



DITF to boost exports, economic activities

Says Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Highlighting the importance of economic stability and growth, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has expressed optimism that the 30th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2026 will help expand economic activity, create jobs and strengthen Bangladesh's exports.

"From the very outset, the interim government has remained firmly committed to safeguarding economic stability and fostering the

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The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is constructing an eco-park at a cost of Tk 8 crore on Chanpara Char, a landmass that has emerged between the Balu and Shitalakshya rivers. Located north of Sultana Kamal Bridge in Demra, Dhaka, the char is about 900 metres long and 200 metres wide. The Balu flows to the west and slightly south of the char before merging with the Shitalakshya to the east. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Is the Jamaat alliance tearing NCP apart?

18 leaders resign following coalition; party insiders say more to follow

SHAMIMA RITA

Weeks ahead of the next general election, the National Citizen Party (NCP) has plunged into a severe internal crisis following its decision to join a 10-party electoral alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami.

In the past 11 days, at least 18 top and second-tier leaders have either resigned from party posts or withdrawn from election-related activities ahead of the February 12 polls.

NCP central member Sayeda Nilima Dola announced her resignation yesterday in a Facebook post, saying the party has lost its ability to pursue its vision of building a new, moderate political force focused on post-July state reforms.

"The party has fully shifted to right-wing politics. If this were truly a strategic alliance, so many leaders and activists would not

have resigned," she wrote.

Party insiders told The Daily Star that discontent over the alliance had been building even before its formal announcement, adding that as many as 10 other key leaders may resign at any time.

On December 27, at least 30 central leaders submitted a memorandum to NCP Convener Nahid Islam, opposing any alliance with Jamaat and arguing that such a partnership contradicted the party's centrist and reform-oriented principles.

Despite the objections, Nahid announced the alliance at a press conference later that day, claiming the decision was supported by 130 party members.

The internal rift surfaced publicly on December 25, when Joint Member Secretary Mir Arshadul Haque resigned in protest.

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Aim to hand over power to elected govt soon: Touhid

BSS, Munshiganj

The interim government aims to hand over state power to the elected government as soon as possible after the February 12 election, Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain said yesterday, dismissing any notion of external pressure over the polls.

The adviser made the remarks while speaking to journalists after a meeting with officials of various government offices and departments at the Munshiganj Deputy Commissioner's conference room.

The adviser said the government is committed to maintaining cordial relations with all countries, adding that Bangladesh currently enjoys good relations with the outside world.

Responding to a question, Touhid said there is no scope for haste in the judicial process.

He said the authorities are not fully certain about the whereabouts of Hadi's killers but stressed that the government is making sincere efforts to bring those responsible to justice as soon as possible.

Earlier, the foreign adviser laid wreaths at the July Shaheed Memorial alongside members of the martyrs' families.

He later visited the graves of those martyred in the July movement at the Uttar Islampur area of Munshiganj town and inquired about the wellbeing of the bereaved families.



Abdus Sattar, Saleh Tarique's new PS, press secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former secretary ABM Abdus Sattar has been appointed as the private secretary to BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, said the party yesterday.

Sattar previously served as the private secretary to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

At the same time, AAM Saleh, former general secretary of the Dhaka Reporters Unity, also known as Saleh Shibly, has been appointed as Tarique's press secretary, according to a BNP press release.



Sattar Saleh

Star journalist gets CRAB best reporting award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star's head of crime desk, Mohammad Jamil Khan, has received the "A4 Bashundhara Paper CRAB Best Reporting Award 2025" for his investigative reporting on narcotics. The award was conferred by the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) at its annual general meeting at the Shafikul Kabir Auditorium of the Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

Jamil received a crest, a certificate, and a cheque for Tk 1,00,000. A total of five journalists were honoured in five categories this year for their reports published or broadcast in 2025.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali attended the programme as the chief guest and handed over the awards to the winners.

CRAB President Mirza Mehdi Tamal presided over the event, while CRAB General Secretary MM Badshah and members of the association's executive committee



Jamil Khan

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E-rickshaws rolled out on trial basis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday launched e-rickshaws in Dhaka on an experimental basis, aiming to bring the city's rickshaw sector under a disciplined and regulated framework.

Lieutenant General (ret'd) Abdul Hafiz, special assistant to the chief adviser of the interim government, inaugurated the pilot programme at an event in Jhigatala.

Officials said 12,135 rickshaw drivers have already received training, while another 55,000 have been listed under the ongoing process. Initially, 25 e-rickshaws have been introduced on city streets, with more to be added gradually.

The design and specifications of the e-rickshaws were developed by Buet and later approved by the government. Currently, three companies are supplying the vehicles, with more expected to join in phases.

Dhaka North City Corporation Administrator Mohammad Azaz said the initiative addresses what has been termed the "Banglar Tesla" crisis, referring to the uncontrolled growth of battery-powered rickshaws across the city.

He said the Dhaka Metropolitan Police will determine how many rickshaws can operate in specific areas and wards.

"For instance, in Dhanmondi, only 400 to 500 rickshaws are sufficient, while there are currently 3,000 to 4,000. Only the required number will be authorised, and the rest will be phased out gradually," he said.

Azaz emphasised that existing rickshaw pullers would not be disadvantaged. "Existing rickshaw pullers will receive temporary permits for one year."

During the pilot phase, traditional rickshaws will operate in Motijheel, while only Buet-approved battery-powered rickshaws will run in Dhanmondi. Rickshaws will also be barred from main roads to prevent monopolies or irregular practices.

"This is just the beginning. Area

by area, illegal rickshaws will be removed and legal ones allowed. If successful, the programme will expand across Dhaka," Azaz added. The e-rickshaws can travel at speeds of up to 30km per hour and will stop automatically if the limit is exceeded, officials said.

To support drivers affected by the transition, the government will involve the Palli Karma

Japanese firm Tiger New Energy is providing geofencing technology to ensure rickshaws operate only within designated zones.

Sheikh Moinuddin, special assistant to the chief adviser at the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, said the main cause of Dhaka's traffic disorder is mixed traffic. "On the same roads, rickshaws, tempus [human hauliers],



- 25 Buet-approved e-rickshaws initially introduced
- Over 12,000 drivers trained; 55,000 more listed
- DMP to fix ward-wise rickshaw numbers

- e-rickshaws to run in Dhanmondi during pilot
- One-year temporary permits for existing rickshaw pullers
- Illegal rickshaws to be phased out area by area

Sahayak Foundation for alternative employment, low interest loans and NGO support to purchase new rickshaws, he said.

Local Government Division Secretary Mohammad Rezaul Maksud Jahedi said Buet, with support from the Bangladesh Energy and Power Research Council, developed the e-rickshaw to be safe, energy-efficient and congestion-reducing.

As a result, the government formulated the "Operation Regulations 2025 for Three-Wheeled Low-Speed Battery-Powered Rickshaws".

buses and trucks move together. The unregulated rickshaw sector has grown far beyond control."

Additional Police Commissioner (Traffic) Anisur Rahman said the new e-rickshaw design incorporates multiple safety features, controlled speed and geo-fencing, which will improve traffic management and environmental sustainability.

DSCC Administrator Mahmudul Hasan said the new e-rickshaw model is being piloted in Ward-14, while in Ward-10 (Motijheel), traditional pedal rickshaws have been converted using lithium batteries and geofencing technology.

NEIR LAUNCH PROTEST Most mobile phone shops stay shut for 3rd day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most mobile phone shops across the country remained closed for the third consecutive day yesterday in protest against the launch of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) system.

"We have kept our shop closed. Such a system is neither practical nor can be described as development-oriented," said Abdullah Jaber, a shop owner at Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka. He said the closure would continue if the NEIR system was not scrapped.

Most shops were seen closed at major handset markets, including Jamuna Future Park, Bashundhara City Shopping Complex, and Motaleb Plaza in the capital.

However, some outlets selling handsets

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Ensuring law, order for next 40 days key to fair polls

Says DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali yesterday said a fair national election would be possible if law and order can be maintained over the next 40 days.

He made the remarks while speaking at the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh's Best Reporting Award ceremony at the Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium.

"At present, the crime situation in Dhaka is very much under control. If we can maintain law and order for the next 40 days, it will be possible to hold the election in a fair manner," he said.

Describing 2025 as a "very turbulent year", the commissioner said the July uprising was followed by severe unrest in 2025, requiring police to control large crowds on many occasions.

He said the upcoming national election is now the police's top priority.

Referring to the election scheduled for February 12, he said extensive reshuffling has taken place within the police force through a lottery system.

Explaining the process, he said Dhaka

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