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

BNP to set up wage commission and ensure safe housing if it wins

Zubaida underscores people-first approach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will build a state founded on equality, knowledge and respect for labour, prioritising the people above power and merit over privilege, said



Dr Zubaida Rahman yesterday.

"We say 'we' before 'me', 'the country' before 'us', 'the people' before 'power', and Bangladesh on top of everything and equality over division," said the wife of party Chairman Tarique Rahman at a views exchange meeting organised by the BNP Election Steering Committee at the Hatirjheel Amphitheatre in Dhaka.

"Equal opportunities for all, respect for labour, and valuing merit through merit-based jobs – this is how we want to present a society and a state where the people come first," she added.

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Army personnel stand guard as part of being deployed to heighten security measures around the capital ahead of the 13th parliamentary election, scheduled for February 12. The photo was taken on Ring Road in the Mohammadpur area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY ICT-1 accepts charges against Menon, Qamrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution on Tuesday filed formal charges at International Crimes Tribunal 1 against former ministers Rashed Khan Menon and Qamrul Islam over alleged crimes against humanity linked to killings during the July 2024 uprising.

The tribunal, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, accepted the charges after the prosecutor urged the court to take cognisance and scheduled the next hearing for February 9.

Both Menon, Workers Party of Bangladesh president and former civil



aviation minister, and Qamrul, Awami League leader and former food minister, are currently in custody.

Prosecutor Gazi Monwar Hossain Tamim, reading the charges before the three-member tribunal, stated that the accused attended a 14-party alliance meeting chaired by then prime minister Sheikh Hasina on July 19, 2024.

The meeting decided to impose a nationwide curfew and authorise the use of lethal force against student-led protesters, Tamim told the tribunal. Following the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader told the media the decision had been taken to "shoot on sight", he added.

The first charge relates to killings across the country during the uprising following the Gono Bhaban meeting. The second alleges that the decision to use lethal force caused the deaths of 23 people on July 20 in Badda and surrounding areas.

The prosecution also accused Menon and Qamrul of abetment, incitement, and conspiracy to commit crimes against humanity.

SHAFIQR'S ACCOUNT 'HACK' Bangabhaban staffer arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After about 20 hours of detention, police yesterday showed a Bangabhaban employee arrested in a case filed over the alleged hacking of Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman's X (formerly Twitter) account.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police informed journalists about the arrest of Sorware Alam, an assistant programmer at the Bangabhaban's ICT section, at a brief press conference at the DMP's Media Centre around 11:00pm. Sorware was picked up from Motijheel around 1:00am.

Sirajul Islam, a member of Jamaat's Election Management Committee, filed the case against Sorware with Hatirjheel Police Station under the Cyber Security Ordinance last night.

DMP Additional Commissioner Shafiqul Islam, head of its Detective Branch, said that the DB took permission from the President's Office, the Secretariat and other relevant authorities before showing Sorware arrested.

Shafiqul claimed police had "sufficient" evidence linking Sorware to the incident.

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'Bhabi' Elen Bhutto takes campaign door to door



KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

From early morning until late at night, Esrat Sultana Elen Bhutto moves from one village to another, campaigning tirelessly.

Whenever she meets women along the way, she embraces them warmly, without regard for social status or position.

She greets male voters with the same cordiality.

Elen Bhutto is the lone female candidate among eight contestants in the Jhalakathi-2 constituency, which comprises Jhalakathi Sadar and Nalchity upazilas.

She was previously elected from the same seat following the death of her husband, Zulfiker Ali Bhutto.

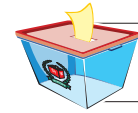
Widely known as "Bhabi" among locals, Elen represents a constituency where her late husband was elected three times.

She first entered the parliament through a by-election in 2000 after her husband's death and was later re-elected.

After securing the BNP nomination for the 13th National Parliament election scheduled for February 12, Elen has intensified her campaign, which gained further momentum after the official start of electioneering.

Every day, she spends long hours reaching voters through door-to-door campaigning. At public gatherings,

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FEBRUARY 12 ELECTION | DHAKA-20

High hopes, fresh pledges shape a calm contest

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE and SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Rina Hijra has lived in the Commissioner Mor area, beside Dhamrai Thana Road, since birth. Over the decades, she has watched the rural landscape change – mud roads paved, markets expand, and living standards improve.

But for Rina and the Hijra community, little has changed.

Now in her sixties, she looks to the upcoming national election with cautious hope.

"I will vote. I have voted before," Rina told The Daily Star. "But we have never received any government assistance. We still survive by begging from door to door."

The Hijra community lives within Dhamrai municipality, part of the Dhaka-20 parliamentary constituency.

Located on the northwestern edge of the Dhaka district, the seat includes the municipality and 16 unions of Dhamrai upazila. It borders Mirzapur in Tangail to the north, Nawabganj to the south, Savar to the east, and Saturia and Manikganj Sadar to the west.

The Dhaka-Aricha Highway cuts through the largely rural constituency.

As election day approaches, candidates and activists are canvassing across the upazila. Campaign talk fills local markets.

"There is interest in the election, but the festive mood of the past is missing," said Sujon Moni Das, a blacksmith from Nannar union.

"Candidates are coming to us. We tell them roads need repairs, and the impoverished need support. Above all, we want an environment free from violence."

Though agriculture remains central, Dhamrai is also known for its ancient market, industrial factories, and rich cultural heritage. The Yashomadhav Rath Yatra is a 400-year-old tradition of the area.

Meanwhile, pottery made by artisans on the banks of the Bangshi river is an inseparable part of Dhamrai's culture.

Additionally, the reputation of its bell-metal and brassware utensils and artwork is worldwide.

Sukanta Banik, whose family has traded in the Dhamrai market for nearly two centuries, said Dhamrai is naturally a peaceful place.

"Campaigns are ongoing. Candidates and their

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Nabila Tasnid
NCP



Md Tamiz Uddin
BNP

Healing through shared experiences

Workshop empowers trafficking survivors to become caregivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ferdousi Akter, a survivor of human trafficking, said it took her years of struggle to move from being rescued to rebuilding her life and supporting others with similar experiences.

Speaking at a workshop, Ferdousi described what she called a long and difficult journey.

"First a victim, then a survivor, then a champion survivor, then taking responsibility as a caregiver," she said.

The dissemination workshop titled "A Survivor Care Model Led by Individuals with Lived Experience: From Experience to Expertise," was organised by Justice and Care at a city hotel on Tuesday.

Practitioners, officials and development partners attended the event to discuss how lived experience can be professionalised to strengthen

survivor care.

Ferdousi said she had endured "countless shocks", but those experiences now help her connect with survivors in ways outsiders often cannot.

She said survivor care begins from the earliest stages and continues as survivors try to restart their lives. This includes rescue, repatriation, peer mentoring, family counselling, physical follow-up, rehabilitation support and development-oriented training.

"When a survivor plans to start life anew, we are not only caregivers. We become companions on the journey," she said, adding that families often accept support workers more easily when they recognise shared experience and trust.

Her focus, she said, is safety and dignity, while planning support around survivors' situations, mental states and hopes.

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Customers look at a wide variety of pigeons at the popular 'Kobutorer Haat', held in the Hasnabad area of Dhaka every Wednesday and Saturday. Depending on the type of pigeon, each is sold at around Tk 250 to Tk 5,000. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Rushed media ordinances threaten press freedom

Says Article 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Article 19 yesterday expressed concern over the interim government's abrupt release of draft ordinances to establish a National Media Commission and a Broadcasting Commission, allowing only three days for public feedback.

The last-minute move, taken at the closing stage of the interim government's tenure, lacks transparency and due process and risks undermining freedom of expression in Bangladesh, the UK-based international human rights organisation said in a statement.

According to the rights body, the draft National Media Commission Ordinance proposes a commission whose structure, status, responsibilities of

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