



BNP senior leaders lay a wreath on the grave of party founder and late president Ziaur Rahman at Zia Udyan in the capital yesterday, marking his 90th birth anniversary

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL



## Dhaka candidates already on the move

Official campaigning yet to begin, but many conducting voter outreach through various means

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE and SADIQ MUHAMMAD ALOK

Although the official window for election campaigning begins on January 22, aspirants for the upcoming 13th national election are already active on the ground, engaging in various forms of "mass contact" to woo voters.

According to the election schedule, polling will take place on February 12. Formal campaigning -- including the use of posters and digital projections -- is prohibited until electoral symbols are allocated on January 21.

However, candidates across Dhaka constituencies have already started moving to increase their exposure, using social gatherings, religious venues, and digital platforms.

Candidates are frequently visiting local markets, attending social events, and offering prayers at local mosques. Courtyard meetings and charity activities have also become common outreach methods.



commemorative programme for late BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a school in Dhanmondi on January 14.

In Dhaka II, BNP's MA Quayum has been involved in charitable activities, distributing blankets among underprivileged people in Moddho Badda.

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Politics must prioritise the people, not blame game

Says Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said politics must move beyond decades of blame and confrontation and instead focus on improving the lives of people and standing by them in times of need.

"Those of us who are in politics, who do we do it for? We do it for the people of this country. In short, in simple words, standing

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## Star ITIHAS ADDA

### Dreams of intellectual emancipation still unrealised: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The emancipation of the intellect -- a vision imagined by a group of Dhaka-based thinkers a century ago -- remains largely unfulfilled in present-day Bangladesh due to social elitism, intolerance, and a lack of moral integrity among the intellectual class.

Speakers made these remarks yesterday at the eighth episode of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, a history discussion series held at The Daily Star Centre.

The event marked the centenary of the Muslim Sahitya Samaj (Muslim Literary Society), founded in Dhaka on January 19, 1926.

Addressing the theme of the event, senior researcher Wakil Ahmed said the country has reached a point where people use their intellect to justify burning down the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

"That intellect dictates: if opinions do not match, burn it down. This is indeed a 'great emancipation', which in

reality means we have achieved nothing," he said.

He said the nation has failed to uphold the values nurtured by the intellectuals of 1926. "We have walked our own path. While the Sahitya Samaj was a social and cultural movement, the movements that followed in Bangladesh were largely political," he added.

"We rise like mercury when heated, reaching the peak in just 36 days. But then suddenly, the mercury drops to the bottom," Wakil Ahmed said.

He noted that while the nation can mount large political uprisings, it struggles to sustain cultural values. "We fight for freedom, we achieve it, but we cannot hold on to it," he said.

Referring to the present situation, Wakil Ahmed described it as more "disturbing" than the period the movement originally confronted. "Demonic forces are flexing their muscles everywhere, while human forces are defeated," he said.

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Speakers at the eighth edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, a history discussion series held at The Daily Star Centre.



A four-member delegation of the National Citizen Party, led by NCP Convener Nahid Islam, met Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Don't pay visa bond before interview

US embassy urges applicants

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US embassy yesterday urged visa applicants not to pay any bond in advance, warning that early payments neither guarantee visa approval nor ensure safety from fraud.

"Paying early does not guarantee you a visa, and third-party sites can be scams," the embassy said in a statement posted on its verified Facebook page.

It added that any payment made before a visa interview is non-refundable, while the bond will be returned only if the visa holder complies with its terms.

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## Empower urban govt to tackle Dhaka's woes

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of coordination among service-providing agencies and the limited authority of city mayors are among the key reasons behind the deteriorating condition of Dhaka and other cities across the country, urban experts and politicians said yesterday.

They stressed that forming a strong and empowered urban government is essential to effectively address city-level problems.

The speakers urged political parties to clearly outline plans for establishing an urban government and tackling urban challenges in their election manifestos.

They made the remarks at an urban dialogue titled "Manifesto to Save Dhaka," jointly organised by the Urban Development Journalists' Forum Bangladesh and Gulshan Society at a city hotel.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Mohammad Azad said the authority of city corporations is largely limited to waste management and installing streetlights.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- >Create one city coordination body
- Expand city corporation powers
- Earmark share of traffic fines for city corporations
- Make agencies publish targets, quarterly progress

"Without a dedicated police force, eviction drives cannot be made sustainable," he said.

He said traffic law violation fines

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## TK 32CR GRAFT CASE

Court frames charges against S Alam, PK Halder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday framed charges against S Alam Group Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam, former managing director of Reliance Finance Limited, PK Halder and II others in a Tk 32-crore graft case.

Judge Md Abdus Salam of the Special Judge's Court-9 of Dhaka passed the order, said a court staffer. The court also set February 8 to start recording the deposition of the witnesses, he added.

The other accused are S Alam Group Vice Chairman Abdus Samad, directors Mohammad Abdullah Hasan and Shahana Ferdous, former executive VP and head of risk management at Reliance Finance Rashedul Haque, former corporate

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## UTTARA ABDUCTION

Bodyguard dies of his wounds

Suspect remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A 57-year-old retired army personnel working as a bodyguard died two days after being attacked during an abduction in Dhaka's Uttara on January 16.

Police on Sunday arrested suspect Bachchu Mia in Chattogram's Chawkbazar in connection with the murder, according to the police forwarding report.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jasrita Islam yesterday placed Bachchu on a three-day remand in connection with the murder of Mahbub Alam. The attack took place on Road 12 in Sector 14 of Uttara. Mahbub was critically injured and died while undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital two days later.

On January 17, Mahbub's son Abdullah Ismay Azam filed an attempted murder case with Uttara West Police Station against six unnamed people, which was later converted into a murder case.

Police have yet to trace the abducted man or his family members.

Kamrul Islam, sub-inspector of Uttara West Police Station and the investigating officer, said last night, "We will interrogate the arrestee and try to get more information from him."