



Pakistan PM pays tribute to Khaleda Zia

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif yesterday visited the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad to offer condolences over the death of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

During the visit, the Pakistan prime minister wrote his remarks in the visitors' book, paying tribute to the late leader, who also served as chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, according to a message received in Dhaka.

Khaleda Zia, the first female prime minister of Bangladesh, breathed her last on December 30, 2025 at the age of 80 while undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital in the city.



BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman in a meeting with the left-leaning alliance, Democratic United Front, at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Govt warns parties of sabotage ahead of elections

BAHARAM KHAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With the national elections approaching, the interim government has warned political parties about possible infiltration by agents of fascist forces and saboteurs posing as allies.

The concern was raised at a law and order advisory committee meeting held at the Secretariat yesterday.

The meeting also discussed drafting a new ordinance to ensure the protection of leaders of the July uprising, including student leaders who played key roles in the nationwide movement, sources told The Daily Star.

At least two sources present at the meeting confirmed that the decision to draft the ordinance has already been taken and that discussions have taken place focused on its progress. The ordinance is expected to be enacted soon.

Preserving communal harmony during the election period was another key issue discussed, said an official.

After the meeting, Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury urged political parties to remain vigilant and prevent saboteurs from exploiting inter-party rivalries.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to holding the election on schedule, the home adviser said attempts to derail the process would fail.

He directed law enforcement agencies to adopt a stricter approach to prevent disruptions.

A home ministry official present at the meeting said surveillance has been intensified nationwide. Intelligence agencies have been instructed to strengthen monitoring, while law enforcement agencies will work in close coordination to maintain order. Training of security forces and election-related personnel is also being expedited.

Political activities, including rallies and campaigns, will be closely monitored to ensure stability, the official said.

The meeting discussed measures to maintain communal harmony and prevent the spread of rumours

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JnU student union polls today

Enthusiasm wanes after three postponements

RAKIB MADBER

After being postponed three times, the Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUcsu) and hall union elections are scheduled to be held today amid tight security on campus.

According to the Election Commission, voting will be taking place in a total of 178 polling booths at 39 centres. CCTV cameras have been installed at all centres to ensure transparency, and the vote-counting process will be broadcast live after polling ends.

A total of 16,445 voters are expected to cast their ballots. For the central union, 157 candidates are contesting 21 posts, while 33 candidates for 13 hall union posts.

Earlier, following student protests on September 17, the university administration initially scheduled the elections for November 27. It was rescheduled for December 22 due to earthquake panic and campus closure, before being deferred again to December 30.

On December 30, the election was postponed once again after the death of former prime minister and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia. The Election Commission later fixed today (January 6) as the new date.

The repeated postponements created uncertainty among voters and candidates, raising concerns over turnout.

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DHAKA AIRPORT Third terminal not opening under interim govt

Says civil aviation adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) will not open during the tenure of the interim government, Civil Aviation Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said yesterday.

He made the remarks at a press conference at the Secretariat on the Travel Agency (Registration and Control) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

"The government will not be able to open the third terminal during its tenure. We made every effort, including negotiations with



the Japanese vice minister, but our attempts were unsuccessful," the adviser said, adding that opening the terminal was not possible despite their best efforts.

He said the ministry is now working on completing the procedural requirements for the next steps.

The next government will take a decision on this issue, he added. Sources at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said the delay is due to unresolved issues over the operation and maintenance of the terminal.

Negotiations between CAAB and a Japanese consortium on the mandatory operation and maintenance agreement failed to reach a consensus, said a CAAB official.

The consortium includes Japan Airport Terminal Company, SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Severe cold paralyses daily life in Pabna

Ishwardi records lowest temperature at 8.4°C

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU,
Pabna

Severe cold and dense fog, with no sunlight, have been disrupting lives and livelihoods in Pabna and adjoining areas.

Ishwardi upazila recorded 8.4 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, the country's lowest temperature of the day. The temperature may continue to fall over the next four to five days, according to the Met Office.

Low-income people, including day labourers, have been suffering the most, as they have to venture out in the cold weather to earn a living.

"There is hardly any passenger, but I still have to come out. Today, I have had only one trip to Chatmohar upazila so far," said Md Shahid, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver on the Pabna-Ishwardi road. Md Jalal Uddin, an elderly rickshaw-puller, shared a similar ordeal.

In the Ishwardi rail station area, most trains were seen moving

slowly with fog lights turned on throughout the day amid dense fog and poor visibility.

"Because of slow movement amid dense fog, most trains are running at least 20-30 minutes late," said Hasina Akter, Pakshey divisional transportation officer of the railway. "Train lines are often affected by cold weather, so the trains are moving carefully, causing the delay," she added.

Day labourers and marginal people were found trying to get relief from the cold by burning wood and paper on roadsides throughout the day.

Agricultural activities have also been severely disrupted due to the biting cold.

Md Kamruzzaman, a farmer in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila, said, "This is the time for onion cultivation, but we are having a hard time working in the fields in such cold weather."

If the cold weather continues until next week, it will result in major losses for onion farmers, he added.



A rickshaw van-puller hauls a goods-laden vehicle to earn a living while people light small fires along roadsides to keep themselves warm amid severe cold in Pabna's Ishwardi yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

REINSTATEMENT OF CANDIDATURE 42 appeals filed with EC on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 42 appeal applications were submitted to the Election Commission yesterday, on the first day, against the returning officers' decisions following the scrutiny of nomination papers for the February 12 national elections.

EC data showed that of the 42 applicants, 41 appeals were filed against the cancellation of nomination papers, while one appeal was lodged against a returning officer's decision to accept a nomination paper.

Region-wise, three appeals were submitted in Rangpur, five in Rajshahi, three in Khulna, one in Barishal, one in Mymensingh, 15 in Dhaka, seven in Faridpur, four in Cumilla, and two in Chattogram. The only appeal filed against the acceptance of a

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JULY KILLINGS IN ASHULIA Cross-examination of IO completed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

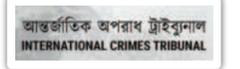
The cross examination of Investigation Officer Jane Alam Khan in a crimes against humanity case over the killing of seven people and the burning of five bodies and one victim alive during the July uprising in Ashulia was completed yesterday.

Afterwards, defence counsels for three of the 16 accused filed applications before the International Crimes Tribunal-2, seeking permission to produce six defence witnesses.

The prosecution opposed the pleas, arguing that applications for defence witnesses must be submitted at the commencement of the trial, which the defence had failed to do.

Prosecutor Mizanul Islam told the tribunal that the rules clearly require the defence to inform the court at the beginning of the trial if they intend to produce witnesses.

Tribunal chairman Justice Nozrul Islam SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES DNCC to form team to oversee management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka North City Corporation has taken an initiative to form a nine-member steering committee to ensure unrestricted public access to parks, playgrounds, and public spaces under its jurisdiction and to oversee their proper management and maintenance.

The decision was made at the 13th corporation meeting of DNCC held yesterday at Gulshan Nagar Bhaban. The committee is being formed to regularly monitor whether the 106 parks, playgrounds, and public spaces located across 52 wards under DNCC are being properly managed and maintained.

DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azaz SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



SC cautions media over misleading reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following some false reports on two judges' leaves, the Supreme Court administration yesterday issued a notification cautioning that any individual or organisation publishing or broadcasting false, misleading or untrue news about the SC will be held liable for contempt of court.

"In view of the above, all media professionals are hereby directed to verify the objectivity and authenticity of any news relating to the Supreme Court of Bangladesh with the Supreme Court's media focal person or the office of the registrar general prior to publication or broadcast. In the future, if any false, misleading, or untrue news concerning the Supreme Court of Bangladesh is published or broadcast, the individual or institution concerned shall SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

