



## Bangladesh resumes US corn imports

B1



## UN accuses Israel of 'apartheid' in West Bank

P5



## Is grievance politics clouding the future of Ganges treaty?

P6



## 'Individual hard work behind Afghans' T20 success'

P11

# Seat-sharing knot tightens for Jamaat, IAB

### Inclusion of NCP in alliance further complicates calculation

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MAMUNUR RASHID

The daunting task of striking a seat-sharing deal has grown increasingly complicated for Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Andolan Bangladesh with the two parties fielding candidates in more than 240 overlapping constituencies.

Jamaat and IAB – two of the largest Islamist groups in the country – had been in talks for over three months to consolidate Islamist votes under an alliance of eight mostly Islamist parties.

Despite prolonged discussions, the talks collapsed just short of the December 29 nomination deadline, leading both parties to submit nominations in hundreds of seats and deepening uncertainty within the newly announced alliance.

Election Commission data show that Jamaat filed nominations in 276 constituencies on the final day, while Islami Andolan submitted papers in 268 seats.

An analysis of the nominations reveals that Jamaat and IAB candidates are set to compete directly in at least 240 constituencies across the country, often in seats where senior leaders themselves are contesting.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Construction of an elevated expressway ramp at Panthakunja Park, adjacent to the Sonargaon intersection, has resumed after a long pause. The work had been suspended in September last year by a High Court order amid protests from environmentalists, who warned the project could cause significant environmental damage. Authorities said work resumed after the HC vacated its earlier order.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



## CA expects unanimous 'yes' in July referendum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said political parties have endorsed the July Charter and expressed confidence that they would campaign for "yes" votes in the referendum.

"I don't think any party will seek a 'no' vote," he said.

At a meeting with Paola Pampaloni, acting managing director for Asia-

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

# Swechchhasebak Dal leader shot dead in Dhaka

### Another man bullet-hit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants shot dead former Swechchhasebak Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabbir and injured another man in the city last night.

Musabbir, who served as the general secretary of Dhaka City North Swechchhasebak Dal, the volunteer wing of the BNP, was shot near the Super Star Hotel in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar around 8:30pm.

He was rushed to BRB Hospital on Panthapath but was pronounced dead on arrival, Fazlul Karim, additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Tejgaon Zone), told The Daily Star.

The injured, Sufian Byapari Masud, is the general secretary of the Tejgaon Thana Van Workers' Union.

Party members said Musabbir attended a programme with a group of Shariatpur residents at the Super Star Hotel in the evening.

After the event, Musabbir and Masud were walking down a lane nearby when two men opened fire. The attackers fled the scene on foot, said police.

Following the incident, a group of people including local BNP men staged protests near the Sonargaon intersection.

Family members and party activists said Musabbir spent much of his time in jail during the Awami League regime and was repeatedly arrested in a number of political cases.

Hailing from Shariatpur, he was the eldest among three siblings. His

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Azizur Rahman

# LPG prices soar on artificial scarcity

### Traders call indefinite strike for higher distribution charges

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Suppliers and dealers of bottled liquefied petroleum gas are selling the fuel at Tk 350–900 more than the government-fixed rates despite adequate stock.

The government fixed the price of the standard 12kg LPG cylinder at Tk 1,306 for January, but they are selling between Tk 1,650 and Tk 2,200, according to traders in Dhaka and Chattogram.

In 2025, 14.65 lakh tonnes of LPG were imported, up slightly from the previous year, with 54.2 percent of it arriving in the last six months, according to data from the National Board of Revenue. It cost importers about Tk 11,780 crore, down about 2.7 percent year-on-year.

The imports were led by Meghna Fresh LPG, Omera Petroleum, Jamuna Spacetech Joint Venture, Sun Gas, United Aygaz LPG, Petromax LPG, Delta LPG, Bashundhara LP Gas, Premier LPG and BM Energy.

In Dhaka, dealers say the companies themselves are selling LPG at inflated rates.

"We are supposed to buy a 12kg cylinder at Tk 1,150 to sell it at the fixed rate of Tk 1,306. But the companies charge Tk 1,300–1,340, making it impossible to sell at the government fixed rate at the retail level," said Saiful Islam, a dealer in the Sadarghat area.

The Daily Star has seen at least four tax challan documents that showed a top importer sold per cylinder between Tk 1,302 and Tk 1,329 between January 4 and 7 to a distributor. The

unit rate was Tk 1,221 and 1,248 in those challans and a 7.5 percent VAT was added on top of the sum.

As per the January rate fixed by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, the companies were supposed to sell the product at Tk 1,158 to distributors, who were supposed to sell it at Tk 1,208 to retailers.

YEAR	IMPORT (LAKH TONNE)	COST
2025	14.64	11,780cr
2024	14.41	12,101cr
2023	12.23	9,185cr

However, a retailer in the Kachukhet area was yesterday seen selling a 12kg cylinder to customers for Tk 2,100 and Tk 2,200.

"I have to buy cylinders at Tk 1,880 to Tk 1,900 from dealers. Moreover, I receive only 10–12 cylinders every 3–4 days, while daily demand exceeds 30," he said.

In Chattogram, The Daily Star visited 12 retail shops in Agrabad, Kazir Dewri, Chawkbazar, Oxygen and Muradpur and found the LPG cylinders were selling at well above the official rate. Four shops reported having no gas-filled cylinders in stock.

"Retailers are forced to sell at higher prices

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

# BCB firm on not sending team to India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday reiterated its concerns over the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India and reaffirmed its stance of not sending the national team to the country for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, starting on February 7.

BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul and other board directors had a meeting with the Sports Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul yesterday afternoon, after which Bulbul informed the media of their firm stance.

"We have written to the ICC highlighting the importance of safety and security. While our primary responsibility is to look after the players, there is also a large group beyond them, including journalists, sponsors, and cricket fans," Bulbul said.

"Since a government order [GO] is required for any overseas travel, we are seeking guidance from the government on this matter. If the security situation does not improve, we will continue to fight for our rights," he added.

Dr Nazrul also addressed the media, saying that there was going to be no compromise on the issues of security and dignity.

"We will not compromise with our national honour or the security of our cricketers. We of course want to play the World Cup, but only in the other host nation, Sri Lanka. We are standing firmly by this stance," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



# Shibir wins top posts in first JnUCSU polls

RAKIB MADBER

Candidates backed by Islami Chhatra Shibir have secured a crucial victory in the first-ever election to Jagannath University Central Students' Union (JnUCSU) sweeping the vice-president, general secretary and assistant general secretary posts.



Riazul Islam

Abdul Alim

Md Riazul Islam, the VP candidate from Shibir-backed Odomyo Jobian Oikya panel, was elected VP with 5,591 votes, according to the results announced by the Election Commission at around 12:00pm yesterday.

His nearest rival, AKM Rakib of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal-backed panel, received 4,688 votes.

For the GS post, Shibir-backed Abdul Alim Arif bagged 5,475 votes, while JCD-backed candidate Khadijatul Kubra

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



LPG cylinders are seen chained outside closed stores in Mohammadpur amid a supply shortage of the cooking fuel. Locals allege shopkeepers are keeping shops closed so that they can use different methods to sell the cylinders at higher prices.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

POWER, ENERGY

# Govt unveils new 25-year master plan

### Eyes clean, efficient, accessible energy for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has unveiled a new 25-year power and energy master plan, to be implemented from 2026 to 2050.

According to a press release from the chief adviser's press wing, implementing the plan will require an estimated \$177 billion to \$192 billion.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, submitted the master plan to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at State House Jamuna in presence of several advisers and senior officials.

Policy gaps in the previous three master plans – prepared in 2005, 2010, and revised in 2016 – were identified and briefly reviewed during the meeting, the release added.

The new plan projects peak electricity demand of 59,000 megawatts (MW) by 2050, compared to 70,500 MW in the 2023 plan. Current demand is around 16,700 MW.

The 2023 integrated power and energy master plan, prepared with JICA's support, was criticised by local experts for overestimating demand and including high-cost fuel sources. Following the formation of the interim government, various quarters called for a review with input from local experts.

The new plan aims to ensure reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy for all through optimal use of domestic

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5