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

Number of July martyrs debated in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman and State Minister for Shipping Razib Ahsan locked horns at the parliament yesterday over the number of July martyrs.

Speaking on the motion to thank the president for his speech, Razib said at least three MPs mentioned the number of July martyrs. "One claimed that 844 people were martyred, another said the number was over 1,000, and yet another mentioned 1,400 martyrs."

He said the health ministry had initially reported -- based on hospital sources -- that more than 1,400 were martyred, and even UN agencies echoed that figure.

Later, however, the liberation war ministry issued a gazette that cancelled previous gazettes and published a final list of 844 martyrs.

He said the leader of the opposition, Shafiqur Rahman, at a programme on April 14, 2026, said he had visited homes of 1,200 martyrs out of 1,400.

"But the government gazette lists 844. How could you have visited 1,200 homes out of 1,400? I cannot understand this."

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A delegation from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday visited The Daily Star office to see the devastation following the arson attack on the office on December 18, 2025. The delegation included Benoit GUIDEE, director for Asia and Oceania (Indo-pacific) at the ministry; David PENEAU, director Asia Desk; Frédéric INZA, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., French Embassy Dhaka; and Christian Bec, political counselor at the embassy. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, briefed the delegation during the visit.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FUEL CRISIS
BNP considering campaigns to counter opposition
Urges govt to curb hoarding and ensure steady supply

SAJJAD HOSSAIN



Anticipating protests from opposition parties over the ongoing fuel crisis across the country, ruling BNP leaders are considering launching counter political campaigns while urging the administration to step up vigilance against fuel oil hoarding.

With people already under pressure because of the high cost of essentials and fuel, the government must keep fuel supply as normal as possible, take steps to prevent panic, and explain the real situation clearly, they also said.

They warned that if the situation is allowed to slide, public anger may pave the way for the opposition to grab political space.

Although the government says the country has fuel stock for May and while a reserve for June and July is being secured, BNP leaders said the steps taken so far have not cleared the confusion regarding the fuel situation.

Senior BNP leaders discussed the issue last week, as the party assessed the political fallout of the situation.

According to sources at the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman was dissatisfied with

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'Don't allow fascists to rear their heads' State minister for info warns opposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Yasser Khan Choudhury



yesterday cautioned the opposition not to invite danger through their actions in a way that may allow fascists to raise their heads in Bangladesh once again.

He made these remarks yesterday during a discussion on the thanksgiving motion regarding the President's speech in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Yasser Khan Choudhury emphasised that a fate similar to that of the Awami League government should not befall the current administration. At this point, members of the opposition signalled their support by thumping their desks.

Addressing the opposition, the state minister then said, "You must also be mindful. You must ensure that your fate does not end up the same way."

Yasser Khan Choudhury

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WOMEN IN POLITICS

Move beyond tokenism, ensure real empowerment

Speakers urge parties at roundtable by Star, UNDP Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged political parties to move beyond "numerical inclusion" and ensure meaningful political empowerment for women by reforming internal nomination processes and dismantling structural barriers.

They said the upcoming local government elections would be a critical litmus test for Bangladesh's democratic journey, offering an entry point for grassroots female leadership following a sharp decline in directly elected women in the 13th national parliamentary election.

The discussion, titled "Closing the Gaps: Strengthening Women's Voice in National and Local Elections", was organised by The Daily Star and UNDP Bangladesh at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Sharmin Islam, gender team leader at UNDP Bangladesh, presented an overview of the current landscape, noting that the recent national election marked a historic low in women's direct representation.

Despite high voter turnout, she said the number of directly elected women dropped to a record low



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

compared to the previous five elections.

"Even after decades of female leadership at the top, nearly 99 percent of people in Bangladesh hold some form of gender bias," she said, citing the UNDP Gender Social Norms Index. "About 70 percent still believe men make better political leaders than women."

Andrés Del Castillo, chief technical adviser to the UN Ballot Project, stressed international concern over the shrinking space for women in politics.

"The low level of participation is a red signal. It is time to act," he said.

Dr Selim Jahan, professorial fellow at BIGD, highlighted the lack of women in the candidate pool.

"In a country of 180 million people where 51 parties participated, 41 parties could not find a single qualified female candidate," he said.

He described a "tripartite barrier" that marginalises women as candidates, activists, and voters,

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Ecneec orders a study on relocation of Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has asked the housing and public works ministry to conduct a study on relocation of the Secretariat to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar instead of building a new 21-storey high-rise at its current site.

The directive came at yesterday's Ecneec meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) was asked to assist in carrying out the study within four weeks, said sources at the planning ministry.

A proposal to demolish the old Cabinet building and build a Tk 649 crore 21-storey tower was placed at the meeting but not approved, as concerns were raised it would worsen traffic congestion in the area.

Relocating the Secretariat to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar -- the former trade fair ground near parliament -- was discussed as an alternative. Officials noted that such a move would ease ministers' travel and allow the current Secretariat compound to be repurposed for district

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The woman found dead on riverbank was strangled

Say doctors who conducted autopsy; no signs of rape found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Doctors who conducted an autopsy on the bodies of an unidentified woman and a newborn recovered from the Louhajang River bank in Tangail's Mirzapur said the woman had been strangled to death.

Six days after the bodies were recovered, police have yet to identify them.

Alamgir Hossain, residential medical officer of Tangail General Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday that the autopsy found evidence of strangulation but no signs of rape.

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SAGAR-RUNI MURDER
HC gives taskforce six more months to complete probe

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday granted the government-formed taskforce six more months to submit its full report on the killings of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

The bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice AFM Saiful Karim passed the order while hearing a writ petition filed in 2012 by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, seeking a fair probe and justice.

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2026

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