



Rohingya repatriation only solution to the crisis

CA tells UNHCR representative

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the repatriation of more than one million Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar's Rakhine State remains the only viable and sustainable solution to the crisis.

He urged the UN refugee agency to continue its active engagement to facilitate their safe return.

The chief adviser made

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



US Ambassador to Bangladesh Brent T Christensen pays a courtesy call on Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman at the Army Headquarters yesterday. They exchange greetings and discussed ways to further strengthen the existing cordial relations between the two countries.

PHOTO: BANGLADESH ARMY

PDB overpaid BPC Tk 644cr for furnace oil

Price set above procurement cost, says PDB at BERC hearing

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) has said it paid Tk 644 crore more than necessary to the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) for furnace oil supplied to power plants over the last one and a half years.

At a public hearing yesterday, PDB officials said BPC charged a fixed price of Tk 86 per litre during the period, despite its actual procurement cost varying between Tk 57 and Tk 83 per litre in different months.

PDB noted that 35 percent of BPC's furnace oil supply comes from the state-owned Eastern Refinery, while the remaining 65 percent is imported.

It argued that prices should be set based on a weighted average of domestic and imported costs, rather than through a fixed or arbitrary calculation.

"Furnace oil is a byproduct of crude oil and has a global benchmark price, known as Free on Board (FoB). The cost at Eastern Refinery should not exceed this, but BPC does," said Md Jahangir Alam Mollah, a PDB director, during a hearing before the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

He said BPC has sold furnace oil at Tk 86 per litre for a long time, while private companies imported the fuel at Tk 57 per litre in December last year.

BERC held the public hearing on furnace oil pricing for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'981 hurt in polls-related violence since Oct last year'

HRSS says clashes, threats, rumours fuel election-time unrest

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and TOUSIF KAIUM

Violence has flared since campaigning began for the 13th national election on January 22, and police say arrests and cases alone will not be enough unless rival groups show restraint.

In the eight days from the start of official campaigning until yesterday, at least 19 incidents of clashes were reported across the country, according to media reports and data received from police.

A Jamaat upazila unit secretary was killed in clashes in Sherpur on Wednesday.

The incidents were triggered by local disputes, "offensive" comments on social media, and even quarrels over sitting on a chair, according to the information.

19 clashes recorded since campaigning began on Jan 22

BNP- and Jamaat-led alliances involved in most reported clashes

Police say arrests alone cannot curb poll-time violence

Experts blame weak enforcement of electoral code

Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) said in a statement yesterday that, based on information it collected from October until yesterday, at least 981 people were injured and five were killed in 113 incidents of violence across the country linked to the upcoming national elections.

HRSS said that during the campaign period, candidates' aggressive attitudes, the spread of hatred against opposition parties and other candidates, threats and intimidation, smear campaigns, falsehoods and hostile remarks are fuelling hostility and violence among party leaders, activists and supporters, which is not desirable in any way.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

150 agri students receive Prayash Syngenta scholarship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 150 final-year university students from agriculture-related disciplines across Bangladesh received the Prayash Syngenta Scholarship 2025 at a certificate handover ceremony held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

Jointly initiated by Syngenta Bangladesh and The Daily Star, the scholarship supports academically strong and motivated students who aspire to contribute to the country's agricultural development.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Hedayet Ullah, managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh; Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor of The Daily Star; and Mohammed Shahidul Islam, corporate affairs and sustainability director of Syngenta Bangladesh, attended the ceremony and handed over certificates to the recipients.

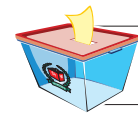
Addressing the students, Mahfuz Anam urged them to remain committed to agriculture as a field of study and profession, highlighting the growing role of technology and innovation in advancing agricultural development in Bangladesh.

Hedayet Ullah stressed the rising global demand for food production amid a rapidly growing population and the critical role future agricultural professionals will play in meeting this challenge.

This year, the programme received 760 applications from 27 universities across the country.

The selection process included multiple stages, such as academic screening and an independent review of applicants' written submissions focusing on motivation, contribution plans and potential impact.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



FEBRUARY 12 ELECTION | DHAKA-12

A battle of 'Saifuls'

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Dhaka-12, as a constituency, can be defined by a high-density corridor where industry, commerce, and community intersect.

It is home to the high-octane Tejgaon Industrial Area, Karwan Bazar -- the country's largest wholesale hub and Dhaka's primary food lifeline, the country's largest truck stand at Tejgaon, a concentration of business headquarters rivalling that of Motijheel and Gulshan, and sprawling residential neighbourhoods.

Diverse in both character and function, Dhaka-12 is as complex as it is crowded.

A total of 15 candidates are contesting the February 12 polls, representing parties including Jamaat-e-Islami, Jatiya Party, Biplobi Workers Party, Ganosamhati Andolan, Communist Party of Bangladesh, and Gono Odhikar Parishad, among others.

The BNP has extended its support to Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Huq in the constituency, withdrawing its own candidate, Saiful Alam Nirrob, former convener of BNP's Dhaka North City unit.

Nirrob, who faced the brunt of repression under the Awami League government, chose to stay in the race, prompting the BNP to expel him. He is now contesting the election as an independent candidate with the Football symbol.

Voters believe the real contest is among BNP rebel Saiful Alam Nirrob, Jamaat-backed Saiful Alam Khan Milon, and BNP-supported Saiful Huq, turning the race into what many are calling the "Battle of the Saifuls".

Besides the three, Taslima Akhter of Ganosamhati Andolan, Kallol Banik of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Mohammad Shahjalal of Bangladesh Islami Front, Mominul Amin of National Democratic Movement, Tarek Rahman of Amjanatar Dal, Sarker Mohammad Salauddin of Jatiya Party, Mahmudul

Hasan of Islami Andolon Bangladesh, Farid Ahmed of Jonotar Dal, Mosammat Salma Akter of Inshaniyat Biplob Bangladesh, Muntasir Mahmud of Bangladesh Cultural Liberation Alliance (Muktijot), and Abul Bashar Chowdhury of Gono Odhikar Parishad are also contesting for the seat.

All candidates are engaged in intensive campaigning, making different promises to win over the support of the constituency's 3,33,320 voters -- 1,74,349 men and 1,58,968 women.

Talking to The Daily Star, voters identified load-shedding, mosquito menace, teen gangs, and extortion as the constituency's most pressing issues.

Major candidates have also prioritised these concerns in their election pledges.

Saiful Alam Nirrob has pledged to eliminate extortion, curb drug abuse, dismantle teen gangs, clear footpaths occupied by hawkers, vendors, floating populations and construction materials, and modernise the truck stand.

He also vowed to allocate designated days for street vendors to operate on unused roads.

"If voters elect me with the 'Football' symbol on February 12, my primary goal will be to build a modern and safe Dhaka-12," Nirrob told The Daily Star.

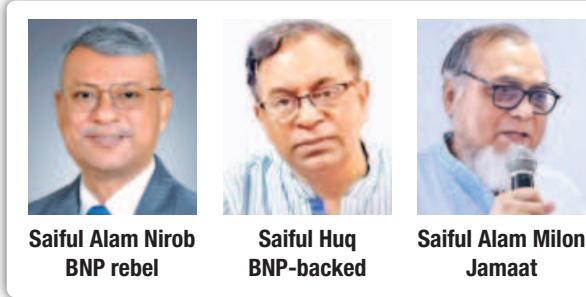
Nirrob expressed optimism about being elected, but voiced concern over the use of muscle power and election-centric violence.

Jamaat candidate Saiful Alam Milon also voiced hope, saying people want change and will vote for Jamaat to bring it.

Talking about his party's pledges, he said Jamaat, if voted to power, would create employment for 50 lakh youths in its first year at the country's helm.

He also spoke of skill development programmes for educated youth, upgrading colleges into universities,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Saiful Alam Nirrob

Saiful Huq

Saiful Alam Milon

BNP rebel

BNP-backed

Jamaat

'January saw 42 communal attacks'

Says Oikya Parishad, places seven demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 42 incidents of communal violence, including 11 killings and one rape, were reported across the country in January, raising concerns about the safety of religious and ethnic minorities ahead of the upcoming national election, said Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday.

The incidents, recorded up to January 27, also included nine attacks on temples and churches, and 21 cases of attacks, looting, land grabbing, and vandalism of minority homes and businesses, the organisation said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

DEMANDS

- ❶ Level playing field for minority candidates, voters
- ❷ Ban on use of religion, communal sentiment in campaigns
- ❸ Adequate law enforcement, including army, if needed
- ❹ Declare minority-dominated areas risk-prone

In a written statement, the organisation's acting general secretary Monindra Kumar Nath said the organisation documented a total of 522 incidents nationwide over the last year.

These included 61 killings; 28 incidents of violence against women, including rape and gang rape; 95 attacks on places of worship involving vandalism, looting, and arson; 102 attacks on homes and business establishments; 38 cases of abduction, extortion, and torture; 47 incidents of threats and physical assaults; 36 arrests and torture on allegations of religious blasphemy; and 66 cases of forcible occupation of land, homes, and businesses.

He said members of minority communities

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A total of 150 agriculture students received the Prayash Syngenta Scholarship 2025 at a certificate handover ceremony held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. Jointly initiated by Syngenta Bangladesh and The Daily Star, the scholarship supports those who aspire to contribute to the country's agricultural development.

PHOTO: STAR

Submit probe report on Hadi murder by February 3

Court asks CID

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit a probe report by February 3 in a case filed over the killing of Inqilab Moncho spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Awlad Hossain Muhammad Zonaid passed the order after the CID failed to submit the report yesterday, said a police officer working at the court.

On January 25, the court directed the CID to submit the report by yesterday, he added.

On December 12 last year, Hadi, an independent aspirant for the Dhaka-8

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3