

THE BEST QUALITY  
**EVERY TIME GUARANTEED**  
**BSRM**

THE NATION'S  
LARGEST ROD  
MANUFACTURER  
★★★★★

**BSRM**  
building a safer nation

**SHAH CEMENT**

BANGLADESH'S  
**NO.1 CEMENT BRAND**

## Working to restore public trust in polls system: CEC

BSS, Rangpur

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday that the most critical challenge of



the government and the Election Commission is to ensure that the upcoming national election is conducted in a free, fair and impartial manner.

"People have lost confidence in the election system, the Election Commission, and the administrative machinery involved in the electoral process. We are working tirelessly to restore this lost trust."

He made the remarks while addressing a views exchange meeting at the Regional Election Officer's Office in Rangpur.

Reiterating the EC's commitment to neutrality and transparency, the CEC said, "As long as the Election Commission remains conscious of its

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



People from several indigenous communities of the Chattogram Hill Tracts, including Pangkhua, Khumi, Lushai, Mro, Marma, Bawm, Chak, Tanchangya, Khiyang, Tripura and Chakma, brought out a rally in Khagrachhari yesterday to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

PHOTO: JOYANTI DEWAN

## 600 acres set aside for US cotton hub

### Govt starts work to reduce trade gap with America

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The bid to reduce the trade gap with the US is progressing at full steam, with the government allocating 600 acres of land for building a cotton warehouse and local importers targeting American cotton imports worth \$1 billion this year.

The warehouse, on 600 acres of land at the Mirsarai economic zone in Chattogram, will be built by American and local entrepreneurs, said Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman.

The move would pave the way for higher cotton imports from the US as it would reduce the import time to a day or two from more than 45 days at present.

By the end of this fiscal year, Bangladesh can increase the import of American cotton to \$1 billion, which will help reduce the trade deficit between the two countries, said Showkat Aziz Russell, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

At present, Bangladesh imports about \$370 million worth of cotton from the US, which is about 7 percent of total imports of the white fibre in a year.

Garment exporters are also demanding yarn spun out of American cotton for the favourable tariff rate from the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

## History has been distorted in the July Declaration

### Says Prof Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jahangirnagar University professor Anu Muhammad yesterday accused the interim government of distorting history in the July Declaration.

"History has been distorted in the July Declaration, which demonstrates the interim government's lack of transparency, self-contradiction, and disregard for public opinion."



He made the remarks while addressing a discussion titled "One Year of the Interim Government: Reviewing Responsibilities and Roles" organised by the civic platform Democratic Rights Committee at the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) auditorium in the capital's Bijoynagar.

Presiding over the discussion, Prof Anu, a member of the committee, said in order to ensure credible elections, the government must act impartially and implement necessary administrative and organisational reforms.

He acknowledged positive

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## INT'L DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

# Indigenous communities now just as vulnerable

### Says a report of Kapaeeng Foundation

MD ABBAS

Bangladesh's indigenous peoples continued to face grave risks in the first seven months of the year despite expectations of an improvement following the July uprising, according to a report by Kapaeeng Foundation.

From January to July, the rights organisation for indigenous people of Bangladesh documented alarming incidents of land grabbing, criminalisation, sexual violence, torture, arbitrary detention and harassment, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Both state and non-state actors were involved in many of the violations, said the report, which was released yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

On January 16, a mob attack in Dhaka by a group calling itself "Students for Sovereignty" left at least 18 indigenous students critically injured.

While five suspects were arrested, three were later released on bail, and no trial has yet taken place.

The organisation recorded 24 cases of violence against indigenous women during the period, with 21 of them taking place in the CHT.

Victims included four women, of whom two were gang-raped and two killed after rape. Seven women were sexually harassed, five were targeted in attempted rape, one was molested and three were tortured.

Police filed six cases and arrested 12 suspects in connection with the incidents.

As many as 295 people were affected in 15 land-related incidents, with cases reported from Naogaon, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangamati, Bandarban, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

These included alleged attempts to establish a security camp on indigenous land in Barkal, occupy 130 acres of Jum and fruit plantations belonging to 39 families and seize a Buddhist temple site after cutting down 300 trees.

Private companies were also accused of land grabbing.

The report documented 170 victims in 32 incidents of civil and political rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, detention, beatings, house raids, threats and forced religious conversion.

In one case, 30 indigenous children were reportedly converted to Islam.

Kapaeeng warned of a "deep-seated culture of impunity" that emboldens perpetrators.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## 99% of govt reforms were presented by the BNP

### Says Tarique



UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has said almost 99 percent of the reforms the current government is talking about were actually presented to the nation by his party about two and a half years ago.

He said BNP, along with like-minded political parties that stood on the streets, fought to remove dictatorship and create an environment where people could breathe freely, presented the 31-point reform proposal to the nation.

While virtually addressing the council session of the Doctors

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## New council seals another JP split

### Anisul made chairman, Howlader secy gen of new faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party yesterday split yet again, this time with Anisul Islam Mahmud and ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader leading a new faction that leaves out current Chairman GM Quader.

Anisul and Howlader were elected chairman and secretary general, respectively, through voice vote at the party's 10th National Council, held at a convention centre in Gulshan.

Mujibul Haque Chunnu was elected executive chairman and Kazi Firoz Rashid senior co-chairman. Around 2,000 councillors from across the country attended.

Founded in 1986 by late military ruler HM Ershad, the Jatiya Party has a long history of factionalism, having split at least six times before. The other factions include Jatiya Party (JaPa) led by GM Quader, Jatiya Party (JP) led by Anwar Hossain, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) led by Andaleev Rahman Partho, Bangladesh Jatiya Party led by MA Mukit, and Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar) led by Mostafa Jamal Haider. The first four are registered with the Election Commission.

GM Quader is Ershad's brother while Anisul is known as a follower of Ershad's wife Rowshan Ershad, who had served as senior co-chairman of the party. The Rowshan-Quader rivalry had sprung out in the open numerous times before and after Ershad's death.

Presiding over the council, Anisul said the interim government's ongoing reforms would fail without an elected parliament. "Although the government is also talking about elections, there is doubt about whether an acceptable election will be held at all," he added.

Chunnu, who had served as JP secretary general under Quader since 2021, offered an unconditional apology to the people for what he termed the party's "past moral mistakes".

"Joining elections under the Awami League government

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Ukraine won't gift land to occupiers

### Says Zelensky as Trump-Putin set to meet on August 15 in Alaska

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine won't surrender land to Russia to buy peace, President Volodymyr Zelensky warned yesterday, after Washington and Moscow agreed to hold a summit in a bid to end the war.

Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the US state of Alaska on August 15, to try to resolve the three-year conflict, despite warnings from Ukraine and Europe that Kyiv must be part of negotiations.

Announcing the summit on Friday, Trump said that "there'll be some swapping of territories to the betterment of both" Ukraine and Russia, without providing further details.

"Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier," Zelensky said on social media hours later.

"Any decisions against us, any decisions without Ukraine, are also decisions against peace. They will achieve nothing," he said, adding that the war "cannot be ended without us, without Ukraine".

Zelensky also urged Ukraine's allies to take "clear steps" towards achieving a sustainable peace, during a call with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

National security advisors from Kyiv's allies -- including the United States, EU nations and the UK -- were gathering in Britain yesterday to align their views ahead of the Putin-Trump summit.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3



The Lalbagh stretch of the Gabtoli-Sadarghat Beribadh Road remains riddled with potholes, garbage, and stagnant water. Its condition worsens every few months due to substandard construction and use of heavy vehicles, leading to traffic congestion and frequent accidents in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## GRAFT ALLEGATIONS Govt bins ex-secy's remarks about advisers

STAR REPORT

The interim government has "strongly" rejected former secretary ABM Abdus Sattar's "unsubstantiated" corruption allegations against unnamed advisers.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also expressed full confidence in the honesty of the government advisers.

Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid, in a statement circulated by the Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday, said, "Making broad claims without presenting evidence or identifying individuals is both irresponsible and detrimental to public trust."

"Our administration remains steadfast in its commitment to transparency, integrity, and accountability."

Sattar, currently general secretary of Dhaka Officers Club and personal secretary to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, alleged that several advisers of the government are

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1