

Taiyeb's surprise departure

He left for Germany in an Emirates flight yesterday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser of the interim government on ICT and telecommunications, departed Bangladesh for Germany yesterday, sources at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka confirmed.

He left the country on an Emirates Airlines flight (EK 583), an associate of his said, adding, "Sir [Taiyeb] took leave from office on February 9 and 10. He was formally given a farewell by both the ICT and Telecom divisions of the ministry. He will now return to normal life, so he left today [yesterday]."

Taiyeb was appointed special assistant to the chief adviser with the status of a state minister on March 5, 2025.

Earlier, in November 2024, Taiyeb, an electrical engineering graduate of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, was appointed as an ICT policy adviser.



BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman addressing journalists during a post-polls briefing at the Intercontinental Hotel in the capital yesterday, after his party achieved a landslide victory in the 13th national election on February 12.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

World hails Bangladesh on polls success

UN, EU, foreign govts pledge support for reforms, national unity

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations, the European Union, and several other countries have congratulated the people of Bangladesh on holding successful elections, pledging support for national cohesion, democratic rights, and the rule of law.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres, said on Friday that the UN chief has encouraged all political stakeholders to build on the momentum generated by the polls to strengthen national cohesion and the rule of law.

Guterres congratulated the people of Bangladesh on holding the elections and a referendum and reaffirmed the UN's commitment to supporting the country's efforts to build a peaceful and prosperous future, Dujarric said.

He added that the UN expects that the elections will lead to ensuring human rights for all, including the minorities, as Bangladesh advances its transition and pursues inclusive, sustainable reforms.

Meanwhile, the European External Action Service yesterday welcomed the holding of genuinely competitive parliamentary elections and a referendum in a peaceful atmosphere.

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BNP's average win margins dwarf Jamaat's

BNP, ALLIES			
Division	Seats won	Median of Difference	Average % victory margin
Barishal	16	41,483	66.29%
Chattogram	48	48,656	54.27%
Dhaka	58	45,447	54.61%
Khulna	11	24,750	26.39%
Mymensingh	18	47,361	70.14%
Rajshahi	28	42,571	38.49%
Rangpur	14	26,540	18.87%
Sylhet	18	55,477	83.25%
Grand Total	211	45,214	53.54%

JAMAAT, ALLIES			
Division	Seats won	Median of Difference	Average % victory margin
Barishal	3	26,229	38.63%
Chattogram	5	50,577	43.55%
Dhaka	11	11,389	12.60%
Khulna	24	27,448	25.80%
Mymensingh	4	25,879	34.22%
Rajshahi	11	6,993	5.56%
Rangpur	18	23,690	27.23%
Sylhet	1	9,581	13.73%
Grand Total	77	23,787	23.57%

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in 14 constituencies. In four seats — Gaibandha-1, Cumilla-4, Rangpur-3 and Satkhira-2 — the margin exceeded 100,000 votes.

The largest gap was in Satkhira-2, where Jamaat triumphed by 150,666 votes. In these landslide seats, the average margin of victory stood at 252.15 percent.

The BNP-led alliance, despite its sweeping success, also faced close contests in several constituencies.

Its narrowest victory margin was just over 1,000 votes. It won by between 1,000 and 2,000 votes

in three seats — Chattogram-14, Brahmanbaria-5 and Cox's Bazar-4.

In another six seats — Dhaka-13, Khulna-5, Gaibandha-4, Dhaka-10, Dhaka-17 and Dinajpur-3 — the margin ranged from 2,000 to 5,000 votes. Dhaka-17 was won by BNP chairperson Tarique Rahman.

The average percentage margin of victory in these close BNP wins was just 2.17 percent.

The BNP alliance won by margins of 5,000 to 10,000 votes in 18 seats.

In total, it recorded landslide victories — margins exceeding 100,000 votes — in 27 constituencies.

The largest margin was in Rangamati, where BNP won by 170,322 votes, followed closely by Rajbari-2 with a margin of 169,955 votes.

On average, in these big wins, BNP candidates secured over 200 percent more votes than their closest rivals.

Overall, 24 constituencies across the country saw percentage winning margins below 5 percent.

These were almost evenly split between the two camps — 11 seats went to the BNP and 13 to the Jamaat-led alliance.

As the margin brackets widen,

the gap between the two alliances becomes more pronounced.

A total of 25 seats had winning margins between 5 and 10 percent, with BNP winning 15 and Jamaat eight.

Similarly, 35 seats recorded margins between 10 and 20 percent; BNP and its allies captured 22 of these, while Jamaat and its partners secured 13.

Regionally, Jamaat faced its toughest competition in the Rajshahi division, where it won 11 seats with an average margin of just 5.56 percent.

The BNP, meanwhile, encountered

its strongest resistance in Rangpur division, winning 14 seats there with an average margin of 18.87 percent.

Jamaat's most comfortable victories came in the Chattogram division. Although it won only five seats in the region, the alliance posted an average margin of 43.55 percent — its highest regional performance.

The BNP, on the other hand, dominated Sylhet division, achieving an overwhelming average winning margin of 83.25 percent across 18 seats, marking it as the party's strongest regional bastion.

This election has set a 'new benchmark'

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Ijabs said the electoral framework largely accords with international standards and praised the Election Commission for working independently and transparently.

He highlighted the role of citizen observers, fact-checkers, and youth and women activists in rebuilding public trust and enhancing transparency.

He commended poll workers for managing voting and counting efficiently, noting that the presence of party agents at all stages enhanced integrity.

Regular updates on tabulation by returning officers and legacy media also helped maintain public confidence, he added.

However, Ijabs pointed out that independent participation of persons with disabilities was not always ensured. Women accounted for only four percent of candidates, with seven elected, while youth activism did not consistently translate into influence within party structures.

"Limited participation by women affects the quality of democratic decision-making," he said, urging Bangladesh to fulfil its commitments under international conventions on women's rights.

He also noted under-representation of indigenous communities and minorities.

Tomáš Zdechovský, head of the European Parliament Delegation, said Bangladesh is entering a crucial new phase and urged the new parliament and government to implement approved reforms.

Commonwealth Observer Group Chairman Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo commended the peaceful election while highlighting areas where further progress on inclusion and accessibility could strengthen the democratic process.

"The people of Bangladesh have exercised their democratic rights to seek the fulfilment of their aspirations. We encourage them to be magnanimous and united in their shared democratic future," said the former president of Ghana.

He raised concerns about online misinformation, cyber harassment and hate speech, which continue to affect public discourse, while noting that officials assisted elderly voters and persons with disabilities, but many polling stations remained inaccessible, particularly on upper floors, and lacked provisions for other forms of disability.

"Women's and youth participation emerged as key concerns in the electoral process," Nana Addo said.

"Meanwhile, although young people were visibly active throughout the process, it did not consistently translate into meaningful participation within formal political party structures."

On the referendum, the group said it recognises the July charter as a response to multiple and urgent demands for reform.

Asked about the ban on Awami League activities and its absence in the election, Nana Addo said this reflects the recent political history of the country.

"One of our most important recommendations to the new government will be to pursue measures that enable all political actors within Bangladesh's polity to participate in future elections. This would strengthen the democratic process demonstrated on election day."

He encouraged the Bangladesh Election Commission to conduct a post-election review, including all observer recommendations, as is consistent with good practice.

Unity, not divisions or vengeance

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Stating that justice will be the guiding principle of his future government in ensuring the rule of law, Tarique sought cooperation from all political parties and forces in building a "safe and humane Bangladesh".

The BNP chairman also placed the highest importance on maintaining peace and order in the country, saying law and order must be kept normal at any cost and that no form of violence, retaliation, provocative activities, or wrongdoing will be tolerated.

Tarique pointed out that the next government will inherit a "fragile economy", weakened constitutional and statutory institutions and a "deteriorating" law and order situation left behind by an authoritarian regime.

Earlier, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir introduced Tarique Rahman as the "Prime Minister-in-waiting".

Tarique said, "This victory belongs to Bangladesh. This victory belongs to democracy. This victory belongs to the people who aspire to and have sacrificed for democracy. From today,

we all are free, with the restoration of freedom and rights."

Noting that the mandate belongs to the people, he said, "You have paved the way for the establishment of democracy in the country."

"Your spontaneous participation will lead to the re-establishment of a parliament and government accountable to people..." he said, adding that the will of the people must be upheld.

The BNP chairperson congratulated all candidates regardless of the election results. In a democratic state, political parties are the true beacons of democracy, he said.

"If both the government and the opposition play responsible roles from their respective positions, democracy will surely take an institutional form in the country."

Addressing the political parties that participated in the election, he said, "Your ideas and views are important to us..."

Later, Tarique and BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury took questions from journalists.

Asked whether any "engineering" was needed to win more than 200 seats, Tarique said, "Convincing the people was our engineering. All we did was bring the people to our side. Alhamdulillah, we succeeded."

Ensuring a "proper environment" was also part of that effort, he said.

On whether the election was difficult, he said it was. "If you want to do good work or achieve any good, you have to work hard. It will be difficult."

About reconciliation with the supporters of the Awami League, Tarique said, "[It would be done] by ensuring the rule of law."

Referring to the immediate challenges, Tarique said the main tasks include reviving the economy, maintaining law and order, and addressing what he described as politicisation of institutions.

"We have to ensure good governance."

In reply to a query, Tarique said his government would "definitely" listen to the youth but would also address issues related to other sections of society.

About steps the BNP will take to revive the economy, Tarique said his government will facilitate more businesses and create jobs.

"We want to have an economy where everyone, based on their qualifications and merit, can do business, trade and thrive... We do not want to give opportunities to any special group. That is not good in the long term," he said.

About foreign policy plans, including relations with India, Tarique said, "I think we have made ourselves clear regarding foreign policy. The interests of Bangladesh and the Bangladeshi people come first. We will decide our foreign policy while protecting those interests."

Referring to ties with China, Tarique said, "We'll try to protect the interests of the people of Bangladesh. If there is something that will not be in favour of Bangladesh, naturally we cannot do that."

"I'm sure mutual interest is the first priority we will go by," he added.

Adding to Tarique's answers, Khosru said, "The BNP follows the principle of multilateralism. We

don't have any country-centric policy as such. Relations will be based on mutual respect, mutual interest, non-interference and strategic autonomy for Bangladesh."

Replying to a question about reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Khosru said, "SAARC was initially initiated by Bangladesh. Naturally, we want to revive it... We will hold discussions with our friends once we form the government."

In response to a question on whether they would demand the extradition of ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina from India, Amir Khosru said, "It depends on the legal process."

When asked if the government would seek a review of the verdicts of the International Crimes Tribunal, he said it was "a matter for the judiciary".

"We would like to leave the judiciary separate from the functions of the executive and the legislature," he added.

Ismail Jabiullah, member of the BNP chairperson's Advisory Council, moderated the programme.

'Will be in JS, on the streets'

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According to him, assistant returning officers advised candidates to approach the Election Commission, but when they did so, their applications were rejected on the grounds that the gazette had already been published, effectively depriving them of their rights.

With the gazette now in place, Azad said the only remaining option was to seek remedy through election tribunals, and if necessary, to file writ petitions with the High Court.

He also said that as the "Yes" vote prevailed in the July charter referendum, the provision for nominating 100 upper house members based on proportional votes is now in effect. According to him, the people have rejected the scope for a "note of dissent", making proportional representation by popular vote mandatory in forming the upper house. During the July charter reform discussions, the BNP had argued that the upper house should be formed based on the proportion of seats won, not total votes.

Addressing the BNP, which secured a parliamentary majority, Azad said the party now bears greater responsibility and should act accordingly.

Referring to post election violence, he warned that the alliance would be compelled to announce political programmes if such incidents continue. A draft of possible programmes has already been prepared and will be finalised after consultations at the highest level.

Azad also claimed that in some constituencies the number of "No" votes in the referendum was unusually high. He added that detailed allegations of irregularities, including claims of manipulation in 30 seats, would be placed before the Election Commission at a meeting today.

At a press conference earlier in the day, the Jamaat demanded recounts in the 30 constituencies, alleging "fraud".

The constituencies are Dhaka-7,8,10,13 and 17; Panchagarh-1; Thakurgaon-2; Dinajpur-3 and 5; Lalmonirhat-1 and 2; Gaibandha-4; Bogura-3; Sirajganj-1; Jashore-1; Khulna-3 and 5; Barguna-1 and 2; Jhalakathi-1; Pirojpur-2;

Mymensingh-1,4 and 10; Kishoreganj-3; Gopalganj-2; Brahmanbaria-5; Chandpur-4; Chattogram-14; and Cox's Bazar-4.

A recount, the party claimed, would change the results in many of these seats.

JAMAAT ACCEPTS OUTCOME
 Earlier in the day, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said his party recognises the overall outcome of the election and will serve as a "vigilant, principled, and peaceful opposition" in parliament.

In a post on his verified Facebook page, Shafiqur said Jamaat remained committed to a stable and functioning democratic order and would respect the rule of law.

"In any genuine democratic journey, the true test of leadership is not only how we campaign, but how we respond to the verdict of the people," he wrote. "We recognise the overall outcome, and we respect the rule of law."

Highlighting the party's performance, he said Jamaat secured 77 seats, nearly quadrupling its parliamentary presence and emerging

as one of the strongest opposition blocs in contemporary Bangladeshi politics.

"That is not a setback. That is a foundation," he said, describing the result as a base for future political growth.

He thanked party activists and volunteers who, he said, worked tirelessly during the campaign, noting that some faced intimidation and harassment for exercising their democratic rights. Their "courage", he added, "has strengthened our democracy".

In a separate post, Shafiqur condemned incidents of violence allegedly targeting Jamaat supporters and other political activists after the polls, warning the incoming government that the people's mandate is "not a licence" but a conditional trust.

"The core conditions of that trust are maintaining law and order, ensuring equal protection for all, and guaranteeing the safety of every citizen regardless of political identity."

At the briefing in the afternoon, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General and head of its central publicity

department Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair demanded that oath-taking of the declared winners in those constituencies be suspended until the recounts are completed.

According to Zubair, the results were "deliberately altered to defeat the candidates of Jamaat and the I-party alliance". He further alleged that a section of officials from the administration and the Election Commission were involved in the "fraud", adding that Jamaat is taking legal steps over the issue.

After the briefing, in a post published at 6:24pm on Jamaat's official Facebook page, Shafiqur wrote, "The BNP alliance has secured a majority of seats. We recognise this result and respect the constitutional process. However, the national vote outcome also reflects a deeper and more complex reality."

The post was taken down within seven minutes, but by then had already been shared more than a hundred times and drawn over a hundred comments.