



Strike over DP World deal cripples Ctg port

Govt, CPA negotiating contract with UAE-based company

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Operations at Chattogram port came to a standstill yesterday over the planned handover of the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to DP World.

The government and the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) are negotiating the contract with the UAE-based operator.

Worker organisations at the port began their fresh protests on Thursday and went on an eight-hour strike yesterday.

The CPA yesterday afternoon transferred four employees, who have been leading the protests, to Pangaon Inland Container Terminal in Keraniganj. It asked them to join their new workplace by today.

The four employees are Humayun Kabir, audit assistant and coordinator of Chattogram Bandar Rokkha Parishad; Md Ibrahim Khokan, engine driver and general secretary of Bandar Jatiyatabadi

Protesters accuse the government of offering excessive concessions to DP World, warning that a large portion of earnings would be transferred abroad if the most profitable terminal is leased out.

Sramik Dal; Md Anwarul Azim, senior accounts assistant; and Md Faridur Rahman, a fourth-class employee of the engineering department.

However, Humayun told The Daily Star that they would not join their new workplace and continue the protests.

The CPA has also formed a six-member committee to assess the financial losses caused by the strike and identify those involved in the movement.

During yesterday's protests, speakers at a rally accused Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) Ashik Chowdhury, CPA Chairman SM Moniruzzaman, and other top officials of spearheading the deal. Protesters chanted slogans against them during a procession in the port area.

This correspondent could not reach Ashik for comment despite repeated attempts yesterday. Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakawat Hossain and his personal secretary were also unavailable for comments.

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With no cargo to carry to and from Chattogram port, trucks are parked in and around a terminal near PC Road yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Be wary of vote theft and ballot stuffing

Tarique urges voters in Tangail, Sirajganj; pledges export of heritage items



SAJJAD HOSSAIN from the campaign trail

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday warned against vote theft, urging voters to remain wary of people from other areas casting votes using someone else's name.

"You must be prepared from the day before to make sure no one can put a stamp on your vote using your name.... You must be careful and keep a watchful eye on your own polling centres," he told a rally in the Charjana Bypass area on the Dhaka-Tangail Highway last evening.

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A party canvassing for 'yes' under public pressure: Shafiqur Jamaat ameer pledges unity govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said public pressure has compelled a certain political party to start campaigning for a "yes" vote in the February 12 referendum.

Making an oblique reference to BNP, he said, "They did not allow the issue of the referendum regarding the July charter and reforms to come to the fore. They only began

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Next govt faces 'clouded outlook', rising risks: IMF

LITANY OF RISKS

Delayed banking reforms may dampen depositor confidence, heighten contagion risk

Forex market imbalances may lead to losses in foreign reserves

Heightened uncertainty could raise the risk of stagflation

A sharp reduction in aid flows will limit budgetary resources

Geopolitical tensions will increase commodity prices

Trade barriers may lead to a loss of foreign market share for RMG

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The next elected government will inherit an economy with a "clouded outlook" and rising macro-financial risks requiring urgent action, according to the International Monetary Fund's latest assessment.

One of the dangers, the IMF said, is the possibility of delayed banking reforms — or, more seriously, "reversals of exchange rate reform and fiscal discipline".

While a gradual recovery remains possible, the report argues that the

balance of risks is skewed sharply to the downside.

"Since the completion of the combined review in June 2025, the near-term growth outlook has deteriorated, and the pace of the decline in inflation is projected to slow," the IMF said.

Tight policies, weak investment amid financial sector strains and election-related uncertainty are expected to limit FY26 growth to 4.7 percent, which is projected to accelerate to around 6 percent over the medium term, according to an

IMF forecast.

Foreign exchange reserves have begun to rebuild, but the IMF cautioned that "buffers have yet to fully recover".

The report, released yesterday, comes as Bangladesh's interim government works to stabilise the economy ahead of elections scheduled for February.

Recent data show a strengthening external position, supported in part by continued IMF disbursements. Total purchases under the

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In the run-up to February 12 polls, Shakeel Anwar visits outlying constituencies to hear directly from voters about their hopes, demands and expectations.

Nalchity, where Hadi's memory meets ballot box

SHAKEEL ANWAR, from Nalchity, Jhalakathi

Snaking through narrow, brick-laid lanes and by-lanes, I walked into Khas Mahal, a densely populated neighbourhood adjoining the Nalchity upazila headquarters launch ghat. Most houses here — some barely more than shanties — stand on khas, or government-owned land.

On one such alley stands the ancestral home of Osman Abdul Hadi, a modest two-storey structure made of corrugated sheets. Since Hadi's assassination in December, the house has become an unlikely destination for visitors from far beyond this southern upazila of Jhalakathi district.

There was no family member

inside when I arrived. Instead, two young men — Omer Faruque and Mithun, both college students — and a police constable, Nasir Uddin, stood watch.

Omer and Mithun had travelled from Barishal, around 15 miles away, simply to see "Hadi bhai's



home". Both had met Hadi during the tumultuous days of the July 2024 movement. Omer recalled their first encounter vividly.

"He came to Barishal in August," Omer said. "We were demonstrating on the streets when we heard someone from

Dhaka University had arrived. People urged him to lead the slogans. He put one hand on my shoulder, climbed onto a rickshaw, and began chanting."

Omer said he later joined Hadi in guarding a Hindu temple in nearby Jhalakathi town during a tense period of communal anxiety immediately after August 5. "We came to pay respect to his memory," he said softly.

As the two young men rode away through the narrow lanes, constable Nasir Uddin said such visits had become common. "People come from far away just to see the house," he said. "The other day a woman from Khulna came and cried loudly. She said she watches Hadi bhai's videos on her phone all the time."

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25th

The Daily Star

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Announcement for O & A Level Private and School Candidates

Criteria

Students who appeared for the following sessions & qualify for the award criteria will be eligible for the gala event. The schools following Cambridge Curriculum will be eligible to register for **October/November 2024, May/June 2025, October/November 2025** and schools following Edexcel Curriculum will be eligible to register for **October/November 2024, January 2025, May/June 2025, October/November 2025** sessions.

Last date of registration is 28th February 2026.

Cambridge

(6 A's or above for "O" level or IGCSE in one or two consecutive sessions)
(3 A's or above for "A" level in one or two consecutive sessions)

Edexcel

(Grading of "7" or above in 6 Subjects for IGCSE in one or two consecutive sessions)
(3 A's or above for IAL in one or two consecutive sessions)

Private Candidates

Private candidates are requested to submit their information at The Daily Star office to be recognized as awardees. Contact The Daily Star, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, till **28 February 2026, between 11:00 am and 4:30 pm (except on Fridays and Saturdays)**, with their **original** and a **photocopy of the Statement of Results or Certificates and 2 (two) passport-size photos**. Please call this number at **+8801786111100** or email at **o.alevel.tds@gmail.com** before heading to the specified address.

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