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Show bailed pro-AL leaders arrested in other cases

Rajshahi DIG asks cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police's Rajshahi Range has directed officers to show arrested leaders and activists of banned "fascist" organisations in other cases after they secure bail, if they are considered capable of reorganising, strengthening, or mobilising the group.

Those who do not meet that criterion need not be shown arrested for now upon securing bail, the directive said.

The instruction was issued on Tuesday by the Office of the Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Rajshahi Range, in a notice signed by DIG Mohammad Shahjahan. It was sent to the superintendents of police in Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogura and Joypurhat for necessary action.

According to the notice, the directive will remain in force until

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With demand for fresh banknotes rising ahead of Eid, roadside vendors in Gulistan have become busy exchange points for people swapping old or defective notes for shiny new ones, often taking a small commission for the service. People collect fresh notes for Eid salami, a tradition in which elders give money to children on the festive day. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Rabiul's memo on state ministers 'bypasses rules'

BAHARAM KHAN

Road Transport and Bridges, Railways, and Shipping Minister Sheikh Rabiul Alam has expressed his desire to distribute responsibilities among two state ministers in an office memo to the cabinet secretary.

The memo, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Ajit Deb on Tuesday, says that State Minister Habibur Rashid will be assigned responsibilities for the railways ministry and the Road Transport and Highways Division.

State Minister Rajib Ahsan will be given charge of the shipping ministry and the Bridges Division.

The memo said the decision was made the previous day and was being implemented accordingly.

Sources at the Cabinet Division said a minister cannot request the cabinet secretary, through a senior assistant secretary of his ministry, to allocate portfolios to state ministers of any ministry.

The memo also did not mention whether the prime minister's consent had been obtained, which is mandatory under the Rules of Business.

A former secretary, speaking on condition of anonymity, said such situations arise due to a lack of clarity regarding procedural requirements. "Problems have been created due to not knowing such matters."

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India stands with Israel 'with full conviction'

Says Modi as he starts two-day Israel visit to discuss AI, defence



REUTERS, Jerusalem

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Israel yesterday for a two-day visit that both countries have cast as a chance to deepen relations, as regional concerns mount over the risk of military conflict between the United States and Iran.

In an address to the Israeli parliament, Modi told lawmakers that India stood with Israel "with full conviction" as he shared his nation's condolences over the October 2023 Hamas attack.

"Like you, we have a consistent and uncompromising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, with no double standards," he said.

Both Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who also addressed the parliament, spoke of terrorist attacks that their nations had faced, with Netanyahu saying India and Israel both faced the challenge of confronting "radical Islam".

Modi became the first prime minister in India's history

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Jubo Dal leader shot dead after iftar in Raozan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Criminals shot a Jubo Dal leader in Chattogram's Raozan upazila yesterday evening.

The victim is Mujib Bhandari, 60, president of a ward unit Jubo Dal of Purbogujara union, said a local journalist.

Police said the incident took place near a shop at Oli Miar Hat around 7:00pm.

Balayat Hossain, assistant superintendent of police (Rangunia circle), told The Daily Star, "Mujib Bhandari was sitting outside a shop after finishing his iftar. Armed assailants appeared at the scene and opened fire, leaving him injured."

Mujib was taken to the Raozan Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead, he said, adding that Mujib had been involved in BNP politics, but could not confirm his position in the party.

The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

The body of Mujib was sent to Chattogram Medical College morgue for an autopsy, the ASP added.

Urban voters show ballot box apathy

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Urban areas revealed clear signs of low voter participation in the February 12 national election.

The voting rate in constituencies across the 12 city corporation areas was significantly lower than in rural areas. Against the national average turnout of 59.44 percent, most city corporation seats fell short — several by wide margins.

Election Commission data shows that there are 45 seats in the city corporation areas, with results from one seat withheld due to a court order. Of the 44 seats whose results were announced, only five managed to cross the national average.

The remaining 39 recorded turnout levels up to 22.02 percentage points lower, according to the final result sheets compiled by returning offices.

None of the five constituencies with the highest turnout — all above 77 percent — were in the city corporation areas. These are Chuadanga-2 (78.27 percent), Jashore-6 (77.90 percent), Jhenaidah-3 (77.84 percent), Naogaon-1 (77.52 percent), and Panchagarh-1 (77.41 percent).

By contrast, four of the five seats with the lowest turnout were in the urban area. Dhaka-12 recorded 37.42 percent turnout, over 22 percentage points below

the national average. Gopalganj-2 followed at 39.83 percent, while Chattogram-9 (41.02 percent), Chattogram-11 (41.73 percent), and Chattogram-10 (43.49 percent) ranked among the seats with the lowest turnout.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Sk Tawfique M Haque, director

government benefit lists. In cities, this fear does not exist.

"The election was different in one crucial respect: many Awami League supporters refrained from voting. In cities, it was relatively easy for them to stay away from the polls. In rural areas, it was difficult due to the fear of identification

TURNOUTS IN CITY CONSTITUENCIES

LOWEST	HIGHEST
Dhaka-12: 37.42%	Rangpur-2: 68.59%
Chattogram-9: 41.02%	Rajshahi-2: 63.73%
Chattogram-11: 41.73%	Rangpur-3: 63.71%

of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance at North South University, said city turnout reflects a global trend: people in urban areas often cast fewer ballots compared to rural voters.

"Urban residents tend to believe that, whether they vote or not, politics will remain unchanged and the country will continue on the same course as before," he said.

In contrast, rural voters feel a stronger compulsion to go to polling centres. They fear that if they do not cast their votes, their names might be removed from

and the potential loss of benefits," he added.

According to EC data, Dhaka city experienced widespread erosion in voter participation.

Turnout figures across Dhaka's constituencies reveal a consistent pattern of lower participation compared to the national average. In fact, none of Dhaka's constituencies crossed the national average.

In Dhaka-4, voter turnout stood at 45.41 percent, 14.03 percentage points below the national average. Similar gaps

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Barishal Bar chief held over court vandalism

HC issues contempt rule against 9 lawyers

STAR REPORT

Barishal District Bar Association President Sadiqur Rahman Linkon was arrested and sent to jail yesterday on charges of vandalising a courtroom and making derogatory remarks about a judge, who granted bail to Awami League leader and former MP Talukder Mohammad Yunus in a criminal case.

Besides, the High Court issued a contempt of court rule against Linkon, a pro-BNP lawyer, and eight other lawyers in connection with the incident.

Detectives held Linkon from the Bar Association office in a case filed by Rajib Majumdar, bench assistant of Barishal's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Linkon and 11 other lawyers were accused in the case filed with Kotwali Police Station, said Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of Barishal Metropolitan Police.

Police produced him before the court

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Israel behind two-thirds of journo deaths in 2025

CPJ says 129 were killed last year

AFP, New York

A record 129 journalists and media workers were killed worldwide in 2025, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said yesterday, blaming Israel for two-thirds of the deaths.

It was the second consecutive annual record for press deaths and the deadliest year since the CPJ began collecting data more than three decades ago.

"Journalists are being killed in record numbers at a time when access to information is more important than ever," CEO Jodie Ginsberg said in a statement. "We are all at risk when journalists are killed for reporting the news."

Over three-quarters of all the fatalities in 2025 were in conflict settings, the CPJ said in its report. More than 60 percent of the 86 members of the press killed by Israeli fire in 2025 were Palestinians reporting from Gaza, it added.

The Israeli military maintains that it never deliberately targets journalists. The number of journalists killed in Ukraine and Sudan also increased in 2025 compared to a year earlier.

The CPJ highlighted a rise in drones being used, with 39 cases documented, including 28 killings by Israel in Gaza and five by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in Sudan.

In Ukraine, four journalists were killed by Russian

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New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner plays a commanding shot during his team's 61-run win over former champions Sri Lanka in a Super Eights Group 2 clash of the T20 World Cup at Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium yesterday, a result that, following two straight losses, eliminated the co-hosts who still have a match to play. After Santner (47 off 26 balls) stitched an 84-run partnership with Cole McConchie to lift the Black Caps from 84 for six to 168 for seven, Sri Lanka limped to 107 for eight, with Rachin Ravindra taking four wickets.

PHOTO: AFP

Economic priorities the government should focus on

P6

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الإسلامية
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 26

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:10	12:45	4:30	6:01	7:30
JAMAAT 5:20	1:15	4:45	6:11	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
8	26	5:06	6:02
9	27	5:05	6:02
10	28	5:05	6:02