



With export documentation and shipments coming to a halt, exporters are in serious trouble. Failure to ship goods on time could result in significant financial losses.

SYED M TANVIR,
managing director of Pacific Jeans



Defying the government's call to withdraw their protest, NBR officials yesterday launched an indefinite work stoppage and staged a "March to NBR" in front of the headquarters in Agargaon, demanding the chairman's removal and an end to what they call "vengeful transfers".

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

NEWS ANALYSIS

Shutdown is another economic peril Finance ministry should start inclusive dialogue with NBR protesters now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Bangladesh navigates a precarious economic recovery, a total shutdown of the country's customs and tax operations is another disruption the nation cannot afford. Yet that is precisely the reality the economy is now confronting.

Vowing to continue an indefinite work stoppage and stage a protest march on tax offices, the NBR Reform Unity Council has intensified its demands, including the removal of the NBR chairman. As the shutdown enters its second day, port clearances and tax functions remain paralysed, straining already fragile trade flows.

While the grievances voiced by protesting revenue officials stem from frustrations with top-down reform efforts, the tactics of crippling the tax machinery threaten to damage the economy.

After weeks of tension within the revenue administration, the government on May 25 announced a clear timeline to finalise amendments to the Revenue Policy and Revenue Administration Ordinance by July 31. The plan, issued through an official press release, pledged consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including those aligned with the protest.

The current standoff has its roots in a sweeping overhaul of the National Board of Revenue, proposed under an ordinance backed by the International Monetary Fund. The ordinance would split the NBR into two distinct divisions -- one responsible for tax policy and the other for revenue collection -- in a move the government said was aimed at eliminating conflicts of interest between policymaking and implementation.

However, as protests began to mount within the revenue administration, the finance ministry suspended the ordinance to ease

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

CONSENSUS TALKS

Appointment of caretaker chief to take centre stage

Discussions resume today on upper house

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The National Consensus Commission is likely to propose two options for appointing the chief adviser to caretaker governments: one involving parliament, and the other selecting an individual from among retired chief justices.

Commission members will also invite political parties to recommend how chief advisers should be appointed.

The matter will be discussed as the consensus commission resumes talks with political parties today after a three-day break. This marks the seventh day of the second round of discussions.

Professor Ali Riaz, vice president of the consensus commission, told The Daily Star that the discussions would focus on the formation of an Appointment Committee for Constitutional and Statutory Bodies and the process of electing members to the upper house.

In the coming days, the commission and parties will discuss a wide range of issues, including the framework for interim or caretaker governments, he added.

Asked what the commission recommends as the method for appointing the chief adviser, Prof Riaz said that the Constitution Reform Commission had earlier proposed that the National Constitutional Council would appoint the chief adviser. The Electoral Reform

Commission also made a similar recommendation.

"But we are no longer in that position. We will have to develop a new proposal. We are currently reviewing and evaluating the options we have," he said.

At discussions with the constitution reform commission, citizens expressed support for formation of an All-Party Parliamentary Committee, the members of which will be members from both the treasury and opposition benches. This committee will be involved in the appointment of the chief adviser.

"We will put this on the table during the discussions," he said.

Prof Riaz also mentioned that some political parties, during the first round of talks, favoured following the process outlined in the 13th Amendment for appointing the chief adviser. That option will also be part of the discussions.

There are opinions against involving the judiciary in the process, he said. "We will take that into consideration as well."

Almost all political parties have supported the revival of the caretaker government system in the first round of discussions.

The system of a caretaker government was introduced after the fall of the Ershad regime in 1990.

Later, the caretaker government system became a contentious issue, leading to repeated political crises. The BNP adopted the system after prolonged protests

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

- Consensus reached on 2 of 9 issues
- Dozen key issues not discussed yet
- July Charter by next month

Govt looks to appoint navy to run NCT for now

Talks with port authorities underway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government is considering appointing the Bangladesh Navy to operate the port's New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) with assistance from the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) for the next six months.

The matter was discussed during a meeting between senior CPA officials and Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Shakhawat Hossain at the CPA administrative building yesterday.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of several ongoing projects at the port, which was visited by Shakhawat earlier in the day.

A senior CPA official, seeking anonymity, confirmed the development and said the CPA had earlier proposed operating the NCT through its own management by floating a direct tender.

During the meeting, the adviser conveyed the government's decision to appoint the Bangladesh Navy through direct tender to operate the terminal. The official added that the Navy will form a workforce to run the NCT.

The government's decision comes amid widespread protests and criticism

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Illegal shops and parked vehicles clog the entrance to the capital's Dhaka Medical College Hospital, causing severe public inconvenience. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Umama Fatema quits SAD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Umama Fatema, former spokesperson of the Students Against Discrimination, has officially stepped down from the platform, citing internal betrayal, political interference, and smear campaigns.

In a Facebook post yesterday, she wrote that her formal journey with the movement ended with its central council held on Wednesday.

"After the formation of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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