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No women on tickets of 30 parties

Only 109 of 2,568 JS aspirants are female

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Women remain largely absent from the electoral race, with 30 of the 51 political parties contesting the upcoming national election fielding no female aspirants at all, Election Commission data shows.

The figures lay bare a stark imbalance -- despite women making up half the population, their presence among candidates remains marginal.

Of the 2,568 aspirants for the February 12 polls, only 109, just 4.24 percent, are women. Seventy-two of them were nominated by parties, while the rest are independents.

The exclusion is most pronounced among Jamaat-e-Islami, which submitted 276 nominations without a single woman, followed by Islami Andolan Bangladesh with 268.

Several other parties, large and small, have also fielded exclusively male candidates, reinforcing what female activists describe as tokenistic and limited efforts at inclusion across the political spectrum.



DEA agents escort captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, from a helicopter as Maduro heads to the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse in Manhattan for an initial appearance on US federal charges including narco-terrorism, conspiracy, drug trafficking, and money laundering, in New York City yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS



Bangladesh's existence rooted in Liberation War

Says Tarique, likely to visit Bogura on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existence of Bangladesh would not have been possible without the 1971 Liberation War, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday.

Describing the Liberation War as the foundation of Bangladesh, he said the BNP believes the country will move forward while upholding the aspirations of the '71 Liberation War, and the '90 and '24 mass uprisings.

He emphasised his vision of creating a liberal, democratic, and welfare-oriented Bangladesh. PHOTO ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Cold wave taking a toll on children, elderly

Hospital admissions with cold-related diseases soar; experts blame La Niña

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dense fog that set in late December continues to persist, dragging down daytime temperatures and driving up cold-related illnesses. Daily life across Dhaka and the northern districts has slowed to a crawl, with children, the elderly, and low-income families bearing the brunt of the chill.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 48 people have died of cold-related diseases across the country since November.

Currently, a mild cold wave is sweeping across Rajshahi division and the districts of Dinajpur, Jashore, Chuadanga, and Kushtia.

Climate scientist Rashed Chowdhury, adjunct faculty at Arizona State University, said Bangladesh's cold spell is part of a wider global climate pattern rather than a local anomaly.

"La Niña is cooling not only Bangladesh but also the regional climate," he explained, adding that the polar jet stream is pushing cold air farther south.

"Large parts of the Northern Hemisphere, including regions of the United States and Canada, are also experiencing colder-than-normal winters," he added.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), in its monthly forecast, has already warned of two to three cold waves in January, one of which could be "severe", with temperatures dropping as low as 4°C.

Bazlur Rashid, senior meteorologist at the BMD, said the dense fog is not clearing due to a lack of westerly winds and rainfall. "The

- 48 died from cold-related diseases since Nov
- Polar jet stream cooling entire region
- BMD forecasts 2-3 cold waves in January

situation will not improve until the fog lifts. People will feel colder as foggy conditions block sunlight," he noted.

Around this time of year, Dhaka's daytime temperature usually hovers near 28°C. Yesterday, however, it was just 19°C due to heavy fog.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'I'm still president' of Venezuela

Maduro tells NY court, pleads not guilty to narco-terrorism charges, slams US ops

AGENCIES

Toppled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro yesterday pleaded not guilty to charges of narco-terrorism after President Donald Trump's stunning capture of him rattled world leaders and left officials in Caracas scrambling to respond.

Maduro, 63, pleaded not guilty in New York federal court to four criminal counts that include narco-terrorism, cocaine importation conspiracy and possession of machine guns and destructive devices.

"I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man. I am still president of my country," Maduro said through an interpreter, before being cut off by US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein. Maduro's wife Cilia Flores also pleaded not guilty.

Lawyers for both Maduro, and his wife said that their clients won't seek bail at this time. The attorneys added that they'll seek an application at a later date. Maduro and his wife will stay in a New York jail until their next hearing on March 17. Protesters gathered outside the courthouse ahead of the arraignment.

The ousted leader, his hands zip-tied, and his wife were transported under guard yesterday morning from a Brooklyn detention centre to a helicopter bound for the Manhattan court.

The arraignment got underway as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told an emergency UN Security Council meeting that there should

- Caracas softens tone towards Trump
- UN chief questions legality of US raid
- Dhaka expresses concern over Maduro's detention
- 32 Cubans killed in US raid in Venezuela

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh suspends IPL broadcast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh interim government decided yesterday to suspend the broadcast of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season, scheduled to start on March 26, until further notice.

In a press release issued by the country's TV-2 wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, it was stated that the directive by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to have Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman released from the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) squad last Saturday for the upcoming IPL had come to the government's attention.

The press release -- signed by Assistant Secretary Mohammad Firoz Khan and sent to state radio agency Bangladesh. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A family member of July martyr Faisal Sarker breaks down in tears at his grave in the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital yesterday. The Criminal Investigation Department had exhumed 114 unclaimed bodies of July martyrs to collect DNA samples for testing. Following analysis, the identities of eight victims, including Faisal, were confirmed. PHOTO: STAR

'At least now my son knows where his father rests'

Some families get closure as eight July martyrs identified in Rayerbazar unmarked graves

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and TOUSIF KAIUM

Little Hamim was just eight months old when his father Mahim Mia, a pickup driver, left their home to join the July movement in the capital's Mohammadpur on July 18, 2024.

However, Mahim never returned to see his little boy. Brutally killed during the movement in the same area, Mahim's body was buried unidentified and unclaimed in the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

For over a year and a half, Mahim's family, certain that he was among the 114 unclaimed bodies of July martyrs buried there, were unable to tell Hamim exactly where his father was laid to rest.

The search finally ended as the DNA matching results for eight of the bodies were presented at the graveyard yesterday.

Hamim was finally found in grave no-9. His wife Jasmin Akter, with tears in her eyes, said, "For the first time, my son touched the soil of his father's grave. At least now he knows where his father rests."

Along with Mahim, seven other July martyrs were identified so far.

The 114 bodies were exhumed by the Criminal Investigation Department of Police to collect DNA samples. SEE PAGE 2 COL 1