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

'Feb 12 polls will be held peacefully'

Home affairs adviser expresses confidence

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barishal

Home Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Md Jahangir Alam



Chowdhury yesterday expressed confidence that the upcoming 13th National Parliamentary Election will be held peacefully, citing the smooth and "incident-free" celebration of recent religious festivals.

"The Durga Puja was peaceful this year, even Saraswati Puja was held a few days ago without any incident. The election will also be very peaceful with everyone's cooperation," he told journalists after a meeting with law enforcement agencies and

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Illegally occupying the space beneath the Babu Bazar Bridge in the capital, makeshift street vendors begin readying for the day's trade, defying existing regulations. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

33% food samples tested unsafe in FY 2024-25

Food Safety Authority data reveals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Food Safety Authority detected adulteration, contamination, and low nutritional content in 571 of 1,713 tested food samples (33.3 percent) in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The samples included pickles, sauces, chips, puffed rice, fruit drinks, mustard oil, butter, soybean oil, dalda, and honey, among others, said Mohammad Mostafa, member (public health and nutrition) of the BFSa at an event yesterday.

The BFSa organised the event at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council to mark National Food Safety Day 2026.

The samples were collected and tested following proper regulations, documentation, and use of accredited laboratories, Mostafa said.

He explained that adulteration includes adding prohibited substances to mislead consumers or for financial gain, such as urea in chilli or non-food grade colours to enhance appearance.

Contamination refers to harmful substances introduced during processing or from environmental sources, such as trans fats. Quality deviations occur when products contain too little or too much of a required ingredient, such as edible oils lacking the prescribed Vitamin A content, he said.

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Policy reversals, underfunding hurting edn goals

Speakers tell dialogue

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allocate 4-6 percent of GDP to education
- Form a task force to draft sector-wide plan
- Establish a permanent education commission
- Introduce universal mid-day meal programme
- Strengthen teacher capacity, status, recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

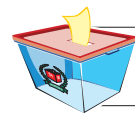
Bangladesh's education system is suffering from the absence of a long-term plan, frequent policy reversals, weak learning outcomes and chronic underinvestment, speakers said yesterday, warning that the country is falling behind on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4).

The observations were made at a policy dialogue titled "SDG-4 progress and challenges in Bangladesh: Expectations from the next government", organised by the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) at the Bangladesh Tourism Corporation auditorium in the capital.

Brac University Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said Bangladesh has operated for decades without a sector-wide education development plan.

"All governments have neglected education for the past 55 years," he said, arguing that reforms repeatedly fail because education is not treated as a priority in national planning.

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FEBRUARY 12 ELECTION | DHAKA-19

Labour rights, daily struggles shaping election discourse

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE and SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

A group of students were chatting at a tea stall on the Jahangirnagar University campus; their conversation centred on the upcoming national election.

They shared varied views on the electoral atmosphere, candidates, political parties, concerns, and their hopes for a post-election Bangladesh.

Many students of the university are voters in the Dhaka-19 constituency, which includes Savar and Ashulia.

The constituency comprises Shimulia, Dhamsona, Yearpur, Ashulia, Birulia, Pathalia, Savar Union, Savar Municipality, and Savar Cantonment.

Known for the garment industry and the Dhaka-Aricha Highway, the area holds major economic importance but has long been plagued by persistent problems.

Severe traffic congestion is a daily reality in Nabinagar, Baipail, and Savar Bus Stand.

Industrial waste has heavily polluted the Bangshi river and surrounding areas, while poor drainage causes waterlogging even after slight rainfall.

Furthermore, gas shortages for both industrial and residential use remain a consistent struggle.

As an industrial hub, the area also sees frequent criminal activities linked to transport, the jhut (garment scrap) trade, and land grabbing.

Any instability in the garment sector here affects national politics and the economy, making labour unions particularly influential in this region.

Khairul Mamun Mintu, a local garment workers' leader, told 'The Daily Star', "A large portion of voters in Dhaka-19 are workers. We discussed our demands on living standards and professional development with candidates and are now evaluating who addressed our rights."

"I haven't seen any clear programmes for workers in the candidates' manifestos," he added. "While many listened to us, heavyweight candidates did not seem to prioritise our demands."

According to locals, the main contenders are BNP's Dewan Mohammad Salahuddin, National Citizen Party (NCP) candidate Dilshana Parul -- representing the Jamaat-led alliance -- and Mohammad Faruk Khan of Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

Nabinagar, Baipail, Ashulia, and Savar Bus Stand areas are alive with campaign processions, banners, and posters.

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Dilshana Parul



Dewan Md Salahuddin

MJF unveils platform for gender-inclusive energy transition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A coalition of 33 organisations under the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday launched the Women's Energy and Empowerment Network (WEE-NET), calling for women and marginalised communities to be placed at the centre of the country's energy policies and just transition plans.

The platform was unveiled at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, where speakers said women continue to face structural exclusion from employment, decision-making and economic opportunities, an inequality they argued is being replicated in the energy sector.

On behalf of the platform, Wasirul Rahman Tanmoy of MJF said women's labour force participation in Bangladesh stands at 19 percent, while their representation in leadership and technical roles in the energy sector remains below 10 percent.

He added that this compares with a global average of 32 percent female participation in the renewable energy sector.

Speakers said current energy policies largely treat women as consumers rather than entrepreneurs, technicians, innovators or decision-makers, warning that limited access to technical education could further widen the gap as the sector evolves.

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Justice Mamnoon resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Mamnoon Rahman, one of the senior-most High Court judges, has resigned from office citing "personal reasons", Supreme Court officials said yesterday.

"We have received the resignation letter by email," said Supreme Court Registrar General Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siddiquee.

A source said the judge had been on leave since March 3, 2025, due to personal reasons and physical illness.

The SC administration approved his leave until July 20, 2025. Although Justice Mamnoon Rahman submitted applications seeking an extension of leave, the office declined the requests.

However, due to illness, he was unable to comply, the source added. He is currently residing in Canada with his family.

FACT-CHECKED ✓

'Out of context videos manipulating religious sentiment'

Dismislab says voters being misled ahead of polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In recent weeks, several short video clips of political leaders' remarks on religion have gone viral on social media, triggering outrage and thousands of reactions labelling the speakers as "atheist" or "enemy of religion".

Media analysts and election observers warn that such videos are contributing to misinformation and could be used to manipulate voters.

Investigations show that while the videos were not technically altered, selective clipping and removal of context distorted their meaning and were strategically circulated ahead of the polls.

One such video featured BNP leader Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel. In the clip, he is heard saying, "People will be able to go and offer prayers at the Dhakeshwari temple, and priests of the temple will be able to perform puja at Baitul Mukarram when necessary."

Verification, however, shows this was not his full

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The 25th convocation of East West University (EWU) was held on Aftabnagar playground in Dhaka yesterday. Bangladesh Public Service Commission Chairman Prof Mobasser Monem conferred degrees on the students. The convocation speaker was Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals PLC. Prof Mohammed Farashuddin, chairperson of the Board of Trustees, EWU; and Prof Shams Rahman, vice chancellor, among others, spoke on the occasion.

PHOTO: COURTESY