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53 submit nominations for women's reserved seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 53 aspirants have submitted nomination papers to the Election Commission (EC) over the past 14 days to contest the 50 reserved women's seats in the 13th National Parliament.

The deadline for submission ended yesterday. EC officials said the BNP-led alliance submitted 36 nomination papers, the Jamaat-e-Islami alliance 13, and one came from an independent alliance.

"We received 36 nominations from BNP and its allies, 13 from Jamaat's alliance, and one from an independent candidate, Sultana Jesmin. Their candidacies will be scrutinised during verification," said EC Joint Secretary and Returning Officer Md Moin Uddin Khan.

He added that three nominees -- Shamma Akter, Mst Mehrunnisa, SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Speakers at a roundtable, titled "Disability-Inclusive Budget 2026-27: Addressing Inflation and Economic Challenges", jointly organised by The Daily Star, Access Bangladesh Foundation, and Women with Disabilities Development Foundation at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

CTG CITY COLLEGE 'Gupto' replaces 'student' in graffiti, sparks JCD-Shibir clash



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two rounds of clashes broke out between Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir on the Chattogram Government City College campus yesterday, injuring several people.

The clashes broke out on the college campus along New Market-Ice Factory Road. A master's examination was underway on campus at the time.

Later in the afternoon, JCD activists brought out a protest march in the New Market-College Road and Nalapara areas, demanding justice and calling for a "Shibir-free campus".

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Transport fares to be adjusted reasonably

Says PM's info adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister's Adviser on Information and Broadcasting Dr Zahed Ur Rahman yesterday said transport fares will be "rationally" adjusted in line with the recent increase in fuel prices, with a decision expected soon.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Secretariat, he said discussions were ongoing to fix fares at a reasonable level.

To simplify the structure, fares for air-conditioned buses may be set in two or three tiers, likely before the upcoming Eid, he added.

The adviser emphasised that freight charges, particularly for trucks, have a greater impact on the cost of living than passenger fares. "The government's responsibility is not only to protect consumers... Those who drive buses and trucks are also citizens... it would not be appropriate to impose measures that would make their businesses unviable," he said.

He added that the government aims to strike a balance to minimise hardship for all. "In this SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

'Persons with disabilities seek dignity, not charity'

Speakers urge shift from allowances to disability-inclusive budgeting for FY 2026-27 at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights advocates and experts yesterday urged the government to move beyond allowance-based support and adopt a disability-inclusive budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, noting that rising living costs, limited access to services, and disability-related expenses are worsening hardship for persons with disabilities.

They made the remarks at a roundtable titled "Disability-Inclusive Budget 2026-27: Addressing Inflation and Economic Challenges" held at The Daily Star Centre. The Daily Star, Access Bangladesh Foundation, and Women with Disabilities Development Foundation jointly organised the programme.

At the discussion, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said persons with disabilities do not want charity but opportunities to work and live independently with dignity.

However, the challenges they face are structural, institutional, and social, and cannot be addressed by law alone unless public attitudes change, she said.

Shaheen Anam called on rights groups to place clear proposals before policymakers

on infrastructure, transport, and accessibility.

She stressed that the diverse needs of persons with disabilities must be reflected in budget measures.

Presenting the keynote, Albert Mollah, executive director of Access Bangladesh Foundation, said the government currently runs 95 social security programmes under 24 ministries and divisions,

Tk 900, compared to about Tk 3,400 for persons with profound disability in Nepal and around Tk 3,950 in Sri Lanka."

Citing a World Bank study supported by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, he said families with a person with disability face an additional 13 percent in costs, while the poverty rate among such households rises by 23-34 percent.



The disability sector accounts for 3.49% of the social safety net budget and only 0.52% of the national budget. The monthly allowance remains at just Tk 900, compared to about Tk 3,400 in Nepal and around Tk 3,950 in Sri Lanka.

ALBERT MOLLAH
Executive director, Access Bangladesh Foundation

of which only seven are dedicated to persons with disabilities. Of these, only two directly support individuals through allowance and stipend schemes.

Noting that the disability sector accounts for 3.49 percent of the social safety net budget and only 0.52 percent of the national budget, he said, "Currently, the monthly allowance remains at just

Ashrafun Nahar Misti, executive director of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation, stressed the need for inclusive budgeting across ministries and departments to ensure that persons with disabilities are not deprived of education, healthcare, employment, transport, rehabilitation, services, and access to justice.

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Now ensure cars for MPs

Hasnat Abdullah demands at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the government arranged offices for MPs in their constituencies in response



to an earlier demand, NCP lawmaker, Hasnat Abdullah, has now called for car facilities to help them better connect with the people.

On March 31, NCP MP Atiqur Rahman Mujahid demanded offices for MPs in their constituencies.

Raising the issue on a point of order yesterday, State Minister for LGRD Mir Shahe Alam said a few days ago, an MP had complained that there was no designated place for lawmakers to sit when visiting upazila parishads.

He said that in response, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman instructed him to take necessary measures.

"We have issued a government order to prepare a room in every upazila parishad -- with furniture and attached bathrooms -- for MPs and ministers to sit," he said.

He added that these rooms will be available soon. The rooms will be SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

More than 25,000 absent on first day of SSC exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six examinees and one invigilator were expelled, while 25,408 candidates were absent on the first day of the SSC and equivalent examinations held across the country yesterday.

The examinations, however, passed off smoothly, with no major incidents of cheating, irregularities, or question leak rumours, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said at a briefing at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

He said authorities maintained strict monitoring, including surveillance of digital platforms, to prevent cyber-enabled misconduct.

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July net shutdown ordered in phases

Official testifies at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A senior state-run telecom official yesterday told International Crimes Tribunal-1 that a nationwide internet shutdown on July 18, 2024, was ordered and executed in phases -- from international gateways to submarine cables -- under directives from regulators and the then ICT state minister.

Mirza Kamal Ahmed, then acting managing director of Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited, said the order was conveyed through BTRC-run WhatsApp groups.

Kamal, the incumbent BTCL deputy managing director, testified as a prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case involving Sajeeb Wazed Joy

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2026

BTKG

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