions,” organised by The Daily Star at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka. The paper’s Consulting Editor Kamal Ahmed moderated the event.

Talking about the recent spate of violence rocking the country, BNP



Secretary General Mirza Fakhruddin Islam Alamgir said the incidents that occurred over the last few weeks made people worried. “People are again asking whether the election will really happen or not,” he said.

Fakhruddin said the opportunity for an election was created through 15 years of movements, bloodshed, repression and suffering, and finally through a student-led uprising.

“We, the people of Bangladesh, always love elections. But over the last 15 years, a situation was created where people felt they would survive only if they stayed away from elections,” he said.

“Whenever we get such a chance, some groups and some incidents destroy it,” Fakhruddin said, adding that his party wants to remove this fear and move towards the election.

“Many said the BNP is hungry for power. Now it is being proven that delays have created space for incidents that could sabotage the election,” he said.

Referring to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia’s Vision 2030 announced in 2016, Fakhruddin said current reform proposals about political restructuring and balance of power between the cabinet,

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## 28 arrested so far for attacks on Star and Prothom Alo

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven people were sent to jail yesterday over their alleged involvement in the arson, vandalism and looting of the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

They were arrested in separate drives across the capital, police said, adding that nine were shown arrested in the case filed by The Daily Star and two in the one filed by Prothom Alo.

Investigators produced them before a Dhaka court, seeking their detention in jail until the probe is completed, after which the court sent them to jail.

With these, 28 people have so far been arrested in the cases, 17 of whom have been sent to jail. Besides, two individuals were arrested under Section 54 of the Penal Code.

Earlier in the day, Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s media wing issued a press release stating that the Detective Branch arrested nine suspects from different parts of Dhaka, while Tejgaon police arrested the remaining two.

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## ATTACKS ON MEDIA, CULTURE Impunity at the core of mob violence

Says UN expert; CPJ urges probe, notes pattern of attacks on freedom of expression

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mob attacks on leading media outlets and cultural centres in the country are deeply alarming and must be promptly and effectively investigated, with perpetrators brought to justice without delay, UN expert Irene Khan said yesterday.

In a statement, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion said the attacks reflected the interim government’s failure to protect media and artistic freedom, warning of serious consequences for the country’s democratic progress.

The unrest followed the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, a prominent youth leader of the July 2024 uprising. The 32-year-old was shot by masked gunmen in Dhaka on December 12 and died last Thursday at a hospital in Singapore.

After news of his death spread, protests erupted demanding justice. Several buildings – including those housing Prothom Alo and The Daily Star – were vandalised, looted and set on fire. New Age editor Nurul Kabir was harassed, while cultural organisations such as Chhayana and Udichi were also attacked.

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Nahid Islam, convener of NCP; Mujahidul Islam Selim, presidium member of CPB; Mirza Fakhruddin Islam Alamgir, secretary general of BNP; and Hamidur Rahman Azad, assistant secretary general of Jamaat at the Star Elections Dialogue held at the Media Bazar, Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Illegal firearms, social media abuse a cause of concern

ROs, police tell EC

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Returning officers and field-level police officials yesterday expressed concerns over major challenges such as illegal arms, social media rumours, indiscriminate bail of listed criminals, and weak border security.

At a meeting with the Election Commission, they sought urgent steps to address these issues ahead of the upcoming polls and July charter referendum.

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## ‘Ensure safety of our missions now’

Dhaka asks Delhi after demos near embassy, missions in India; two countries summon each other’s high commissioners

### DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has asked New Delhi to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and security of Bangladesh’s diplomatic missions and facilities across India.

The call came in the wake of violent demonstrations near several Bangladesh missions in India.

The government also urged India to carry out a thorough investigation and said such incidents must not recur.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh foreign ministry summoned Pranay Verma, the Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, around 10:00am to convey the message.

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**Visionary Pathfinder**

**Guiding Star**

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## Reazuddin Ahmed

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The Financial Express, News Today and  
The Financial Herald

Former President, National Press Club

Former President, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists

Former Chairman, South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA)

On the fourth anniversary of his passing, we,  
his family members, respectfully seek prayers  
for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

**IN REMEMBRANCE**