

## Bangladeshi firms partner with Starlink

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several Bangladeshi firms have partnered with Starlink to support the setup of ground earth stations in Bangladesh.

The firms have signed contracts with Starlink for collaboration as a team from the US telecommunications service provider is currently visiting Bangladesh.

The collaboration includes space allocation, construction support, and ongoing infrastructure maintenance.

The visit of the Starlink team helped Bangladeshi firms learn about some of Starlink's interest.

At some places, firms are providing support using their own properties, while at some locations, Starlink is considering the Hi-Tech Park property.

Discussions on locations and implementation details are ongoing, said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser.

Taiyeb hoped that Starlink would ensure reliable and high-speed internet in Bangladesh's cities, remote areas, northern regions, or coasts, free from the hassle of load shedding or natural disasters.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and the women's cricket team of Bangladesh pose for a photo at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium during a ceremony titled Adamya Nari Puroshkar 2025 on the occasion of International Women's Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

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## 130 camps

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"We have devised this strategy and will implement it nationwide, starting from Dhaka. These crimes must be stopped at any cost."

Expressing frustrations over a lack of safety for women and children, she said, "International Women's Day comes and goes, but nothing changes for women in this country. We're still failing to provide a safe environment for [even] children."

Adding that the camps would maintain strict surveillance, she said, "We must use all our strength to heal this 'sick' society."

Adviser Sharmeen then questioned, "How can anyone lay a hand on a child who hasn't even become a woman yet? Has this country turned into a land of cowards? The men who assaulted an eight-year-old girl are roaming free -- what kind of masculinity is this?"

"Do you believe our society is in a healthy state? Do you think I can change this decaying system in just five[six] months? This child is fighting for her life, and even the doctors are unsure whether she will survive. But they are doing their best, and young men and women are protesting. I will do everything in my power to ensure justice for this child through the home and law ministries."

She also urged the media to play its role responsibly. "Doctors are doing their utmost. The media, too, has a responsibility. These incidents keep happening, and we must not let them continue. There is evidence, there are arrestees, and we will not let them escape justice."

## 36 members

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terrorism act against the outfit's members.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed 17 operatives of the outfit on a five-day remand for interrogation after Paltan Police Sub-Inspector Md Nurul Islam sought a 10-day remand.

The order was passed by the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Masuma Rahman.

Earlier in the day, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said in a statement that its Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit arrested four members of HT from Mohammadpur, Adabor and Utarkhan areas.

The arrestees were identified as Md Helal Uddin, 45; Asaduzzaman Nur, 18; Tanim Sikder Shihab, 18; and Ahmed Nasif Karim alias Kabbo, 18.

The CTTC team conducted raids around 3:00am and detained them.

Over the past few days, the banned outfit had put up posters across the city urging people to join a "March for Khilafat".

In response, the DMP warned on Thursday that any activities under the banner of HT are punishable under anti-terrorism laws.

Under the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009, any gathering, procession or promotional activities by proscribed groups is a criminal offence.

Asked whether the group's continued activities indicate an intelligence failure, DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali said: "We have no such intelligence agency in the DMP."

When asked why the rally was not prevented despite the presence of the CTTC unit, Ali said: "CTTC is very active. They are making arrests. There is no intelligence failure. Dhaka has many alleys, and anyone can put up posters in the dead of night."

About Friday's rally, he said: "We could disperse the gathering at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque gate, but as there were a large number of devotees, immediate action could have led to casualties. That's why we took a strategic approach and intervened when the rally moved towards the Paltan intersection."

DMP arrested 15 from the spot, four more last night and three others the day before, bringing the total to 22.

"The operation is still ongoing."

## Tk 2.21cr extorted daily

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Awami League Presidium Member Shahjahan Khan, once considered the unparalleled leader of the organisation, was replaced by Abdur Rahim Baksh Dudu. Its former general secretary Osman Ali was replaced by Humayun Kabir Khan.

Dudu, who rose from operating truck fleets, is involved with local BNP politics, sources said.

Humayun, on the other hand, has a post in the BNP, according to his Facebook profile, serving as an assistant secretary for labour affairs.

### A NEW SYSTEM

In the past, Awami League members used various tools such as tokens, receipts, and stickers for extortion. But the new extortionists have introduced a novel method to avoid risks of detection.

"Extortion is now happening under the pretext of paying salaries for night guards, cleaners, and linemen, and transactions are happening using cash and bKash," the agency report reads.

Saiful Islam, the new secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, refuted the findings, and said the transport sector is free from extortion.

"After August 5, all sorts of extortion by owners and workers' associations have stopped. Only city corporations are collecting tolls," he said.

The BNP leader also warned of tough action in case of allegations of involvement in extortion.

"I can tell you that there is no extortion in long haul, inter-district and inter-city buses. But if there are any extortions in autorickshaw, CNG or cargo trucks, I cannot tell. I don't have any idea about those sectors," he said.

According to the agency report, out of the Tk 2.21 crore daily extortion, Tk 1.17 crore is extorted under the name of

Transport Owners' Association.

Huge amounts of money are being extorted under the pretext of collecting fees for city corporations, terminal authorities, expenditure of counters and terminals, fees of workers, linemen, cleaners and security guards. Proofs of 11 types of such payments were found by the agency.

It added that goons are extorting money from long and medium haul buses, trucks, pickups and covered vans, microbus, private cars, human haulier, CNG-run autorickshaw and even rikshaw.

### HOTSPOTS AND BENEFICIARIES

Three major inter-district bus terminals are located in the busiest areas of the capital - Gabtoli, Sayedabad, and Mohakhali. There are 240 ticket counters in Gabtoli, 108 in Sayedabad, and 88 in Mohakhali.

As much as Tk 1.07 crore is extorted from these three terminals daily, while Tk 80 lakh is extorted from local and inter-district bus stands, the report reads.

In March last year, a research by Transparency International Bangladesh found that buses pay at least Tk 1,059 crore in illegal tolls and bribes every year across the country.

The TIB report found that a section of unscrupulous Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials and staffers, police officers, transport associations, staffers of city corporations and municipalities, and people affiliated with political parties get shares of the bribes and extortion money.

But surprisingly, the agency inquiry found police are mostly being let out this time. Currently, the extorted money is being distributed among political leadership, leaders of owners and workers associations, two parts of

Dhaka City Corporation and linemen.

However, in three terminals, some traffic police are being able to get their "fair share" through linemen, the report says.

To stop this practice, the report recommended privatising the bus terminals and stands and allowing them to officially charge commissions from the vehicles using those structures. The terminals and stands will operate using the proceeds of that commission.

It also recommended introducing bus franchising to better manage the roads and creating a sustainable transport management strategy.

According to data from the BNP's Nava Paltan central office, more than 1,000 party members have been expelled for their involvement in rent-seeking and illegal occupation of properties and businesses over the last few months. More than 12 committees have been dissolved after allegations against members proved true.

Contacted, BNP Standing Committee Member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku told The Daily Star yesterday, "Those involved in these activities were never part of the BNP's 16-year-long movement. Despite clear directives from the party, anyone engaging themselves in such activities violating discipline cannot be considered part of the BNP."

Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fozul Kabir Khan said the government is trying to control extortion in the transport sector.

"We are taking action whenever we get a complaint. BRTA too has started taking action. If those tasked with supervising this sector are involved in extortion, we will take action against them as well," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

representation system to the upper house, lowering age limit of MPs to 21, keeping at least 10 percent candidates in the lower house from among the youth, and constitutional amendments with two-thirds majority in both houses are among the topics in the questions.

The commission asked for the parties' opinions on limiting the terms of the president and the prime minister, and prohibiting the same person from simultaneously holding the positions of party chief, prime minister, and leader of parliament.

It wants the parties' views on the constitution of the Election Commission, a separate authority for demarcation of constituencies, making a bachelor's degree mandatory to become a member of the upper house in the proposed bicameral legislature, barring individuals from contesting polls if charges are accepted by the International Crimes Tribunal, establishing a permanent national constitutional council for appointing officials in all constitutional bodies and others.

The political parties will need to give feedback on Public Administration Reform Commission's proposals on transforming four oldest divisions into four provinces and introducing a provincial governance system, the formation of an independent and permanent Public Administration Reform Commission, amendments to the Official Secrets Act of 1923, and creation of two new divisions named Cumilla and Faridpur.

The other proposals in the letter with questions include having new commissions named Public Service Commission (Education), Public Service Commission (Health), establishing a Capital City Government at the proposed provincial government level, comprising Dhaka Metropolitan, Tongi, Keraniganj, Savar, and Narayanganj.

## Govt creating 7,000 supernumerary posts

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Forum, postponed their demonstration for 12 weeks following government assurances regarding their demand for promotion.

The doctors, who were protesting at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, withdrew their abstention after 45 minutes. Emergency services remained operational during this time.

Many of these doctors were denied promotion during the previous government's tenure for political reasons, forum leaders said. They added that since the political changeover in August last year, they had been urging the health ministry to grant their overdue promotions, but to no avail.

Against this backdrop, the forum announced on February 25 a two-hour work abstention for three days from yesterday if their demands were not met.

As per the announcement, over 100 doctors formed a human chain in front of the Bagan Gate at DMCH around 10:00am, pressing their two-point demand: the immediate promotion of all eligible specialised doctors with retrospective benefits and the elevation of all third-grade doctors to first and second grades in due course with appropriate benefits.

Sources said doctors' leaders met Prof Sayedur Rahman on Friday night to discuss their demands and reached a consensus.

Prof Sayedur visited the DMCH around 10:30am yesterday to announce the decision to the protesting doctors.

### SUPERNUMERARY POSTS

According to Prof Sayedur, they have been working on the issue for the past three months, consulting various stakeholders to find a resolution.

Following recommendations from the public administration ministry, promotion proposals are being submitted in three phases, he said.

In the first phase, a proposal to create supernumerary posts for the promotion of 3,033 specialised doctors has already been sent to the public administration ministry and is expected to be forwarded to the

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## Take firm actions against perpetrators

BNP leader Salahuddin urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed concern over the growing incidents of violence against women and children and urged the government to take tougher measures to tackle the issue.

"Maintain law and order with a firm hand. Ensure that the country's situation does not become unstable and that Bangladesh's reputation remains intact," he said, calling upon authorities at the interim government and law enforcement agencies.

He made the remarks while speaking at an event titled "Indomitable Women, Invincible in Strength," organised by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in honour of women's role in the July uprising.

There, Selima Rahman, another standing committee member of BNP, also spoke as a special guest.

finance ministry within the week.

In the second phase, a proposal for 2,065 posts was sent to the public administration ministry on Thursday.

In the third phase, another proposal for 2,024 posts will be submitted, Prof Sayedur added. The total number of supernumerary posts, in that case, would be 7,122.

A senior DGHS official said they had sought applications from eligible candidates for various posts and received many submissions. Candidates for vacant posts were selected first based on a set of criteria, though he could not immediately provide the exact number.

As the number of vacant posts far outweighs the number of eligible candidates, the authorities decided to create supernumerary posts, he said, adding that three separate lists were prepared due to the large number of candidates.

Another senior DGHS official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the health ministry sent the proposals after getting the green light from the public administration ministry.

Meanwhile, Prof Sayedur informed the doctors at the DMCH that the promotions would be granted within 12 weeks. Following his assurance, they postponed their protests for the same duration.

Contacted, Prof Sayedur said a backlog of promotions had accumulated due to a lack of a proper manpower development plan. Additionally, many doctors had faced discriminations, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"As a result, a situation arose where such measures were necessary to retain specialised doctors in service."

In response to a question, he said additional budget would not be required immediately, as most doctors were already receiving the amount due to annual increments.

"They need the promotion for prestige."

Regarding the process, he said it was a massive task and they were working in coordination with other ministries to resolve it.

## Security guards can now arrest people

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and have the power to detain individuals when necessary.

"They will be legally protected, just like regular police officers," he said, adding that private security guards working in shopping malls and residential areas will be given official appointments under this initiative.

For instance, a shopping mall such as Bashundhara City, which has around 50 security guards, has a designated leader. That leader has been given a temporary appointment as a member of the police force under the initiative, he said.

While the DMP is committed to ensuring security, the force faces limitations as some officers will be on leave for Eid.

"Many of our personnel live in barracks, away from their families for long periods. A certain percentage must be granted leave as per government directives. We urge residents to ensure the safety of their homes, apartments and shops when they leave for prayers or travel for Eid."

Ali also emphasized the importance of vigilance during Tarawih prayers.

"As the evening falls, many people head to mosques for prayers, leaving streets and neighbourhoods relatively empty. This is a vulnerable time for security."

Major crimes such as murders and armed robberies have significantly

declined in Dhaka, Ali said.

However, he acknowledged a rise in street crimes, particularly snatchings by young offenders.

In recent times, there has been an increase in street crimes where young offenders, often referred to as 'teen gangs,' snatch mobile phones from pedestrians. Many of them are aged between 15 and 22.

These incidents mostly occur when people are distracted while using their phones on buses, in private cars or on motorcycles, he said.

Efforts are underway to curb such crimes and recover stolen goods.

"Some stolen phones are being smuggled across borders and sold illegally. We are working to detect and recover those."

Ali reassured Dhaka residents that while the city faces various challenges, the overall law-and-order situation remains under control.

"Dhaka is one of the most densely populated megacities in the world. Comparing its crime rate to that of other major cities will show that we have relatively lower incidents of serious crimes."

He reiterated that police stations are now more proactive in registering cases.

"Since I took charge, I have instructed officers to record all complaints truthfully. We do not refuse cases if there is merit to them."