



"And so, if there is no response that meets the humanitarian situation... we will have to toughen our collective position."

French President Emmanuel Macron on Israel's blockade of Gaza aid

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## Japan to provide \$1b in budget support, grant

Yunus holds bilateral talks with Japanese PM; 6 MoUs signed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan will provide \$1.063 billion to Bangladesh in loans and grants for budget support, railway upgradation and scholarships, reaffirming its full support for the interim government's reform agenda and commitment to a peaceful political transition.

The agreements were signed in Tokyo by Bangladesh Ambassador Md Daud Ali and Japanese Ambassador Shinichi Saita, reflecting both nations' resolve to deepen their strategic partnership for peace, stability, and shared prosperity, according to the press wing of the Chief Adviser's Office.

Of the total package, \$418 million will be provided as a Development Policy Loan to support economic reforms and climate resilience, \$641 million will fund the upgrade of the Joydevpur-Ishwardi rail line to a dual gauge double track, and \$4.2 million in grants will go toward scholarships.

The deals were formalised on the sidelines of a bilateral meeting between Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru.

Yunus, on a four day visit to Japan since May 28, received a guard of honour ahead of the meeting and presented Ishiba with the graffiti book "Art of Triumph", chronicling the July uprising in Bangladesh.

During his visit, Yunus addressed the Nikkei Asia Forum and participated in a series of meetings and seminars with Japanese officials, business leaders, and the Bangladeshi diaspora. He is scheduled to return home today.

Six additional Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed yesterday during the Bangladesh Business Seminar in Tokyo, aimed at bolstering economic and investment cooperation. The MoUs in focus are on energy cooperation, industrial expansion, textile accessories, green mobility, cybersecurity investment, and digital integration.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and Bangladesh's energy and mineral resources ministry agreed to strengthen collaboration on energy projects.

Japanese firm ONODA Inc signed a land lease agreement with Bangladesh Special Economic Zone (BSEZ) to expand its gas meter assembly manufacturing, inspection, and maintenance operations.

Bangladesh Naxis Co Ltd signed an MoU with BSEZ Ltd to establish a factory producing apparel accessories.

Glafti and Musashi Seimitsu Industry, in partnership with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), will support the construction of a plant to manufacture battery-powered cycles and electric motorcycles.

Cipher Core Co Ltd committed \$20 million to launch a national pilot project using Complete Cipher Technology by inventor Takatoshi Nakamura, aiming to position Bangladesh as a quantum-resilient digital economy, with exclusive rights granted to the local entity for technology deployment and global expansion.

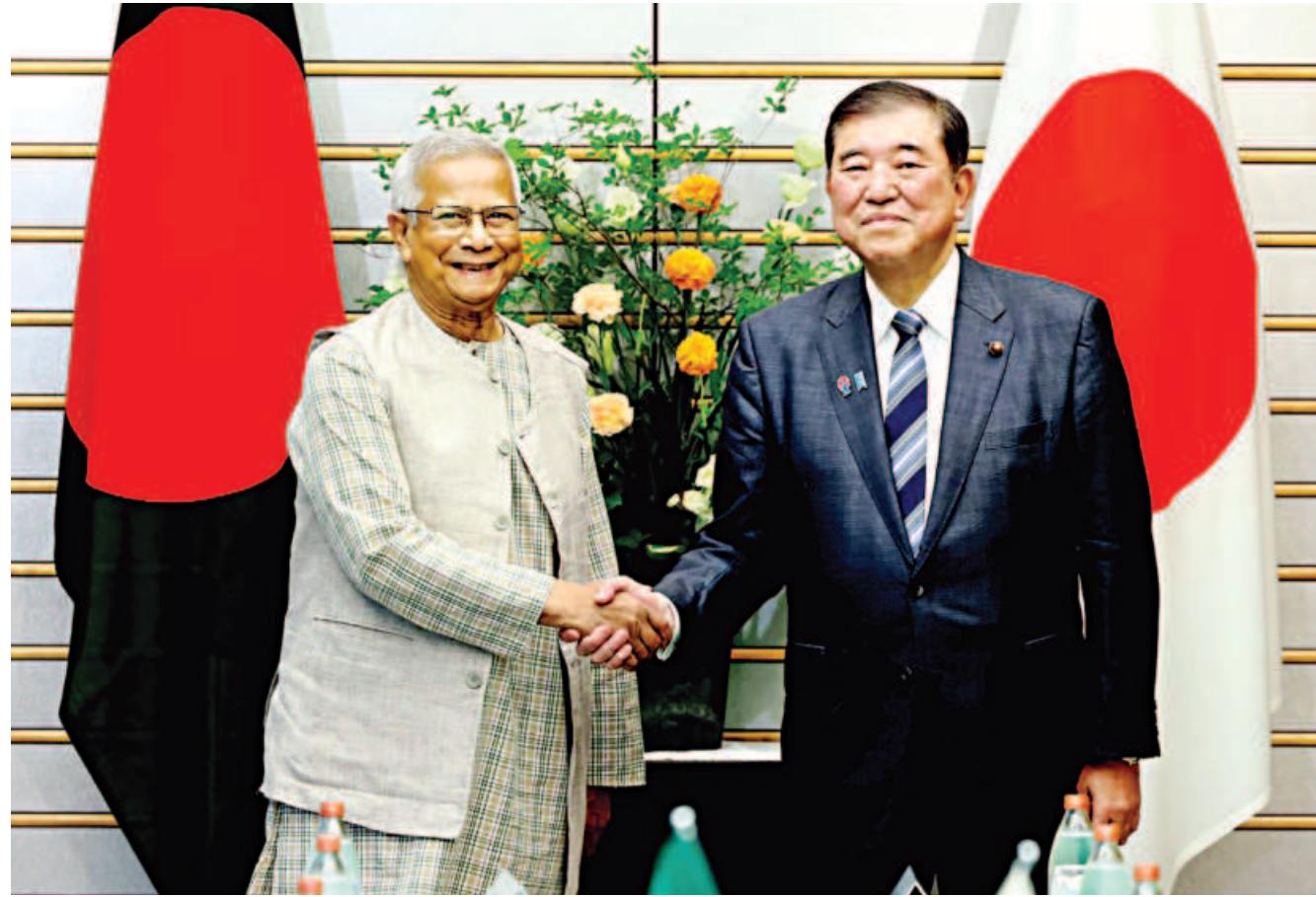
JICA and BIDA signed an agreement for early-stage technical and kind support for the Integrated Single Window Platform (ISWP), designed to unify investment-related services across various agencies.

Addressing the event, Yunus congratulated all parties involved and said, "Now it is our task to implement. I am moved."

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### 6 MOUs AT A GLANCE

- ↳ Energy cooperation
- ↳ Gas meter plant
- ↳ Apparel accessories factory
- ↳ E-bike & battery-run cycle plant
- ↳ Information security initiative
- ↳ One-stop investment platform



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus exchanges pleasantries with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba at the latter's office before their bilateral meeting in Tokyo yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Help us build 'New Bangladesh'

Yunus calls on Japan

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus urged the Japanese government and entrepreneurs to extend their full support in building a "New Bangladesh" and by doing so, turning the dreams of millions of youths into reality.

"We are in big trouble. Literally, Bangladesh has gone through a 16-year earthquake. Everything fell apart... we are trying to pick up the pieces," he told the "Bangladesh Business Seminar" hosted by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at JETRO headquarters in Tokyo, reports UNB.

Calling on Japan as a friend of Bangladesh, he SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## DEV BUDGET EXPENDITURE Health ministry puts up poor show again

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Two divisions responsible for healthcare delivery have once again ranked among the worst performers in executing their development budgets, spending just a fraction of their allocated funds over the past 10 months.

The Medical Education and Family Welfare

only exception was fiscal 2020-21 when the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division achieved the national average, show documents of Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

Experts and officials attribute poor ADP execution to the incapacity of implementing agencies, project directors' lack of experience, reliance on the Public Works Department

DIVISION	ORIGINAL ALLOCATION	REVISED ALLOCATION	IMPLEMENTATION (REVISED ADP) RATE
Health Services	Tk 13,741cr	Tk 5,673cr	14.90%
Medical Education & Family Welfare	Tk 6,449cr	Tk 2,283cr	2.34%

Division used just 2.34 percent of its revised Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocation of Tk 2,283.16 crore till April, the lowest expenditure rate among all ministries and divisions.

The Health Services Division fared slightly better, spending 14.9 percent of its Tk 5,673.51 crore budget and ranking fifth from the bottom, well below the national average of 41.31 percent.

This marks yet another year of weak budget execution since the health ministry was split into two divisions in 2017. The

(PWD) for construction work, outdated budgeting practices, and changes in the top tier of implementing agencies after the July mass uprising.

The data on the ministry's dismal performance comes on the heels of a Health Sector Reform Commission report that identifies inadequate allocation, unchecked corruption and mismanagement as key problems in the health sector.

Only 5.2 percent of the current fiscal year's budget -- a mere 0.74 percent of the Gross

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## Election future uncertain, if Dec deadline missed

Says Mirza Abbas; BNP doubles down on polls demand as it marks Zia's 44th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas yesterday expressed concern that there may never be another election in Bangladesh if the national polls are not held by December.

"Don't try to delay the election with excuses. We know very well that if the election doesn't take place in December, there will never be another election in this country. Bangladesh will be subjugated to foreign masters," he said at a program in front of the BNP central office in Naya Paltan in the evening, marking the 44th death anniversary of BNP founder and former president Ziaur Rahman.

He also claimed that only one person is against holding polls by December - Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Earlier in the day, after paying tribute at the grave of the BNP founder, Mirza Abbas said that if June is considered for holding polls, there will be no election at all.

"If an election is to be held, it must be held by December. If there's no intention to hold the election, then the responsibility lies with Dr Yunus, not us. The people of Bangladesh will ensure that [polls]," he said, adding that without an election, the country's progress will come to a halt.

He also strongly criticises the chief adviser for his remarks on the election timeline during his ongoing visit to Japan.

He added, "From Japan, Dr Yunus is defaming BNP. He is defaming the country. He has said that only one party wants an election [in December]. But we want to say, there is only one person who does not want an election, and that is Professor Muhammad Yunus."

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Torrential rain throughout Thursday inundated the field in front of Bokulnesa Mohila Degree College in Amtali upazila, Barguna.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



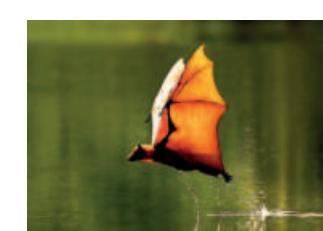
Pakistan, India close to completing border troop reduction

P5



The right way to reform public administration

P6



A haven for biodiversity amid urban sprawl

WR1

## Thousands still marooned

Houses damaged, acres of farmland submerged as rain, tidal surge continue to batter coastal districts

STAR REPORT

Thousands of people remained stranded across several coastal districts as tidal surges and torrential rains, triggered by a depression over the Bay of Bengal, kept battering the region for the second day.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the deep depression has weakened after moving onto land but is still likely to bring heavy rainfall to parts of the country.

Flooding, gusty winds, and the breach of several embankments have caused widespread damage across Noakhali, Patuakhali, Bhola, Cox's Bazar, Khulna, Barguna, and Barishal.

Thousands of homes have been damaged, vast acres of Aman seedbeds submerged, and numerous fish farms washed away, reported our correspondents.

The BMD's Storm Warning Centre said the deep depression has turned into a land depression and is

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