



"There is a stain on our relations such as had never occurred in our history."
Venezuela's interim leader Delcy Rodriguez on ties with US

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Law and order lapses stoke public fears

1,300 looted firearms yet to be recovered;
710 escaped inmates still at large

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN
and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Despite the launch of Operation Devil Hunt, continued killings and law enforcement's failure to arrest escaped criminals and recover looted weapons are raising serious concerns ahead of the national election.

The first phase of the operation, designed to curb crimes, began on February 8, 2025, while the second phase, which is still ongoing, began on December 13.

However, at least a dozen murders were reported in the first week of this year alone, around four of them in the capital.

Moreover, eight political killings have taken place since the declaration of the election schedule on December 11, including that of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson and July uprising frontliner Sharif Osman Bin Hadi.

According to Police Headquarters data, over a thousand firearms looted during the July 2024 uprising, including 28 stolen from Narsingdi jail, are still unaccounted for.

Furthermore, the whereabouts of around 710 inmates who escaped from various prisons during the uprising remain unknown.

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MAJOR KILLINGS IN 2026

- Lawyer Naeem Kibria beaten to death in Dhaka (Jan 1)
- Surgical assistant Shipon, 24, hacked to death in Dhaka (Jan 1)
- Pharmacy owner Khokon Chandra dies of injuries from Shariatpur attack (Jan 3)
- Scrap dealer Shahabuddin hacked to death in Dhaka (Jan 6)
- Student Mohammad Shahed Islam killed in Chattogram (Jan 6)
- Trader Rana Pratap Bairagi shot in the head in Jashore (Jan 6)
- Jubo Dal leader Mohammad Jane Alam Sikder shot dead in Chattogram (Jan 6)
- Trader Moni Chakrabarty hacked to death in Narsingdi (Jan 6)
- Ex-Swechchhasebok Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabir shot dead in Dhaka (Jan 8)



Suraiya Begum, wife of slain Swechchhasebok Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabir, sits outside the DMCH morgue yesterday, her face drained of expression as she waits for her husband's body. Musabir was shot dead by unknown assailants in the capital on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DEVIL HUNT PHASE-1 (FEB 8-MAR 2)

12,220 people arrested

188 locally made weapons recovered

50 firearms seized

15,009 arrested (till Jan 6)

218 firearms seized

1,333 looted firearms still missing

243,000 rounds of ammunition unrecovered

DEVIL HUNT PHASE-2 (DEC 13-ONGOING)

MUSABBIR MURDER
Cops focusing on turf war in Karwan Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Swechchhasebok Dal leader Azizur Rahman Musabir had been receiving threats for some time before he was shot dead in the capital's Tejgaon area on Wednesday night, police said.



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order.

Following the brazen attack on Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho and an independent MP aspirant from Dhaka 8, the government on December 13 decided to provide personal security to individuals who played key roles in the July uprising, as well as high profile political figures.

The government has also offered firearm licences to candidates in the upcoming parliamentary election to ensure their security. Despite these measures, political killings continue.

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8 political killings since polls schedule: ASK

MUNTAKIM SAAD and
MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With a little over a month left before the 13th general election, political leaders and activists are increasingly falling victim to targeted killings.

The violence began soon after the election schedule was announced on December 11 and has continued even in crowded areas, often involving firearms.

These escalating political killings are fuelling widespread fear and panic, raising serious concerns about law and



Farmers inspect beehives in a mustard field at Kashimpur in Rajshahi's Godagari upazila yesterday. The farm's owner Ataur Rahman said many bees get knocked out, while others fail to return to their hives at all because of pesticides sprayed on the flowering crop.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

BCB alerts ICC to security concerns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Cricket Board sent a letter to the International Cricket Council yesterday, detailing its security concerns over sending the national team to India for the ICC T20 World Cup.

The ICC had earlier asked the BCB to communicate its concerns in detail in response to the board's original letter on Sunday, in which it requested the cricket's global governing body to relocate Bangladesh's World Cup matches from India.

The board is now waiting for ICC's response, which could determine whether or not Bangladesh participate in the event, set to begin on February 7 in India and Sri Lanka.

Earlier on Wednesday, BCB President Aminul Islam Bulbul had reaffirmed the board's stance to not travel to India following a meeting with the Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul.

The adviser had also said the government will not compromise on "national honour or the security of our cricketers" and demanded that Bangladesh's matches be relocated to Sri Lanka.

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Govt to fix prices of all 295 essential drugs

Adds 135 new medicines to list, frames pricing guideline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has updated the National Essential Drug List, raising the number of medicines to 295, and announced that prices will be fixed for all of them to ensure greater affordability for the public.

Alongside, a guideline for setting prices of all drugs – both essential and non-essential – has been approved to give authorities effective control over pricing.

The advisory council headed by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus endorsed the updated list and the guideline at its weekly meeting yesterday.

Briefing reporters after the meeting at the Foreign Service Academy, Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the CA for the health ministry, described the move as "groundbreaking for Bangladesh's health sector," saying it would have far-reaching implications in reducing healthcare costs.

He added that a government gazette will be issued soon, with implementation to begin during the tenure of the interim government.

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- Pharmaceuticals companies must use 25% production capacity on essential drugs
- Price of non-essential medicine may not vary by more than 15%

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BNP planning clampdown on defiant grassroots

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is closely monitoring grassroots leaders who oppose supporting the party's nominees, and it is collecting their information for taking action against them.

The party will instruct them to actively work for the candidates; otherwise, strict organisational action will be taken, said party sources, adding that the grassroots leaders concerned might be offered opportunities, like running for local government offices or be placed in party posts, if they fall in line.

The party also gave tickets to two aspirants in a dozen seats, which caused divisions among the grassroots.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed, said, "Two persons have been nominated from the party in 11 to 12 seats. According to the RPO [Representation of the People Order], the candidate who is given the party electoral symbol will be the official one, and the other will become irrelevant."

"In these seats, it is normal for the party activists to be divided and work for both candidates. But after the symbol is allocated, we hope that they will all unite."

The BNP leader added that organisational action has been taken against those who are running as independents, violating party instructions.

"If more leaders are identified, we will try to resolve the issue through discussions. If that doesn't work, further organisational action will be taken," Salahuddin said.

The BNP has expelled 10 leaders in the last seven days for contesting as independents, defying party instructions.

In over four dozen seats, nominated leaders said party acting chairman

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