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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পুবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Chinese envoy  
condemns  
attacks on Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has strongly condemned the recent attacks, vandalism and arson at the office of The Daily Star in Dhaka, expressing solidarity with the newspaper and support for independent media.

He made the remarks during a visit to The Daily Star building yesterday, which was vandalised, looted and set on fire in the early hours of December 19.

He described the attacks as unacceptable and emphasised that violence against media institutions undermines freedom of expression and the rule of law. Yao Wen said China firmly supports the role of independent media in a democratic society, and lauded The Daily Star's stance on democracy, freedom of speech and human rights.

He also stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of journalists and media organisations so they can carry out their professional duties without fear or intimidation.



Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen walks amid charred rubbles at The Daily Star office, which was attacked and torched in the early hours of December 19. During his visit yesterday, the envoy strongly condemned the attack.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Seat-sharing talks  
between Jamaat,  
NCP nearing end

Shafiqur, Nahid hold meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convenor Nahid Islam yesterday held a special meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, a day after announcing that seat-sharing within their alliance would be finalised soon.

According to NCP sources, the one-on-one discussion between the two leaders of the 11-party alliance focused on seat distribution and overall election strategy.

NCP Joint Convenor Sarwar Tushar told The Daily Star that during the meeting, the NCP and Jamaat chiefs also discussed ways to maximise the number of alliance candidates winning in the February 12 election.

The meeting took place at the Jamaat ameer's office in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area.

In a post on his verified Facebook page after the meeting, Nahid said they discussed the upcoming national parliamentary election and the recent political situation, describing it as a "special meeting".

The meeting comes amid intense discussions to finalise seat-sharing among the 11 like-minded parties, including Jamaat, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the NCP.

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Defence  
delaying  
Palak trial

Prosecutor tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that the defence representing former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak appeared to be hoping the trial would not continue until after the election and was therefore attempting to delay proceedings.

Tribunal member Justice Shoful Alam Mahmood immediately responded, "Will Awami League come to power if the election is held – do not say like this."

Tajul replied that such remarks by the defence had reached the prosecution's attention.

The comment came after Palak's defence counsel requested more time to prepare for the charge-framing hearing, even though the date had earlier been fixed for Wednesday. The defence said jail authorities had not allowed them to bring laptops and pen drives when they visited Palak last Friday for privileged communication, and sought a tribunal order to permit this.

After hearing both sides, the tribunal set next Thursday for the defence hearing. Palak remains in custody after



A pedestrian pauses to admire blooming flowers displayed on a footpath beside the Abahani playground in Dhaka's Dhanmondi, where passersby often stop to admire or buy plants for indoor and rooftop decoration. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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Tarique to kick off  
campaign from  
Sylhet on Jan 22

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman will formally launch his party's election campaign for the 13th national parliamentary election from Sylhet on January 22.



"Tarique Rahman will go to Sylhet on January 22. However, the detailed tour plan is yet to be finalised," his Press Secretary Saleh Shibly told UNB.

Traditionally, Shibly said, the BNP begins its national election campaign from Sylhet by offering fateha at the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) and Hazrat Shah Paran (R).

"During the visit, he will offer fateha at both shrines. It has not yet been decided where the campaign will formally begin, but I believe it will start in Sylhet after visiting the two shrines," he added.

On Saturday, while exchanging greetings with editors and senior journalists at a hotel in Dhaka, Tarique said his party will go to the people with its plans from January 22.

Party sources said Tarique Rahman, who assumed the post of party chairman on Friday night, will visit all divisions during the election campaign period – from 6:00am on January 22 to 7:30am on February 10 – to seek votes for the candidates of his party and alliance partners.

Participatory and  
peaceful polls key  
to democracy

Says EU chief election  
observer Ivars Ijabs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union's Election Observation Mission (EOM) yesterday said a peaceful, participatory and transparent election in Bangladesh is crucial to strengthening democratic institutions.

"These historic elections will be crucial to bolster democratic institutions through the ballot box," said EU EOM Chief Observer Ivars Ijabs at a press conference at a city hotel.

The full mission will comprise around 200 observers from all 27 EU member states, as well as Canada, Norway and Switzerland. This is the EU's first fully fledged election observation mission in Bangladesh since 2008.

An 11-member core team began work in Bangladesh in late December, while a 56-member long-term observer team arrived yesterday and will be deployed across all 64 districts. In addition, 90 short-term observers will arrive shortly before the

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HC questions  
EC decision to  
accept NDF, JP  
nominations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule questioning the legality of the Election Commission's decision to accept the nomination papers of candidates from the National Democratic Front (NDF) and Jatiya Party (Ershad) for the February 12 national election.

In the rule, the court asked the EC, the government, NDF and Jatiya Party to explain within two weeks why the EC's decision should not be declared illegal and why it should not be directed to cancel the nomination papers of the two parties' candidates.

The bench of Justice Razik-Al Jalil and Justice Md Anowarul Islam issued the rule following a writ petition challenging the EC's decision to allow NDF and Jatiya Party to contest the election.

Abdullah Al Mahmud, a July warrior, filed the petition with the High Court on January 6, also seeking a directive for the EC to cancel the nomination papers submitted by NDF – led by Anisul Islam Mahmud and Anwar Hossain Manju – and Jatiya Party (Ershad), represented by its general secretary Shameen Haider Patwary.

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