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2 DAYS TO VOTE



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman greeting a rally in the capital's Jatrabari on the final day of campaigning yesterday. PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Campaigning draws to a close

WASIM BIN HABIB

The curtain has fallen on 20 days of intense electioneering as Bangladesh heads into its 13th national parliamentary polls on Thursday, a pivotal moment of democratic transition marked by cautious optimism among voters.

Campaigning officially ends at 7:30am today, closing a frenetic stretch of rallies, street meetings and door-to-door canvassing by major political parties and independent candidates.

Since the campaign began on January 22, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB), the National Citizen Party (NCP) and others crisscrossed the country to drum up support.

Leaders and candidates remained locked in a war of words while leaning heavily on social media to mobilise supporters and shape narratives.

For the country's 12.76 crore voters, Thursday's



Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, and other leaders of the 11-party alliance at a rally in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

BNP will build safe, self-reliant country

Tarique apologises for past mistakes, vows clean governance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acknowledging shortcomings while in power earlier, BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, in an address to the nation yesterday, apologised to the people, saying his party has learned from past mistakes and is committed to building a safer Bangladesh for all.

"In the past, with your support, BNP governed the country several times. While running the state, we may have made unintentional mistakes in some areas. For that, I sincerely apologise to the people of

this country."

In his speech, broadcast on BTV at 7:15pm, he pledged strict anti-corruption measures, the restoration of the rule of law, and accountable governance.

Calling for a fresh mandate, Tarique added, "Learning from past mistakes and building on our achievements, I once again seek your support in the February 12 national election to build a safe Bangladesh for present and future generations."

He said that if the BNP is given the

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- No rally, procession will be allowed after this morning
- Restrictions will remain in force for 48 hours after voting ends
- Candidates expected to continue outreach through social media

Jamaat pledges 'Bangladesh 2.0'

In televised speech, party chief outlines plans for justice, governance, economic overhaul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday pledged to build a "Bangladesh 2.0" by placing the young generation at the forefront of state leadership and carrying out reforms in the judiciary, education, and the economy.

In a televised address to the nation on Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar around 6:15pm, Shafiqur said Jamaat envisioned a Bangladesh where citizens would no longer be forced to take to the streets to secure their rights.

"We do not want another July. We want such a Bangladesh where people will never again have to come out onto the streets," he said.

He said the July uprising reflected people's collective aspiration for a discrimination-free Bangladesh and a break from entrenched and dark political practices.

Shafiqur said the country's young generation now wants to see a new Bangladesh they can proudly call their

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Officials prepare election materials ahead of their distribution to polling centres at Azimpur Girls' School and College in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Governor's BB reform mission stalls

Ahsan Mansur's planned ordinance gets stuck

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD MEHEDI HASAN

When Ahsan H Mansur took office as governor of Bangladesh Bank in August 2024, he spoke with the urgency of a reformer determined to rebuild credibility in a fragile financial system. About 18 months later, his tone has become more restrained, reflecting both progress in stabilisation and frustration that a cornerstone reform -- full legal autonomy for the central bank -- has suddenly hit the wall.

The shift in mood was evident at a monetary policy briefing at the central bank, where Mansur again pressed for stronger independence. The same day, Bangladesh Bank officials gathered inside the compound, expressing dissatisfaction over the government's decision not to approve proposed amendments to the Bangladesh Bank Order, the foundational law governing

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US lowers tariff for Bangladesh to 19% from 20%

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The United States has reduced its reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi exports to 19 percent from 20 percent, as the two countries signed a new trade agreement last night to strengthen economic ties.

Under the deal, the US will grant duty-free or reduced-duty access to around 2,500 Bangladeshi products, while Bangladesh will allow about 4,400 American products into its market on similar terms.

Bangladesh will gradually extend duty-free access to more US goods over the next decade, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star after the signing ceremony, held in a hybrid format.

Garments made with US cotton will enjoy zero-duty access to the US market, alongside pharmaceuticals, fisheries products, particle board and food items.

The agreement was signed by Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin and National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman for Bangladesh, and by US Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer for Washington, following negotiations that began in April last year and stretched over more than nine months.

According to a statement from the Chief Adviser's Office, Ambassador Greer praised Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for his leadership. "This agreement will fit Bangladesh into US trade policy," Greer said.

Adviser Bashir Uddin called the deal "a historic new phase in bilateral trade relations", while NSA Khalilur Rahman said the tariff

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FROM THE HOUSE OF ISPAHANI



THE FINAL PUSH

With voting just two days away, the country was buzzing as the campaign trail hit the home stretch yesterday. From city streets to village corners, the final day of electioneering unfolded like a festival of politics. **Top left**, Islami Andolan Bangladesh Ameer Syed Rezaul Karim addressing a rally in Barishal; **top right**, Jatiya Party (GM Quader-led) candidate for Gaibandha-1 Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary greeting a rickshaw puller while campaigning in the district. **Bottom (L-R)**: Dhaka-9 candidate Tasnim Jara hugging a voter while campaigning in the capital's Sipahibagh; supporters of Dhaka-5 BNP candidate Nabi Ullah Nabi attending a rally in the capital's Jatrabari; a women's procession held in support of Jamaat's Chattogram-10 candidate Shamsuzzaman Helaly in the district's Halishahar; and supporters of Dhaka-12 independent candidate Saiful Islam Nirrob at a procession in the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

PHOTOS: STAR



BNP alone has plan, experience to govern

Says Tarique on last day of campaigning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman said that winning applause with pleasing words is easy, but running a country is not. He added that, at present, no political party other than BNP has a clear plan, concrete programmes, or the experience needed to govern the nation.

He also called on everyone to remain vigilant and, hinting at Jamaat activists, alleged that a group is attempting to manipulate the election by manufacturing fake ballot seals.

"Where are their plans? They only have big words... We have seen that their own friends were part of the government over the last one and a half years. But why is the country in such a difficult situation now?" he asked while addressing an election rally on Pir Jangi

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Shafiqur alleges plot to hijack election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman alleged that a certain group, fearing defeat, has become desperate and is now plotting to hijack the election "through the back door".

"They are unleashing goons, stockpiling weapons, and attempting to capture polling centres to snatch away people's votes," he said, hinting at BNP activists.

Shafiqur made the remarks while speaking at an II-party alliance election rally at the Mohammadpur Central Eidgah ground in Dhaka yesterday afternoon. The event was organised in support of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Ameer Mamunul Haque, the alliance candidate for Dhaka-13 constituency.

The Jamaat chief further said, "Let me make it clear -- the July warriors have not fallen asleep. They are still awake. In Sha Allah, we will resist all their [BNP activists] misdeeds. Don't dare to snatch people's votes again."

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IAB commits to ideology over power politics

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) Ameer Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim has said his party has never engaged in power-centric politics, stressing that it remains committed to ideology and Islam.

"If we had practised power politics, we could have tasted power long ago. We have pursued ideology and Islam," he told an election rally in Barishal-4 (Mehendiganj Hizla-Kazirhat) yesterday, campaigning for party candidate Mufti Syed Muhammad Abul Khair.

Rezaul Karim, also the Pir of Charmonai, said IAB is contesting the election despite obstacles, solely to uphold Islam and Shariah. He urged voters to support the party's hand fan symbol, saying it would "bring smiles to your faces."

Senior Nayeb-e-Ameer Mufti Syed Faizul Karim described the February 12 polls as a chance to change the nation's fate. He argued that Bangladesh's 12 previous elections failed to meet public expectations due to flawed

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Parties outline visions in televised speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties yesterday outlined their visions for governance, reform, and citizen welfare, among other issues, in addresses to the nation on state television, a day before the polls.

Emphasising justice-based, corruption-free governance, economic fairness, and protection of citizens' rights, they urged voters to cast their ballots and support their candidates.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Kazi Sajjad Zahir Chandan warned of a "deep systemic crisis" marked by inequality, democratic decline, and falling living standards.

He pledged widespread reforms, drawing inspiration from the 1971 Liberation War and the July 2024 Uprising, and promised universal healthcare, free education, guaranteed employment for families, food rationing, and workers' protections.

Urging voters to resist manipulation, he said the

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Jamaat pledges 'Bangladesh 2.0'

FROM PAGE 1

own -- Bangladesh 2.0.

Describing youths as hardworking, courageous, talented, and technologically aware, he said Jamaat wanted to work hand in hand with them to rebuild the country.

He said people want security, good governance, and insaf (justice), stressing the need for fundamental reforms to ensure accountability and fairness.

"Some steps towards reform have been taken, but many are incomplete or at a very early stage," he said, urging people to vote "yes" in the referendum to complete the reform process.

Termining the national elections held in 2014, 2018, and 2024 a "mockery", the Jamaat chief said citizens had been deprived of their voting rights in those polls.

On Jamaat's vision for governance, he said the party had outlined it through policy summits and its election manifesto, which was prepared with input from experts at home and abroad, as well as people from different professions.

"If we get the opportunity to form the government by the will of Allah and the love of the people, we will begin implementing our plans from the very first day, after the Fajr prayers," he said.

"We must say yes to honesty and justice, and no to corruption and oppression," he said, urging votes for Jamaat.

On women's rights, Shafiqur said no society could prosper without ensuring women's dignity and security.

"If we come to power, women will not remain confined to the household. They will lead mainstream society with pride, from corporate leadership to politics, without discrimination," he said.

He also pledged equal rights and security for people of all faiths.

"This Bangladesh belongs to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians alike. No one will live in a culture of fear," he said, adding that any attempt to attack people based on religious identity would be resisted.

Addressing religious leaders, he called on the ulama and members of the Tablighi Jamaat to play an active role in nation-building, saying it was a collective responsibility to establish justice and insaf in society.

Steps would be taken to strengthen

the role of religious groups in national policy processes, he added.

He further pledged that, if Jamaat comes to power, no one would face persecution, arbitrary "tagging", or extrajudicial killings.

Outlining priority areas for reform, Shafiqur identified education, the judiciary, and the economy as key sectors.

"Education must be ethics-based and technology-driven," he said, adding that Jamaat wants to turn young people into skilled professionals and provide them with jobs rather than unemployment allowances.

On the judiciary, he said meaningful reform was essential to ensure justice.

"Without establishing justice in society, we cannot build the Bangladesh we aspire to," he said, calling for honest, capable, and committed individuals to be appointed to the bench.

On the economy, he said wide-ranging reforms were needed, particularly in the banking sector.

"We must make our economy investment-friendly. Only then will employment be created and unemployment reduced," he said.

The Jamaat chief alleged that previous rulers had treated the state as personal property and misused public resources, institutions, and development projects for personal and partisan gain.

Jamaat representatives who had previously served in parliament and local government, he claimed, had not been accused of corruption.

He also announced plans to hold elections among volunteer representatives to choose delegates who would liaise with embassies and high commissions, advocate for expatriates' rights, and ensure their voices are heard.

He said efforts would be made to restore suspended international flights, including the Manchester route, and to launch new services where needed. He also pledged to ensure the dignified repatriation of deceased migrant workers and expressed support for proportional parliamentary representation of expatriates.

On foreign policy, Shafiqur said Bangladesh would pursue relations with all countries based on equality and mutual respect.

"Our national interests, dignity, and development goals will guide our international engagements," he said.

He also pledged responsible and transparent action on climate change.

Concluding his address, Shafiqur said state power was an amanat (trust) of the people and must never be treated as a privilege.

"We must always remember that we are accountable," he said, recalling Hazrat Omar's saying that a ruler would be held responsible even if a dog died of hunger by the banks of the Euphrates.

"I earnestly appeal to you all to elect Jamaat-e-Islami candidates on the Daripalla (balanced-scale) symbol and the candidates of the II-party alliance in your respective areas on February 12," he said.

US lowers tariff for Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

reduction and zero-duty access for textiles using US inputs would give Bangladesh exporters "a major boost".

The agreement was approved by the Council of Advisers yesterday and will take effect once both sides issue formal notifications.

The deal follows earlier tariff changes. In April last year, US President Donald Trump imposed a 37 percent reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi exports, later reduced to 20 percent after negotiations.

As part of broader commitments, Bangladesh has pledged to purchase 25 Boeing aircraft, with 14 deals already being finalised at a value between Tk 30,000 crore and Tk 35,000 crore.

The country will also increase imports of US cotton, soybeans, liquefied petroleum gas and other products.

Bangladesh previously agreed to import 3.5 million tonnes of US wheat over five years, of which 660,000 tonnes have already been purchased.

US Trade Representative data show that bilateral goods and services trade rose to \$12.4 billion in 2024, marking a 3 percent increase from the previous year. The trade deficit stood at \$6.1 billion, as Bangladesh exported goods worth \$8.4 billion to the US and imported \$2.3 billion in American products.

BNP will build safe, self-reliant country

FROM PAGE 1

responsibility to run the state, it will build a self-reliant Bangladesh, targeting every sector and every class of people, and will announce and implement the national pay scale for government officers and employees on time.

Tarique warned that certain groups are deliberately misinterpreting religion for political gain and attempting to mislead faithful Muslims, urging citizens to remain alert and united during this critical electoral period.

Citing respected religious scholars, he said, "Many prominent ulemas have spoken out clearly that some people, for the sake of party interests, are misusing religion and trying to confuse devout Muslims. Therefore, I appeal to all believers -- we must remain cautious so that no one can mislead faithful Muslims."

"BNP wants to build a safe Bangladesh in which Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians -- believers, non-believers, or sceptics -- whether living in hills or plains, every citizen will remain secure."

Calling the upcoming election a historic milestone, he added, "The fallen, defeated, and expelled fascist clique had taken away ownership of the state from the people and seized all democratic political rights. Finally, through long movements and sacrifices of thousands of lives, the ownership of the state has been

returned to the people."

"Direct voting -- from local representatives to members of parliament -- is the precondition for restoring people's lost political authority."

Outlining BNP's manifesto, the party chief pledged wide-ranging reforms focused on employment, youth, women, farmers, education, healthcare, technology, and governance.

He announced plans to create one crore jobs through economic restructuring, regional development, foreign investment, and expansion of IT, freelancing, and outsourcing sectors.

Educated unemployed youth would receive temporary financial support for up to one year until employment is secured.

On women's empowerment, he said BNP would introduce Family Cards in the names of female household heads, initially providing monthly assistance to economically disadvantaged families.

"We consider the Family Card a symbol of women's economic empowerment," he said, adding that his party would ensure daycare centres and breastfeeding corners at workplaces, women-only electric transport, strict laws against cyberbullying, and exemplary punishment for violence against women.

Addressing farmers, he said Farmers' Cards will provide updated agricultural information and financial

assistance, reiterating BNP's belief that protecting farmers means protecting the nation.

Education reforms would include mandatory vocational training from high school, free skill development programmes at colleges and universities, and the introduction of a third language alongside Bangla and English to enhance global employability.

On healthcare, he said BNP plans to recruit 1,00,000 healthcare workers, 80 percent of them women, to deliver basic medical services at the grassroots level.

He also highlighted initiatives in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data processing, and semiconductors, aiming to generate hundreds of thousands of jobs annually.

Regarding religious harmony, Tarique said, "The state belongs to everyone. Ensuring safety is the responsibility of the state, and security is the right of all."

He stressed that Bangladeshis have consistently rejected dictatorship, extremism, and communalism.

Calling on voters, he urged citizens to support the BNP. "A victory for the paddy sheaf means victory for Bangladesh. It means an independent, sovereign, and fascism-free Bangladesh."

"On February 12, please vote for the paddy sheaf... Let the first vote of our youth be for democracy. With your support, we will build a just, humane, and secure Bangladesh."

UK PM Starmer's communications director quits

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was scrambling to shore up his premiership yesterday, as another top aide quit and he prepared to face lawmakers furious that his government has become embroiled in the Jeffrey Epstein scandal.

The Labour leader, in office for 19 months, is facing calls from opposition politicians to resign over the appointment of Peter Mandelson as US ambassador, despite knowing he had maintained links to Epstein after the sex offender was convicted in 2008.

In a fresh setback, Starmer's communications chief Tim Allan quit just months into the role, the day after his chief of staff, Morgan McSweeney,

also resigned for advising Starmer to make the contentious Mandelson appointment.

McSweeney's departure deprives the beleaguered UK leader of his closest adviser.

Allan said in a short statement that he wanted "to allow a new No.10 team to be built", referring to the prime minister's 10 Downing Street office.

Starmer has already had several communications chiefs in his short tenure, with staff departures, policy U-turns and missteps an increasing hallmark of his struggling administration that has increasingly dented his popularity.

The embattled prime minister was due to address Labour MPs later yesterday in a crunch meeting.

"Advisers advise, leaders decide. He

made a bad decision, he should take responsibility for that," Conservative opposition leader Kemi Badenoch told BBC radio, calling Starmer's position "untenable".

The fallout from the appointment of Mandelson, sparked by emails showing that he remained friends with Epstein long after the latter's conviction in 2008, is the most serious crisis of Starmer's time in power.

Several backbench Labour MPs, mostly from the left of the party who have never warmed to Starmer's centrist tilt, have suggested that Starmer should follow McSweeney out of the exit door.

But a number of leading figures have defended him, as no clear successor has emerged, and with the party facing key local elections in May.

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Misrule will not return if 'Yes' vote wins: Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the country would undergo a fundamental transformation and misrule would not return if the "Yes" vote prevails in the referendum scheduled for February 12.

He also expressed confidence that the national parliamentary election, slated for the same day, would be free, fair, peaceful and festive.

The chief adviser made the remarks while addressing a farewell meeting with all secretaries at his office yesterday.

Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the chief adviser, later briefed the media at the Foreign Service Academy.

"If the 'Yes' vote wins in the referendum, Bangladesh's future will be built in a more positive way," Prof Yunus said.

Expressing optimism, he said the election would be better than any held previously in the country, adding that

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Operations at the Chattogram Port have returned to normal after the indefinite work stoppage by port workers was suspended till February 15. All operational activities, including import and export, resumed at the country's main seaport from 8:00am yesterday. The photo was taken in the Chattogram Port area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CHATTOGRAM-6 (RAOZAN)
Security tops voter concerns ahead of polls

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

Ahead of the 13th national election scheduled for February 12, voters in the Chattogram-6 (Raozan) constituency say they are gripped by a deep sense of unease over security concerns.

The contest in the constituency features several heavyweight contenders, including BNP's Giasuddin Kader Chowdhury (sheaf of paddy), Jamaat-e-Islami's Shahjahan Manju (scales), Bangladesh Islami Front's Principal Allama Ilias Noori (candle), and Ganosamhati Andolon's Nasiruddin Talukder (mathal-farmer's cap).

All four candidates have been actively campaigning, repeatedly promising to build a "peaceful Raozan" free from violence and

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Surayya replaces Azaz as DNCC administrator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Surayya Akhtar Jahan has been appointed as administrator of the Dhaka North City Corporation after the government decided not to renew the one-year contract of Mohammad Azaz.

An additional secretary of the Local Government Division, Surayya was appointed yesterday through a gazette notification signed by Mahbuba Irene, joint secretary of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.

Previously, Azaz was appointed to the post on a full-time basis on February 9 last year for a one-year term.

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PARTY MANIFESTOS

Long on pledges, short on funding details: Shujan

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Major party manifestos overly ambitious
- No party provided cost estimates
- Funding sources for pledges remain unclear
- BNP's job, growth, welfare targets highly costly
- Good governance key to implementing Jamaat's pledges
- Economic security voters' top concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reviewing the election manifestos of five political parties, Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday said the manifestos of the two major parties are excessively ambitious and that none of the parties has provided financial estimates for implementing their proposed programmes.

As a result, although the pledges may appear attractive in principle, questions remain among citizens about the economic capacity to carry them out, the organisation said.

"It is striking that no party has specified how much money will be required to implement their promises, or from which sources that money will be mobilised," said Dilip Kumar Sarkar, chief coordinator of the organisation.

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FEB 12 ELECTION | DHAKA-6

Legacy collides with new promises

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK and SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

As the election date draws closer, a festive political mood has taken hold of the Dhaka-6 constituency.

The narrow alleyways of Sutrapur, Wari and Gendaria in Old Dhaka are alive with processions, slogans and energetic campaigning.

Candidates are reaching out to voters with promises to resolve long-standing civic problems, while residents look to the polls with hopes of real change.

Dhaka-6 comprises wards 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46 of the Dhaka South City Corporation, covering Wari, Gendaria, Sutrapur and parts of Kotwali thana.

The constituency is home to key landmarks, including Jagannath University, Sadarghat, Sayedabad Bus Terminal, Ahsan Manzil, Joykali Temple, Baldha Garden, Asgar Ali Medical College, Narinda and

Dhupkhola.

Residents said the main contest is between the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami candidates.

The BNP nominee is Ishraque Hossain, son of former Dhaka mayor and freedom fighter late Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Jamaat has fielded Abdul Mannan, a former student leader and assistant secretary of Dhaka City South Jamaat. Both candidates are campaigning intensively and engaging directly with voters.

Locals said Ishraque enjoys strong popularity as a former mayoral candidate and young leader, drawing large processions and rallies.

In contrast, Mannan has focused on an organised, door-to-door campaign.

Voters identified key local issues as gas and water shortages, the congested environment across Old Dhaka, severe traffic jams in Sayedabad and

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Ishraque Hossain
BNPAbdul Mannan
Jamaat

Justice Naima Haider resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Naima Haider, a senior High Court judge who was

under investigation by the Supreme Judicial Council, has resigned from office, citing "personal difficulties".

"Justice Naima Haider submitted her resignation letter on February 5. We sent the letter to the president the same day," said Supreme Court Registrar General Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siddiquee.

He said the Supreme Judicial Council had initiated an investigation concerning Justice Naima.

She is also among 12 HC judges who have been kept away from judicial functions since October 16, 2024, following demands from the anti-discrimination movement, SC sources said.

Justice Naima's tenure was scheduled to continue till March 18, 2029. She was elevated as an additional judge of the High Court Division on June 30, 2009 and appointed a regular judge of the same division on June 30, 2011.



PHOTO: STAR

A human chain was formed in front of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, demanding security assurances for minorities, indigenous people and women voters, so that they can exercise their right to vote freely. The protest was organised by Nagorik Samaj, with participants from all walks of life and civil society coming out in support.

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Badiul Alam's 23rd death anniversary

STAR REPORT

Today is the 23rd death anniversary of freedom fighter and politician Advocate Badiul Alam.



Born in the Sikder family of Fatehnagar village under Chandanaish in Chattogram in 1926, Badiul completed his graduation from Calcutta University in 1946 and followed it up with an LLB degree from Dhaka University.

During the Liberation War, he was an Awami League regional president in Chattogram. Later, he took on the responsibility of the Socialist Party's Chattogram South Division president. In 1972, he became vice-president of the Lawyer's Association before becoming president of the association in 1981. He also briefly taught at the Bangabandhu Law Temple.

To commemorate his death anniversary, Advocate Badiul Alam Memorial Foundation will organise a dua mahfil in Chandanaish.

Security tops voter

FROM PAGE 3
For a large section of voters, however, safety concerns have eclipsed campaign symbols and slogans.

A series of alarming incidents over the past 50 days, with at least 12 Hindu households reportedly set on fire late at night while dwellers were locked inside from outside, has spread fear across the upazila. Locals believe impoverished Hindu families are being deliberately targeted.

Of the upazila's around 3.5 lakh voters, about 95,000 belong to the Hindu community, making them a significant voting bloc.

Sunil Das, 59, a grocery shop owner, said, "Those responsible for the arson incidents have not been identified yet. We can't sleep at night out of fear." Another local, Griha Bishwas, said, "We want to vote for someone who will see people as human beings, not through the lens of religion. If the situation remains calm, then we will go to vote."

Over the past 18 months, since August 5, 2024, at least 20 people have been

killed, and more than a hundred incidents of gunfire have been reported in Raozan. As a result, doubts persist among voters about whether they will be able to cast their ballots safely.

"The people here want nothing more than security. We want an MP who does not maintain any armed group," said Aminul Islam, a rickshaw puller.

Anwar Hossain, a farmer, voiced frustration over broader policy failures affecting livelihoods. "Although farmers received free fertiliser and seeds during the previous government, we never got the real benefits. Agriculture was never among the top priorities of this or any past government," he said.

According to the Chattogram district administration, 37 of the 95 polling centres in Raozan upazila have been identified as vulnerable.

Additional security measures have been deployed at these centres, said Sajedul Islam, officer-in-charge of Raozan Police Station.

Long on pledges

FROM PAGE 3
He made the remarks while presenting the keynote paper at a press conference at Jatiya National Press Club.

Referring to the BNP's manifesto, Dilip said promises such as creating 10 million jobs, raising the economy to one trillion dollars by 2035, gradually bringing 40 million families under a family card system, and recruiting 1,00,000 health workers are extremely costly initiatives.

He said the scope of the proposed farmer card and the amount of subsidy promised under it are not clearly defined, making it difficult to determine how much public revenue would be required for the programme.

To increase the tax-to-GDP ratio, the tax net would have to be expanded severalfold, he said, adding that the BNP's plan to bring wealthy citizens under the tax net may face resistance from affluent groups.

Commenting on Jamaat's pledges, he said ensuring good governance would be the foremost prerequisite for implementing them.

"Unless corruption can be reduced to a tolerable level, it remains questionable whether plans to simultaneously lower tax rates and increase public spending can be realised in practice," he said.

However, Shujan said that if the tax base can be significantly expanded,

meritocracy can be established in government recruitment, investment and procurement, and losses in state-owned sectors reduced, then implementation of the manifesto may be possible.

The keynote paper said high inflation, unemployment and income inequality have shaped the main socio-economic context of the election, making economic security the most important issue for voters.

While all parties speak of development, their approaches differ, it said, noting that BNP advocates a market-based approach, NCP a citizen-centric economy, CPB state control, and Jamaat a modern, just, high-growth economy.

Regarding the implementation of the July National Charter, Shujan said it has emerged as a symbol of transparent elections, an accountable state and the restoration of citizens' rights. Although all five parties have taken a positive stance on the charter, differences are evident in their interpretations.

"BNP and NCP see it as the foundation of a post-authoritarian transition, Islamic parties view it as an opportunity for moral governance, and CPB considers it a framework for state reform," Dilip said.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar also spoke at the event.

Legacy collides with new promises

FROM PAGE 3
surrounding areas, and pollution and encroachment along the Buriganga river.

"We, the residents of Old Dhaka, have faced discrimination in many ways," said local businessman Prabhat Kumar Sur. "Our gas and water problems are decades old. Roads are narrow, traffic congestion is constant, and the environment is polluted with dust and waste."

He added that elected representatives could address these problems if they were sincere. "Before elections, candidates make many promises, but they are rarely seen afterwards. Let's see if things change this time."

According to locals, Ishraque has an extra edge due to his father's legacy, with elderly voters expressing support for him as Khoka's political heir.

Meanwhile, Mannan has gained popularity among younger voters.

Mannan told The Daily Star that the public response to his campaign has exceeded expectations.

"People are no longer accepting the negative propaganda against Jamaat. They will express this through their votes," he said.

If elected, he said he would focus on preserving Old Dhaka's heritage sites, such as Ahsan Manzil and Baldha Garden and develop them as tourism hubs.

He also pledged to free the Buriganga from pollution and take measures to stop extortion.

Criticising Ishraque's "politics of legacy", Mannan said, "The younger generation does not like politics based on family identity. People are looking for a better alternative."

Meanwhile, Ishraque Hossain told The Daily Star that public sympathy for him stemmed from the "oppression and torture" he and his family have faced over the years.

While acknowledging the goodwill generated by his father's popularity, he clarified, "Personally, I am against hereditary politics. I want to establish my own position through my own

work and struggles." If elected, Ishraque said he would remove illegal road occupations, introduce bus route rationalisation to ease traffic congestion and promote administrative decentralisation.

"I have plans to create vocational training and IT startup opportunities for the youth. For women, financial assistance will be provided through 'Family Cards' as per the party's manifesto, and separate services will be arranged in public transport," he said.

"You can give me a chance," he said addressing voters. "I believe I will not disappoint you."

Other candidates in the constituency include Ahmed Ali Sheikh (Gono Front), Md Fakhruul Islam (Gono Odhikar Parishad), Yunus Ali Akond (Bangladesh Congress), Md Akter Hossain (Bangladesh Muslim League), and Amir Uddin Ahmed Dalu (Jatiya Party).

Dhaka-6 has a total of 2,92,283 voters, including 1,52,519 men, 1,39,761 women and three hijra voters.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 101 OF 2026
IN THE MATTER OF:
A.K. Khan & Company Limited

-VERSUS-

The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms,
(Divisional Office), CDA Annex Building (6th Floor),
Kotwali, Chattogram

.....Petitioner

.....Respondent

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 12 read with section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed for alteration of the object clauses in the Memorandum of Association of the above-named Company by inserting new object clauses retaining the existing clauses before the Hon'ble High Court. Upon preliminary hearing, Madam Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque, the Hon'ble Justice of the High Court Division was pleased to admit the application by an order dated 2nd February, 2026. Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on the date so fixed. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned upon payment of required costs.

Yours sincerely,
(Nazmun Binte Islam)

Barrister-at-Law | Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Tanjib Alam & Associates, BSEC Bhaban (Level 11) 102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh, Tel: +88 02 8189240

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 135 OF 2026

Mahmudur Rahman alias Mahmudur Rahman Manna. Petitioner
-Vs-
A.B.M. Nazmul Kadir Chowdhury and others Respondent

This information is for all concerned that the petitioner filed an application under section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994 before the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. After hearing the petitioner, the Company Bench of the Hon'ble Court was pleased to admit the same vide Order dated 2.02.2026 and also passed ad-interim direction. If anyone is interested to oppose/contest the said application, s/he may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through authorized Advocate on or before the date.

Dr. Syeda Nasrin
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Career Opportunity



Ref No: BCB/Admin/HR/2026/98

Date: February 10, 2026

The Bangladesh Cricket Board is the national governing body for cricket in Bangladesh, responsible for the promotion and development of the game at all levels. With a dynamic and fast-growing cricket ecosystem, BCB plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the sport nationally and internationally.

Position Title : Civil Engineer

Organization: Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Employment Type: Full-Time.

Position Overview :

The Civil Engineer will be responsible for planning, supervision, execution and quality control of infrastructure development and maintenance works of BCB facilities including stadiums, practice grounds, buildings and related civil structures. The role requires strong technical expertise, project coordination skills and compliance with safety and engineering standards.

Key Responsibilities :

- Planning, supervision and execution of civil construction and renovation works.
- Preparation of BOQ, estimates, drawings and technical specifications.
- Monitoring quality control, safety compliance and construction standards.
- Coordination with consultants, contractors and internal stakeholders.
- Site inspection, progress reporting and documentation.
- Maintenance planning for existing infrastructure.

Qualifications & Experience:

- BSc in Civil Engineering from a recognized university.
- Minimum 3-5 years of relevant professional experience.
- Experience in infrastructure/building construction projects preferred.
- Knowledge of construction management, estimation and site supervision
- Proficiency in AutoCAD and related engineering software.

Interested candidates are requested to send their CV along with a forwarding letter mentioning expected salary and 01 (One) recent photographs to the Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216 at the email: job@bcb-cricket.com on or before 19th February 2026. Only the short listed candidates will be called for an interview. Please mention the position of the application applied for on the top of forwarding letter.

BIRDEM GENERAL HOSPITAL

(An Enterprise of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh)
122 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

☎ : 41060501-24, Fax: 41060476

Website: www.birdembd.org, www.dab-bd.org

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1.	Division /Entity	Diabetic Association of Bangladesh
2.	Procuring Entity	BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
3.	Source Of Fund	Revenue & Govt. Grant, BIRDEM General Hospital
4.	Reference No	BIRDEM/Purchase/OTM/Equipment/2026/02, Dated: 09 th February 2026
5.	Details of Work	Construction of 3-Story Pre-Fabricated Steel Structure of BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
6.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
7.	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Director (Hospital Administration), BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, On behalf of Director General, BIRDEM General Hospital
8.	Name & address of the office selling tender documents	Procurement Section, Room: 230, 1 st floor of OPD Building, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
9.	Date of selling of tender documents	Tender documents will be available from 14 th February 2026 to 10 th March 2026 on all working days (09.00 am to 01.00 pm).
10.	Tender closing date & Time	12 th March 2026 (From 08.00 AM to 12.00 PM).
11.	Tender opening date & Time	12 th March 2026 at 12.30 Noon (In presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent, if anybody available).
12.	Price of tender document	Tk. 5000/ (five thousand) only. (Non-Refundable)
13.	Tender Security	3% of the quoted amounts have to be deposited in the form of Demand Draft or Pay-order from any local commercial bank in favour of Director General BIRDEM General Hospital.
14.	Pre bid Meeting	A pre bid meeting will be held on 24 th February 2026 in the room no: 246 at 12.00 PM.
15.	General terms & conditions for the Tenderers:	
	a.	The tenderers should be the manufacturer or their authorized supplier/distributor or dealer of the items.
	b.	Membership of a Trade Organization.
	c.	Detail specifications, terms & conditions, warranty & after sales service will be enumerated in the tender schedule.
	d.	The tenderer must have valid trade license, TIN, VAT, Income Tax Certificate & All other related documents as per Tender Schedule.
	e.	Detail terms & conditions are mentioned in the Tender documents.
16.	BIRDEM authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.	
17.	In case of holiday or any unavoidable circumstances last date of dropping & opening will be the next working day.	

Brig Gen Dr. Md. Nasir Uddin Ahmed (Retd.) Director
(Hospital Administration)
BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.

BIRDEM GENERAL HOSPITAL

(An Enterprise of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh)
122 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

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Website: www.birdembd.org, www.dab-bd.org

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1.	Division /Entity	Diabetic Association of Bangladesh
2.	Procuring Entity	BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
3.	Source Of Fund	Revenue & Govt. Grant, BIRDEM General Hospital
4.	Reference No	BIRDEM/Purchase/LTM/Equipment/2026/01, Dated: 09 th February 2026
5.	Details of Work	Drawing, Design, Supply, Installation, testing and commissioning of Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) type Air Cooler for OPD open space and corridor of BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
6.	Procurement Method	Limited Tender Method (LTM)
7.	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Director (Hospital Administration), BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, On behalf of Director General, BIRDEM General Hospital
8.	Name & address of the office selling tender documents	Procurement Section, Room: 230, 1 st floor of OPD Building, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.
9.	Date of selling of tender documents	Tender documents will be available from 14 th February 2026 to 2 nd March 2026 on all working days (09.00 am to 01.00 pm).
10.	Tender closing date & Time	4 th March 2026 (From 08.00 AM to 12.00 PM).
11.	Tender opening date & Time	4 th March 2026 at 12.30 Noon (In presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent, if anybody available).
12.	Price of tender document	Tk. 5000/ (five thousand) only. (Non-Refundable)
13.	Tender Security	3% of the quoted amounts have to be deposited in the form of Demand Draft or Pay-order from any local commercial bank in favour of Director General BIRDEM General Hospital.
14.	General terms & conditions for the Tenderers:	
	a.	The tenderers should be the manufacturer or their authorized supplier/distributor or dealer of the items.
	b.	Membership of a Trade Organization.
	c.	Detail specifications, terms & conditions, warranty & after sales service will be enumerated in the tender schedule.
	d.	The tenderer must have valid trade license, TIN, VAT, Income Tax Certificate & All other related documents as per Tender Schedule.
	e.	Detail terms & conditions are mentioned in the Tender documents.
15.	BIRDEM authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.	
16.	In case of holiday or any unavoidable circumstances last date of dropping & opening will be the next working day.	

Brig Gen Dr. Md. Nasir Uddin Ahmed (Retd.) Director
(Hospital Administration)
BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.

NEWS

2 surveys paint contrasting pictures

One predicts BNP sweep, another shows close race with Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led alliance could win around 208 seats in the 13th national parliamentary election, said a public opinion survey by Eminence Associates for Social Development (EASD) yesterday.

The survey also projected that the Jamaat-e-Islami led alliance may secure about 46 seats. Conducted by EASD, a non-profit organisation, the survey was based on the views of 41,500 respondents.

The findings were unveiled at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, where EASD Chief Executive Officer Shamim Hayder Talukder presented the results.

According to the survey, the Jatiya Party may win three seats, other parties four, and independent candidates around 17 seats.

Shamim said the survey was carried out across all 300 constituencies. Data were collected from 41,500 respondents through a digital platform between January 18 and January 31.

Among the respondents, 26,560 were men (64 percent), while 14,922 were women (36 percent). Young voters aged 18-30 made up 37.2 percent of participants. Another 45.2 percent were aged between 31 and 50, including 27.5 percent in the 31-40 age group and 17.7 percent aged 41-50.

According to the findings, 66.3 percent of respondents expressed willingness to vote for BNP. Jamaat ranked second with 11.9 percent support, followed by National Citizen Party with 1.7 percent. Among others, Jatiya Party received 4 percent support, while independent candidates 2.6 percent.

Meanwhile, another survey released yesterday indicated a much tighter contest between the two alliances.

According to this survey, the BNP led alliance may secure 44.1 percent of the vote, while the Jamaat-led alliance could get 43.9 percent. It further projected that the Jamaat-led alliance may win in 105 constituencies, while the BNP-led alliance could emerge victorious in 101 seats.

The findings were based on a public opinion survey conducted by International Institute of Law and Diplomacy (IILD), with technical support from Projection BD and Jagoron Foundation, between January 21 and February 5. The survey drew responses from 63,615 participants.

The results were presented by IILD Executive Director Shafiqul Alam at a city hotel.

According to the survey, 1.7 percent of respondents expressed support for Jatiya Party, while 6.5 percent said they were yet to decide whom they would vote for.

Among the participants, 36,634 were men, or 57.59 percent, while 26,981 were women, accounting for 42.41 percent.



A child tugs at the string of his kite as it catches the wind and ascends into the sky. Around him, his friends watch eagerly waiting for their turn at flying the kite. The photo was taken in the Hatirjheel area of the capital recently.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

BOGURA-6 (SADAR) CONSTITUENCY

Nuri pledges jobs, food security for all

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, Bogura

Dilruba Nuri, contesting the Bogura-6 (Sadar) seat in the 13th national parliamentary election, is campaigning on foot in a constituency of nearly five lakh voters, relying on a handheld loudspeaker and donations from well-wishers.

Of the 34 candidates vying for seven parliamentary seats in Bogura, Nuri, 38, is the sole female aspirant. She is contesting the election with the "Ladder" (Moi) symbol as a nominee of the Democratic United Front, a coalition of nine left-leaning parties.

A lawyer by profession, Nuri is a familiar sight in the narrow lanes of Bogura town, walking door to door to reach voters. When possible, she rents a pickup van to extend her reach, though cost remains a constant constraint.

She said her entire campaign is being financed through small contributions from supporters.

Nuri entered politics in 2003 through the Samajtantrik Chhatra Front. Since 2022, she has served as the district member secretary of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BSD) and the central general secretary of the Socialist Women's Forum.

Her political motivation, she said, lies in fighting for the basic rights of working people, particularly those living in what she described

as inhuman conditions in urban areas.

Her manifesto's main slogan is to ensure work for every hand and rice for every mouth. It also pledges to build a discrimination-free society and guarantee a dignified life for all.

Beyond economic issues, Nuri pointed to persistent gender bias. "Even during campaigning, voters question how female leaders and activists dress," she said. She also



criticised a culture in which voters expect cash in exchange for support.

"People often ask for money when we ask for votes. How did this system come to exist?" she asked, calling for deeper reflection on the country's electoral practices.

"We want to be elected to give people a life of dignity and humanity," Nuri said. "Not an inhuman life, lived like beggars."

Guideline set for doctor postings and transfers

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has, for the first time, formulated a posting and transfer guideline for government doctors to make human resource management in the health sector more effective, transparent and people-orientated.

Under the guideline, postings and transfers – with a few exceptions – will be carried out through an automated system based on a matrix-driven evaluation framework.

The matrix will be developed by assessing doctors' merit, skills, length of service, higher qualifications, workplace-based contributions, level of service delivery and geographical location.

According to The Posting and Transfer Guideline for Doctors Serving in the BCS (Health) Cadre, 2026, transfer activities will be completed annually between December and March.

The health ministry issued a circular in this regard on Sunday.

"There was no specific guideline for posting and transfer of doctors. The new guideline will come into effect very soon," Health Secretary Saidur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It will make the posting and transfer process transparent and free from influence," he added.

The guideline said a matrix – a measurable, transparent and uniform evaluation framework – will be prepared on a numerical basis for posting and transfer purposes.

It will integrate doctors' merit, skills, length of service, higher qualifications, level of service delivery, geographical location and performance-based contributions.

The matrix will vary for doctors at different levels.

Scores will also differ based on workplace location. For example, a doctor working in a hilly district or hard-to-reach area will receive a higher score than one working in the capital or a divisional headquarters.

Similarly, a doctor with a higher degree will receive a higher score than one with a lower qualification.

Doctors working at upazila-level hospitals will receive higher scores compared to those working at district-level hospitals, medical colleges or specialised hospitals.

Misrule

FROM PAGE 3
there has been no significant tension surrounding the polls so far.

Yunus thanked the secretaries for their performance and cooperation in expediting work related to around 130 ordinances issued over the past 18 months.

Later in the day, the chief adviser presided over a special meeting of the Advisory Council, where a draft ordinance and two policies were approved.

Shafiqul Alam said the council approved the "Bangladesh Public Service Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026", under which the PSC will no longer require prior government approval to spend its allocated funds. At present, the PSC depends on multiple levels of permission, including from the Ministry of Finance, for financial matters.

He added that the drafts of the "National Qualifications Framework Policy, 2026" and the "National Fisheries Policy, 2026" were also approved.

Surayya

FROM PAGE 3

In a press release, Md Alamgir Hossain, public relations officer of the ministry, said Azaz had not been removed, but would be relieved of his duties upon completion of his tenure.

Surayya is set to assume charge on February 11.

Azaz, who also serves as chairman of the River and Delta Research Centre, has recently faced scrutiny over corruption allegations.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) opened an inquiry against him in November last year over alleged abuse of power, irregularities, corruption and bribery.

আধুনিক ভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

নিয়মিত মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রাম শূন্য আসনে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি
শিক্ষাবর্ষঃ ২০২৪-২০২৫

নিয়মিত মাস্টার্স প্রোগ্রামে ২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আধুনিক ভাষা ইনস্টিটিউটের চীনা ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতি প্রোগ্রাম (CLC), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), ফরাসি ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতি প্রোগ্রাম (FLC), জাপানি ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতি প্রোগ্রাম (JLC)-এর শূন্য আসনে ভর্তি প্রক্রিয়ার অংশ হিসেবে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন (ইউজিএ) কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে যে কোনো বিষয়ে চার বছর মেয়াদি স্নাতক (সম্মান) ডিগ্রিপ্রাপ্ত শিক্ষার্থীরা আবেদন করতে পারবেন। তবে স্নাতক (সম্মান) পরীক্ষার মোট জিপিএ ৬.৫০ বাততে হবে। তবে মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক/সমমান পরীক্ষায় আলাদাভাবে ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৩.০০/ দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। মাস্টার্স ডিগ্রিপ্রাপ্তরাও আবেদন করতে পারবেন। ভর্তির ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীর বয়স ও শিক্ষাবর্ষের কোনো বাধাব্যতীত নেই। বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে স্নাতক/ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি অর্জনকারী শিক্ষার্থীরা অনুল্লভ কর্তৃক ডিগ্রির সমতা নিজস্ব সাপেক্ষে ভর্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন। আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের ৯ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখ থেকে ২২শে ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে নির্ধারিত ভর্তির আবেদন ফর্ম সন্ধান ও জমা দান করতে হবে (সমগ্র সকাল ১০টা থেকে বিকাল ৪:৩০টা পর্যন্ত, অফ-ও পনিবার বাসে, মোহাঃ ০১৫৪৪৩৩৫৭৫)।

ভর্তি ফর্মঃ <https://portal.iml.du.ac.bd/DU-registration>
বিস্তারিত তথ্যঃ আধুনিক ভাষা ইনস্টিটিউটের ওয়েবসাইটে দেয়া আছে।
<https://www.facebook.com/iml.du.ac.bd> অথবা
<https://www.facebook.com/seba.iml> (Page) এবং
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/iml.du.ac.bd>

অধ্যাপক মোহাম্মদ আবদুল কামাল
পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

জিডি-৯৭

Deadline

FROM PAGE 3
On January 5, the court asked the PBI to submit the investigation report by yesterday.

Sagar Sarowar was a news editor at Maasranga TV, and his wife, Meherun Runi, was a senior reporter at ATN Bangla.

They were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Their only child, Mahir Sarowar Megh, who was only five at the time, was in the apartment at the time.

After the killings, eight suspects – Kamrul Islam alias Arun, Abu Sayeed, Rafiqul Islam, Bakul Miah, Masum Mintu, Palash Rudra Paul, Anamul Haque alias Humayun Kabir and Tanveer Rahman Khan – were arrested.

Of them, Tanveer and Mintu are now on bail, while Palash is absconding. The remaining five are behind bars.

After the case was filed, the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station was tasked with the investigation, which was handed over to the Detective Branch (DB) of police three days later, on February 16, 2012.

The DB investigated the case until April 18 of that year.

The case was then transferred to the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), which conducted the probe till November 3, 2024.

On November 4 of 2024, the PBI took charge of the investigation following a High Court order.

On October 23, the same year, a four-member task force was formed to investigate the case where the PBI chief was made the convener.

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 10

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:25 12:45 4:30 5:57 7:15
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

পানি সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়
পানি সম্পদ পরিকল্পনা সংস্থা
৭২ গ্রীনরোড, ঢাকা।

স্মারক নংঃ ৪২.০২.০০০০.০০০.০১০.৯৯.০০০১.২৫-৪৯৯
তারিখঃ ২৬শে মার্চ ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ
৯ই ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

অপসারণ আদেশ

যেহেতু, যথাযথ অনুসন্ধান, পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা বা জরিপের ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে নিম্নলিখিত স্থানগুলোর নিকট ইহা পরিষ্কৃত হইয়াছে যে, আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান বাংলাদেশ পানি আইন, ২০১৩ এর বিধান লংঘন করিয়া পানি সম্পদের উপর নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থানপা নির্মাণ কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন, যাহার ফলে জলস্রোতের স্বাভাবিক প্রবাহে বীহার সৃষ্টিসহ জলস্রোতের গতিপথ পরিবর্তন হইয়াছে;

এবং যেহেতু, আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠানকে জাতীয় পানি সম্পদ পরিষদের নির্বাহী কমিটি (ECNWRC) হতে ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা হিসেবে জেলা প্রশাসক, মুন্সীগঞ্জ কর্তৃক গত ০৬/০১/২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখে মুক্তিসম্পন্ন শুনানির সুযোগ প্রদান করা হইয়াছে ও আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠানের উপস্থাপিত বক্তব্য বিবেচনা করা হইয়াছে এবং জেলা প্রশাসক, মুন্সীগঞ্জ কর্তৃক অবৈধ স্থানপা অপসারণের নিমিত্ত "অপসারণ আদেশ" জারী করা প্রয়োজন মর্মে মতামত প্রদান করিয়াছেন;

এবং যেহেতু, উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়াদি বিবেচনাক্রমে ইহা প্রমাণিত হইয়াছে যে, আপনার প্রতিষ্ঠান বাংলাদেশ পানি আইন, ২০১৩ এর বিধান লংঘন করিয়া পানি সম্পদের উপর নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থানপা নির্মাণ ও ড্রাট কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন যাহার ফলে জলস্রোতের স্বাভাবিক প্রবাহে বীহার সৃষ্টিসহ জলস্রোতের গতিপথ পরিবর্তন হইয়াছে;

সেইহেতু, বাংলাদেশ পানি আইন, ২০১৩ এর ধারা ১৩ তে প্রদত্ত ক্ষমতাবলে, নিম্নরূপ অপসারণ আদেশ জারী করা হইল;

(ক) অবৈধ স্থানপা নির্মাণকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ শাহ সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড, পশ্চিম মুক্তারপুর, পঞ্চসার, মুন্সীগঞ্জ সদর, মুন্সীগঞ্জ;

(খ) অবৈধ স্থানপা স্থানঃ জেলাঃ মুন্সীগঞ্জ; উপজেলাঃ মুন্সীগঞ্জ সদর; ইউনিয়নঃ পঞ্চসার, মৌজাঃ পূর্ব মুক্তারপুর;

(গ) অবৈধ স্থানপা সম্পর্কিত বিবরণঃ
পূর্ব মুক্তারপুর মৌজার ০১ নং খাস খতিয়ানের ৩০১ নং দাগে নদী শ্রেণি হিসেবে ২১.৩৫ একর, ৩০২ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ১.৭৭ একর, ৫৮৪ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ০.৬০ একর, ৩০৩ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ২.৭৭ একর, ৩০৪ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ১.১৫ একর, ৩০৫ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ২.৫২ একর, ৩০৬ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ০.৭০ একর, ৩০৭ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ৩.৫৮ একর এবং ৩০৮ নং দাগে সিক্তি শ্রেণি হিসেবে ৩.২৭ একর মোট ৩৭.৭১ একর ভূমির মধ্যে ২০.৬৭ একর ভূমিতে (ক) তে বর্ণিত শাহ সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড অবৈধভাবে দখলে রয়েছে। উক্ত ভূমিতে অবৈধ স্থানপা নির্মাণের বিবরণ নিম্নরূপঃ

ক্রমিক নং	বিবরণ	স্থানপা পরিমাণ
০১	০১ (এক) টি টিনসেড ঘর	০.৩০ একর
০২	০১ (এক) টি লেবার শেড	১.০০ একর
০৩	পাথর ও মাটি স্তুপ করিয়া রাখা	১৯.৩৭ একর

ঘ) অপসারণের সময়সীমাঃ অপসারণ আদেশ জারীর তারিখ হতে ১৫ (পনেরো) দিন;

(ঙ) নির্বাহী কমিটি বা ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত অন্য কোনো প্রয়োজনীয় বিষয় বা তথ্যঃ শাহ সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে অপসারণের ব্যর্থ হইলে আইনগত ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত প্রশাসনিক প্রতিষ্ঠান অপসারণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করিবে;

(চ) শাহ সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ সমুদয় অপসারণ ব্যয় নির্বাহ করিবে।

বাবস্থাপনা পরিচালক,
শাহ সিমেন্ট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিমিটেড
পশ্চিম মুক্তারপুর, পঞ্চসার, মুন্সীগঞ্জ সদর, মুন্সীগঞ্জ।

(মোহাম্মদ লুৎফুর রহমান)
মহাপরিচালক
পানি সম্পদ পরিকল্পনা সংস্থা

GD-294



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Ekushey Padak has surpassed all my other awards: BABITA

“I am very happy and delighted. Especially, because I am receiving the honour in the Language Month. Thus, I feel that it is the greatest achievement of my life.”

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Babita is an internationally acclaimed film actress. After acting in Satyajit Ray's *Ashani Sanket*, she was honoured in many places around the world. In her own country, she has received the National Film Award many times, including the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Mayor of Dallas also gave her a lifetime honour.

This time, Babita is going to receive the Ekushey Padak. She shared this feeling of joy with The Daily Star.

When asked about her personal feelings on receiving the honour, the actress said, “I am very happy and delighted. Especially, because I am receiving the honour in the Language Month. Thus, I feel that it is the greatest achievement of my life.”

Babita also said, “I thank and express my gratitude to the government, to my co-artists and everyone related to the film industry, to my directors too. Throughout my long career, journalists have also played an important role, and I express my love and gratitude to them as well. I also express my love to my parents, brothers, and sisters.”

When asked whose thought came to her mind first after hearing the news of receiving the Ekushey Padak, Babita said, “To tell the truth, when I learned the news, I thought first of my only son, Anik. A few days ago, I was with him in Canada for a long time. While I am now back, I miss him deeply.”

Speaking about her sister Champa and elder sister Suchanda, Babita said, “They are very happy. Everyone from home and abroad

called to congratulate me. My brother and his family members from outside the country called after hearing the news.”

Babita explains why this award feels more special to her. “I have received many awards in life. I have received the National Film Award multiple times in Bangladesh, including the Lifetime Achievement Award. Additionally, I have received honours from Kolkata and many other countries. The Mayor of Dallas gave me a lifetime tribute and declared a day as ‘Babita Day’ in my honour. But the Ekushey Padak has surpassed all my other awards.”

Babita said, “I have spent a whole life acting and dedicated myself fully to the industry. I believe that it is my audience and well-wishers whose love and appreciation brought me this far. I am grateful to each of them.”

THE SOUNDTRACK OF DEMOCRACY

Election songs reshaping Bangladesh's 13th Parliamentary Election

ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

For the first time in over a decade, election songs have become a genuinely diverse cultural phenomenon. They are no longer simply tools played on loudspeakers at roadside rallies. They have crossed into weddings, social gatherings, reels, and everyday listening. Election Commission data, derived from Al Jazeera, shows that 43.56 percent of voters fall between the ages of 18 and 37, many of them first time voters who carry the memory and energy of the July 2024 uprising. According to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, the country had roughly 130 million internet users as of November 2025, accounting for nearly 74 percent of its population. In this landscape, a catchy four-line hook can travel faster than any rally speech, and the election songs of 2026 are proof of that.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) official theme song, built around the lyrical hook *Vote dibo kiske? dhaner shish e (How will I vote? On the sheaf of paddy)*, is a good place to begin. The structure is a question and an answer. The sheaf of paddy is BNP's election symbol, but the song does not simply announce it. It frames the act of choosing BNP as a natural response, as though the listener arrived at the decision on their own. The visuals reinforce this. Rather than showing party leaders or political rallies, the video paints a portrait of Bangladesh itself: its landscapes, its rivers, and its people across many occupations, from farmers and garment workers to students and indigenous communities.

The National Citizen Party, which emerged directly from the July 2024 student movement, has taken a markedly different approach. Its theme song grounds itself in cultural imagery: ox carts, children at play, festivals, and scenes of everyday life. The most telling moment in its lyrical strategy is the self-identification as *moddhoponhi*, meaning middle path or centrist. It tells younger and reform minded voters that NCP is not a continuation of any old party but something genuinely new.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's song *Dekhe Dekhe Kete Gelo Bela* has arguably been the most viral of the season. The lyrics are layered in a way that most election songs are not. The line “Nouka,

dhan er shish, langol dekha shesh; daripalla ebaar gorbe Bangladesh” (The boat, the sheaf of paddy, the plough – seen enough of them. Now Bangladesh will rise under the banner of the scale) names the election symbols of every major party: the boat for Awami League, the sheaf of paddy for BNP, the plough for Jatiya Party. It then declares that the time for watching these symbols govern is over. The scales, Jamaat's own symbol, are positioned as the new chapter.

Artificial Intelligence has been used while composing many of the songs for some parties and many individual candidates. While this made production faster and cheaper, it has raised serious concerns among musicians and creators in Bangladesh. For professionals in the music industry, AI in composition is not a step forward, but a threat. It bypasses the work of composers, arrangers, and producers who have spent years building their craft.

These individual candidates reveal yet another layer of how political communication is evolving. Ishraque Hossain's song weaves English phrases like “No fear, no lie” and “Power of youth” into Bangla lyrics. In urban Bangladesh, particularly among educated young people, English words have become markers of cosmopolitanism and confidence. The phrases chosen are the shorthand vocabulary of youth politics: truth, courage, and generational power. Tarique Rahman's *TR 17* goes further still, packaging its message inside a DJ banger, a genre associated with club culture and youthful energy. The effect is to make political participation feel less like a duty and more like something exciting. *TR 17* itself functions almost like a brand name, blurring the line between a political campaign and popular culture marketing.

History suggests that the popularity of election songs does not necessarily predict electoral outcomes. Many previous songs continue to circulate among young people even after political shifts. What remains is not the result, but the rhythm, memory and emotional imprint.

This year's election songs underscore how politics increasingly intersects with culture, technology and identity. Whether through folk nostalgia, AI-generated tunes or bilingual DJ anthems, parties are competing not just for votes, but for attention, emotion and cultural relevance.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED | VISUAL: ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

‘Witness to My Own Absence’

Farzana Ahmed Urmī's solo exhibition at Kalakendra features over 50 mixed-media portraits in acrylic, pastel, watercolour, and charcoal. Blurred faces evoke emotion, identity, and memory, shaped by political movements. Curated by Wakilur Rahman, the show invites viewers into a meditative, contemporary portrait experience.

DATE: FRIDAY-MONDAY | FEBRUARY 6-MARCH 2, 2026
TIME: 4:00PM-8:00PM
VENUE: KALAKENDRA, LALMATIA, DHAKA



‘University of Chankharpul’ wins Hiralal Sen Award at DU

Filmmaker Monirul Haque Akash's *The University of Chankharpul* won the Hiralal Sen Award 1432 and Best Screenplay at the Amar Bhashar Chalachitra festival, organised by the Dhaka University Film Society. The six-day festival ran from February 3 to 8 at Dhaka University's Teachers-Students

Centre, showcasing 20 feature films and three shorts, both classic and contemporary.

The closing ceremony featured critic Bidhan Rebeiro presenting the awards to Akash, joined by Tarek Ahmed of Dhaka Doc Lab and DUES moderator Professor Habiba Rahman. Tamim Noor's

Utshob won Best Director, Cinematography, and Sound Design. The festival screened notable films including Ahmed Hasan Sunny's *Ekhane Rajnoitik Alap Joruri*, Alamgir Kabir's *Surjo Konna*, Tareque Masud's *Muktir Gaan*, and Joybrat Das's *The Academy of Fine Arts*.

Film Certification Board reformed with Prince Mahmud, Rafiqul Anowar Russell

The government has reconstituted the Bangladesh Film Certification Board, appointing songwriter and music director Prince Mahmud and filmmaker-producer Rafiqul Anowar Russell to the 15-member panel.

The move follows controversy over the board's earlier composition, announced on January 14, 2026. Two previously named members, film editor Iqbal Ehsanul Kabir and director Khijir Hayat Khan—who resigned—were omitted from the new board.

The senior secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will serve

as chair, while the vice chairman of the Bangladesh Film Certification Board acts as member secretary.

Alongside Prince Mahmud and Rafiqul Anowar Russell, the board includes representatives from government ministries, cultural organisations, and the film industry, including Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed and Tasmiah Afrin Mou.



INTERNATIONAL

Iran warns of 'deep distrust' with US

Adviser to Khamenei to visit Oman today after US-Iran talks

AGENCIES

Iran still holds "deep distrust" for the United States despite agreeing to return to talks on its disputed nuclear programme, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned yesterday.

"We are looking for serious negotiations to achieve a result, provided the other side shows the same seriousness and is also ready for constructive negotiations," the minister said.

"Unfortunately, a deep mistrust persists due to the behaviour of the United States in recent years," he said, addressing ambassadors at a diplomatic gathering in Tehran.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday called on his compatriots to show "resolve" ahead of the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution this week.

Since the revolution, "foreign powers have always sought to restore the previous situation", Ali Khamenei said, referring to the period when Iran was under the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi.

Ali Larijani, an adviser to Khamenei and secretary of its national security council, will visit Oman today following indirect US-Iranian talks there, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

US and Iranian diplomats engaged through Omani mediation in the Gulf state last week in an effort to revive diplomacy.



Pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrate in Sydney, Australia yesterday against Israeli President Isaac Herzog's visit. The visit has attracted the ire of some people in Australia, who accuse Herzog of being complicit in civilian deaths in Gaza. Pro-Palestine groups have organised protests in cities and towns across the country.

PHOTO: AFP

Israel moves to tighten West Bank control

Eight Muslim countries condemn new measures; Israeli gunfire kills four Palestinians in southern Gaza

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's security cabinet has approved a series of measures set to deepen Israeli control over the occupied West Bank, paving the way for further settlement expansion in the Palestinian territory.

The territory, which Israel has occupied since 1967, would form the largest part of any future Palestinian state but is seen by many on the religious right as Israeli land.

"The security cabinet today approved a series of decisions... fundamentally changing the legal and civil reality in Judea and Samaria," a statement said on



Sunday evening, using the biblical names for the West Bank.

The measures, announced by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Defence Minister Israel Katz, include the removal of decades-old regulations barring Jewish

citizens from purchasing land in the West Bank, according to a joint statement by the two ministers.

Smotrich said the move aimed at "deepening our roots in all regions of the Land of Israel and burying the idea of a Palestinian state".

Saudi Arabia and seven other Muslim countries yesterday condemned the new Israeli measures to tighten control of the West Bank.

Meanwhile, Israel's military said it killed four suspected Palestinian men who attacked its troops as the armed men emerged from a tunnel in southern Gaza yesterday, calling the group's actions a "blatant violation" of the ceasefire.

Xi to visit US 'toward the end of the year': Trump

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump has said he will host Chinese leader Xi Jinping at the White House late this year, as the world's top two economies look to reset ties marred by a roiling trade war.

Trump made the comment in an interview with NBC News taped Wednesday — the same day he and Xi had a wide-ranging conversation about trade, Taiwan, Russia's war in Ukraine, and the situation in Iran.

Trump is expected to go to China in April, before Xi would then visit the United States.

Fuel situation in Cuba critical

Says Kremlin, accuses US of 'suffocating' the island

REUTERS, Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday that the fuel situation in Cuba, which has unveiled a plan to protect essential services and ration fuel, was critical and that US attempts to "suffocate" the island's economy were causing many difficulties.

Cuba detailed its plans to navigate the deepening crisis on Friday as the communist-run government dug in its heels in defiance of a US effort to cut off oil supply to the Caribbean island after declaring Cuba "an unusual and extraordinary threat" to US national security.

"The situation in Cuba is indeed critical. We are aware of this. We are maintaining intensive contacts with our Cuban friends through diplomatic and other channels," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Russia is trying to restore its own battered ties with the United States as US President Donald Trump seeks to broker a deal to end its war in Ukraine.

Open to dialogue with China

Says Japan's PM Takaichi a day after winning election landslide

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said yesterday she is open to dialogue with China after sparking a row with Beijing in November with comments about Taiwan.

"Our nation is open to various dialogues with China. We already have exchanges of views. We will continue the exchanges of views. But we will deal with them in calm and appropriate ways," Takaichi told a news conference a day after winning an election landslide.

Takaichi said her landslide election win showed that the public recognises the urgent need for major policy reforms.

"We believe that the public has shown understanding and sympathy regarding our appeals concerning the urgent need for a major policy shift," Takaichi said.

Campaigning draws to a close

FROM PAGE 1

The party also promised electoral reforms, curbing corruption and ensuring discrimination-free socio-economic development.

Jamaat vowed to build a state based on *insaf* (justice), envisioning a "new and prosperous Bangladesh" free from corruption, extortion and exploitation. NCP, born directly from the student-led uprising, promised to dismantle structural inequality, foreign dominance and systemic corruption.

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman toured dozens of districts, addressing rallies attended by tens of thousands and making area-wise development pledges.

On the final day, both intensified their efforts in the capital. Travelling in a red-green bus, Tarique attended eight rallies in Dhaka, starting from his constituency, Dhaka-17, where he said no party other than BNP had a clear plan, concrete programmes or the experience to govern, and reiterated a zero-tolerance stance on corruption and law and order.

Shafiqur began his last day with a rally in Dhaka-13, joined a mass procession in his constituency, Dhaka-15, and later held another rally in Dhaka-1. At one gathering, he urged party members to resist any attempt to hijack the election "through the back door".

NCP Convener Nahid Islam attended the Dhaka-13 rally alongside Shafiqur and went on to hold meetings and rallies at seven other locations in the city.

While the campaign period was largely peaceful, sporadic clashes between rival supporters were

reported in several districts, along with allegations of intimidation and breaches of the electoral code of conduct. At least one person was killed and several hundred were injured during in clashes during the 20-day campaign.

Although formal campaigning ends this morning, candidates are expected to continue outreach through social media. No public meeting or procession will be allowed in any constituency after this morning, and the restrictions will remain in force until 48 hours after voting ends, according to the Election Commission.

COUNTRYWIDE CAMPAIGN
Across the country, the final day saw similarly hectic scenes.

Bogura remained vibrant throughout the day, with a cycle rally held in support of Tarique, who is also contesting from Bogura-6.

In Chattogram, BNP Standing Committee member and Chattogram-11 candidate Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury urged voters at a press conference to remain vigilant against any election engineering.

In Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir called on voters to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War and the July 2024 uprising.

In Barishal's Mehendiganj upazila, IAB held its final rally at Freedom Fighters' Park, where its Ameer and Pir of Charmonai Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim reiterated its commitment to upholding ideology and Islam over power.

Large processions were reported from Sylhet and Sunamganj, where BNP and Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir held separate events,

causing traffic gridlock.

Sohel Chowdhury, former vice president of BNP's Sylhet District Unit, died of cardiac arrest while attending a campaign for the party's candidate in Sylhet-2.

In Mymensingh, mainly BNP and Jamaat candidates took to the streets with thousands of supporters, while voters expressed satisfaction over the absence of large-scale violence.

"It is a positive thing that no untoward incident took place here. We want such a peaceful situation to continue in the coming days," said Abul Hasan, a voter from Char Anandipur village in Mymensingh Sadar.

Similar reports of campaigning came from Chattogram, Pabna, Gopalganj, Bagerhat, Narayanganj and Munshiganj.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to the report.]

IAB commits

FROM PAGE 2

leadership and policies.

Criticising Jamaat-e-Islami, Faizul Karim said the party had abandoned its earlier slogan of establishing Allah's law and honest governance. "Their manifesto contains no mention of Islam. So, anyone aspiring for Islam who votes for them will be deceived," he said.

Candidate Abul Khair pledged to address fishermen's problems if elected and promised to form an all-party development committee with representatives from across the political spectrum to advance local development.

BNP alone has plan, experience to govern

FROM PAGE 2

Mazar Road in the Dhaka 8 constituency yesterday afternoon.

The BNP chief said it has now been proven that BNP can transform the fate of the people of Bangladesh. "If anyone can change the fate of this country, who can do it? If the reins of corruption are to be pulled tight in this country, who can do it?" he asked.

The crowd responded by shouting "BNP".

Tarique added that there would be no compromise on graft and law and order.

"Anyone who commits corruption is a corrupt person and does not belong to any party. Anyone who breaks the law and causes suffering to people cannot belong to any party; they are criminals. Therefore, the law will take its own course in their cases."

He also pledged several development initiatives in Dhaka 8, including playgrounds, expanded graveyard space, and measures to reduce waterlogging.

Earlier, Tarique, speaking at a gathering in the Dhaka-10 constituency, said a group has started conspiring around the polls.

At the Kalabagan Krira Chakra playground rally, the BNP chief said leaders and activists of a group were caught forging ballot seals and he urged vigilance.

"Those covert conspirators who mislead mothers and sisters and ask for bKash numbers and NID numbers — you must stay alert."

Tarique warned that failure to remain watchful could undermine the

sacrifices made to establish the voting rights. "If everyone remains alert, no one will be able to stop the pace of change in the people's fate."

"Today, we must take an oath and make a commitment that, at any cost, we will establish democratic and political rights in this country, and we will work together in unity to build the country we expect."

Tarique also said BNP does not intend to make promises beyond people's capacity or reach.

"We must stay alert about this election. A group has started conspiring around the polls. We have seen reports in newspapers. Their people are trying to mislead the public."

Tarique attended eight rallies in the capital yesterday, starting from his own constituency, Dhaka-17. He travelled by a red-green bus, accompanied by party leaders and activists.

Addressing a gathering at the Kamal Ataturk Avenue playground, he said if BNP comes to power, it will build a country where people can move safely, traders and working people can work freely, and families can sleep peacefully at night.

"There are many problems in Dhaka-17. There are traffic problems, air pollution, and waterlogging. If everyone works together, these problems can be solved."

At one stage, Tarique said his mother, late Khaleida Zia, endured imprisonment, oppression, and torture but never left the country. "Even knowing death was near, she did not leave the country and stayed among the

people."

At 7:00pm, speaking at another rally in Jatrabari under the Dhaka-5 constituency, Tarique said those who took away the people's rights over the last 16 years and those who were once their allies were now hatching conspiracies.

The party chief said, "It will not be enough to just cast votes and leave. We must understand the vote count and then return home."

Referring to the gas crisis, Tarique said new gas fields must be discovered, adding, "Gas was imported from abroad during the fascist regime so that their own people could earn money. We will discover our own gas fields."

Speaking at a rally at the Basabo Tarun Sangha field at 5:00pm, the BNP chief said initiatives would be taken to build a playground, improve hospital services, develop roads, and reduce waterlogging in the Dhaka-9 seat.

After many enforced disappearances, killings, and repression, the people of this country have finally regained their voting rights. "We must ensure that no one can take away this voting right," he told a gathering at Lalbagh Balur Math in the Dhaka-7 seat last night.

Tarique last night visited the graves of former president Ziaur Rahman and former prime minister Khaleida Zia at the capital's Zia Uddin, concluding his 19-day election campaign.

Since January 22, Tarique has joined rallies at 29 venues in 26 districts outside the capital and addressed 15 election meetings within Dhaka.

India-Pakistan T20 World Cup match

FROM PAGE 16

right to approach the Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC), should it choose to do so," the media release read.

Bangladesh, who are scheduled to co-host the 2031 ICC World Cup alongside India, will now get to host another mega event prior to that, declared ICC.

"As part of this understanding, an agreement has been reached that Bangladesh will host an ICC event prior to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2031, subject to the usual ICC hosting processes, timelines, and operational requirements," it added.

Then, at around midnight, the Pakistan government declared on social media that its national team will face India in Colombo in their group-stage match of the T20 World Cup, jointly taking place in India and Sri Lanka.

"In view of the outcomes achieved in multilateral discussions, as well as the request of friendly countries, the Government of Pakistan hereby directs the Pakistan National Cricket Team to take the field on February 15, 2026, for its scheduled fixture in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," the post read.

Earlier, the tripartite dialogue was held in the aftermath of the Pakistan government instructing its national team not to play India on the 15th. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif later said this step was taken in solidarity with Bangladesh, who were replaced by Scotland in the World Cup for refusing to travel to India over security concerns.

Since the Pakistan government's declaration on February 1, the ICC tried, through both formal and informal channels, to persuade the PCB to convince its government to reconsider.

As part of its attempts, ICC's deputy chairman Imran Khawaja arrived in Lahore for a meeting with PCB officials and BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul, who was invited by the PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi.

BCB issued a press release last night, minutes before ICC released its statement, where it expressed "profound and heartfelt gratitude" to the PCB chairman and Aminul requested Pakistan to play against India on the 15th.

"Following my short visit to Pakistan yesterday and given the forthcoming outcomes of our discussions, I request Pakistan to play the ICC T20 World Cup game on February 15 against India for the benefit of the entire cricket ecosystem," he was quoted in the press release. According to reports, ICC could have incurred losses of around \$250 million if the India-Pakistan clash did not happen.



Pakistan face the USA in a Group A clash of the T20 World Cup in Colombo today, two years after the Americans stunned the 2009 champions and knocked them out of the 2024 edition. The USA pushed favourites India hard in their opener in Mumbai before going down by 29 runs, while Pakistan nearly stumbled into another upset against the Netherlands on Saturday. With a Super Eight spot on the line, Pakistan can ill afford any slip-ups.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

bwged clean The Daily Star

JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

Implications on the Political Landscape of Bangladesh

A roundtable titled "Just Energy Transition: Implications on the Political Landscape of Bangladesh" was held on 20 January 2026, at The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka. Jointly organised by The Daily Star, Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network (CLEAN) and other CSOs, the dialogue brought together representatives from notable political parties, CSOs, and NGOs. The Roundtable aimed to deliberate on the 13 Point Citizens' Demands to political parties ahead of the 13th National Elections regarding the Just Energy Transition.



MONOWER MOSTAFA
Networking Advisor
Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network (CLEAN)

The power sector has become a 'corruption sector' over the last 16 years of governance, bleeding trillions of taka. Our key expectation for party manifestos is a clear roadmap addressing two interlinked crises: energy security and systemic graft. We are 70% import-dependent on fossil fuels, leaving us dangerously exposed to global price shocks. While international pressure and our own commitments necessitate a shift, a powerful syndicate vested in fossil fuels has blocked progress on renewables. Any credible manifesto must commit to breaking this corrupt circuit. We must abandon absurdly high demand projections that led to overcapacity and crippling capacity charges. Future policy must ensure security through renewables, drastically reduce losses, and restore the ministry's health. The 'Quick Supply' act is gone; we now need transparency and realistic, long-term planning.



ZAHIR UDDIN SWAPON
Advisor to the
Chairperson
Bangladesh Nationalist Party

The world faces political and security crises linked to dwindling fossil fuel supplies, as seen in countries such as Venezuela and Iran. For any nation, strategic resources such as energy and electricity are integral to its existence. An energy security framework is now strategically more critical than even food security. Crises in energy cannot be viewed superficially or blamed merely on a lack of expert knowledge. It is rooted in failures of the political process. Problems in the energy sector are created and worsened by systemic corruption. The previous ruling party flowed a political narrative that justified these actions, often supported by a coalition and a section of intellectuals. This corrupt system targets national resources and strategic sectors. Even when political processes fail, the authority to resolve major strategic crises remains with those who hold state power.



READUS SALEHEN JAWAD
Member of the
Central Council
Network for People's Action (NPA)

Our discussion must address a critical issue: the government's draft Integrated Energy and Power Sector Master Plan (IEPMP). This plan locks us into fossil fuels, promotes false solutions like hydrogen ammonia, and ignores the need for smart grids and decentralised generation. Most alarmingly, it has no mechanism for public participation, no framework to protect displaced workers or communities, and no accountability for issues such as capacity charges. The stance should be clear: Energy decisions must be democratic. We demand community profit-sharing and management stakes. Crucially, any move towards new coal power is a red line; it would destroy any just transition. This transition is not merely about fuel sources; it is about transforming power relations, ensuring democracy and justice, an agenda I find lacking in current party manifestos.



RAZEQZAMAN RATAN
Joint General Secretary
Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BASOD)

In Bangladesh, we have double the power generation capacity, yet our per capita consumption is among the world's lowest. The people bear the burden of the subsidy for this inefficient system. The priority must be to optimise and fully utilise the capacity we already have. Adding more plants will only deepen financial losses and increase the subsidy burden on the public. Bangladesh must urgently invest in exploring and extracting its own natural gas using national capacity, rather than relying on foreign companies. Our potential in solar, hydro, wind, and biomass remains largely untapped and must be developed without delay. The current model makes us dangerously dependent on external actors; we have given the 'key to our

house' to foreign entities. Transition is inevitable, but to make it just, we need a fundamental political shift that stops the bleeding of public wealth and prioritises energy sovereignty.



KAZI SAJJAD ZAHIR CHANDAN
President
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)

Despite promises and a constitution that declares citizens as owners of national resources, Bangladesh's energy sector has historically been plundered, with vast sums concentrated in the hands of a wealthy elite. Successive governments, regardless of their rhetoric, have represented this plundering class, favouring foreign companies and private interests over the people. This is evidenced by secretive agreements for power plants and fuel imports with foreign entities, locking the nation into corrupt, dependent deals. A patriotic, democratic government

to balance import dependency with emission reduction. We will mandate rooftop solar on public buildings and utilise our riverbanks for solar plants. Any transition must involve local communities and address job losses. We commit to publishing all foreign agreements and fostering a domestic electric vehicle industry to create new economic sectors.



ASHRAFUL ALAM
Joint Secretary
General
Islamic Andolan Bangladesh

Bangladesh is resource-rich and has a capable workforce. Our fundamental problem is not a lack of expertise but systemic corruption in state management. Personal intentions are good, but collective governance has consistently failed. Therefore, our primary commitment is zero tolerance for corruption, rooted in our faith and the principle of divine accountability for every atom of injustice. We must utilise our

constitutional right. Finally, political parties should consider the large, environmentally conscious youth electorates and formally include these demands in election manifestos to ensure a credible and just energy pathway.



SHAWKAT ARA BEGUM
Programme Director
TARA Climate Foundation Bangladesh

Our energy sector is a directionless fleet, riddled with corruption and unrealistic plans. This crisis is a politically constructed disaster stemming from import dependency and fossil-fuel reliance. As we approach a new government, we must displace this failure with 'right politics'. We must move from a 'corporatocracy', where business interests dominate parliament, to a true democracy that prioritises people. A just transition must be renewable-based, freeing our villages

naturally follow.



BENOZIR AHMED
Policy Adviser
Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network (CLEAN)

While there are tall claims of success in the power sector, including near-total electrification and increased per capita usage, a critical issue remains. Our installed generation capacity is nearly double our peak demand. A primary reason is that this sector has become a "goose that lays golden eggs," implying systematic financial exploitation. Past policy has been flawed. Master plans for the sector have repeatedly been formulated by foreign companies, which is a self-contradictory approach for a sovereign nation. Now, Bangladesh possesses a new possibility. A sense of unity exists, and people are ready to think anew. My humble request to future leaders is to channel this collective thinking effectively. When



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Immediately halt all new fossil fuel power plant projects and invest instead in a decentralised, renewable energy grid, prioritising rooftop solar to enhance energy sovereignty and reduce import dependency.
- Amend the Public Procurement Act to mandate full transparency, publishing all power sector agreements, and ensure citizen participation to dismantle systemic corruption.
- Establish a legal mandate for a rapid and just transition by setting a binding national target to generate at least 40% of power from renewables by 2040
- Ensure a just transition by legally guaranteeing community consultation, profit-sharing, and the protection of livelihoods for workers and communities displaced by the energy shift.
- Develop a realistic, long-term Integrated Resource Plan through a cross-party consensus to replace flawed demand forecasts.
- Strengthen judicial independence and parliamentary oversight to hold the executive accountable for opaque agreements.

is needed to prioritize the people's interest in energy. Until then, leftist and democratic forces must continue to oppose harmful policies like gas exports and controversial power plants. The solution lies in breaking this cycle of elite friendly governance and implementing a manifesto that ensures the energy sector is secure, transparent, and serves the common people.



NAZMUL HAQUE PRODHHAN
General Secretary
Bangladesh Jashod

Historically, governments have pursued flawed power projects, from outdated plants to installing unnecessary infrastructure such as poles without lines. More recently, massive overcapacity in power generation has been created, with heavy reliance on costly coal and gas contracts, leading to excessive capacity payments to power companies even when plants sit idle. This system has become a channel for large-scale financial plunder, where billions are siphoned off, exemplified by individuals amassing vast wealth abroad through these dealings. Despite public awareness of this looted wealth from the power sector to banks and the stock market successive governments have failed to conduct proper investigations or hold anyone accountable. The current administration has continued making these questionable capacity payments without scrutiny, effectively legitimizing past corruption. While access to electricity has improved, the underlying systemic rot remains unaddressed. We must move beyond rhetoric to a common, actionable commitment for a sovereign and just energy future.



NAVID NOWROZ SHAH
Joint Chief
Coordinator
National Citizens' Party (NCP)

Our commitment is to a non-discriminatory Bangladesh, and energy policy is central to this. Global conflicts are fuelled by energy wars, and our national crisis stems from a flawed political system, not just technical failures. For 17 years, a corrupt political narrative enabled looting, supported by intellectuals and the media. Therefore, your expert analysis must also diagnose this systemic failure of political thought. The solution lies solely in the political process. In our manifesto, we advocate for Integrated Resource Planning

own energy resources, from atomic to solar, and reduce our dependence on foreign sources. The government's duty is to create opportunities and ensure no corruption taints it. If we can purge this corruption from the administration, we will manage a transition that truly serves the people's needs and delivers fairness in the energy sector.



HASAN MEHEDI
Member Secretary
Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED)

Bangladesh's energy sector has lost more than Tk 2.2 trillion in 17 years through inefficiency, while capacity payments to idle or barely used plants added another Tk 1.76 trillion. We have seen accountability efforts have faced intimidation, arrests, and political pressure. As a national election nears, many see an opening for change. For the last six months, advocacy groups have pressed major parties to commit to energy justice in their manifestos. A key demand is a shift toward renewable energy, which analysts say would eliminate the need for new fossil fuel projects and render the opaque Energy and Power Sector Master Plan (EPSMP) irrelevant. Today, we are calling for an overhaul of policymaking and propose a participatory process from the outset, ensuring civil society involvement and protecting rights of women, workers, and indigenous communities. Such inclusion can be essential for a fair transition and nationwide reform.



MUNIR UDDIN SHAMIM
Director - Programme,
Evidence and Learning
Ethical Trading Initiative Bangladesh (ETIB)

The energy sector is intrinsically tied to political economy, making it vulnerable to imposed, unproven 'false solutions'. My request to all parties is to reject these, considering our limited capacity and foreign interests. A renewable transition can create over 1 million jobs, aligning with development goals. Crucially, we must instil 'Responsible Business Practice': transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. Our current Public Procurement Act fails this test; it must be amended to make all power sector agreements public and to mandate citizen participation in monitoring projects, which is a

from exorbitant tariffs. This requires proper institutional decisions and political will. I expect the political parties here, especially those forming the next government, to commit to this fundamental change for an equitable energy future.



BAREESH CHOWDHURY
Policy and Campaigns Coordinator
Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)

The lesson from the previous regime is stark: our corrupt, dysfunctional energy sector left us utterly exposed to external shocks. The 2022 LNG price spike halted imports for ten months, quadrupled power prices, and ignited the cost-of-living and reserve crises that fuelled later unrest. Energy security is therefore an urgent political issue. We have colossal overcapacity; peak demand is only 40-45% of our generation capacity. It is senseless now to invest in new fossil fuel plants. Instead, we must embrace renewables' modular advantage: decentralised solar on rooftops, not massive land grabs. Our policies perversely tax renewables while subsidising fossil fuels; we must create a level playing field. I urge all parties to see the renewable sector's huge employment potential, cited here as 2 million jobs, and commit to this essential transition.



MD. ABUL KALAM AZAD
Program Manager - Just Energy Transition, Resilience & Climate Justice ActionAid

A meaningful energy transition in Bangladesh requires questioning the country's entrenched processes. The energy sector remains trapped in traditional and top-down discourse. Reform in this sector is impossible without confronting these structural foundations. Bangladesh is still a village-based country, and its energy policy needs to be comprehensive and context-specific, designed by Bangladeshis, not by donors, moving beyond megawatt-centric planning to community needs. As a village-based country with concentrated communities, micro-grids make more sense than politically driven grid expansion. Institutional reform and stronger coordination among ministries are needed to build a modern and inclusive grid. If these foundations are set, investment will

in state power, involve the people in policymaking and lead this new consciousness wisely.



ADVOCATE ABDULLAH AL NOMANI
Executive Director
Lawyers for Energy, Environment and Development (LEED)

Constitutionally, just transition links to the right to life, environmental protection, and social justice. As a lawyer, I would like to emphasise the need for specific commitments from political parties. First, we require new laws and regulations crafted with genuine citizen participation, not as 'subjects' but as owners of the state. Parliamentary oversight must be reformed to include stakeholders. Second, we need an independent judiciary capable of true judicial activism. To prevent corruption in the energy sector, we must have a robust legal and judicial system that holds the executive accountable. This is fundamental for implementing any credible Citizens' Manifesto.



TANJIM FERDOUS (MODERATOR)
Head of Strategic Partnerships
The Daily Star

Bangladesh energy transition is no longer a purely technical or economic issue. It's a deeply political situation. Decisions around energy mix, pricing, subsidies, public finance, and renewable investments directly affect livelihoods, inequality, fiscal stability, and public trust. As the country navigates economic pressures, climate vulnerability, and the global energy transition, the question before us is not whether to transition, but how just, inclusive, and politically sustainable that transition will be. Our dialogue is framed by the 13-point Citizens' Manifesto from civil society. Together, we must move beyond critique. Let us forge a consensus to build a renewable, efficient, and equitable energy system for Bangladesh.

Aasha Mehreen Amin, Joint Editor, The Daily Star; Ashrafal Alam Raana, Consultant, Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC); Moshle Uddin Suchok, Energy Lead, ReGlobal; Mousumi Yesmin, Advocacy Officer, Manusher Jonno Foundation and Manirul Islam, Deputy Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) were also present at the roundtable, providing us with their expert knowledge and thoughts.



EMBASSY OF DENMARK



Embassy of Sweden
Dhaka



Norwegian Embassy
Dhaka

The Daily Star



সেন্টার ফর পলিসি ডায়ালগ (সিপিডি)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Advancing Indigenous Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

A roundtable titled "Advancing Indigenous Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): Progress, Challenges and Political Commitments" was held on 26 January 2026, at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka. Jointly organised by The Daily Star, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), and the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish embassies in Bangladesh, the dialogue brought together representatives from notable Indigenous Peoples and rights groups, CSOs, media, and the Interim Government of Bangladesh. Speakers at the roundtable discussed that progress towards a modern, inclusive, and equitable Bangladesh is closely linked to sustainable peace and inclusive development that includes Indigenous Peoples.



DR FAHMIDA KHATUN
Executive Director
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Advancing indigenous rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts remains a critical test of whether policy commitments translate into dignity, security, and lived rights. Despite the establishment of institutions and some legal steps, serious gaps persist, especially in land and resource governance, effective local administration, and trust in security and justice systems. Land rights demand the highest urgency because land is inseparable from identity, livelihood, and cultural survival. A credible mechanism for resolving land disputes, supported by clear procedures and public reporting, is essential. Strengthening participatory local governance is vital, with devolution of administrative and budgetary authority and stronger accountability. Confidence-building in security and justice must be followed by improved civilian governance and access to justice. Rehabilitation of displaced communities should progress alongside land protection, while safeguarding women and girls should be treated as a priority.



SUPRADIP CHAKMA
Honourable Adviser -
Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
Interim Government of Bangladesh

The Chittagong Hill Tracts face deep challenges from decades of demographic engineering, political manipulation, and weak local governance. The hill communities have been marginalised, with limited capacity to influence decisions affecting their land, livelihoods, and rights. Political and regional leaders often lack the ability or willingness to implement development initiatives, while administrative bodies delay or obstruct projects, including quality education and livelihood programmes. Land grabbing by private and corporate actors remains widespread, undermining community ownership and security. Security gaps allow informal labour exploitation and criminal activity, while existing mechanisms fail to protect vulnerable groups. Despite these obstacles, targeted interventions such as digital education programmes with significant investment offer hope

to promote these rights globally, including through recommendations to Bangladesh on fully implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord. This issue is particularly timely for Bangladesh as it moves through a critical political transition. Without proper recognition of indigenous people, democratic reform risks remaining incomplete. The CHT holds significant potential for sustainable development, including ecotourism and agricultural exports. Unlocking this potential requires transparent, inclusive partnerships with indigenous people, ensuring economic growth goes hand in hand with respect for their rights and protection of the region's unique character.



H E HAKON ARALD GULBRANDSEN
Ambassador
Embassy of Norway,
Bangladesh

International standards such as ILO Convention 169 and the UN define indigenous people through self-identification, historical continuity, strong ties to land, distinct cultures and languages, and non-dominant status in society. By these criteria, Bangladesh clearly has indigenous people in both the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the plains, much as Norway does. Indigenous people are small in number and pose no threat to society, but often struggle to preserve their identity and avoid cultural extinction. Norway's own history with indigenous and minority groups is marked by failed assimilation policies that sought cultural uniformity.

Chittagong Hill Tracts, especially for those who have experienced displacement, violence, and loss during the conflict. The CHT problem must be recognised as a political issue, not a security or economic one. Implementation of the 1997 Peace Accord has been blocked by multiple "spoiler" groups, including armed groups, settler organisations, and vested interest groups, which resist devolution of authority and the functioning of the Land Commission. Policies of "othering" have labelled indigenous people as separatists or criminals, justifying security first approaches instead of rights-based solutions. We must prioritise making the Land Commission fully functional, delivering justice for recent human rights violations, finalising voter lists, and ensuring elections for the hill district and regional councils. Establishing a diplomatic consultative group could provide technical support and hold the government accountable for implementing the Accord and improving human rights.



LOLA GARCIA-ALIX
Senior Adviser
International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGLA)

Indigenous Peoples must be placed at the centre of Bangladesh's democratic transition, not treated as an afterthought. International law leaves no legal ambiguity about who Indigenous Peoples are. The UN intentionally avoids a rigid definition, relying instead on widely accepted criteria such as self-identification,

improve accountability and peace. Past impunity, including unresolved killings and human rights violations, must be addressed through credible investigations. Intersectional discrimination, particularly against women within indigenous people, must also be addressed to uphold equality and rights.



PROF. AMENA MOHSIN
Former Chairperson
Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka

The Chittagong Hill Tracts remain a deeply political and complex issue. During my visit there last year, it became clear that while infrastructure has developed, mindsets and power structures have not changed. Military operations continue under different names, highlighting that force alone cannot resolve the problems. The 1997 Peace Accord has limits, especially regarding land, recognition, and justice, and cannot be fully implemented without formally recognising Indigenous Peoples. Also, communities face a confusing legal landscape with parallel administrations and widespread impunity, particularly regarding violence against women. The daily experience of "othering" is reinforced through checkpoints and discrimination at various levels. Building confidence requires genuine local dialogue and substantive institutional reform. This includes making traditional systems like the Shalish and roles like Karbaris more

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord of 1997 continues to suffer from significant implementation gaps affecting indigenous people. Some of the key issues in the area include an ineffective land dispute resolution mechanism, limited devolution of authority to hill district councils, displacement, conflict between settlers and indigenous people that disrupts daily life. Indigenous women face compounded discrimination, and access to justice remains severely limited, with courts often treating indigenous people as outsiders or miscreants. Recognition of indigenous communities is still largely symbolic, despite constitutional guarantees and Bangladesh's obligations under international human rights law, including ICCPR and ICESCR. Political will and commitment from all parties are essential to mainstream Indigenous Peoples to implement the Peace Accord fully and uphold their rights. International engagement and pressure, including through UPR reviews, are critical to support Bangladesh in fulfilling these obligations and ensuring justice and equality for its indigenous people.



MONG SING HAI MARMA
Journalist
The Daily Star

Nearly three decades after the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, Indigenous Peoples still struggle to enjoy equality, justice, and dignity. At the heart of ongoing tensions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is the



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Fully operationalise the Land Dispute Resolution Commission to protect indigenous land rights and resolve conflicts transparently.
- » Strengthen participatory local governance by devolving administrative and budgetary authority to hill district and regional councils.
- » Ensure formal recognition of Indigenous Peoples to uphold dignity, legal rights, and meaningful participation in decision-making.
- » Promote inclusive security and justice by demilitarising the region, establishing local police, and improving access to courts.
- » Address intersectional discrimination, particularly against indigenous women, through targeted protection and empowerment measures.
- » Foster sustained dialogue and international support to implement the 1997 Peace Accord and ensure equitable development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

if executed effectively. Sustainable progress requires stronger local leadership, capacity building, and equity-based approaches that prioritise community needs. Attention to the rights, identity, and welfare of the hill people is crucial for regional stability, while meaningful development must balance governance, security, and empowerment to prevent further marginalisation.



H E CHRISTIAN BRIX-MØLLER
Ambassador
Embassy of Denmark,
Bangladesh

The rights of indigenous people in Bangladesh are of high importance also to us because indigenous rights are human rights and therefore universal. Nordic countries share histories that include indigenous communities and past injustices, and hard lessons have shown that recognition, dialogue, and strong indigenous institutions are essential for progress. Denmark and Greenland work actively at the UN and through support to IWGLA

Real progress only came through inclusion, dialogue, and recognition, which strengthened democracy and sustainable governance. Diversity is now seen as a national asset. Indigenous knowledge contributes to culture, land management, and innovation. I hope Bangladesh will learn from this experience and recognise the same value in its own Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their rights are protected with dignity.



DR IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
Executive Director
Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts faces a deeply entrenched political and security challenge shaped by decades of deliberate demographic, social, and political transformations. Military and security agencies exercise significant influence over the region, empowering settler groups and securitising political issues. Indigenous Peoples continue to face denial of recognition, legal rights, and access to justice, while political parties avoid addressing indigenous rights in their platforms. Political parties, whether in power, in opposition, or aspiring to govern, must be willing to engage seriously with the armed forces on the future of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Lasting solutions require genuine dialogue with security actors, institutional reform, recognition of indigenous identity, and a commitment to transform political will into inclusive governance and human rights protections.



PALLAB CHAKMA
Executive Director
Kapaceng Foundation (KF)

Peace is the highest priority for indigenous people in the

historical continuity, distinct cultures, non-dominant status, and strong ties to land. By these standards, indigenous people in Bangladesh are clearly recognised under international law. Recognition of indigenous people is a legal and moral obligation and a prerequisite for peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Denial of recognition fuels discrimination, land dispossession, exclusion, and conflict, and undermines implementation of the CHT Accord. Recognition strengthens democratic legitimacy, stability, and social cohesion. Nordic experiences show that recognition, dialogue, and strong institutions lead to peace and inclusive development. Sustainable peace and democratic nation-building in Bangladesh are not possible without recognising Indigenous Peoples as partners in shaping the country's future.



BARRISTER SARA HOSSAIN
Honorary Executive Director
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)

The situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts requires a political solution, not just technical fixes. The 1997 Peace Accord remains contested in courts, and key actors involved in challenging it are now politically active, highlighting the need to understand the political realities blocking progress. Addressing discrimination and ensuring equal rights for indigenous people must be the starting point, alongside activating the Land Commission as the first concrete step. We also see that justice in the region faces structural gaps. Courts lack training on customary laws, family courts are absent, and non-formal systems are underutilised. Strengthening these institutions and including youth and community participation can

accountable, alongside empowering district councils. Ultimately, achieving lasting peace hinges on recognition, intersectional attention to women's security, and inclusive governance to rebuild trust.



SATEJ CHAKMA
International Affairs Secretary
Bangladesh Indigenous Youth Forum

The Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict in Bangladesh comes from historical policies of exclusion, assimilation, and "othering". The 1997 Peace Accord, achieved after decades of dialogue with multiple governments, established key institutions such as the Hill District Councils, Regional Council, Land Dispute Resolution Commission, and the Implementation and Monitoring Committee. However, many of these institutions are now inactive or underperforming. Immediate priorities include resuming dialogue between indigenous leaders and the state, reforming and revitalising these bodies, finalising local voter lists, and handing over administrative responsibilities for law and order, land, forests, and communication to local councils. Demilitarisation and the establishment of local police are crucial for restoring peace. Without these measures, the region risks reverting to past conflict, highlighting the urgency for inclusive governance, recognition, and respect for indigenous rights, with continued support from international partners such as the Nordic countries.



ADVOCATE ABDULLAH AL-NOMAN
Chief Executive
Lawyers for Energy, Environment, and Development (LEED)

land issue that must be looked into carefully. Lack of legal recognition for customary land, combined with land acquisition in the name of development, continues to displace indigenous people, while the Land Commission remains underpowered and ineffective. Development efforts exist, but the question remains: who truly benefits? Excluding Indigenous Peoples from decision-making risks deepening inequality and social fragmentation. Hill District Councils are weakened by appointed leadership and limited accountability, undermining public trust. Strengthening indigenous self-governance, ensuring transparent leadership, supporting community-centred development, and prioritising education are essential for lasting peace and stability in the region.



TANJIM FERDOUS (MODERATOR)
Head of Strategic Partnerships
The Daily Star

The Chittagong Hill Tracts hold a unique place in Bangladesh, home to diverse Indigenous Peoples facing longstanding challenges in land rights, governance, security, and inclusion. The 1997 Peace Accord promised dialogue, decentralisation, and recognition of rights, yet nearly three decades later, many provisions remain partially implemented, affecting trust and justice. As the country navigates a democratic transition, issues like indigenous rights, women's safety, land governance, and local institution effectiveness are central to inclusive development. Practical progress requires renewed political engagement, lessons from comparative experiences, and recognition of Indigenous Peoples as a foundation for national unity and stronger democratic governance.



A worker sorts freshly printed pages at a press in Banglabazar, Dhaka's historic book market, where much of the city's publishing labour still unfolds behind the scenes.



Students at Bashurat Boys' High School, Companyganj, receiving donated books under the School-to-School Library Programme—an effort to expand access to reading materials. PHOTO: SANDRA ZEIDENSTEIN.

BUILDING A NATION IN PRINT

Paper, textbooks, and publishing in East Pakistan.

NADEEM OMAR TARAR

Walk through the narrow lanes of old Dhaka in the 1950s and you'd hear it before you saw it: the rhythmic thrum of presses, the chatter of compositors, the swish of paper reams unwrapped and weighed. In shops stacked to their rafters, publishers bargained with paper dealers, schoolteachers thumbed fresh primers, and children tugged at sleeves for the newest detective novel. East Pakistan's early decades were many things—turbulent, ambitious, improvisational—but above all they were printed.

This is the story of how Dhaka's book people—publishers, printers, booksellers, illustrators, teachers, and civil servants—helped assemble the infrastructure of learning and debate in a young nation. It is also the story of bamboo forests and offset machines, of foreign exchange lists and children's biographies, of an emergent Bengali reading public whose appetite re-shaped supply chains. In these interlocking worlds of paper and pedagogy, East Pakistan built not only an industry but a cultural vision of itself.

A city of presses, a bazaar of books

By the time of independence, Dhaka already possessed a deep printing lineage. The city's historic market district had long nurtured what people informally called a Bangla Bazar—a cluster where publishers, printers, booksellers, textbook traders, paper dealers, and stationery shops operated cheek by jowl. That market ecology mattered. Long before centralised planning arrived, the bazaar gave writers and readers a practical path: a manuscript could find a compositor, a proofreader, a printer, a binder, a jacket artist, and—crucially—a bookseller who knew which school or thana might buy two dozen copies on credit.

The local publishing scene was not monolithic. A vibrant roster of Dhaka houses—Majid Publishing House, Mullick Brothers, Wadud Publications, Purbachal Prakashani, Azad Publishing House, Bards and Books, Kitabistan, Maju Publications, Standard Publication, and Aziz Book House—anchored the trade. Some specialised in school texts and reference works; others cultivated fiction, drama, and children's magazines. All of them, in different ways, were learning on the job: pricing reams, choosing type sizes for new litho plates, aligning curricula to syllabi that shifted with education policy.

The scale was still modest. In the early 1960s, a government survey counted 803 publishers nationwide; 154 of them were in Dhaka, with another two hundred-plus booksellers operating across East Pakistan, including 183 in the capital alone. Many were not "firms" in the modern sense but single-proprietor outfits, family partnerships, or author-publishers who farmed out printing and haggled shelf space title by title. Yet this small-bore structure was also a strength. It kept the system responsive to local demand: a popular storybook could be hurried back onto the press; a school inspector's approval could turn a modest primer into a reliable seasonal income.

Paper first: The mills that fed the presses

Every book begins as paper, and East Pakistan's most transformative industrial development of the 1950s was papermaking at scale. The Karnaphuli Paper Mills in Chittagong came into operation early in the decade and grew into one of Asia's largest producers, joined by the Khulna Newsprint Mills and by factories like Adamjee Card & Cardboard and Sethi Straw Board. Together they formed the backbone of a regional supply chain that, for the first time, allowed East Pakistan's printers to buy domestic stock: white printing papers, mechanically finished and glazed varieties, newsprint, art and imitation art papers, ivory and boxboard, fine opaque dictionary stock, binding board and cloth, kraft packing sheets—the full tool kit of a book economy.

But papermaking is an ecological industry before it is an industrial one, and the mills' fortunes rose and fell with bamboo. Between 1959 and 1961, large swathes of the bamboo forests went into a natural flowering cycle. To preserve future yields, the mills left stands uncut for years. Paper supply tightened sharply; the Paper Trade Association registered a 42 percent shortfall in printing paper, and planners estimated national demand (some 54,000 long tons) outstripped installed

capacity even at full tilt. Shortages rippled outward: presses triaged jobs; publishers delayed seasonal releases; schools made do.

Quality, too, was a battleground. Printers grumbled that local sheets varied in thickness and grain, showed subpar glazing, and scuffed easily in transit. As offset and photomechanical processes spread—often with German, Swiss, or American machines—the mismatch between mill specifications and imported press tolerances became glaring. Paradoxically, even with these compromises, domestic paper could be dearer than comparable imports once transport and handling were factored in. The industry's response was pragmatic rather than purist. When textbook deadlines loomed and purse strings tightened, printers and publishers chose workable stock over ideal stock. The result was a visible signature of the period: books sturdy enough for classroom life, if not always showpieces of finish.

Machines and skills: Building a print workforce

If paper is the body, machinery is the spine. The 1950s and 1960s saw an influx of offset presses and ancillary equipment into East Pakistan, aided at times by external credit lines and a general push to modernise printing for newspapers and government work. The technological shift created a parallel demand for skilled labour in composition, plate-making, press operation, colour separation, and binding.

Dhaka's solution was to teach its way through the gap. The Institute of Graphic Arts, established in 1967, aimed to produce the technicians and supervisors the expanding sector urgently needed. Its arrival complemented a wider regional rise in graphic arts education and brought the book trade into dialogue with design: jacket typography became bolder, interior layouts cleaner, and illustration programmes more ambitious. Even when a book's paper felt coarse or a stitch line showed, the visual identity of Bangla publishing grew more distinctive—with jacket art that drew on local motifs, landscape palettes, and a sense of Bengali modernity that was neither derivative nor provincial.

A planned reading public: The Dhaka Textbook Board

No single market guaranteed printers' survival like the school textbook. In 1958, following national education policy recommendations, textbooks moved decisively into the public domain of planning and procurement. The East Pakistan Textbook Board (EPTBB), headquartered in Dhaka, assumed responsibility for commissioning, standardising, and supervising school texts in Bangla and other requisite subjects. Crucially, the EPTBB relied on local publishers and printers, paying royalties and spreading work across the city's presses rather than concentrating it all in a single state plant.

The scale was transformative. Between 1961 and 1964, East Pakistan produced 134 new textbooks in Bangla, with a staggering 25.1 million copies printed—numbers that reveal the demographic and developmental stakes of schooling. The Board's commissioning process knitted together authors, editors, illustrators, and presses, while a Central Syllabus Committee guided content in nationally sensitive areas such as English, history, and general science. International players found niches at the margins—Oxford University Press, for example, supplied textbooks to private schools outside the government stream—but Dhaka's ecosystem did the heavy lifting for the mass market. For printers, textbook seasons meant full order books; for publishers, royalties underwrote riskier lists in fiction, drama, or reference.

The downstream effects were everywhere. Bookshops multiplied not only in Dhaka but across the province; a 1966 survey counted 183 sellers in the capital and 207 elsewhere in East Pakistan. Many were seasonal shops that sprang up when school lists were announced, stocking slates and pencils alongside the requisite readers. Around them grew a shadow economy of "wayside" stalls hawking weeklies, romances, historical page-turners about the glories of Islam, and locally adored paperbacks.

Children's books: 738 doors to imagination
The surest barometer of a reading culture is what it offers its youngest members. In 1962, the National Book Centre published a UNESCO-supported survey of children's literature in East Pakistan. The numbers astonish: between

1947 and 1964, Dhaka's presses issued 738 titles for children in Bangla—intended for the roughly seven million students enrolled from Class I to Class X.

What did those children read? Biographies led the list (180 titles), with subjects ranging from the Prophet of Islam to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and from poets like Nazrul Islam and Rabindranath Tagore to scientists such as Jagadish Chandra Bose. Literary fiction was the next giant: 150 short-story collections, 49 fairy-tale volumes, 42 novels, and 33 dramas, mixing translations and homegrown tales. Poetry was sparse (just 13 books), but science writing for the curious child—on matter, space, light, electricity, chemistry, sound, and the solar system—claimed a meaningful niche. Travelogues were rare (13 titles), a reminder that books were often a substitute for expensive journeys. Translators, meanwhile, made the world familiar: Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels, Great Expectations, Silas Marner, Aesop's Fables—all recast in Bangla for East Pakistan's schoolchildren.



A general view of Karnaphuli Paper Mills Ltd in East Pakistan, 1956.

The shelves looked different, too. As observers noted at the time, Bangla book jackets drew "much more upon local art traditions and scenic surroundings," cultivating a visual language that felt rooted rather than generic. In a literal sense, children were learning to read their country's landscapes in colour and line.

The legal-economic choreography: Imports, lists, and licences

Publishing requires more than paper and ink; it depends on the bureaucratic frame that governs what can be imported, sold, and taught. In the early 1960s, foreign exchange regulations organised reading matter into categories: scientific and technical books, textbooks and reference works, periodicals, fiction and novels, maps and charts, manuscripts and proofs, and all materials prescribed by government and educational institutions. A "Free List" and an "Open General List" (OGL) differentiated items requiring no licence from those that did. Certain genres—"horror," "comics," anything deemed "anti-Islamic" or "obscene"—were explicitly barred.

For East Pakistan's book trade, these lists functioned like a traffic light system. They cued booksellers on which invoices would clear without friction and which needed extra paperwork; they shaped university librarians' acquisition plans; and they signalled national priorities. Because English remained the language of higher education, most prescribed and recommended college-level texts were still foreign. Import permits allowed buyers in Dhaka to order from Indian, British, or American publishers (at different periods and under changing restrictions), while book-aid initiatives—USAID's Book Development Project, The Asia Foundation shipments, and USIS textbook translations—flowed into university and technical libraries, chronically underfunded and lagging in the latest science and engineering materials.

The numbers tell their own tale. By 1964, East Pakistan counted roughly nine million

literate adults—an enormous potential market but one stratified by language, level of schooling, and income. University and specialised libraries skewed heavily towards English. Book import bans and licensing slowdowns sharpened the pain: a single delayed invoice could derail a semester.

UNESCO, the National Book Centre, and a culture of encouragement

One of the era's quieter successes was an ethos of encouragement—prizes, surveys, and training—that treated publishing as a public good. With UNESCO's help, the National Book Centre (NBC) opened its East Pakistan operations in 1960 to promote reading, improve production standards, and provide technical services. The NBC documented the trade's realities (how many books were printed, in which subjects and languages, and at what cost), organised festivals and exhibitions, and did something psychologically vital: it celebrated excellence.

Annual book prizes honoured publishers in Bangla alongside those in Urdu, spotlighting

English, and 27 per cent in Urdu, with smaller shares in other languages. For Dhaka's book world, the trend lines were clear. As schooling expanded and a provincial public asserted its linguistic preferences, demand for Bangla titles intensified—not only in literature but in religion, social sciences, and practical "useful arts." Subject-wise, literature dominated (just over 20 per cent of titles), religion followed (nearly 17 per cent), and social sciences trailed close behind, reflecting a society that was debating identity, ethics, governance, and history on the page.

These were not abstract choices. A rise in Bangla publishing meant more work for local writers and translators, more commissions for Dhaka illustrators, more plate-making at local presses, and more royalties circulating within the city. It also meant a subtler shift in self-conception: students learned physics terms in Bangla, devoured serialised mysteries set on familiar riverbanks, and encountered biographies that braided global figures with national icons.

The invisible labour that made it possible

We rightly remember the marquee houses and prize lists, but early East Pakistan's print culture rested on networks of invisible labour. Typesetters who could compose a complex Bangla line without slowing the form; proofreaders with hawk eyes for diacritics; foremen who coaxed uneven stock through temperamental presses; binders who stitched by hand and squared up spines that would not split under a schoolboy's satchel. Women worked in sorting rooms and on finishing lines; travelling salesmen shouldered parcels to district towns, negotiated consignment terms, and took back returns with stoic good humour.

Many of these workers crossed domains. A calligrapher might moonlight as a jacket artist; a schoolteacher might edit primers in vacation months; an author could advance costs on a civic handbook and recover them slowly from two dozen patient retailers. In a sector where banks declined collateral and credit was scarce, reputation and reciprocity functioned as the real currency. The city's book bazaar was a credit commons.

A nation on the page

By the mid-1960s, Dhaka's publishing world was both more modern and more itself. It had offset presses and a graphics institute; it had paper mills with all their promise and problems; it had an education board that could summon millions of copies on deadline. It had bookshops that reached every district and a children's list rich in biographies, tales, translations, and science. It had regulations that channelled imports and donors who filled some gaps. It had its own aesthetic: jackets that looked like Bengal, not somewhere else.

Most importantly, it had readers—lakh after lakh of them. They were students and shopkeepers, village schoolmasters and clerks, nurses and newly trained engineers. They bought what they could afford and borrowed what they could not, reading in courtyards and tea stalls, in library corners and on buses. As they did, they assembled a civic conversation about who they were and what they wanted to become.

If we look back today from the vantage point of Dhaka's contemporary book fairs, robust newspapers, and buzzing independent presses, the throughline is unmistakable. The early decades' improvisations—the mills that sometimes faltered, the lists that sometimes constrained, the ad hoc firms that sometimes vanished—nonetheless built capacity and confidence. They proved that an industry could be local and ambitious at once, and that a culture could be knit from paper even when paper was scarce.

To build a nation in print is to do many unglamorous things well: to specify a sheet and price a ream, to commission a diagram that actually teaches, to translate a chapter without losing its grace, to stitch a binding that will survive a monsoon. East Pakistan did those things, and Dhaka was its engine room. In the pressrooms and bookshops of those years, a city found its voice—and put it, indelibly, on the page.

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What people read: Languages and subjects

A bibliographic survey catalogued roughly 25,000 books printed nationally between 1947 and 1961. The language breakdown mattered profoundly in East Pakistan: about 40.8 per cent of all titles were in Bangla, 21.2 per cent in

Dhaka division

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At least 10 people have been killed by gunshots in 34 incidents since the election schedule was declared.

The highest number of shooting incidents took place in Dhaka division (9), followed by Chattogram (7), the report added.

Police would take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of disorder around polling centres, Rezaul said.

Any mob, illegal gathering or assembly around polling centres will be dealt with firmly, he said, adding that the police will act in a completely neutral manner to ensure a free and fair election.

"No one will be given even an inch of leeway. People should not be frightened. Our request is simple: everyone should come out to vote," he said, while urging voters not to be misled or intimidated by misinformation spread on social media.

Ahead of the election, the PHQ issued a written directive instructing field officials to ensure professionalism and responsible conduct.

It clearly instructs police personnel not to show bias towards any political party, candidate or supporter and to maintain neutrality in dealing with all stakeholders during the polls.

The directive also imposes strict restrictions on the use of social media and mobile phones while on duty.

Police members are barred from making comments, posting photos or expressing opinions related to the election on Facebook or any other platform.

Political posts, comments or shares are also prohibited.

Unnecessary use of mobile phones during duty hours is not allowed and personal phone use on polling day has been banned.

The instruction stresses that any instance of fake voting or violation of the electoral code of conduct must be dealt with immediately under the law, while the use of force is permitted only if the situation goes out of control.

Police members have also been directed to ensure strict law enforcement within a 400-yard radius of polling centres, where smoking and the carrying of flammable materials, including matchsticks and lighters, are completely prohibited.

Meanwhile, police have heightened security around the transportation and storage of ballot papers and election materials following intelligence reports of possible sabotage attempts during their delivery.

EC lifts phone

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there is no room for doubt," he said.

The revised directive ensures voters, candidates, agents, journalists and observers can carry phones into polling centres, removing any ambiguity over the commission's position, he added.

The bid to ban mobile phones sparked sharp criticism, with many taking to social media to question the intent behind the move.

Critics described the decision as "unnecessary," "restrictive" and "against transparency," arguing it would undermine openness in the electoral process.

However, Election Commissioner Abdur Rahmani Masud defended the phone ban, saying that allowing hundreds of people with cameras and mobile devices inside polling centres would create serious problems.

He acknowledged concerns about voters being without phones for hours but stressed that the restriction was part of the voting procedure.

"This is a restriction we have imposed on voters," he added.

Meanwhile, after a meeting with the EC yesterday, Jamaat leaders said their activists, particularly women, were being attacked in different areas and criticised law enforcement.

On law enforcement, Jamaat leader Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said: "We discussed the role of law enforcement officials in Khulna, Natore and Shariatpur -- their actions are not conducive to a free, fair and acceptable election."

They must be given proper instructions, and if necessary, withdrawn. Otherwise, elections in those areas will not be fair.

"With only three days left before the election, we stressed the need for maximum neutrality and responsible conduct from all sides," Zubair added.

NCP Spokesman Asif Mahmud Sojib Bhuiyan said some EC activities appeared "influenced".

He also accused the EC of carrying out administrative reshuffles based on the BNP's recommendations.

"Transfers should have been neutral and systematic. Instead, we see officials being withdrawn immediately after proposals from a particular party's candidates," he said.

Meanwhile, the EC has imposed a 48-hour restriction on staying in polling areas ahead of the February 12 parliamentary election and referendum.

Except for election officials, persons authorised by the EC and residents or voters of the constituencies, no one will be allowed to remain in the polling zones from 7:30am on February 10 until 4:30pm on February 13, according to the EC.

Governor's BB reform mission stalls

FROM PAGE 1

the central bank.

At the briefing yesterday, Mansur did not conceal his disappointment. "It should have been done," he said of the autonomy proposal. "We were hopeful -- that is why we submitted it. Why it was not done, I cannot say. But it is in the national interest, and we will present it to the next government."

The autonomy plan, first formally proposed by Mansur in October last year, sought sweeping changes to strengthen the central bank's legal protection and align it with global standards. The package included restructuring the central bank board, elevating leadership authority and revising appointment and removal procedures for top officials -- measures designed to shield monetary policy from political influence.

But in a letter to Mansur on Sunday, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, himself a former central bank governor, struck a cautious tone, arguing that introducing major

amendments to such a fundamental law during the tenure of an interim government would not be realistic.

"It would be more reasonable for the next elected government, after assuming office, to review and amend the Order as necessary," Ahmed wrote, adding that any amendment required "detailed review" and consultation with experts and stakeholders.

As the interim administration neared the end of its term without acting on the proposal, Mansur publicly warned that delaying reform until after elections could make passage more difficult. The International Monetary Fund echoed that institutional reforms remained a priority but would fall to the next elected government.

Irked by Ahmed's letter, officials under the banner of the Bangladesh Bank Officers' Welfare Council held a protest rally yesterday, demanding the resignation of the finance adviser for shelving the proposal.

AKM Masum Billah, president of the council, accused Ahmed of

taking a "dual stance," adding that he had previously supported greater autonomy when serving as central bank governor.

"We are demanding his resignation, even if it is just a day before the end of his tenure," Billah said.

The organisation urged whichever party forms the next government after the February 12 election to implement central bank autonomy swiftly, noting that major political parties have already pledged support in their election manifestos.

The episode highlights a shift in Mansur's governorship. Early in his tenure, he framed reform as urgent and achievable. Now, his focus has turned toward preserving economic stability while waiting for political space to complete unfinished tasks.

"All central banks worldwide have legal protection," Mansur said. "Politicians often seek short-term economic gains, but central bankers must ensure long-term sustainability. Pressure exists everywhere -- including here -- and legal protection

is necessary so that financial discipline is not lost again."

He warned that without stronger safeguards, past banking sector weaknesses could re-emerge. "If we do not act, the misuse and looting we saw in banking could return," he said. "Autonomy is a permanent shield."

Mansur acknowledged that broader reform remains incomplete. "Reform is a process, not a one-day event," he said. "We drafted seven laws. Two have been implemented: the Bank Resolution Act and the Bank Deposit Protection Ordinance. If the others had passed, we could have progressed further."

Mansur, former executive director of the Policy Research Institute, assumed office as the 13th governor of Bangladesh Bank on August 14, 2024, for a four-year term. Asked whether he would remain in office if his proposed reforms failed to advance under the next government, he avoided a definitive response, saying, "We will cross the bridge when it comes."

Disinformation swarms social media

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A strong opinion are provided with disinformation that influences them to vote for a certain political party.

In this process, they use religion, violence and many other aspects for provocation," said Sumon, also founding editor of fact-checking organisation FactWatch.

Over one month, from mid-December 2025 to mid-January 2026, The Daily Star documented 220 cases of disinformation circulated by various party-aligned actors.

Entities that appear to support Jamaat-e-Islami top the list, with half of the documented instances of disinformation (96) coming from them within this limited dataset. The Awami League-aligned groups follow with 78, and the BNP-aligned actors 38. No official party links were examined for this story.

Together, these 220 posts received over 2 million engagements (likes, comments, and shares) within the first 24 hours after they were published, showing how fast such content can reach voters.

Jamaat-aligned entities lead the engagement share, accounting for more than 1.8 million interactions (90.68 percent). The AL and the BNP-aligned actors trail far behind with 5.13 percent and 3.57 percent of the total engagement, respectively.

TARGETING RIVALS

Data show that disinformation in the election season is not random noise but a deliberate tactic aimed at political rivals.

Findings show the Jamaat-aligned entities directed four of every five (78 percent) pieces of disinformation at the BNP, once an ally but now the main political rival. These posts aggressively framed the BNP and its leadership as extortionists and criminals, attempting to position Jamaat as the morally superior alternative.

For example, Uttorbongo Television, which released an AI video featuring a staged interview with an elephant handler who falsely claimed the BNP was the "real extortionist".

BNP-aligned actors countered in equal measure, targeting Jamaat with 80 percent of their disinformation campaign.

Rab, DGFI need to be disbanded

FROM PAGE 16

posted to Rab were allegedly misled into carrying out extrajudicial killings, the former army chief noted he had access to extensive intelligence through the Army Security Unit, the Director of Military Intelligence, and his interactions with Rab officers.

Speaking before the tribunal, drawing from what he said were countless interviews with army officers, Iqbal recounted three exchanges.

In the first account, Iqbal spoke about a junior officer who had just returned to the army after serving in Rab and came to his office for a routine interview.

He mentioned that his standard question to such officers was how many people they had killed and said he asked this officer the same.

"The officer answered: 'Six'." Iqbal stated he then asked the officer whether all six killings had been carried out by him directly.

"The officer explained that he had personally killed two, while in the remaining four cases he was present during the killings."

When Iqbal asked how much money he received for each killing, he said the officer replied, "Ten thousand".

"I asked what he did with the money. He told me he donated it to a mosque in his village," Iqbal said. "I realised that he had carried out these acts against his will, and out of guilt, he donated the money."

These contents frequently questioned Jamaat's Islamic credentials and portrayed the party as a threat to the Hindus.

Meanwhile, pro-AL entities mostly targeted the interim government and student coordinators. Examples include a widely shared claim that Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus was plotting a civil war.

Across the political divides, defamation was the dominant weapon. Of the 220 pieces of documented disinformation, 155 were categorised as defamatory. Nearly 90 percent of all such content spread by Jamaat-aligned entities targeted the BNP, while almost all those from BNP-aligned actors focused on Jamaat.

Both sides accused each other of criminality.

AFFILIATION-WISE COUNT & ENGAGEMENT			
AFFILIATION	COUNT	ENGAGEMENT (24HRS)	ENGAGEMENT SHARE
Pro-Jamaat	96	18,85,889	90.68%
Pro-AL	78	1,06,602	5.13%
Pro-BNP	38	74,283	3.57%
Others	6	12,944	0.62%

On December 21, 2025, a high-engagement post falsely alleged that BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and his brother ran a multimillion-taka scheme to smuggle AL leaders across the border. But there was no evidence provided against the claim.

Jamaat-aligned actors also promoted conspiracy narratives, saying the BNP is willing to compromise national interests for Indian favour, including a fabricated story that the party's Chairperson Tarique Rahman had agreed not to purchase weapons without India's permission.

BNP-aligned pages attacked with "moral corruption" narratives, including a fabricated post accusing Chhatra Shibir activists of partying and consuming alcohol after inciting nationwide unrest over Osman Hadi's killing.

"secret understanding" between the AL and Jamaat-Shibir, claiming detainees linked to Jamaat had been quietly released.

This pattern was widespread.

Of the 62 manipulative posts pushed by Jamaat-aligned entities, 48 targeted the BNP, while pro-BNP actors produced 18 such posts, almost all aimed at Jamaat.

Beyond outright fabrication, political actors also distorted facts by presenting information out of context. Unlike fabrication, which relies on complete falsehoods, decontextualisation manipulates authentic information to construct a misleading narrative.

Among the content analysed, 27 posts fell into this category, where real statements or events were reframed to serve partisan agendas. For example, one video post claimed

to show a scene where a BNP leader harassed a freedom fighter. However, the video appears to show someone asking another person to change his seat.

Entities that appear to support the AL mostly pushed narratives of minority persecution, exaggerating isolated incidents into claims of widespread violence, and invoking calls for foreign intervention.

MEDIUM USED

While videos remain the dominant vehicle for disinformation, recent patterns show the growing popularity of photocards. Of the 220 disinformation items analysed, 104 were videos and 44 photocards.

Roughly one-third of the disinformation posts relied on forged documents or fabricated quotes, with 75 such instances identified. These were split evenly between pro-Jamaat and pro-AL pages and users.

Deepfakes and other AI-generated content formed the second most common category, totalling 58 documented cases. Pro-Jamaat entities produced the highest number in this category with 27 instances, followed by pro-BNP actors with 17, and pro-AL entities with 14.

METHODOLOGY

The 220 posts analysed were collected by monitoring a watchlist of 615 Facebook pages and profiles known for spreading disinformation and hate speech.

The watchlist was compiled through a rigorous, political party-blind selection process involving manual monitoring, targeted keyword searches, and cross-referencing with independent fact-checking resources.

Political alignment was assessed by manually reviewing the most recent 30 posts of each actor before data collection began in mid-December. No official party links were examined.

In the watchlist, 27.4 percent appeared AL-aligned, 25.57 percent Jamaat-aligned and 14.5 percent BNP-aligned. The others included the National Citizen Party, meme pages, unaffiliated content creators and other foreign entities.

(The authors are interns at The Daily Star.)

Visualisation: Abir Ayon and Abdullah Hel Bubun

him seeking officers, to which he said he gave no commitment.

During the inauguration of Hotel Radisson in Chattogram, he recalled, then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina summoned him during a meeting with police officials and instructed him to provide Rab with officers.

"I replied that due to a shortage of officers, it was not possible."

The pressure continued until his retirement, but he stressed that he stood his ground.

"Because of Rab's actions, my tenure was a deeply painful period," Iqbal said. "The pain of being unable to do anything weighed heavily on me at all times."

'TAINTED ARMY'

He concluded by explaining to the tribunal that his testimony was intended to cleanse the institution.

"Some believe I have taken a stand against the army," he said. "But no matter how much we try to deny it, the army has been tainted. We must not waste the opportunity for self-purification that has now come."

"This will not diminish the army's glory; rather, it will elevate it to even greater heights," he added. "The entire nation will know that the army never spares the guilty."

After his deposition was completed, a defence lawyer cross-examined him for a few minutes, and then the tribunal adjourned the proceedings till February 18.

Parties outline

FROM PAGE 2

"sickle" symbol represents "ending exploitation, reducing inequality, and giving workers a voice in parliament."

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Ameer Maulana Mamunul Haque called for an "insaf-based, corruption-free Islamic welfare state," stressing that "changing governments is not enough; the system must change."

He promised job guarantees for youth, fair prices for farmers, women's safety, protection for workers, and governance based on justice and accountability, urging votes for "rickshaw," the party's electoral symbol, and a "yes" vote in the referendum.

"Your vote can be a stand against injustice and a step toward a humane Bangladesh," he said.

AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan Manjur described the election as an opportunity to establish "real democracy," citing the failures of past polls and promising a "Bangladesh 2.0" based on justice, accountability, and citizens' rights.

His party's priorities include constitutional and electoral reforms, national health insurance, youth employment, education reform, and zero tolerance for corruption and political violence.

Urging votes for AB Party's "eagle" symbol, he said, "This election is about returning the country to its people."

Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Iran outlined plans for a justice-based welfare state addressing corruption, unemployment, and rising prices.

He pledged affordable healthcare, low-cost housing, youth employment, fair farm prices, factory reopening, and anti-corruption measures, describing the party's goal as an "insaf-based, exploitation-free Bangladesh."

Iran called for peaceful participation and asked voters to support "pineapple," the party's electoral symbol.

Bangladesh Socialist Party (Marxist) Coordinator Masud Rana criticised decades of corruption, inequality, and foreign influence, which he said triggered the July 2024 uprising.

He said elections alone cannot deliver justice. He promised workers' and farmers' rights, guaranteed employment, universal healthcare and education, land reform, women's protection, and preservation of cultural diversity.

Rana urged citizens to vote for the party's electoral symbol, "scissors," and engage in grassroots movements to ensure a fair and equitable Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Muslim League President Zubeida Kader Chowdhury highlighted the party's commitment to justice, anti-corruption governance, Islamic values, social welfare, education, women's empowerment, healthcare, agriculture, employment, and infrastructure development.

She stressed national sovereignty, fair foreign policy, and protection of marginalised communities, urging voters to support the "lantern" symbol and vote "yes" in the referendum to realise a prosperous, ethical, and equitable Bangladesh.

Shafiqur alleges

FROM PAGE 2

The rally, presided over by Maulana Mahfuzul Haque, chief adviser to Mamunul's election management committee, was also attended by Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party and the nominee for the Dhaka-II constituency.

At the gathering, Shafiqur urged supporters to start guarding polling centres from now on. "We must prevent any fraud, vote thief, or manipulator from playing with people's fate."

He alleged that a particular group has become obsessed with securing victory for a party, an individual, or a family. "People have seen them in the past and are still witnessing their greed. We believe the peace-loving people of Bangladesh will not support them. They will be rejected by the people."

"Those who stand for the people and uphold the aspirations of July will be chosen by the voters. The signs are already clear."

He also opposed the Election Commission's decision to ban mobile phones around polling centres.

"When the movement against injustice and fascism began in July, the internet was shut down to conceal crimes and legitimise killings. Now, we see the Election Commission trying to walk down the same dark path -- at whose behest and why?" he questioned.

The Jamaat chief further alleged that some government officials were still engaging in partisan activities and attempting to secure victory for certain candidates. "The people's votes will decide who wins and who loses. Who gave you this responsibility? Remember, you will not be forgiven repeatedly. You were pardoned for past offences, but such forgiveness will not be repeated in the future."

He also warned that any attempt to push the country back towards fascism would be resisted, as it was in July 2024.

Shafiqur added that Mamunul Haque would be made a minister if their combine wins the polls.

He later joined a procession in his constituency, Dhaka-15, and a campaign rally in Dhaka-1 (Dohar-Nawabganj) in support of their alliance candidate.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

EC is failing to do its due diligence

Parties' delay in submitting social media details is unacceptable

With the polling day just around the corner, it is mind-boggling that the Election Commission has still not been able to launch its social media monitoring, because it does not have the list of social media handles and pages being used by the parties and candidates for electioneering. As of 4pm on February 9, the EC had yet to begin this task, even though official campaigning is set to end on the morning of February 10. This is a clear violation of the electoral code of conduct, one that the EC has failed to proactively prevent.

According to the code of conduct published on November 10, political parties and candidates contesting the 13th parliamentary election, as well as their agents, were required to submit the names of the social media platforms they use, their account IDs, email addresses, and other identifying information to their respective returning officers before campaigning began on January 22. However, none of the 67 returning officers appointed across the country has been reportedly able to submit these details to the EC.

What's more worrying is the apparent lack of seriousness on the EC's part. That disinformation would be a major challenge during this election season was known to all, including the EC itself. Why, then, did it not act more proactively to obtain the social media details from the contestants? When asked, an election commissioner said that the "time has not ended yet" and that the commission would "sit and get an overall idea of the matter" in a day or two. One cannot help but ask: what purpose would that serve now, with the election just a couple of days away?

The EC claims to have mechanisms in place to monitor campaigning across electronic, print, and social media. But these mechanisms seem to have been ineffective judging by the reports on deliberate disinformation campaigns and the onslaught of fake and misleading content. In fact, according to a study by Transparency International Bangladesh, the EC has failed to prevent several violations of the electoral code. The study found that candidates spent large sums on social media campaigns to create instability, manipulate narratives, and influence voters through AI-generated images and video clips. Many of these campaigns targeted women and opposition candidates, using slurs to demean and intimidate them. Unfortunately, the EC has failed to prevent these abuses.

Overall, in terms of upholding the electoral code of conduct and keeping candidates in check, the EC's performance has been abysmal. It should have been far better prepared to tackle these challenges and to ensure that this election, given its significance, would be beyond reproach. We hope it is much better equipped to ensure that the election day passes without any disruptions, and that voters are able to cast their ballots safely and peacefully. As for the electoral code, the EC must ensure that all violators are penalised accordingly.

Stop the inflow of illegal arms

The government must take urgent measures to maintain poll-time law and order

We are deeply alarmed by reports that illegal firearms are entering the country through at least 30 border routes ahead of the national election on February 12. A recent *Prothom Alo* report reveals that firearm dealers and smugglers are exploiting poorly guarded sections of the borders with India and Myanmar to bring in foreign-made pistols, ammunition, and other weapons. These arms are then being used in violence, murder, turf wars, and extortion.

Recent arrests expose how entrenched and organised this illicit trade has become. Per the report, on January 22, police detained a man with two pistols and 21 rounds of ammunition brought in through Benapole. Earlier on December 1, another arms dealer was caught in Chapainawabganj with one foreign pistol, five rounds of bullets, and two magazines imported via Monakasha. Interrogations revealed that these weapons were intended to be used for election-time violence. Weapons are also entering via fishing trawlers and boats. Smugglers often allow small consignments to be seized by law enforcers while larger shipments pass through, underscoring how sophisticated these networks are.

Equally worrying is the failure to recover the looted firearms during the July uprising in 2024. Reportedly, of the 5,847 firearms taken from police stations and prisons, 1,362 still remain unrecovered. The recovery of 11 sophisticated foreign-made firearms and 394 rounds of ammunition from a house in North Badda also highlights the severity of the threat. Recent reports of political violence across the country further highlight the threat posed by illegal arms. According to the Human Rights Support Society, at least five people were killed and 970 injured in election-related violence nationwide in the two months following the announcement of the election schedule.

The government, therefore, must remain extra cautious and step up efforts across the country to prevent further violence. It is reassuring that nearly 10 lakh law enforcers have been deployed to maintain law and order during the February 12 polls. However, this must be complemented by proactive and coordinated action to stop the inflow of illegal arms. Strengthening border and intelligence surveillance, dismantling smuggling networks, and recovering looted firearms are urgent priorities now. The borders must be secured by all means, and constant vigilance must be ensured during and after the polls to maintain law and order in the country.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Kasparov wins chess match against computer

On this day in 1996, world chess champion Garry Kasparov began a six-round match against Deep Blue, a chess-playing computer built by IBM, in which Kasparov claimed a 4-2 victory.

Can election manifestos deliver on economic pledges?



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is an economist and executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

For a long time, manifestos have held little significance in Bangladesh's political culture. Parties often forgot about them once elections were over, and the public paid little attention. Manifestos have historically been seen as mere formalities, having little influence on voting preferences. But the situation is different for the upcoming 13th parliamentary election. Political parties are making a true effort to present more appealing manifestos, and citizens are also showing increased interest in the promises within.

In this context, we can examine some of the economic pledges made in the election manifestos of the two major parties: Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami. The BNP has pledged to transform Bangladesh into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2034, while Jamaat has pledged to elevate Bangladesh to a two-trillion-dollar economy by 2040. How realistic are these ambitions?

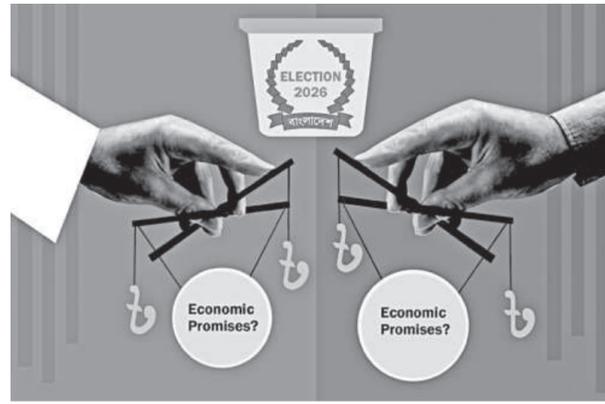
Bangladesh's GDP in the fiscal year 2025 was \$461.63 billion. If the country aims to reach a \$1 trillion economy by FY2034, the economy would need to more than double over nine years. To achieve this, Bangladesh would require an average annual GDP growth rate of around nine percent over the entire period. This means the economy would have to grow at a much faster pace than in recent years and maintain that momentum consistently.

Reaching a \$2 trillion economy by FY2040 as targeted by Jamaat would be even more demanding. Building on the FY2025 base, Bangladesh would require an average annual growth rate of about 10 percent for a prolonged period. However, with such an ambitious target, the party aims for a seven percent growth rate gradually. This is inadequate for reaching the target of a \$2 trillion economy by 2040.

It should be noted that sustained double digit growth has been achieved by only a few countries globally and would demand major improvements in investment, productivity, exports, and overall economic management.

Achieving such high growth and sustaining it long term demands a stable investment environment, technological capacity, skilled human resources, and transparent governance. These are areas where Bangladesh continues to face significant shortcomings.

Private investment hovered at around 24 percent of GDP for about a decade. Then, in FY2025, Bangladesh's total private investment declined to 22.5 percent of GDP. The growth trajectories of most countries indicate



VISUAL: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

that double digit growth cannot be sustained without private investment amounting to at least 30-35 percent of GDP. Beyond private investment, several domestic and external factors also play critical roles in GDP growth. Even China, which saw growth momentum for several years, could not sustain it despite having private investment amounting to over 30 percent.

Although neither BNP's nor Jamaat's manifesto sets concrete targets for private investment (which is critical for growth and employment generation), both have set targets for foreign direct investment (FDI). BNP aims to raise FDI to 2.5 percent of

GDP while Jamaat-e-Islami aims to increase FDI to \$15 billion within five years. In FY2025, Bangladesh received FDI of approximately \$1.69 billion. So, achieving BNP's FDI target would require annual FDI inflows of about \$25 billion, meaning that FDI would need to grow at a rate of roughly 35 percent per year for nine consecutive years. To fulfil Jamaat's FDI target, the average annual growth rate of FDI would have to be about 55 percent.

Achieving such rapid growth in FDI would require major improvements in policy certainty, infrastructure, regulatory efficiency, governance, and overall investor confidence. Without deep and sustained reforms, these targets would be very difficult to realise in practice.

Another important area is the tax-to-GDP ratio. Both parties correctly highlighted the need for higher tax revenues to finance development programmes. The BNP has promised

administrative weaknesses, a culture of tax evasion, technological limitations, and corruption will require deep political and institutional reforms.

Some of the social sector targets in the manifestos involve resource allocation and warrant discussion. BNP aims to raise both education and health spending to five percent of GDP within five years. Jamaat aims to raise education spending to six percent of GDP, and health spending to triple over the next five years. Budget allocation for education in FY2026 is about two percent of GDP, and that for health is only 0.75 percent of GDP. To meet BNP's goal, education spending will have to grow by about 20 percent per year. The greater challenge is the health sector target, as raising spending to five percent of GDP would require an average annual increase of around 46 percent. Meanwhile, Jamaat's ambition to raise education spending implies that education spending as a share of GDP would need to increase by about 25 percent every year on average. Tripling health spending over the same five-year period also requires an average annual increase of about 25 percent.

One of the most attractive pledges from the BNP is to provide family cards to four crore marginalised families, who will receive Tk 2,000-2,500 per month. Initially, 50 lakh poor rural families will receive this card. However, the central challenge lies in financing such a massive programme. Providing 50 lakh cards would cost Tk 12,000-15,000 crore per year. For four crore family cards, an amount of Tk 96,000-120,000 crore per year will be needed. While this is a much-needed proposal for poverty reduction, it is also a significant fiscal commitment requiring a clear financial plan.

There is also no specific plan in either manifesto addressing Bangladesh's imminent graduation from the Least Developed Country category in November 2026. This transition will lead to loss of preferential, duty-free access to international markets, and require the country to reduce import tariffs, thereby placing additional pressure on government revenue. It is therefore surprising that the manifestos lack any strategies to manage the risks associated with this crucial structural transition.

When ambition is disconnected from reality, public trust erodes. A manifesto becomes meaningful only when it is realistic, accountable, and aligned with the economy's real needs.

Our coasts demand more than recycled political pledges

Jashim Uddin is independent researcher and writer on climate change and coastal resilience.

JASHIM UDDIN

As Bangladesh approaches another parliamentary election, political rhetoric is intensifying, development pledges are being recycled, and candidates are once again courting voters with familiar promises. Yet for the people of the southwestern coast—particularly Khulna's Koyra-Paigachha belt—this election arrives with more anxiety than optimism. For many coastal residents, voting feels hollow because electoral promises have rarely translated into tangible improvements in their lives. Instead, they continue to live in a state of chronic vulnerability.

This southern coastal region remains one of the most disaster-prone zones in the country. Government and international studies consistently identify it as highly exposed to cyclones, tidal flooding, storm surges, salinity intrusion, and river siltation. Cyclones Sidr (2007), Aila (2009), Amphan (2020), and Yaas (2021) were not isolated calamities but part of a persistent pattern of climate-induced crisis that has steadily eroded livelihoods, infrastructure, and human security. In Koyra and Paigachha, entire villages have been inundated, embankments have repeatedly collapsed, and families have lost homes, farmlands, and shrimp enclosures built with years of toil and savings.

The official figures from Cyclone Amphan are stark: more than 51,000 houses were damaged in Koyra alone, 4,500 hectares of

shrimp farms were washed away, and over 1.7 lakh people were affected. But beyond these numbers lies a deeper humanitarian tragedy. Rising salinity has undermined agricultural productivity, while asset loss has pushed fishing and farming households into predatory debt. Many families are forced to change occupations during prolonged floods, disrupting social stability and economic security. Flooded schools have deprived a generation of children of consistent education, while saline water has created an acute drinking water crisis—placing an unfair burden on women who must travel long distances for safe water. Waterborne diseases, including diarrhoea, spike during flooding, disproportionately

term resilience. Rice distribution and emergency aid, though necessary, do little to address the structural vulnerabilities that keep these communities trapped in perpetual risk. Equally troubling is the political economy of flooding: local elites have sometimes benefited from waterlogged lands for commercial shrimp cultivation, while ordinary farmers bear the losses—an unjust outcome shaped more by power than public interest.

In the spirit of the July uprising—which demanded equity, justice, and inclusive development—such neglect can no longer be tolerated. The next member of parliament (MP) from this region must move beyond symbolic concern and adopt a clear,

Coastal residents—especially women, farmers, and fishermen—possess invaluable knowledge about their environment and must have a formal role in planning and decision-making. Bangladesh cannot claim inclusive development while sidelining its coastal population. The coast protects the nation from the Bay of Bengal's ferocity; in return, it deserves dignity, security, and opportunity.

affecting women and children.

Compounding this suffering is weak governance and ineffective flood management. Coastal protection remains largely reactive rather than preventive. Fragile earthen embankments are repaired only after breaches occur—often by local communities using bamboo, sandbags, and their own labor—while promised durable embankments and integrated river management projects remain delayed or poorly implemented.

Policy responses continue to prioritise short-term relief over long-

people-centred coastal agenda. What the coast needs is not charity, but representation and justice.

Coastal communities expect concrete commitments from their leaders. For instance, constructing climate-resilient embankments using modern engineering, combined with community-based monitoring and properly managed sluice gates to regulate salinity and flooding, would bring tangible benefits to the community. A transition towards salinity-resilient agriculture—including salt-tolerant rice varieties, floating gardens, and an introduction

to diversified livelihood options would enable farmers to not be dependent on a single, risky occupation.

A stronger regulation of coastal aquaculture to prevent environmental degradation and land grabbing, while promoting eco-friendly shrimp farming practices, would greatly benefit coastal communities. Furthermore, responsible coastal ecotourism around the Sundarbans that genuinely benefits local communities rather than outside investors alone should be encouraged. An improved transport and communication infrastructure, including elevated roads and safer cyclone shelters are instrumental in local community development, and stronger digital connectivity is essential for early warning systems.

The coastal residents would also benefit from urgent investment in safe drinking water systems, such as rainwater harvesting and desalination, alongside better local healthcare services during flood seasons.

Most importantly, policymaking must be participatory. Coastal residents—especially women, farmers, and fishermen—possess invaluable knowledge about their environment and must have a formal role in planning and decision-making. Bangladesh cannot claim inclusive development while sidelining its coastal population. The coast protects the nation from the Bay of Bengal's ferocity; in return, it deserves dignity, security, and opportunity.

What the region needs is a leader who will truly represent the coast—one with a vision for sustainable water management, flourishing ecotourism, quality healthcare, and reliable education. The coast has waited too long; it is time to move from crisis response to coastal justice.

Guard the ballot: Why February 12 vote must not be stolen



Shahab Enam Khan
is professor of international relations at Bangladesh University of Professionals and Jahangirnagar University.

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

It is said that the best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter. But those who say this have perhaps never visited Bangladesh, where the average voter has survived 15 years of electoral theatre and still hopes the ballot box might listen to them. On February 12, that hope gets its day, across 42,779 polling centres, where more than 127 million Bangladeshis will—for the first time since the rigged spectacles of 2014, 2018, and 2024—choose their next government. Let nobody steal that opportunity from them.

This is not merely an election. It is a referendum on whether Bangladesh can govern itself without a strongman, a coup, or an interim arrangement that overstays its welcome like a guest who moved in to help with the cooking but now changed the Wi-Fi password. Investors, development partners, and neighbouring capitals—all are watching to see if Bangladesh can pull off the biggest

it's due, BNP has campaigned on a platform of inclusion and transformation and has articulated a vision of governance beyond "winner takes all." Although the real test, as always, will be in making this happen. Then there is Jamaat-e-Islami, which deserves a nuanced conversation. Jamaat commands a significant voter base, has run a disciplined campaign, and could play a constructive role in parliament, particularly in ensuring that the next legislature does not degenerate into the familiar theatre of absolute majority versus decorative opposition. With the Awami League absent, it is poised to be one of the two majoritarian parties of Bangladesh's once-again predominantly bipartisan parliament. The country desperately needs checks and balances in its parliament.

But here is where the plot thickens, not in an Agatha Christie way, but in the distinctly Bangladeshi fashion where everyone knows who the suspects are but nobody names them

Over 600 were reportedly injured in January alone. Firearms looted during the July 2024 uprising are resurfacing during present clashes. Days before the vote, strategically timed street protests escalated into violent confrontations, including near the chief adviser's residence. Whether driven by genuine grievance or calibrated provocation, the pattern that emerges from these incidents suggests that forces are out there trying to

heard a democratic principle or a pre-drafted press release for rejecting inconvenient results. One hopes it's the former.

Another key dimension here is the Awami League's absence. Awami League voters deserve to vote freely as citizens. I would tell them that one should not take dietary advice from a person feasting at a five-star buffet abroad while they tell you to starve at home. Awami League affiliates owe nothing

comparative political memory but remains sceptical. Together, they form a decisive bloc largely guided by whoever appears least likely to repeat the sins of the past. At the same time, I do not doubt Dr Muhammad Yunus's intention to deliver a credible election. But I am Machiavellian enough to suspect that some within the government would prefer the current arrangement to continue indefinitely, or for the election to fall short of its intended goal of democratic renewal. They will be judged accordingly once a new government takes office.

The interim government has undertaken considerable grassroots electoral preparation, which should be acknowledged. But its critical limitation lies elsewhere. The government and its cohorts failed to empower or encourage local communities to actively resist violence and rigging at the polling station level. Law enforcement, however dedicated, cannot protect every booth or ballot. What was needed was a culture of citizen vigilance—communities understanding that guarding the vote is a shared civic responsibility, not the state's job alone.

Which brings me to the most important point. The people must guard this election. Nearly one million security personnel have been formally deployed, but they may still face the cumulative effects of misinformation, deepfakes, or manufactured mob fury. The role of ordinary citizens in protecting polling stations and aiding security forces is therefore not optional; it has become essential. There has to be genuine public mobilisation to resist anyone with a banner, a slogan, or a whisper from the corridors of power or influence that suggests that the election should not happen as promised.

At the end of the day, Bangladesh cannot afford another parliament where the opposition is a decorative minion. Nor can it afford parties rewriting the post-August 5 settlement because they fear the ballot box. Rabindranath Tagore wrote, "You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water." Bangladesh has stood and stared for long enough. February 12 is the day we wade forward. Let not the chaos actors write the nation's history for us. Vote and guard the polling booth.



'Bangladesh cannot afford another parliament where the opposition is a decorative minion.'

PHOTO: STAR

destabilise the security environment or create enough chaos to legitimise claims of election engineering and rigging after the fact.

The military and law enforcement agencies are the only organised forces capable of delivering electoral security. Antagonising the public against them now serves only those who benefit from any electoral chaos or postponement of the polls. In this regard, it should be mentioned that major contesting parties have warned against foul play in the election, which carries an undertone that gives one pause—the kind of pause where you smile politely while wondering if you've just

to their remorseless leaders, who chose exile over accountability and now demand loyalty from the comfort of someone else's guest room. So, any attempt to destabilise this election—through provocations, boycotts, or manufactured crises—will breed instability and open the floodgates for the very forces everyone claims to oppose.

The youth vote is the elephant in every political room. The 18-to-25 cohort has never voted but has lived through the suffocating autocracy before August 2024—firsthand experience of state bullets, but none of ballot ink. The 26-to-35 bracket carries

The youth vote is the elephant in every political room. The 18-to-25 cohort has never voted but has lived through the suffocating autocracy before August 2024—firsthand experience of state bullets, but none of ballot ink. The 26-to-35 bracket carries comparative political memory but remains sceptical. Together, they form a decisive bloc largely guided by whoever appears least likely to repeat the sins of the past.

democratic exercise of 2026 without the kind of chaos that makes international headline writers reach for their favourite adjective: "failed."

Among the contesting parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party enters the election from what many acknowledge to be a favourable position. To give credit where

at dinner.

Since the election schedule was announced, at least 16 political activists have been killed. The assassination of Sharif Osman Hadi—shot in broad daylight the day after the election schedule was announced—served as a wake-up call about how far certain forces may go to derail the electoral process.

A coherent political vision is key to empowering local government



Dr Nawshad Ahmed, a retired UN official, is an economist and urban planner. He is currently working as the team leader in a primary school infrastructure need assessment project for the Department of Primary Education, Dhaka.

NAWSHAD AHMED

With the parliamentary elections only a few days away, a legitimate question is whether the political parties participating have a clear vision about the future of local government in Bangladesh. The country's two-tier government structure, comprising central and local governments at district, upazila, union, municipality, and city corporation levels, requires strong democratic institutions. While the central government is supposed to frame policies, the local government bodies are tasked with implementing development programmes and delivering services to the people under their respective jurisdictions.

During the last one and a half years, we have noticed a significant shift of emphasis in popular discourses, towards strengthening local government in Bangladesh through radical restructuring to decentralise power, remove political parties' influence in local affairs, and limit the role of members of parliament (MPs) in local governance. A fresh thinking is noticeable among the political leaders towards strong local and urban governance, especially to make Dhaka and Chattogram cities more efficient and dynamic. So far, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami, National Citizen Party (NCP), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and some others have clearly mentioned their commitments through election manifestos and public meetings to build a strong local government and limit the role of the central government in local affairs, if they are voted to power in the next elections.

The BNP, in its "31-Point Outline for Structural Reforms" and "Vision-2030" initiatives, wants to remove the use of party symbols in local government polls to reduce electoral violence and reduce political parties' influence. It also wants to ensure the freedom of operation of local government bodies by removing direct interference of

central administration MPs. Local government will have an additional role in local development, education and health service delivery, BNP promised.

Jamaat-e-Islami pledged that the country will not be administered from all 64 districts, cities and upazilas, indicating the need to decentralise the governance structure and ensure good governance in the country. The party strongly stressed a corruption-free society by ensuring accountability at all levels of government.

Whatever the results of the elections are, there needs to be consensus among the political parties about making the local government system more effective, results-oriented and functioning. The age-old centralised government system inherited from the British and Pakistan rules cannot efficiently deliver development and services for the entire population.

The NCP has made a strong commitment to strengthen local government in its 36-point manifesto. It emphasised decentralising power by shifting authority from the centre, introducing "village parliaments" to strengthen grassroots governance and facilitate effective local participation. The party also wants to make local government the nucleus of development. The new party wants to reduce corruption by transparent local governance, such as making budgets and project funding public.

The CPB and other left-leaning parties also support a decentralised, autonomous, and participatory

local government. These parties draw their commitments for a strong local government system from an ideological point of view, especially strengthening grassroots democracy, reducing central power at the local level, stronger financial autonomy of local bodies, local participatory planning, more transparency, women's participation, and empowering marginalised groups to ensure their participation in local government decision-making processes.

Jatiya Party (JP), since its establishment, has strongly emphasised the strengthening of local government. The JP established the upazila as a new tier of local government in Bangladesh. It also continues emphasising the re-establishment of upazila-level courts to make the legal system more accessible, the introduction of local-level planning, and participatory development.

Whatever the results of the elections are, there needs to be consensus among the political parties about making the local government system more effective, results-oriented and functioning. The age-old centralised government system inherited from the British and Pakistan rules cannot efficiently deliver development and services for the entire population, especially in a populous country like Bangladesh. The poor implementation capacity of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) and abysmal performance of the education and health sectors are examples of poor capacity of a centralised development system. With around 75,000 elected representatives and several lakh employees, the local government of Bangladesh is a reservoir of human resources waiting to shoulder the development and service delivery responsibilities across the country.

Effective people's participation is one of the cornerstones of a functioning local government system, and the Constitution of Bangladesh ensures local-level participation, such as in Articles 11, 19, 23, 37, and others. To ensure that local-level planning, decision-making, service delivery and development are effective, meaningful participation of women, men and youth is necessary. The role of the state is important in creating an environment for people's effective participation in local governance.

About 40 percent of the people in the country are already living in urban areas, raising the demand for infrastructure and services there quickly. It is predicted that in the next two decades, the urban population will reach around 60 percent of the total population. Therefore, we need to plan our urban areas now and develop necessary roads, drains, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure and services. The city corporations and municipalities must take up these responsibilities.

Unplanned development in both cities and towns must be arrested at any cost. The functional capacity of urban local governments should be built with priority.

The local government expenditure in Bangladesh is only one percent of GDP, which is extremely low. The percentage is significantly high in emerging economies like China (11 percent), Brazil (seven percent), South Korea (23 percent), South Africa (10 percent), and Indonesia (six percent). Therefore,

Bangladesh needs to seriously decide to empower local governments to catch up with other countries with strong local government systems.

If the country decides to devolve several functions to the local level and strengthen the system, the commitments made by the political parties before the upcoming parliamentary elections must be carried forward, and a serious effort should be made in that regard over the next five years.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Bridge Construction & Maintenance Circle
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka.
Phone: 02-8879337, 01730-782559
E-mail- sebmc.rhd@gmail.com, sebmc@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No:35.01.0000.152.07.035.26.71

Date: 08.02.2026

e-GP Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the national e-Gp system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following

Tender Id No	Package No	Name of Physical Service	Publishing Date	Last Date & Time of Selling	Opening Date and Time
1223797	PSN/e-PPS3/BCMC/01/2025-26	Sub-soil Investigation of Mongla Bridge over the Mongla River at Daulatdia-Faridpur-Magura-Jhenaidah-Jashore-Khulna-Mongla (Digraj) National Highway (N7) at Bagerhat District during the year 2025-26	10-Feb-2026 14:00	22-Feb-2026 10:00	22-Feb-2026 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-Gp portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-Gp system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The Fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-Gp system Portal have to be deposited online through any Member of Schedule Bank for e-Gp.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-Gp System Portal and from e-Gp help desk (<http://www.helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd>).

(Signature)
08.02.2026
(Abdur Rahman Kaoser)
(ID No. 601960)

Superintending Engineer, RHD (C.C)
Bridge Construction and Maintenance Circle
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka



FILE PHOTO: STAR

Female Leadership in Islam

A response to Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman's views on women's political role

Historical evidence from both the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) era and the period following it further demonstrates that women participated in leadership roles, including leading battles and holding public office (Engineer 1992; Mernissi 1993; Wadud 1999; Hashmi 2000; El Fadl 2001). Consequently, many scholars maintain that there is no explicit Qur'anic prohibition against women's leadership.

SARWAR ALAM

The Ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Shafiqur Rahman, has categorically declared that no woman can ever occupy the party's highest leadership position. In an extended interview with Al Jazeera, he justified this stance by appealing to what he termed "God-given biological differences" (interview with Al Jazeera, January 29, 2026). Yet such a claim, delivered with finality, raises serious theological, hermeneutical, and ethical concerns within the Islamic tradition. Before addressing Rahman's assertion directly, it is necessary to return to the Qur'anic hermeneutics that underlie debates on women's political leadership in Islam.

Islamic interpretive tradition has never claimed singular or absolute authority in understanding divine revelation. Early Muslim scholars frequently acknowledged the provisional nature of their opinions, often concluding with the caveat that while their reasoning reflected their best understanding, ultimate knowledge rests with God alone (El Fadl 2001, 10). Shafiqur Rahman's pronouncement departs sharply from this tradition of epistemic humility. He neither cites Qur'anic evidence prohibiting women's political leadership nor acknowledges alternative interpretive possibilities, instead presenting his view as conclusive and divinely sanctioned.

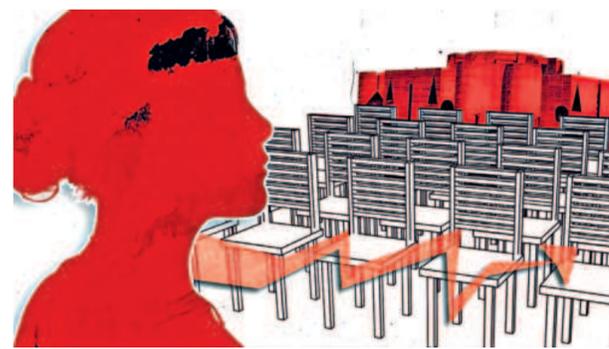
The Qur'an itself offers no support for such categorical exclusions. It affirms that God directly created Adam and breathed His spirit into him (15:29), but it does not state that Adam's wife—popularly known among most Muslims as Hawwa—was created from Adam's rib. Rather, the Qur'an repeatedly emphasises that humanity was created from a single nafs (self or soul), from which its mate was created, and from the two spread countless men and women (4:1; see also 6:98; 7:189; 39:6). This ontological unity undermines any claim of inherent gender hierarchy.

sequence of creation.

However, early Qur'anic exegesis often incorporated Judeo-Christian narratives that reshaped Muslim understandings of gender relations. Figures such as Adam and Hawwa, Joseph/Yusuf and Zulaikha, and Solomon/Sulaiman and Bilqis were frequently interpreted through lenses borrowed from biblical lore. Al-Tabari (d. 923), for example, drawing on reports attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, and others, narrates that Hawwa was created from Adam's rib—a claim absent from the Qur'an and reflective of biblical influence (Ayoub 1984, 82). Further reports, attributed to Jewish converts such as Wahb ibn Munabbih, portray Hawwa as the primary agent of the fall, suggesting that she first succumbed to Satan and then persuaded Adam to follow (Ayoub 1984, 83-84; see also Genesis 3:12-13). These narratives also associate menstruation and childbirth pain with divine punishment (see Genesis 3:16), despite the Qur'an's silence on such claims.

The social and political implications of these exegetical interpolations have been profound. They cast women as morally deceptive, intellectually deficient, and ontologically derivative, thereby legitimising unequal gender relations. By attributing the primal fall to Hawwa, women were rendered perpetual bearers of guilt and divine curse. As Barbara Stowasser observes, these interpretations became doctrinal tools for asserting women's inferior moral and rational capacities (1994, 34).

A similar pattern emerges in the interpretation of the story of Zulaikha. Medieval commentators frequently portrayed her as the embodiment of unrestrained female desire, reducing femininity itself to seduction and guile, although the Qur'an narrates a reciprocal dynamic between Yusuf and Zulaikha (12:23-35). Later exegesis generalised her actions to all women, fostering mistrust of the female sex (Bouhdiba 1985, 26). Scholars such as Al-Baydawi extended this characterisation, contributing to



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

little attention to her leadership. Scholars such as Ibn Kathir focused more on the historical plausibility of related legends than on Bilqis herself. As Stowasser argues, Bilqis's competence and autonomy conflicted with prevailing male elite perceptions of female authority, rendering her an uncomfortable anomaly within classical discourse (1994, 65).

Some early scholars also associated supposedly superior attributes such as reason ('aql) and spirit (ruh) with men, while linking passion, desire, or the carnal soul (nafs) with women. However, some Sufis related women to the concept of nafs in a positive sense (see Schimmel 1979, p. 124). Several scholars argue that the Qur'an scarcely articulates any spirit-soul (ruh-nafs) dualism, nor does it endorse a distinction between mind and body. Rather, such dualistic frameworks have been traced to Neoplatonic origins. As Fazlur Rahman (1980) argues, the term nafs, often translated as "soul," more accurately denotes the person or self. In Qur'anic usage, nafs often refers to tendencies of human personality and mental states. These mental states, however, should not be understood as the mind conceived as a separate substance. Despite this, within certain discourses women were portrayed as passionate beings driven by carnal desire, appetite, and animal instinct, while men were represented as higher, superior, and intellectual beings.

Fatna A. Sabbah contends that such discourses were intended to subjugate women. "Reason and desire are connected in a power relationship, and any strengthening of one implies the weakening of the other," she asserts (1984, p. 112). Although Sabbah does not develop a systematic theoretical framework and does not sufficiently consider the sociopolitical and historical contexts of the medieval texts she examines, some of her observations remain valuable. She cites medieval jurists and Qur'anic commentators who argued that, without the triumph of reason over desire, men cannot fully cultivate their rational capacities. One such jurist and Qur'an commentator is Abu al-Faraj Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200). In his work Dhamm al-hawa (Condemnation of Desire), Ibn al-Jawzi describes the tension between reason and desire, assigning reason to men and desire to women. Similarly, the jurist and Qur'an commentator Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), in Rawdat al-muhibbin wa-nuzhat al-mushtaqin (The Meadow of Lovers and the Diversion of the Infatuated), depicts desire as polluting and distracting. He observes that Satan aligns himself with women when seeking to lead individuals into despair. Women, construed as embodiments of desire, are thus portrayed as distractions to men's

rational endeavours. This view, widely held in medieval discourse, served to justify the control and subjugation of women (Sabbah 1984, p. 113), which does not match the following verse of the Qur'an (33:35):

"For Muslim men and women—for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise—for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward" (trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali).

Regarding women's leadership, it has been argued that women are unfit for leadership positions on the grounds that Islamic leaders are assumed to lead communal prayers, and that women cannot lead men in prayer (Mernissi 1993, p. 32). Fatima Mernissi notes that this argument rests on two assumptions: first, that political or social leaders are obligated to lead prayer; and second, that women are categorically prohibited from leading men in prayer (1993, p. 32). Beyond the concept of awra, women's religious and political leadership has also been tied to the notion of walaya—authority and sovereignty—which classical fuqaha and ulama largely denied to women (Calderini 2009, pp. 9-10). Amina Wadud challenged traditional interpretations of women's leadership in congregational prayer and, in 2005, led a mixed-gender congregational prayer on 18 March. Mernissi and others further argue that the Qur'an does not prohibit women from holding leadership positions; rather, it includes affirmations of female leadership, most notably in the example of the Queen of Sheba.

Historical evidence from both the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) era and the period following it further demonstrates that women participated in leadership roles, including leading battles and holding public office (Engineer 1992; Mernissi 1993; Wadud 1999; Hashmi 2000; El Fadl 2001). Consequently, many scholars maintain that there is no explicit Qur'anic prohibition against women's leadership. The frequently cited hadith used to prohibit women's leadership (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 5, book 59, no. 709) is the following:

"Narrated Abu Bakra: During the days of the Battle of al-Jamal, Allah benefited me with a word I had heard from the Messenger of Allah when I was about to join the Companions of al-Jamal and fight alongside them. When the Messenger of Allah was informed that the Persians had appointed the daughter

of Khosrau as their ruler, he said, 'A people who entrust their affairs to a woman will never prosper.'"

Mernissi questions the authenticity of this Prophetic statement, even though it is recorded in one of the most authoritative canonical compilations, Sahih al-Bukhari. She raises serious doubts about the moral character of the hadith's narrator. According to the methodological standards developed by hadith collectors such as Imam al-Bukhari, the narrator in question would not qualify as trustworthy, as he was known to have given false testimony against a fellow Muslim—an offence for which the caliph Umar reportedly sought to have him flogged (1991 [1987], p. 60). By the criteria established in hadith criticism, Mernissi argues that this report should therefore be classified as majul (fabricated), given the questionable integrity of its narrator and the weakness of its chain of transmission (see also Brown 2009, p. 249).

Despite these concerns, both Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim included this report in their respective sahih collections, and jurists from all major madhahib have relied on it as a key textual authority in arguments against women's leadership in the public sphere. Another Prophetic tradition frequently cited in this context (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 1, book 6, no. 301) asserts that women are deficient in both intellect and religion. This claim is typically linked to women's exemption from ritual prayer and fasting during menstruation and postpartum bleeding—periods that jurists have argued diminish women's capacity for judgment.

Drawing on these hadiths alongside Qur'anic verses 2:228 and 4:34, most jurists have maintained that God favours one sex over the other and grants men a degree of authority over women. On this basis, they argue that it is unlawful for women to hold public office, since such positions could place women in authority over men (see al-Naim 1990, pp. 87-88; 2008, p. 109; Mernissi 1991, pp. 152-53).

However, historical evidence undermines claims of such prohibition. During and after the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, women participated in public decision-making, led military engagements, and held positions of authority (Engineer 1992; Wadud 1999; El Fadl 2001). No Qur'anic verse explicitly forbids women from holding public office.

The Qur'an affirms only a vertical relationship between God and human beings. The relationship among human beings—women and men—is horizontal, more precisely one of mutual reciprocity, as Amina Wadud argues. The only hadith cited to prohibit women from holding political office is of questionable authenticity. The so-called authority, Shafiqur Rahman—who is not a member of the Muslim scholarly community but a medical professional and therefore lacks the requisite qualifications—cannot legitimately claim doctrinal finality on this issue. What he has articulated is merely his personal, or his party's, understanding of Islam regarding female leadership, which does not represent the legal, theological, or philosophical traditions of Islam. Nor should one forget Jamaat's historical treatment of women in 1971, shaped by its own perceptions of women.

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Women played a decisive role at the forefront of the July uprising, yet in formal politics their participation is too often confined to symbolic representation rather than positions of real authority. FILE PHOTO: STAR

Likewise, the Qur'an does not portray Hawwa as the instigator of Adam's disobedience. Instead, both Adam and his spouse are depicted as victims of Satan's deception (7:20-22; 20:120-121). Notably, Satan is said to have whispered directly to Adam (20:120), and responsibility for the transgression is shared equally. Nowhere does the Qur'an assert the moral, intellectual, or ontological superiority of one sex over the other, despite the chronological

what some have described as the literary roots of Muslim misogyny (Barlas 2002, 218).

In contrast, the Qur'anic portrayal of Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, presents a striking affirmation of female political agency. Chapter 27 depicts her as intelligent, deliberative, and sovereign. Extra-Qur'anic traditions further describe her as an effective ruler who successfully governed her kingdom. Yet medieval exegetes devoted remarkably

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND NAGORIK TV
T20 World Cup
Namibia vs Netherlands
Live from 11:30 am
New Zealand vs UAELive from 3:30 pm
Pakistan vs USA
Live from 7:30 pm
STAR SPORTS
SELECT HD1 AND HD2
Premier LeagueChelsea vs Leeds
Live from 1:30 am
(Wednesday)
West Ham vs Man Utd
Live from 2:15 am
(Wednesday)

‘Pressure on Pakistan’ as USA eye another upset

AFP, Colombo

USA leg spinner Mohammad Mohsin said Monday that “the pressure will be on Pakistan” when the teams lock horns in the T20 World Cup again today, two years after the Americans inflicted a shock defeat on the former champions.

But Pakistan quick bowler Salman Mirza insisted the stunning super over defeat in Dallas in the 2024 T20 World Cup would be firmly “in the past” when the two clash in Colombo on Tuesday.

The USA team gave tournament favourites India a big scare in their opening match in Mumbai, reducing them to 77-6 at one point, with Mohsin taking a wicket on his T20 World Cup debut, before losing by 29 runs.

They are confident they can repeat their stunning upset of two years ago in the Group A encounter.

“The pressure of losing the last game will be on Pakistan,” said Mohsin.

Born and brought up playing

Pakistan face the USA in a Group A clash of the T20 World Cup in Colombo today, two years after the Americans stunned the 2009 champions and knocked them out of the 2024 edition. The USA pushed favourites India hard in their opener in Mumbai before going down by 29 runs, while Pakistan nearly stumbled into another upset against the Netherlands on Saturday. With a Super Eight spot on the line, Pakistan can ill afford any slip-ups.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



defeat with 29 runs needed in the last two overs but all-rounder Faheem Ashraf's big hitting bailed them out.

Defeat to the USA two years ago saw them fail to get out of the group.

Mirza admitted the smaller teams were dangerous opponents.

“Until now all the matches are close and no team is small or big in this format,” said Mirza, who took 3-24 against the Netherlands.

Pakistan may bring back experienced batsman Fakhar Zaman to replace Babar Azam who has been criticised for slow scoring.

Meanwhile, Salman Agha's side have been cleared to face India in their T20 World Cup clash in Colombo on February 15 after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ended a week-long stand-off by granting approval. The decision came after a tripartite meeting involving the ICC, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), held over the last two days in Lahore.

cricket in Pakistan, Mohsin migrated to the US five years ago and warned the USA were a better team now than two years ago.

“I have played with most of the players in this Pakistan team, so I have given my input to the

team and we are a more skilled and confident team.”

Mirza was confident the last defeat will not prey on the Pakistan players' minds.

“Winning and losing are part of the game, it happens in cricket,” Mirza said. “The defeat

against the USA is now past and behind us.”

Pakistan, the 2009 champions, were close to suffering another shock in their opening match against the Netherlands on Saturday.

Pakistan were staring at

Zimbabwe dominate Oman; Scots spoil Italy's debut

AFP

Zimbabwe returned to the T20 World Cup in emphatic fashion on Monday, strolling to an eight-wicket win over Oman at Colombo's Sinhalese Sports Club while debutants Italy had a bruising introduction to cricket's biggest stage as they suffered a crushing 73-run loss to Scotland at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

In their first T20 World Cup since 2022, Zimbabwe skittled Oman for 103 before knocking off the runs with 39 balls to spare.

Brian Bennett was unbeaten on 48 and Brendan Taylor, 40, who played in the first T20 World Cup in 2007, made 31 before retiring hurt.

Zimbabwe's quick bowling twin towers Richard Ngarava and Blessing Muzarabani did the early damage, reducing Oman to 27-5 with none of their top order managing to get into double figures.

A face-saving 42-run stand for the sixth wicket between Sufyan Mehmood and Vinayak Shukla gave Oman's total some respectability.

Ngarava finished with 3-17 and Muzarabani 3-16. Brad Evans provided the perfect first-change foil, hitting a nagging line and length to take 3-18.

In Kolkata, Scotland piled up 207-4 with opener George Munsey top-scoring with 84 and in reply Italy were bowled out for 134 in 16.4 overs.

Off-spinner Michael Leask took 4-17 for Scotland, adding to his batting cameo of an unbeaten 22 off five balls.

A nation better known for its football, Italy are the lowest-ranked side in the 20-team tournament and were making a slice of history here.

Chasing a mammoth 208 for victory, they suffered early blows before a valiant fourth-wicket partnership of 73 between Australia-born brothers Ben and Harry Manenti kept them afloat at Eden Gardens.

But Harry departed for 37 and Ben got out after his 31-ball 52 as the Italian batting collapsed from 113-3.

South Africa-born captain Wayne Madsen could not bat after he dislocated his shoulder while fielding and might miss the rest of the tournament.



South Africa captain Aiden Markram smashed a 32-ball 59 while pacer Lungi Ngidi returned figures of 4-31 as the Proteas hammered Canada by 57 runs in their Group D fixture of the ICC T20 World Cup in Ahmedabad yesterday. Markram and fellow opener Quinton de Kock (25 off 22 balls) set the tone with a 70-run opening stand. David Miller then struck a 23-ball 39 and Tristan Stubbs added a brisk 34 off 19 deliveries to provide the late surge, powering South Africa to 213-4. Ngidi led a disciplined bowling display to cap a comprehensive performance, as Canada were restricted to 156-8.

PHOTO: AFP

Rajshahi resume title push as WFL returns

SPORTS REPORTER

The seventh edition of the Bangladesh Women's Football League (WFL) resumes today at the Birshrestha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium after a 13-day pause for the SAFF Women's U-19 Championship in Nepal, with table-toppers Rajshahi Stars FC aiming to continue their dominant run.

Four other matches are scheduled at the same venue today, with second-placed Farashganj SC taking on Bangladesh Police FC.

Unbeaten in eight matches, Rajshahi have established themselves as the standout side in the II-team league. A victory over Suddopuskorini Jubo SC today would push them closer to the title ahead of their final fixture against Bangladesh Army on Friday, the day after the national election.

The national team-laden side have been prolific in front of goal, scoring 79 times in eight outings. Forward Alpi Akter has led the charge with 25 goals, while strike partner Sauravi Akanda Prity has added 12, making the pair a constant menace



for opposing defences.

Rajshahi will be without the Nepalese duo Bimala BK and Dipa Shahi, who left Dhaka shortly after the eighth round concluded on January 27.

“We will certainly feel the absence of Bimala and Dipa because of their experience. I often used Dipa in different positions depending on the situation during matches,” Rajshahi coach Mahmuda Haque Aditi told The Daily Star yesterday at Farz Hotel.

“We do have replacements, but they lack experience. Still, we are confident of sticking to our game plan and maintaining our position at the top,” she added.

Aditi also said the team is focused on securing another win today, while acknowledging that Bangladesh Army could present a sterner test than Farashganj, given their balanced squad.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Journalists stand at the top of the media tribune of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, with a banner saying ‘Journalism is not a Crime’, after local media decided to boycott the Odommo Bangladesh T20 Cup final between Dhumketu XI and Durbar XI yesterday. The protest and boycott came in the wake of BCB security department issuing a warning letter to a photojournalist over taking pictures of the President's Box during a match on Friday.

Europe's top leagues set for a dramatic run-in

AGENCIES

Europe's major leagues delivered another weekend of twists, drama and defining moments as the race for titles, European places and survival continues to tighten across the continent, with stars like Erling Haaland, Bernardo Silva, Kylian Mbappe and Harry Kane once again taking center stage.

The Premier League title race is once again alive. Manchester City's stunning late comeback at Anfield, driven by Haaland and Silva, keeps them firmly in Arsenal's slipstream, refusing to let the leaders pull away.

Arsenal remain top, but City's momentum is unmistakable, while Manchester United's revival under Michael Carrick – inspired by Bruno Fernandes – has reshaped the battle for the Champions League spots.

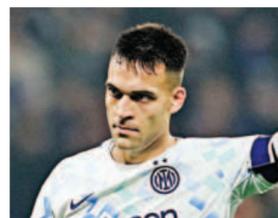
Newcastle, once dreaming of the top five, now face a sobering reality in mid-table, highlighting



how quickly fortunes can change. Germany remains firmly in Bayern Munich's grip. A commanding 5-1 victory, powered by Harry Kane and Luis Diaz, restored their six-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga.

Borussia Dortmund continue to chase, but Bayern's relentless scoring and consistency underline why they remain the benchmark. Hoffenheim, despite defeat, still hold a strong position in the top three, keeping the race for European qualification intense.

The LaLiga title fight is delicately poised. Barcelona cling



to top spot by a single point after Real Madrid's hard-fought win at Valencia, led by Kylian Mbappe. Despite injuries and absences, Madrid's resilience keeps them firmly in contention, while Atletico Madrid's defeat leaves them drifting from the title race and now fighting to secure a Champions League berth. Villarreal and Real Betis sense opportunity as the battle for fourth heats up.

France saw Paris Saint Germain reclaim the Ligue 1 summit in emphatic fashion. Their 5-0 demolition of Marseille, inspired by Ousmane Dembele, showcased

both their attacking depth and dominance, moving them ahead of Lens. With Marseille slipping and PSG surging, the champions have once again seized control, though the chase for European places remains fiercely competitive.

Italy's Serie A continues to be shaped by Inter Milan's authority. Their emphatic 5-0 victory, led by Lautaro Martinez, Marcus Thuram and Federico Dimarco, extended an unbeaten run and moved them eight points clear of AC Milan, putting one hand on the Scudetto.

Juventus' late comeback draw keeps them clinging to a Champions League spot, but Roma are poised to pounce, while Lazio, Atalanta and others remain tightly packed in a congested European race.

Across Europe, the narratives are clear: dominant leaders tightening their grip, challengers refusing to yield, and clubs in transition redefining their ambitions. With every point carrying weight, the final stretch promises more drama.





India-Pakistan T20 World Cup match back on ICC decides not to penalise Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Weeks of uncertainty over Bangladesh's status after not appearing in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and the fate of the India-Pakistan clash in the tournament cleared up yesterday, with the International Cricket Council assuring no sanctions for Bangladesh and the Pakistan government declaring its team will face India in the much-awaited match.

In a statement released yesterday night, detailing the outcomes of Sunday's tripartite dialogue in Lahore between ICC, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), ICC announced no penalty for Bangladesh and also awarded the country hosting rights to an ICC event between 2028 and 2031.

"It is agreed that no financial, sporting or administrative penalty will be imposed on the Bangladesh Cricket Board in relation to the current matter. It is acknowledged that BCB retains the

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Farmers were collecting traditional Tepi Boro paddy seedlings from seedbeds to plant in fields in Shanir Haor, Sunamganj's Tahirpur, yesterday. Once known as a "rice granary" of the country, farmers in the region are increasingly turning to hybrid varieties to save costs and achieve higher yields, causing many local varieties, including Tepi Boro, to gradually disappear.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Disinformation swarms social media

Pro-Jamaat pages far ahead in count, engagement; BNP, AL trail

ABIR AYON and NOURIN SULTANA

With the election just a day away, social media platform Facebook has become a battleground for disinformation, as fabricated quotes, doctored images and misleading photocards circulate widely.

False statements attributed to political leaders are seeking to provoke outrage, while unrelated images are being used to create the illusion of foreign backing or

FEBRUARY 12 ELECTION

geopolitical tension. At the same time, AI-generated visuals are being deployed to frame political figures in staged scenarios, including fabricated meetings and conspiracy theories.

Experts have warned that these tactics may fuel partisan hostility and shape public opinion ahead of the election as many voters are exposed to fake news.

Dr Din M Sumon Rahman, head of Media Studies and Journalism at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said, "The main intention behind the disinformation campaign is to manipulate voting choice. Disinformation neatly feeds the confirmation bias of a decided voter's choice."

The key target of disinformation are swing voters, he added. "Voters who don't know whom to vote for or don't

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Editors' Council concerned over army entry into media office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council has expressed concern over recent incidents of intimidation and harassment of journalists and media institutions, warning that such actions pose a serious threat to press freedom and the democratic process ahead of the national elections.

Referring to the army entering the office of a registered digital media outlet on February 7, the council termed it a "concerning example".

It added that if any irregularity in disseminating news had occurred within that institution, appropriate legal procedures should have followed rather than arbitrary actions.

"The government, army chief, and chiefs of public organisations had been vocal for the past 18 months about their attempts to restore the tarnished reputation of law enforcement agencies. However, such incidents send a negative message to voters and media professionals ahead of the election," said the statement issued yesterday.

The Editors' Council also cautioned that irresponsible reporting and the spread of misinformation could undermine the integrity of election coverage. Calling for accountability, the council urged the government, security agencies, and all stakeholders to ensure the safety of journalists and uphold their responsibility in safeguarding democracy.

Rab, DGFI need to be disbanded Ex-army chief Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former army chief General (ret'd) Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan has called for the immediate dismantling of DGFI and Rab, accusing the agencies of being involved in extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

"I want Rab to be disbanded immediately, and if that is not possible, the military personnel [posted there] should be returned to the armed forces. I also want DGFI to be disbanded because it has lost its legitimacy to exist after fostering a depraved culture like the 'Aynaghar' [secret detention centres]."

Iqbal made the remarks while testifying before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for a second consecutive day yesterday.

He is the first prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case against Maj Gen (relieved) Ziaul Ahsan, who stands accused of orchestrating the enforced disappearance and murder of 104 people between 2010 and 2013 while serving in Rab.

Iqbal, who helmed the Bangladesh Army from June 2012 to June 2015, has also told the tribunal that during his tenure, individuals from India's foreign intelligence agency RAW allegedly operated from the DGFI (Directorate General of Forces Intelligence) headquarters and supplied it with lists of people, identifying them as militants.

"I came to know during my tenure that under the patronage of Maj Gen Tarique Ahmed Siddique [then prime minister's defence adviser], certain individuals from India's intelligence agency RAW regularly visited the DGFI office. They were allowed to work in one of the seven meeting rooms there," Iqbal told the tribunal.

"They would identify certain persons as militants and submit lists of those names to DGFI. I'm unaware whether DGFI took any effective action based on those lists," he added.

'HOW MANY HAVE YOU KILLED?'

Explaining how he discovered that army officers

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Dhaka division tops list of vulnerable polling centres

Police ramp up security

TOUSIF KAUM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

As a single constituency, Brahmanbaria-3 (Sadar) has the highest number of vulnerable polling centres in the 13th parliamentary election, with 121 centres classified as "highly risky", according to police assessments.

The constituency has a total of 192 polling centres.

At the district level, Kishoreganj has the highest number of vulnerable centres, with 438 of its 887 polling centres across six constituencies marked as highly risky.

Within the divisions, Dhaka tops the list, with 2,944 polling centres identified as highly risky. The division has a total of 10,162 polling centres.

The assessments were carried out by the Special Branch (SB) of the police based on factors including political violence, the influence of musclemen, long distances from police stations, difficult terrain, the dominance of particular political parties in certain areas, poor transport links and inactive community policing.

Of the country's 42,761 polling centres, 8,226 have been classified as highly risky ahead of the election, according to the list.

Among the other divisions, Chattogram has the second-highest number of risky polling centres (1,463), followed by Rangpur (1,010), Rajshahi (890), Mymensingh (742), Sylhet (681), Khulna (606) and Barishal (596).

Three police personnel will be deployed at the highly risky centres, said Rezaul Karim,

- 19.2% of 42,761 polling centres classified as highly risky
- 35.8% of highly risky centres in Dhaka division
- 79 incidents of clashes left more than 300 people injured since polls schedule unveiled
- Police to adopt zero-tolerance to disorder on polls day
- Body cams to be worn by law enforcers in sensitive centres
- Mobile and strike teams would be active

deputy inspector general (operations) of Police Headquarters (PHQ). The police members would be equipped with a firearm and body-worn camera. In addition, 13 Ansar members will be deployed at the centre.

Another report prepared by the SB says at least 79 incidents of clashes took place, in which more than 300 people were injured since the declaration of the election schedule.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

EC lifts phone ban at polling centres after criticism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday walked back from its directive banning mobile phones within 400 yards of polling centres during the 13th national election and referendum scheduled for February 12 after a barrage of criticisms.

The development comes following demands from journalists, the Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy, Dhaka University Central Students' Union, Transparency International Bangladesh and several political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and the National Citizen Party.

"Confusion had arisen over the directive," said EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed while speaking with reporters at the EC headquarters in Agargaon in Dhaka.

Voters, candidates and their agents will be allowed to carry phones inside the centres though photos cannot be taken inside the secret voting booths.

The EC's intention was not properly conveyed, which led to the misunderstanding.

"We are correcting the circular so

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
৭২, গ্রীন রোড (পাছপথ), ঢাকা-১২০৫

নাগরিক সেবা সংক্রান্ত গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড তার সেবা কার্যক্রমকে ত্বরান্বিত করতে সম্প্রতি একটি পৃথক ওয়েব পোর্টাল/সাইট (service.bwdb.gov.bd) চালু করেছে। "নাগরিক সেবা" নামে চালুকৃত এই পোর্টালের মাধ্যমে জনগণ প্রাথমিক রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করে নদী ভাঙ্গন, বন্যা নিয়ন্ত্রণ, জলাবদ্ধতা ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে তাঁদের প্রয়োজনীয় আবেদন ও অভিযোগ অনলাইনে দাখিল করতে পারবেন। দাখিলকৃত আবেদন তাৎক্ষণিক সংশ্লিষ্ট দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা/দপ্তরের কাছে পৌঁছে যাবে। আবেদনকারী একটি ট্র্যাকিং নাম্বার পাবেন এবং এর মাধ্যমে তাঁর আবেদনের প্রেক্ষিতে গৃহীত ব্যবস্থা সম্পর্কে জানতে পারবেন।

পোর্টাল ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত সাহায্যের জন্য "০১৩১৮২৩৬৩১৮" নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

পানি-৭৩৮/২০২৫-২০২৬
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GD-290

THAILAND POLLS Ruling party readies for coalition negotiations

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand faced a realignment of conservative politics yesterday, with coalition talks expected to start soon after Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's party clinched a stronger-than-expected victory in general elections.

With 94 percent of votes counted, the ruling Bhumjaithai was way ahead of its rivals after Sunday's vote, securing 193 of the 500 seats in parliament, according to Reuters' calculations based on election commission data.

"We need a strong government," Anutin said in a news broadcast, adding that he wanted to form an administration with a strong majority but was waiting for the final results in a proportional electoral system, where tallies can still change.

বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন
নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়
আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা
www.ecs.gov.bd

তথ্য কপি-২৫

গণভোট ও ত্রয়োদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন ২০২৬

আগামী ১২ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখে গণভোট ও ত্রয়োদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে। এ নির্বাচনে প্রত্যেক নিবন্ধিত রাজনৈতিক দল কিংবা স্বতন্ত্র প্রার্থী বা স্বতন্ত্র প্রার্থী বা তাহাদের পক্ষে অন্য কোনো ব্যক্তি এবং সরকারি সুবিধাভোগী অতি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ব্যক্তিকে "সংসদ নির্বাচনে রাজনৈতিক দল ও প্রার্থীর আচরণ বিধিমালা, ২০২৫" অনুসরণ করিতে হইবে

ভোটকেন্দ্রে প্রবেশাধিকার-

- ভোটকেন্দ্রে নির্বাচনি কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী, প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী প্রার্থী, নির্বাচনি এজেন্ট, পোলিং এজেন্ট, নির্বাচনি পর্যবেক্ষক, কমিশন কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত ব্যক্তিবর্গ, এবং কেবল ভোটারদের প্রবেশাধিকার থাকিবে
- কোনো রাজনৈতিক দলের বা প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী প্রার্থীর কর্মীগণ ভোট প্রদানের উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যক্তি ভোটকেন্দ্রের অভ্যন্তরে প্রবেশ বা ঘুরাঘুরি করিতে পারিবেন না
- পোলিং এজেন্টগণ তাহাদের জন্য নির্ধারিত স্থানে উপবিষ্ট থাকিয়া তাহাদের নির্দিষ্ট দায়িত্ব পালন করিবেন
- পোলিং এজেন্ট বা কোনো ভোটার প্রার্থীর পক্ষে প্রচারণামূলক কোনো বক্তব্য ও প্রতীক সংবলিত কোনো শার্ট, জ্যাকেট, ফতুয়া, ক্যাপ, ব্যাজ বা এইস্থল কোনো কিছু পরিধান করিয়া ভোটকেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ করিতে পারিবেন না

নির্বাচনি ব্যয়সীমা-

- কোনো প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী প্রার্থী The Representation of the People Order, 1972 এর Article 44B(3) তে নির্ধারিত ব্যয়সীমা অতিক্রম করিতে পারিবেন না
- কোনো নিবন্ধিত রাজনৈতিক দল কিংবা স্বতন্ত্র প্রার্থী কিংবা তাহাদের পক্ষে অন্য কোনো ব্যক্তি কর্তৃক সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে নির্বাচন বিষয়ক কোনো কনটেন্ট তৈরি, বিজ্ঞাপন প্রদান, ব্লগিং ও স্পন্সরশিপসহ সকল প্রচারণা ব্যয় এর শিরোনামে সামগ্রিক নির্বাচনি ব্যয় এর সহিত নির্বাচন কমিশন বরাবর দাখিল করিবেন
- নির্বাচনি ব্যয় রাজনৈতিক দলের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০ (পঞ্চাশ) হাজার টাকা এবং প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে ২০ (বিশ) হাজার টাকার উর্ধ্বে হইলে তাহা বাধ্যতামূলকভাবে ব্যাংকিং মাধ্যমে সম্পাদন করিতে হইবে
- সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে নির্বাচনি প্রচারণা বাবদ ব্যয়সমূহ প্রার্থীদের নির্বাচনি ব্যয়সীমার অন্তর্ভুক্ত হইবে
- সামাজিক যোগাযোগ মাধ্যমে প্রচার-প্রচারণায় বিদেশি অর্থায়নে বিজ্ঞাপন প্রদান বা প্রচারণা কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করা যাইবে না

**নির্বাচনি আচরণবিধির লঙ্ঘন শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ
নির্বাচনি আচরণবিধি মেনে চলুন, সূচু নির্বাচনে সহায়তা করুন**