

DHAKA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY Govt backtracks from merger plan

Draft ordinance shifts to affiliation model,
7 colleges to function independently

BAHARAM KHAN and
ARAFAT RAHMAN

The government has finalised the draft ordinance to establish Dhaka Central University, which will primarily function as an affiliating and regulatory body for seven affiliated colleges.

Contrary to last year's draft, the Dhaka Central University Ordinance, 2026 proposes preserving the colleges' existing infrastructure, names and properties. Each institution will continue its regular academic activities, including Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) education, though the colleges will no longer have separate governing bodies, according to the

draft prepared by the Ministry of Education.

Ministry sources said the draft will soon be placed before the Council of Advisers for approval.

The 2025 draft had proposed converting the colleges into full campuses of Dhaka Central University, effectively dissolving their separate administrative identities. Under that plan, Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Government Titumir College, Government Bangla College, Begum Badrunnessa Government Girls' College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College and Kabi Nazrul Government College were to be renamed as campuses of the new university, with academic

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BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman addressing a milad and doa mahfil organised by residents of Korail for late BNP chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia at the T&T Colony ground in Mohakhali yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Will repair state, improve lives

FROM PAGE 1

"Today, the challenges are multi-faceted – the BNP has already worked hard to prepare policies, which will enable the shattered economy to grow as a stable one, which will pave the way for sustainable development, which will empower the lower income people to rise and initiate a new era of hopes and aspirations," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

If voted to power, the party will overcome the financial and political challenges.

"We have challenges. But this has to be overcome with the strength and power of the people. We know the economy is in a critical situation. Political issues are not settled yet. We shall overcome all challenges as we have done in the past."

Since 2009, the Awami League regime devastated the economy, turned it into a mafia economy and encouraged oligarchy.

"It turned into a haven for looters, plunderers – the banks were looted, money was taken away from banks to foreign countries where they became owners of huge assets and wealth. It was a country with no significant employment, no investment, an economy of despair."

The 15 years of Awami rule were marked by lawlessness, lack of accountability and unbridled corruption, all of which led the country to a 'state of fascism', Fakhrul said.

The July Uprising, which compelled Sheikh Hasina to flee the country, brought new hope and created new opportunities.

The BNP has always been a forward-looking party, Fakhrul said, adding that his party initiated political as

well as economic reforms since its inception.

"With the spirit of liberation war and the spirit of the July movement, the BNP is determined to create a better Bangladesh with new ideas, new technology, new opportunities in this changed world," Fakhrul added.

EIGHT SECTORS

Under its Family Card programme, the BNP plans to provide Tk 2,000-2,500 monthly assistance or essential food items to 50 lakh women.

It pledges round-the-clock free medicine through primary health centres, affordable treatment for

volatility.

The BNP's health sector plan promises one lakh new health workers – 80 percent of them being women – for door-to-door screening of common diseases.

The party's health reform agenda places preventive and promotive healthcare at the forefront both in rural and urban areas.

It pledges round-the-clock free medicine through primary health centres, affordable treatment for

major illnesses, expanded maternal care at upazila hospitals and year-round mosquito-control initiatives.

In education, the party plans to provide tablet computers to teachers, set up multimedia classrooms, introduce a "Learning with Happiness" curriculum at class VI and make technical education compulsory.

Regarding employment, the party has planned free internet access at educational institutions and short-term training in foreign languages and skills development.

The card will be issued in the name of the household's matriarch. By reducing household food expenditure, the Family Card enables women to save regularly.

The proposed Farmers Card would ensure fair prices for fertilisers, seeds and pesticides, along with incentives, easy-term loans and insurance.

The card will also enable easier access to affordable financing, seasonal credit and crop and livestock insurance to protect farmers from climate shocks, pests and market

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insecure informal work, saying young graduates struggled to convert education into opportunities and women continued to face barriers.

He underscored women's role in nation building, saying expanding women's participation was "not only a matter of justice; it is an economic necessity".

At the same time, Bangladesh possessed "enormous potential", he said, citing the country's young and industrious workforce, migrant workers, global diaspora and strategic geographic position.

On governance, the Jamaat chief said good governance was central to transformation and pledged "zero tolerance against corruption".

To flesh out its plan, the party organised in-depth discussions across six separate sessions: Strategy for Bangladesh: Governance Framework;

In response, Dewan AH Alamgir, the session's keynote speaker, said: "Women's participation in politics needs to be increased further. Depending on education, access to opportunities and their preferences, women's participation in the economy and politics can be expanded."

Responding to another question on why the party had not nominated any women candidates in the upcoming national election, Jamaat's Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher said: "Jamaat has no objection to direct representation of women. At the Consensus Commission, a proposal has been placed to field women candidates directly in five percent of the seats. Jamaat agrees with this. The party will implement it gradually."

In the same session, Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, asked how Jamaat planned to finance and meet the costs of the promises it was making.

In reply, Alamgir, a development consultant and member of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation's general body, said the matter would be discussed in detail in the next session.

Alongside Jamaat's top leaders, others in attendance included human rights activist Nur Khan Liton; senior Supreme Court lawyer Shahadeen Malik; former MP Akhtaruzzaman; Ibn Sina Trust member (Administration) AKM Sadru Islam; The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam; Prothom Alo Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif; veteran editor Abul Asad; Naya Diganta Editor Salahuddin Muhammad Babar; The New Nation Editor Mokarram Hossain; and Manabkantha Editor Mohammad Shahidul Islam, among others.

Diplomats of the US, the UK, China, India, Pakistan, Kosovo, Turkey, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Australia, Italy, Denmark, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Maldives, Iran, Canada, Palestine, Afghanistan, Libya, Algeria, the EU, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, South Korea, Bhutan, Thailand, Switzerland, Spain, Brazil, the UN, UNDP and IRI were present.

reclaim their rights and future.

"After a dark period of authoritarian rule, we now stand in a phase of democratic transition," said Shafiqur, who is contesting in the election from Dhaka-15.

Turning to the economy, he was "not survival, but stability".

"Growth alone is no longer sufficient. Economic success must be measured by whether people can plan their lives with confidence, provide for their families with dignity and participate meaningfully in society."

In the first session of the summit, Dilara Choudhury, a former professor and chair of Jahangirnagar University's department of government and politics, asked how women's participation in the highest policymaking forum could be ensured.

He pointed to unemployment, inflation and the dominance of

men in politics.

Shafiqur also stressed partnerships

between the state and citizens, the

public and private sectors, and

Bangladesh and the international

community.

Under its fiscal proposals, Jamaat

said it would gradually reduce tax and

value-added tax (VAT) from current

rates, with a long term target of

lowering tax to 19 percent and VAT to

10 percent.

The party also announced plans

to introduce a 'Smart Social Security

Card', integrating National Identity

(NID), Taxpayer's Identification

Number (TIN), health services and

social welfare benefits into a single

platform.

For industries, gas, electricity and

water charges would not be increased

over the next three years. It also

pledged to reopen closed factories

through public-private partnership

arrangements, with 10 percent

ownership allocated to workers.

For the agricultural sector, the

party proposed interest free loan

facilities for farmers.

Under a Qard-e-Hasana scheme,

five lakh graduates would receive

interest free loans of up to Tk 10,000

per month for a maximum period of

two years after graduation or until

they secure employment.

The party announced interest-free

education loans of Tk 10,000 per

month for one lakh students based on

merit and financial need.

It also said 100 students each year

would be provided interest-free loans

to study at leading global universities,

including Harvard, MIT, Oxford

and Cambridge, with the aim of

supporting meritorious students from

low-income families.

The party further announced plans

to merge Eden College and Begum

Badrunnissa College to establish what

it described as the world's largest

women's university.

On healthcare, the party pledged

free medical services for citizens

aged over 60 and children under

five, alongside plans to establish

specialised hospitals in all 64 districts.

In its proposed "First Thousand

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