

Towards hope

FROM PAGE 14  
With dissent no longer throttled and certain political factions no longer hounded, this year saw huge rallies that was also a means to show their strength if only to give more weight to their demands. Helazat-e-Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami and more recently, the BNP, among others staged their "showdowns" in a bid to outnumber the other. But it must have been Khaleda's funeral that witnessed a genuine outpouring of love and affection as mourners clogged almost the entire Dhaka city for hours.

This was supposed to be the year when Bangladesh adopted reforms and accordingly, negotiations and discussions went on for months under the auspices of a consensus commission. The resulting July charter, which is going to be put up in the referendum in the coming elections, understandably fell short of the lofty expectations that the young July rebels had in mind. So much so, that the party born out of the July uprising, the National Citizen Party, refused to sign it. While the reform commissions came forward with their reports, genuine reforms are still to be instituted save for one or two instances. We have to wait till after the election.

Perhaps the most outwardly visible characteristic of this year has been the mob, stemming from ever increasing intolerance and dogmatism. Faced with an equally timid administration that has been kept not to be tough, angry crowds often got out of hand. This only ended up in costing lives and property as we have seen across the country, but most recently in Mymensingh where a man was lynched and then in Dhaka where this newspaper, along with Prothom Alo, survived a violent bout of arson attack and vandalism that halted the publication of both newspapers for a day. The same night two other cultural organisations - Chhayanaut and Udichi - known for their involvement in theatre and music were attacked and vandalised as well. Law enforcement agencies of the government showed little resolve to address the worsening law and order.

Yet it is only with strong resolve that we can turn the page and turn around. It is with that resolve that we usher in the new year and wish every one a peaceful, healthy, prosperous and happy new year.

FROM PAGE 14  
submissions by Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu), an ally of the AL.

Though EC records show that seven aspirants from JSD-Inu filed nominations, the party said it would not participate in the polls.

On Monday, the party announced a boycott of the election, alleging the authorities were attempting to stage an "unconstitutional referendum" and a "one-sided parliamentary election."

Sajjad Hossain, the party's office secretary, questioned the authenticity of the nominations. "We are not taking part in the polls. Our president is in jail, while the general secretary has been absent from work for a long time. So, who issued their nomination letters?" he asked.

EC Public Relations Officer Ruhul Amin Mollik, who provided journalist with the data, said the EC compiled it based on information submitted by the aspirants themselves. Election Commissioner Tahmid Ahmed told this newspaper that the matter would be examined during the nomination scrutiny period.

EC data also indicates that no nominations were submitted by Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (Marxist-Leninist), Krishak Sramik Janata League, Bangladesh National Awami Party,

51 of 59 parties turn in nominations

Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, and Trinamool BNP.

With aspirants from at least 50 parties, the upcoming election is expected to see significantly higher participation than in elections since 2008, when party registration became mandatory.

EC sources said 28 parties, including the Awami League and its allies, contested the 12th parliamentary election in 2024. All 39 registered parties participated in the 2018 polls, which were widely criticised over allegations of ballot stuffing on the night before the voting day, while only 12 parties contested the largely boycotted 2014 election.

All 38 registered parties joined the 2008 polls. Earlier, 54 parties contested in 2001, 81 in the June 1996 election, and 41 in the controversial February 1996 polls. In 1995, 75 parties participated. The 1988 election saw only eight parties participate, as major opposition groups, including the BNP and the Awami League, boycotted the polls.

In 1986, 28 parties contested, though many opposition parties, including the BNP, did not participate. In 1979, 29 parties joined, while the country's first

parliamentary election in 1973 saw 14 parties contest.

**PARTY WISE ASPIRANTS**  
Apart from BNP, Jamaat, Islami Andolon, JP (GM Quader), NCP, and AB Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad fielded candidates in 104 seats, followed by Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis with 94, Khilafat Majlis with 68, Communist Party of Bangladesh with 65, Insaniyat Biplob Bangladesh with 42, and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Basad) with 41.

Bangladesh Islami Front submitted nominations for 27 seats, JSD (Rab) for 31, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist) for 30, Liberal Democratic Party for 24, Jonotar Dal and Gano Forum for 23 each, Islamic Front Bangladesh for 22, Bangladesh Supreme Party for 21, and Bangladesh Sangskritik Mukti Jote for 20.

Bangladesh Labour Party aspires to contest in 19 seats, Bangladesh Congress and Ganosamhati Andolon in 18 each, Amjonotar Dal in 17, Bangladesh Muslim League in 14, Bangladesh Republican Party and Jatiya Party in 13 each, and Nagorik Oikya and Bangladesh Khilafat Andolan in 11 each.

Bangladesh Nationalist Front, Bangladesh Minority Janata Party, and Bangladesh Jasad filed nominations in nine seats each; Nationalist

Democratic Movement and Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Andolan in eight each; Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Muslim League (BML), and Zaker Party in seven each; and Bangladesh Nezame Islam Party and Gano Front in six each.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Sirajul) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh aspirants have filed nominations for five seats each, while several smaller parties submitted nominations in three seats or fewer.

**INDEPENDENT ASPIRANTS DROP**  
According to the data, the number of independent candidates this time has dropped sharply compared to the 2024 and 2018 polls.

In 2024, a record 747 independents filed nominations, with 437 contesting. Experts viewed this as the Awami League's bid to boost turnout, though the presence of rebel candidates from the then-ruling party led some to dismiss them as "dummy candidates."

In 2018, 498 independents filed, and 128 contested, while in 2014, 150 filed and 104 ran. Earlier elections saw 120 independents in 1973, 422 in 1979, 453 in 1986, 214 in 1988, 424 in 1991, 284 in 1996, 486 in 2001, and 151 in 2008, according to EC data.

PARTY WISE ASPIRANTS	
BNP	331
Jamaat	276
Islami Andolon	268
Jatiya Party (GM Quader)	224
Gano Odhikar Parishad	104
Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis	94
Khilafat Majlis	68
CPB	65
AB Party	53
NCP	44
Basad	41
MOST ASPIRANTS FOR A SEAT	
18 (Dhaka 12, Gazipur 2)	
17 (Dhaka 17, Dhaka 18)	
16 Dhaka 3	
LOWEST ASPIRANTS FOR A SEAT	
2 Pirojpur 1,	
3 (Dhaka 3, Chattogram 15)	
4 (Jamalpur 1, Netrokona 4, Sherpur 3)	

Gaza's 'life-saving aid' at risk

EU warns as Israel threatens ban on several aid groups; Palestinian shot dead in West Bank

AGENCIES  
The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism said in a statement the move was part of Israel's decision to "strengthen and update" regulations governing the activities of international NGOs in the Palestinian territory.

"Humanitarian organisations that fail to meet security and transparency requirements will have their licences suspended," the ministry said.

The foreign ministers of 10 nations on Tuesday expressed "serious concerns" about a "renewed deterioration of the humanitarian situation" in Gaza, saying the situation was "catastrophic".

The warning came a day after US President Donald Trump warned Hamas there would be "hell to pay" if it fails to disarm in Gaza, as he presented a united front with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, reports AFP.

The EU warned yesterday that Israel's threat to suspend several aid groups in Gaza under new registration rules would block "life-saving" assistance from reaching the population.

"The EU has been clear: the NGO registration law can not be implemented in its current form," EU humanitarian chief Hadja Lahbib posted on X, after Israel said several groups would be barred from January 1.

"IHL (international humanitarian law) leaves no room for doubt: aid must reach those in need," Lahbib wrote.

Israel warned on Tuesday that it would suspend from January several aid organisations operating in Gaza for failing to provide details about their Palestinian staff, accusing two Doctors Without Borders employees of links to Hamas.

Jamaat open to unity

FROM PAGE 5  
a concern, as ties between the two countries have hit their lowest point in decades since her downfall.

India, South Asia's biggest power, had cultivated a close working relationship with Hasina, helping expand business and trade ties between the neighbours.

As New Delhi seeks to engage parties that could form the next government, Shafiqur confirmed meeting an Indian diplomat earlier this year after his bypass surgery. Unlike diplomats from other countries who made open courtesy visits to him, the Indian official asked that the meeting remain confidential, the Jamaat chief said.

"Why? There are so many diplomats who visited me and it was made public. Where is the problem?" Rahman said. "So we must become open to all and open to each other. There is no alternative to develop our relationship."

India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Shafiqur's statement about the meeting or any request for it to be confidential.

An Indian government source confirmed contacts with various parties.

Asked about Jamaat's historical closeness to Pakistan, the Jamaat chief said: "We maintain relations in a balanced way with all. We are never interested in leaning toward any one country. Rather, we respect all and want balanced relations among nations."

He said any government that includes Jamaat would "not feel comfortable" with President Mohammed Shahabuddin, who was elected unopposed with the AL's backing in 2023.

Shahabuddin, the ceremonial head of the country, himself told Reuters this month that he was willing to step down midway through his term.

Shahabuddin, in a telephone conversation with Reuters yesterday, declined to comment on Rahman's position, saying he did not want to "complicate the matter further".



A Palestinian woman collects water near the rubble of residential buildings destroyed during the war in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, on New Year's Eve yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bleak rights record in 2025

FROM PAGE 14  
In 2025, at least 197 people were killed in mob attacks, up from 128 in 2024, according to ASK. During the interim government's tenure, at least 293 people were killed in mob violence, it said.

Victims included men, women, religious minorities and marginalised groups. ASK also documented incidents where freedom fighters, members of the Baul community and others were humiliated, assaulted and publicly abused.

It appears that a change in state power has failed to bring the desired improvement in the overall human rights situation, ASK said in a press statement yesterday.

"Instead, longstanding patterns of repression have continued in new forms, allowing authoritarian practices, lack of accountability and discriminatory conduct to persist unchecked. As a result, the human rights situation has been assessed as broadly unstable and deeply concerning," it added.

Meanwhile, MSF recorded 428 incidents of lynching that killed 166 people in 2025.

One of the most shocking incidents occurred on December 18 in Bhaluka, Mymensingh, when garment worker Dipu Chandra Das was beaten and burnt to death

over false allegations of blasphemy.

There were at least 42 attacks on the Hindu community in 2025, affecting 33 homes, according to ASK. These included 36 arson incidents, attacks on four temples, vandalism of 64 idols and nine cases of land grabbing. One person was killed and at least 15 were injured.

ASK said groups identifying themselves as "tawhidi janata" were involved in vandalising historically significant sites and centres of art and culture and harassing women and dissenters.

During this period, various statues and monuments related to Bangladesh's history, including the Liberation War, were vandalised and defaced.

These acts constitute a serious insult to the national symbols deeply connected to the Bengali identity, Bangladesh's Liberation War and its independence, ASK said.

Although political activities were relatively limited in early 2025, internal feuds and violence escalated as the election approached, with groups seeking to assert dominance.

ASK recorded at least 401 incidents of political violence, leaving 102 people dead and 4,744 injured. MSF documented 599

incidents of political violence affecting 5,604 people. Of them, 86 were killed and 5,518 were injured, including 97 who sustained gunshot wounds.

After the election date was announced, MSF recorded 26 incidents related to nominations and campaigning. Three were killed and 249 were injured in these incidents.

Inqilab Moncho Spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi was shot dead a day after the Election Commission announced the election schedule.

Both organisations said 2025 was a deeply troubling year for media freedom.

MSF recorded 289 incidents affecting 641 journalists, including one killing, injuries, threats and legal harassment. It also cited the continued use of the Cyber Security Act and ordinance to file cases against journalists.

ASK recorded harassment or abuse of at least 381 journalists. Of them, 123 faced legal cases, 118 were physically attacked, 20 received death threats and 23 were targeted by law enforcement. Three journalists were killed, while the bodies of four others were recovered under mysterious circumstances.

Media freedom came under severe threat on December 18, when mobs attacked, looted and set

fire to the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo. New Age Editor Nurul Kabir was also harassed. Fire service operations were obstructed, and both newspapers were forced to suspend print and online editions for one day.

On the same day, cultural institution Chhayanaut was also attacked. ASK described the incidents as a dark chapter in the history of press freedom in Bangladesh.

Deaths in custody and allegations of extrajudicial killings remained major concerns.

ASK documented at least 38 extrajudicial killings in 2025, all occurring in law enforcement custody, reportedly during "crossfire" or "gunfights".

MSF recorded 19 incidents of gunfights that left 22 people dead. Twelve of those deaths occurred during joint forces operations led by the army.

In prisons, MSF documented 116 deaths, mostly attributed to illness, but also noted cases of suicide, torture and unexplained deaths.

ASK recorded at least 107 deaths in prisons, including 69 undertrial prisoners and 38 convicts. Dhaka Central Jail reported the highest number of deaths at 38.

As many as 641 unidentified bodies were recovered this year, many with hands and feet bound

with scotch tape, lying by roadsides, stuffed in sacks, floating in rivers, or recovered from railway tracks and canals, MSF said.

Violence against women remained widespread. ASK recorded 749 rape cases, including 569 gang rapes. At least 370 victims were under 18. After rape, 36 women were killed, seven died by suicide and six died after attempted rape.

Children were also severely affected. ASK recorded abuse of 1,023 children and the deaths of at least 410 children due to rape, murder, physical abuse, abduction, suicide and explosions.

Meanwhile, along the Bangladesh-India border, at least 34 Bangladeshis died in 2025, including 24 from BSF gunfire, according to ASK.

Presenting its findings at a press briefing at the Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, MSF called for an independent commission to investigate serious human rights violations, stronger protection for journalists and minorities, reforms in policing and prisons, and greater empowerment of the National Human Rights Commission.

ASK echoed similar concerns, saying the government must uphold universally accepted human rights standards in line with public expectations.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
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**Amendment/Corrigendum of e-GP Tender Notice**

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalganj for the procurement of following works. e-Tender details can be downloaded from e-GP System Portal "<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>" for purchase.

An amendment/corrigendum has issued about (i) Document last selling date and time, (ii) Last date and time for tender security submission, (iii) Closing date and time, (iv) Opening date and time of following e-GP Tender. Other matters remain unchanged of this tender.

Tender ID and Package No.	Name of work	Old date & time				New date & time			
		Document last selling date and time	Last date and time for tender security submission	Closing date and time	Opening date and time	Document last selling date and time	Last date and time for tender security submission	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
192481 30/c- GP/GRD /2025- 2026 (OTM)	Supply of Asphalt Mistry, Semi-Skilled & Unskilled Labour for Potholes Repair work at Ch: 00+030m to Ch: 01+950m, Ch: 02+020m to Ch: 03+980m Ch: 04+010m & to Ch: 05+990m of Bijoynasha - Talarhathi-Joynagarhath Road (Z-8420) & Ch: 17+010m to Ch: 18+980m of Satpar-Ramdia-Fukurah Road (2-8419) under Road Sub-Division, Gopalganj during the year 2025-2026.	31/12/2025 17:00	01/01/2026 12:00	01/01/2026 26 12:30	01/01/2026 26 12:30	05/01/2026 17:00	06/01/2026 12:00	06/01/2026 12:30	06/01/2026 12:30

Accepted tenders will be opened online immediately after opening time.

Sheikh Nabil Hossain  
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Executive Engineer (A.C), RHD  
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GD-2798