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## BUS RAPID TRANSIT LINE-3 Ecneec halts project revision, decides to probe

Revised proposal wants to extend deadline  
to Dec 2029, raise cost to Tk 6,597.66cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instead of approving the revised proposal for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 project on the Dhaka-Gazipur route, the government has decided to launch an investigation into the long-delayed scheme plagued by multiple issues and setbacks.

"We're in trouble with the Gazipur to Airport BRT project... The civil works are nearly complete. The plan was to have buses every three to five minutes, which requires a lot of buses. This unplanned mega project is beyond comprehension," Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud said yesterday.

"We've decided to investigate who made the original designs and how the feasibility study was done," he said after the meeting of the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council),

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Due to a depression over the Bay, high tidal waves have caused erosion at several points along the Cox's Bazar beach. Over 1,000 jhau (tamarisk) trees along the beach have been uprooted. Efforts to prevent erosion placing geo-tubes have not worked in many areas in recent years. The photo was taken from Shaibal Point yesterday. PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

## DRIVE AGAINST OLD VEHICLES Transport leaders threaten strike from August 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport owners and workers yesterday threatened to enforce a 72-hour nationwide strike from August 12 to press home their eight-point demand, including halting the ongoing crackdown on outdated vehicles and extending the economic lifespan of such vehicles by five to 10 years.

Leaders of three major associations -- the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, and Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation -- made the announcement at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Saiful Alam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, read out a statement outlining their demands.

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## Declare 'July Charter' or we stage sit in Says Nahid; Patwari's jibe at Babar sparks tension in Netrakona

STAR REPORT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday warned that if the "July Charter" is not declared by August 5, they will take position at the Central Shaheed Minar to realise the demand.

"We will return to Dhaka on August 3. We will not leave the Shaheed Minar [premises] without realising our demand [for the July Charter]," said Nahid while addressing a rally organised by the party's Sherpur district unit in the Raghunath Bazar area of Sherpur town yesterday.

He said the party wants the July Charter to bring about fundamental

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## BNP's income up 15 times in 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) annual income saw a staggering surge in 2024, rising more than 15 times compared to the previous year.

The party earned over Tk 15.5 crore in 2024, a sharp increase from just over Tk 1 crore in 2023.

The BNP yesterday submitted its audit report for the 2024 calendar year (January 1-December 31) to the Election Commission.

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## US, EU make trade deal

15% tariffs for European exports to US

REUTERS, Scotland

The United States struck a framework trade deal with the European Union yesterday, imposing a 15 percent US import tariff on most EU goods, while averting a spiralling battle between two allies that account for almost a third of global trade.

The announcement came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen travelled for talks with US President Donald Trump at his golf course in western Scotland to push a hard fought deal over the line.

"I think this is the biggest deal ever made," Trump told reporters after an hour-long meeting with von der Leyen, who said the 15 percent tariff applied "across the board".

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## EXTORTION ATTEMPT 4 SAD leaders placed on 7-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed four leaders and activists of Students Against Discrimination on seven-day remand in a case filed over extortion from the family of a former Awami League lawmaker in Gulshan.

The four are Ibrahim Hossain Munna, 24, SAD's Dhaka city unit convener; Abdur Razzak Riyad, 23, acting convener of the central

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A Palestinian man, reportedly shot while seeking food aid at a distribution point run by the Israeli- and US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, is carried on a motorcycle in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Foreign debt servicing cost crosses \$4b

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's foreign debt servicing bill has crossed \$4 billion for the first time, marking a sharp rise in repayment pressure.

The country paid just over \$4 billion in the recently concluded 2024-25 fiscal year, a 21 percent jump from \$3.37 billion the year before, according to provisional data from the Economic Relations Division (ERD) released yesterday.

In local currency terms, the debt servicing cost surged 32 percent year-on-year to Tk 49,390 crore in FY25, which increased fiscal pressure on the government.

The growing strain of these repayments comes as Bangladesh receives less foreign assistance than in previous years,

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Star INTERVIEW

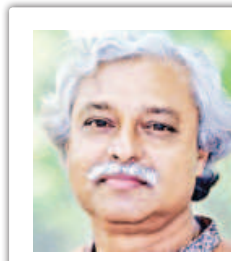
## Reforms must be grounded in consensus, not imposed

Says CPB General Secy Ruhin Hossain Prince

MD ABBAS

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince has warned that imposing controversial constitutional reforms without broad political consensus could not only derail the path to credible elections but also undermine the spirit of last year's mass uprising and the country's democratic aspirations.

"What we are witnessing now is a process that may delay, rather than advance, democratic transition. Many of the reform proposals, especially those concerning rewriting the constitution, run contrary to the ideals



of the Liberation War and are being pushed without a mandate," Prince told The Daily Star recently in an exclusive interview.

Prince said reforms must be part of a broader political consensus, not unilateral initiatives by the interim government.

"Reforms are not a one-day task. They are a continuous process. But without political consensus, no interim government should try to push through controversial changes."

He expressed concern over proposals that seek to alter the constitution's preamble by removing secularism and socialism while retaining Islam as the state religion

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