

BNP moves to counter 'anti-reform' portrayal

Plans month-long programme to reach public directly

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has decided to launch a month-long programme to counter what it says is the opposition's misleading portrayal of the party as anti-reform, as well as criticism over the government's handling of the measles outbreak.

Party sources said the programme will include processions, street rallies, courtyard meetings, leaflet distribution, exchange-of-view sessions, and direct public engagement at the district, city, upazila, and union levels.

A senior BNP leader, seeking anonymity, said, "People are not fully aware of these issues, which is why the opposition has been able to mislead them. Through these campaigns, our grassroots leaders will present the facts directly to the public."

BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said letters have already been sent to district-level units,

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Discarded plastic bottles are brought to a recycling factory in Chattogram city's Bakalia area, where they are cut into small pieces, washed, and dried into flakes before being packed and exported abroad. This recycling process helps reduce pollution and has also created employment for people.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Punish those who attacked The Daily Star, Prothom Alo

Speakers urge govt at Star 35yr celebrations in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

The attacks on The Daily Star and Prothom Alo were attacks on independent journalism itself, speakers said at The Daily Star's 35th anniversary celebration in Barishal yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Akon Quddusur Rahman, administrator of the Barishal District Council and BNP assistant organising secretary for Barishal division, said attacks on journalists who risked their lives to inform the public during the country's political turmoil were barbaric and uncivilised.

"We have witnessed the heinous attacks on the offices of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.... We do not want such incidents to be repeated," he said at the event held at the Zilla Shilpakala Academy auditorium.

He added that political parties often try to suppress journalism when reports go against them, and stressed the need for both ethical journalism and ethical governance.

Referring to media laws, Akon said civil society members and journalists had strongly opposed the ICT Act when the BNP was in power and the Awami League was in opposition.

"But after coming to power, instead of liberalising the law as promised, the Awami League introduced the Digital Security Act by restructuring parts of the ICT Act.... They

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Govt to amend laws if needed to curb mob violence

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday said the government would amend laws or enact new ones if necessary to curb mob violence, acknowledging that the existing legal framework is insufficient to fully address "mob culture".

He made the remarks while speaking as a special guest at the Prime Minister's Special Welfare Meeting organised at the Bangladesh Police Auditorium in Dhaka's Rajarbagh as part of Police Week 2026.

He said the government had spoken about the issue earlier as well and have been taking action within the scope of existing laws as much as possible.

"However, if legal reforms or amendments are needed, we will do that," the home minister said, requesting the home secretary and the inspector general of police to remind him about the matter later.

"Enactment is necessary to address mob culture separately," he said. "It has not been fully possible to do that with the existing laws," the minister added.

The minister said that a special committee has already been formed to draft a modern legal framework to curb gambling, online gambling, and illegal money transfers. This committee will prepare a draft law incorporating provisions for cybercrime and money laundering.

"The nature of crime has changed in the world of the internet," Salahuddin said. "It is no longer possible to operate with old laws."

Referring to law and order, he said the situation had visibly improved over the past two months and that drives

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Mob beats three dead in Kaliakair

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Three people were beaten to death by a mob on suspicions of cattle theft in Gazipur's Kaliakair early yesterday.

During the incident, a pickup used by the victims was also set on fire.

The three are Krishan, 46, of Sylhet's Ghasitola area; Azharul Islam, 36, of Gazipur's Sreepur, and Md Selim, 38, of Dhaka's Mirpur area, said police.

Of them, Azharul and Selim had been accused of multiple robbery and theft cases in the past, said Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kaliakair Police Station.

Quoting witnesses, police said a suspected gang of cattle thieves was passing through the Bagchala Bazar area in a pickup around 2:00am.

Locals then chased the suspects, who were eventually caught and beaten by the mob. Their vehicle was set alight, said Robiul Islam, inspector (operations) of Kaliakair Police Station.

On information, police went to the spot and

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LOCAL ELECTIONS IN BRITAIN

British-Bangladeshis shine in London council races

BULBUL HASAN, from London

The just-concluded local elections in Britain have shaken the UK's political landscape, weakening the ruling Labour Party, fuelling the rise of the right-wing Reform UK, and exposing growing public frustration with the traditional two-party system. But amid the national political upheaval, East London told a different story – one of rising British-Bangladeshi political influence, confidence, and representation.

Across four East London boroughs, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Redbridge and Barking and Dagenham, around 80 councillors of Bangladeshi origin were elected, according to community estimates. Nearly half of them, 38 councillors, came from Tower Hamlets alone, underlining the borough's status as the political heartland of Britain's Bangladeshi community.

Bangladeshi-origin candidates also secured victories in Camden, Croydon, Brent, Ealing, and Birmingham, reflecting the diaspora's widening political footprint across England.

This year's elections also saw noticeably higher community engagement. Local activists and campaigners said more Bangladeshi-origin candidates stood for office than in previous



Lutfur Rahman Forhad Hussain

Around 80 British-Bangladeshi councillors elected in East London boroughs

Lutfur Rahman wins Tower Hamlets mayoralty again

Labour's Forhad Hussain captures Newham mayoralty

Diaspora politics shaped by local concerns

elections, while turnout in several wards with large Bangladeshi populations increased significantly.

At the centre of this East London story were two mayoral victories that carried both symbolic and political significance.

In Tower Hamlets, Lutfur

Rahman secured a fourth term as executive mayor, once again defeating Labour in one of its traditional strongholds. In neighbouring Newham, Labour's Forhad Hussain won the mayoralty, becoming one of the first British Bangladeshis to lead a major London borough under the banner of a mainstream political party.

Together, the results illustrated two parallel paths of British-Bangladeshi political success: one built outside the traditional party system, the other rising through it.

Lutfur's political journey has become inseparable from the story of East London's Bangladeshi electorate itself.

He first entered politics through Labour, winning council seats in 2002 and 2006. But his defining moment came in 2010 when Labour withdrew his candidacy for Tower Hamlets mayor shortly before the election. Lutfur left the party, ran as an independent, and defeated Labour candidate Helal Abbas by more than 7,000 votes.

Since then, he has never lost a mayoral race in Tower Hamlets.

Official council figures show Lutfur got 35,679 votes in this year's election, defeating Labour's Sirajul Islam, who secured 19,454 votes.

His Aspire Party also tightened its grip on the borough council,

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Jamaat MP asks finance ministry not to merge SIBL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Syed Zainul Abedin has urged the government not to merge Social Islami Bank PLC (SIBL) with other troubled lenders and to keep it outside the Bank Resolution Scheme.

In a letter to the finance ministry on April 12, Zainul alleged that SIBL was forcibly taken over by the S Alam Group in 2017 with political backing.

He said the bank had been one of the strongest Islamic banks before the takeover, paying 20 percent dividends for four consecutive years and even securing approval to open a branch in Makkah.

He criticised the Bangladesh Bank for installing independent directors into the SIBL board after the 2024 political changeover.

These directors lacked banking experience, which worsened the bank's condition despite liquidity support, the MP alleged.

Zainul argued that placing SIBL under the Bank Resolution Scheme

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Car bomb kills 15 cops in Pakistan

Officials say militants used small drones, looted weapons

AFP, Peshawar

Militants detonated a car bomb at a checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan and opened fire on police, killing at least 15 and wounding three, officials said yesterday.

"Last night in the Fateh Khel area of Bannu, a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a police checkpoint, after which multiple militants entered the post," Bannu police official Muhammad Sajjad Khan told AFP.

He said that 15 officers were confirmed dead, the latest attack in the border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during a wave of militancy that has strained ties between Islamabad and Kabul.

Gunmen stormed the police checkpoint after the car blast, opening fire, according to officials who said they also used small drones in the attack.

"During the assault, the militants used quadcopters along with heavy weaponry," a senior administrative official in Bannu told AFP on condition of anonymity. He said more than 100 militants took part in the attack.

"In addition, while retreating, the attackers took police personnel and weapons from the station with them," he added.

Bannu has been gripped in recent years by militant activity that has grown across Pakistan's border regions.

The Taliban government in Kabul denies Pakistan's accusations that Afghan territory is a safe harbour for militants, but the frosty relationship has spiralled into deadly armed conflict, including Pakistani airstrikes on cities in Afghanistan in recent months.



Mourners react during the funeral of people killed in an Israeli strike in Saksakiyeh, in Haret Saida, Sidon district, Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Joseph Vijay sworn in as Tamil Nadu chief minister



AFP, Chennai

Indian film star C Joseph Vijay was sworn in as chief minister of Tamil Nadu state yesterday after his new party brokered a coalition in the southern industrial hub.

The swearing-in ceremony followed days of high drama in the state capital Chennai, where Vijay's fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) party initially struggled to secure support from smaller parties after state elections.