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Bangabhaban staffer held over alleged hacking of Shafiqur's X account

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have arrested an assistant programmer from the President's Office in connection with the alleged hacking of Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman's X account, police said.

Sorware Alam, an assistant programmer in the ICT section at Bangabhaban, was picked up from the Motijheel area around 1:00am yesterday.

The move came after a Jamaat delegation filed a complaint with the President's Office on Tuesday afternoon.

Contacted, Hatirjheel Police Station Officer in Charge Golam Mortuza said a case was filed in connection with the incident last night.

DMP Additional Commissioner (DB) Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that Sorware has been shown arrested in the case.

Earlier, at a press conference last evening, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said the party was preparing to file a case against Sorware Alam.

He also claimed that a "malware developed in India" was used to hack the Jamaat Ameer's account.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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.

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 commissioners, and administrative and financial framework would remain under direct government control and heavy bureaucratic influence.

It said such a design exposes the body to political interference and falls short of international human rights standards, including Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which requires media regulators to be independent, impartial, and free from executive control.

Beyond questions of structural independence, Article 19 said the ordinance contains further deficiencies, including the exclusion of freelance journalists from the legal definition of "journalist", depriving a large segment

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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, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

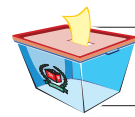
Widely known as "Bhabi" among locals, Elen represents a constituency where her late husband was elected three times.

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

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.

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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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PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

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.

Jamaat misusing religion to deceive voters Says Fakhru

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir



yesterday accused Jamaat-e-Islami of deceiving people by exploiting religious sentiment for political gain.

"Many prominent Islamic scholars have clearly stated that Jamaat-e-Islami speaks in the name of Islam to mislead and deceive people," he said while addressing an election meeting at Kismat Daulatpur village in Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon-1 constituency.

Fakhru alleged that Jamaat activists were misleading women voters by making false religious promises.

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