

DHAKA THURSDAY JANUARY 22, 2026

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXVI No. 9

MAGH 8, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHABAN 2, 1447 HIJRI

SECOND EDITION

56 PAGES PLUS CAMPUS : TK 15.00

NINTH NAT'L PAY COMMISSION

Up to 142% salary hike pitched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ninth National Pay Commission yesterday proposed a new salary structure for government employees, recommending increases ranging from 100 percent to 142 percent, alongside substantial rises in other benefits.

If implemented, the proposals will require an additional annual expenditure of more than Tk 1 lakh crore.

The 21-member commission, led by former finance secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, submitted its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the Jamuna in the evening.

The commission recommended 20 pay scales, with the minimum salary proposed to rise from Tk 8,250 to Tk 20,000 and the maximum from Tk 78,000 to Tk 160,000, according to a statement from the CA's Press Wing.

Zakir said implementing the proposals would require an additional Tk 1.06 lakh crore annually. Currently, the government spends Tk 1.31

- ② Minimum salary Tk 20,000, maximum Tk 160,000
- ② Pensions to increase by 55-100%
- ② Additional Tk 1 lakh crore will be needed
- ② Govt has about 14 lakh employees, 9 lakh pensioners

lakh crore a year for its 14 lakh employees and nine lakh pensioners, the press statement said.

Explaining the rationale, Zakir said the new pay structure was prepared after reviewing significant changes in "nearly all global and national economic indicators, particularly the sharp rise in the prices of essential commodities over the past decade."

"Without a timely and appropriate pay structure, it has become increasingly difficult for government employees to manage living

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ICC rejects BCB's relocation request

Bangladesh given one day to decide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Cricket Council rejected Bangladesh Cricket Board's request to relocate the national cricket team's matches of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup from India after an ICC board meeting yesterday.

ICC announced its decision through a media release after the meeting, held through a video conference. In it, the world cricket's governing body said it did not want to set a bad precedent through accepting Bangladesh's request "in the absence of any credible security threat".

"In the absence of any independent security findings that materially compromise the safety of the Bangladesh team, the ICC is unable to relocate fixtures," an unnamed ICC spokesperson was quoted in the media release, which is also the ICC's first formal response in any form since the BCB first requested relocation on January 4.

"Doing so would carry significant logistical and scheduling consequences for other teams and fans worldwide, and would also create far-reaching precedent-related challenges that risk undermining the neutrality, fairness, and integrity of ICC governance," the ICC spokesperson added.

The tournament, set to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, will now begin on February 7 with an unchanged schedule.

Meanwhile, according to an ESPNcricinfo report, the ICC has given the BCB one more day to confer with the government and decide whether it would send the team to India for the World Cup.

"I asked the ICC board for time to talk to my government for one last time," the cricket website quoted Aminul as saying. "They said it's a



SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

'This was going to be her last term'

Joy tells Al Jazeera about Hasina

STAR REPORT

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has said his mother had already planned to step away from politics, describing her removal from power as "in a sense the end of the Hasina era".

Speaking to Al Jazeera in Washington DC, Joy said Hasina, who is now living in India under government protection, is elderly and had intended that term of her government to be her final one.

"...This was going to be her last term anyway. She wanted to retire," he said, adding that the Awami League would continue to exist without her leadership. "It's the oldest party. It's been around for 70 years. It will continue with or without her. No one lives forever."

Hasina was ousted in August 2024 following

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BNP expels 59 rebel candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday expelled 59 rebel candidates from the party for their involvement in activities that go against party policy, ideology and discipline.

Earlier, the party had expelled 11 rebel candidates.

Of the 59, three are from the Rangpur division, eight from the Rajshahi division, six from the Khulna division, two from the Barishal division, nine from the Dhaka division, seven from the Mymensingh division, seven from the Faridpur division, five from the Sylhet division, six from the Cumilla division and six from the Chattogram division.

From the Rangpur division, ANM Bazlur Rashid from Dinajpur 2, AZM Rezwanul Haque from Dinajpur 5 and Riyad Arafat Sarkar Rana from Nilphamari 4 were expelled.

The eight rebel candidates expelled in the Rajshahi division are

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

13TH NATIONAL POLLS

Election campaigns officially underway

Parties plan rallies across country today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With election symbols allocated yesterday, MP candidates and their supporters are set to hit the campaign trail as electioneering for the 13th national polls formally kicks off today.

The nation is expected to be swept up by election fever, with streets, villages, and towns anticipating the familiar buzz of door-to-door canvassing, slogans, rallies, and a deluge of promises in the coming weeks.

The aspirants have until 7:30am on February 10 for electioneering. The election is slated for February 12, which is three weeks away.

For a large section of voters, this election offers the first genuine chance to exercise their franchise after three consecutive polls were marred by rigging and engineering.

An inquiry commission into the polls of 2014, 2018, and 2024 concluded those elections were orchestrated at

the highest levels of the state, with segments of the administration, police, Election Commission, and intelligence agencies mobilised to carry out the plans.

This time, 1,981 candidates -- including 288 from BNP, 224 from Jamaat-e-Islami, 32 from the National Citizens Party, and 249 as independents -- are vying for 300 parliamentary seats, according to the Election Commission.

Besides, 253 candidates from Islami Andolan Bangladesh, 192 from Jatiya Party, 90 from Gono Odhikar Parishad, 65 from the Communist Party of

Bangladesh, 42 from Insaniya Biplob Bangladesh, 39 from Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, 30 from Amar Bangladesh party, 34 from Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, 26 from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, and 19 from Gono Forum are also competing in the race.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

UNBOWED

The Daily Star
CELEBRATING

35

YEARS OF
JOURNALISM WITHOUT
FEAR OR FAVOUR

The fourth part
of The Daily
Star's 35th
anniversary
supplement
2026,

FACING ECONOMY'S LOOMING CHALLENGES

decodes the
pressures on our
economic growth
and sketches a
clear blueprint
for the road
ahead.

Collect your
copy from your
hawker today.



EC greenlights 24 candidates following dual citizenship review

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following nomination appeal hearings, the Election Commission has given the green signal to 24 aspirants who had dual citizenship to contest the upcoming February 12 national election.

The EC held the hearings from January 10 to January 18. On the final day, the EC heard 24 appeals related to dual citizenship complications.

Earlier, the nomination papers of 15 candidates were declared valid by the Returning Officers (ROs), but separate appeals were later filed against them with the EC. During the hearings, those appeals were rejected, thereby upholding the ROs' decisions.

These are: Dhaka-1 Islami Andolan Bangladesh candidate Mohammad Nazrul Islam; Dinajpur-5 BNP candidate A K M Kamruzzaman; Shatkira-4 BNP candidate Md Moniruzzaman; Faridpur-2 BNP candidate Shama Obaid; Sunamganj-2 BNP candidate Tahir Raihan Choudhury; Sunamganj-3 independent candidate Md Anwar Hossain; Moulvibazar-2 BNP candidate Md Shawkatul Islam; Habiganj-1 independent candidate Sheikh Sujat Miah; Brahmanbaria-3 Jamaat-e-Islami candidate Md Junayed Hasan;

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

When electoral symbols were still up for grabs

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

There was a time when the boat was not confirmed for the Awami League, nor was the paddy sheaf the BNP's permanent symbol.

Electoral symbol distribution was not always as straight forward as it seemed yesterday when the election office finalised 118 symbols for the candidates without any notable discontent.

In the case of the National Citizen Party's demand for the water lily, after months long dispute with the Election Commission, the party finally settled on the water lily bud in November 2025.

THE FIRST DISPUTES: 1973

The debate over symbols began even before the country's maiden parliamentary election. Both the Awami League (AL) and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) demanded the boat.

On January 25, 1973, the EC met political parties to reserve the symbols. The commission adopted the principle that a party which had used a symbol in the previous election would have prior right in the next election. Based on this principle, the EC allocated the boat to the Awami League.

Barrister Aleem Al-Razi, representing the National Awami Party (Bhasani), opposed this decision. He argued that the terms "last

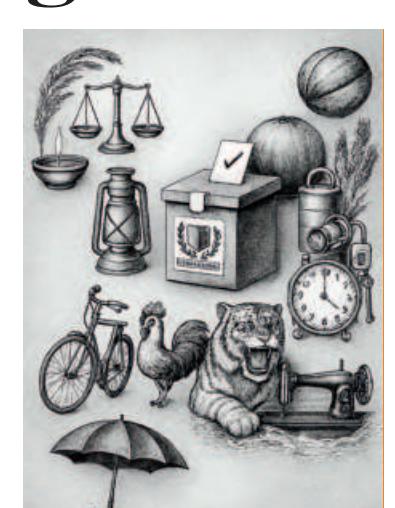


IMAGE: AI GENERATED



Returning officers in 298 constituencies across the country allocated symbols to candidates yesterday. In this photo, Sanjida Islam Tulee, a BNP candidate for the 13th parliamentary polls, smiles as she displays her symbol allocation paper outside the Election Commission's Dhaka divisional office at Segunbagicha.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON