



Hundreds of demonstrators with flags and umbrellas attend a demonstration of the Iranian opposition at the Theresienwiese fair grounds in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC).

PHOTO: AFP

US readies for weeks-long Iran ops

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"Sometimes you have to have fear. That's the only thing that really will get the situation taken care of," Trump said.

Asked if he wanted regime change in Iran, Trump responded that it "seems like that would be the best thing that could happen." He declined to share who he wanted to take over Iran, but said "there are people."

"For 47 years, they've been talking and talking and talking," Trump said after a military event at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "In the meantime, we've lost a lot of lives while they talk. Legs blown off, arms blown off, faces blown off. We've been

going on for a long time." Asked for comment on the preparations for a potentially sustained US military operation, White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said: "President Trump has all options on the table with regard to Iran."

"He listens to a variety of perspectives on any given issue, but makes the final decision based on what is best for our country and national security," Kelly said.

The Pentagon declined to comment. The United States sent two aircraft carriers to the region last year, when it carried out strikes against Iranian nuclear sites.

However, June's "Midnight Hammer"

operation was essentially a one-off US attack, with stealth bombers flying from the United States to strike Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran staged a very limited retaliatory strike on a US base in Qatar.

The planning underway this time is more complex, the officials said.

In a sustained campaign, the US military could hit Iranian state and security facilities, not just nuclear infrastructure, one of the officials said. The official declined to provide specific details.

Experts say the risks to US forces would be far greater in such an operation against Iran, which boasts a formidable arsenal of

missiles. Retaliatory Iranian strikes also increase the risk of a regional conflict.

The same official said the United States fully expected Iran to retaliate, leading to back-and-forth strikes and reprisals over a period of time.

The White House and Pentagon did not respond to questions about the risks of retaliation or regional conflict.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to bomb Iran over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and crushing of internal dissent. On Thursday, he warned the alternative to a diplomatic solution would "be very traumatic, very traumatic." Iran's Revolutionary

Guards have warned that in case of strikes on Iranian territory, they could retaliate against any US military bases.

The US maintains bases throughout the Middle East, including in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Trump for talks in Washington on Wednesday, saying that if an agreement with Iran were reached, "it must include the elements that are vital to Israel."

Iran has said it is prepared to discuss curbs on its nuclear program in exchange for lifting sanctions, but has ruled out linking the issue to missiles.

Two killed

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Rahman, 20, both from Pathapara village, and Md Shuvo, 20, from Dhumi village in Ranihat.

They were first taken to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

"All the victims were local residents," Biswas said, adding that some were previously associated with a political party, but he declined to name it.

The blast caused the brick walls of the house to collapse and blew off its tin roof.

Police, the Bomb Disposal Unit and the Criminal Investigation Department visited the scene and collected evidence.

Police are investigating the incident to determine the exact cause, said the SP.

Major publishers warn

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Monirul Hoque of Ananya Prokashoni said there was uncertainty about the situation following the parliamentary polls.

Ramadan is expected to begin on February 17, subjects to sighting of the moon. Publishers fear turnout will be low as people will spend time on iftar, Taraweeh prayers and other religious observances.

Mazharul Islam of Onno Prokash said it can be easily anticipated that the turnout will be low during Ramadan.

The number of students, who are a major part of the fair's audience and also work part-time at many stalls, may also decline, as educational institutions usually close weeks before Eid, he added.

He questioned, "How will the staffers at the stall manage to work while fasting?"

However, if the Ekushey Book Fair continues to take place in February as per tradition, the next three editions of the fair will also be held during Ramadan.

Adarsha Prakashani Publisher Md Mahabubur Rahman said around 280 stall-holding publishers have announced they will abstain, fearing financial losses.

"Every publisher is suffering economically, more or less. If the book fair is held from February 20, over three hundred publishers will not take part in it," he added.

He also alleged that pavilion allocations were being given beyond regulations to continue the fair without mainstream publishers.

Mahabubur said publishers submitted memorandums and letters to relevant authorities, including Bangla Academy, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the chief adviser's office, requesting rescheduling.

Several publishers, requesting anonymity, alleged that new publishers were being allocated pavilions and stalls without approval from the book fair committee and in violation of seniority rules.

"A dangerous precedent is being set. Later, they will claim these allotments as a 'legal right', paving the way

for chaos and litigation," said a publisher.

This "frantic rush" to fill empty slots will jeopardize the fair's business environment and the entire publishing ecosystem, said another publisher.

Responding to the allegations, Bangla Academy Director General Mohammad Azom said stall and pavilion allocations are reviewed annually based on standards among applicants.

Also, there is no scope to change the scheduled date, as the proposal came after preparations were well underway, he told The Daily Star.

Azom said numerous government approvals had already been obtained, and significant expenditure had been made.

He also denied that the date was chosen arbitrarily, saying it was decided in the presence of publishers and approved unanimously by the book fair committee.

"Every decision has been made in the presence of a large number of publishers of the book fair committee, and this time, even more publishers were included in the committee than in previous years," he said.

Earlier, Bangla Academy had announced that the 2026 Ekushey Book Fair would begin in December last year, considering the election and Ramadan, but later reversed that decision.

Mujibur leads

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Victoria High School, said, "Removing his posters immediately after the election is a commendable step."

According to the district election office, Mujibur secured 1,70,877 votes. His nearest rival, Sheikh Noor-e-Alam Hamidi of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis (rickshaw symbol), got 50,204 votes.

Among other candidates, BNP rebel Mohsin Mia (Football) got 33,911 votes; Pritam Das of Jatiya Nagorik Party (Shapla Koli) received 4,875; Md Abul Hasan of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Moi) secured 969; and Mohammad Zarif Hossain of Jatiya Party (Plough) got 910 votes.

People issued direct mandate for reforms

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between these. That responsibility lies with politicians."

When asked whether the party preparing to form the government -- the BNP -- has any legal obligation to carry out the reforms, he said that the referendum represents the will of the sovereign people.

"Therefore, all political parties, including BNP, have a moral and political responsibility," said Riaz, also the former vice

president of the National Consensus Commission. The parties should not focus only on written laws, but must seriously consider political realities.

The proposals presented in the referendum are what the people directly approved.

The BNP has always claimed to represent public wishes, so Riaz hopes the party would respect these expectations when running the country and reforming the constitution.

The political parties had

already included the issues in their election manifestos, and senior leaders openly asked people to vote 'Yes'.

So, the referendum result is not just the government's agenda -- it is now the agenda of the state and all political parties.

While the manifestos gave indirect approval from voters, this referendum gave direct public approval for major constitutional reforms.

"This should clearly be seen as a people's mandate."

About priorities in implementing reforms, Riaz said it depends on how the process moves forward.

However, since there is a specific order to form an upper house of parliament, that must be completed within six months.

The ruling party and other political parties will decide the detailed priorities, he said.

"Through the referendum, a clear public mandate for reform has been expressed. Political

parties are responsible for implementing it. All parties are committed to state reform. We call on the ruling party, parties represented in parliament and the constitutional reform council, and even parties outside parliament to come together through dialogue and ensure this mandate is carried out."

When asked if he would take on any new role, Riaz said he wants to return to his profession as soon as possible.

BNP sweeps Ctg, wins 12 of 16 seats Internal rifts cost BNP

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Humam and Noman, this marks a successful debut in parliamentary politics.

"It is a rare honour for our village," said Shahadat Hossain, a local resident, noting that Gohira's legacy now spans generations of the Chowdhury and Noman families.

Contacted, Gias Uddin Quader Chowdhury said Gohira has long been a fertile ground for the country's political history.

"This is not the first time several candidates from our village have won at once," he said. "In a previous election, a total of six lawmakers from this village represented the same parliament."

"It's a matter of pride for us," he added.

Meanwhile, the victory of Nurul Amin in Chattogram-1 (Mirsarai) has become a local legend of perseverance. Amin, who started his political career as a ward member of Osmanpur union in 1998, defeated Jamaat's Mohammad Saifur Rahman by a margin of 44,261 votes.

Amin, a former upazila chairman who was removed by the previous regime in 2014, received 1,28,799 votes.

"The people of Mirsarai have seen my work from the union level to the upazila. Their trust is my only strength," Amin said after being declared the winner.

MAIDEN WINS, URBAN MANDATES

This election saw the rise of several new faces who converted their first-time candidacies into parliamentary seats.

In Chattogram-5 (Hathazari), Mir Mohammad

Helal Uddin, son of BNP Vice Chairman Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, won decisively with 1,47,054 votes.

In the city's Chattogram-10 constituency, Sayeed Al Noman secured 1,22,978 votes, riding on a campaign that focused on environmental protection and culture, which resonated strongly with the urban middle class. He is the son of late BNP leader Abdullah Al Noman.

For Hummam Quader Chowdhury, the win in Chattogram-7 (Rangunia) was a convincing entry into the Jatiya Sangsad. He bagged 1,01,445 votes, defeating his nearest rival, Jamaat-e-Islami's ATM Rezaul Karim, who received 41,719 votes.

In contrast, the most nail-biting finish was witnessed in Chattogram-14 (Chandanaish). BNP candidate Jasim Uddin Ahmed, a former upazila chairman making his first run for parliament, faced significant internal friction and a strong challenge from the II party alliance.

Despite the controversy surrounding his nomination, Jasim emerged victorious with 76,493 votes, edging out LDP's Professor Omar Faruque (75,467 votes) by a razor-thin margin of just 1,026 votes.

BNP'S BANSHKHALI BLUNDER

The biggest upset for the BNP occurred in Chattogram-16 (Banshkhali), a constituency the party historically won in 1996, 2001, and 2008.

Jamaat's Zahirul Islam (93,167 votes) capitalised on a fractured BNP base to defeat

official candidate Mishkatul Islam Chowdhury (83,105 votes), where Mishkatul faced a strong challenge from rebel candidate and former union chairman Leyakat Ali.

Leyakat's 55,071 votes effectively split the BNP base, allowing Jamaat to claim the seat for the first time. Analysts also pointed toward Jamaat's disciplined door-to-door campaigning since August 2024 as a deciding factor.

Idris Miah, convener of Chattogram South District BNP, admitted that the presence of rebel independent candidate Leyakat Ali, who drew over 55,000 votes, was the deciding factor. "Although the party high command expelled Leyakat, expulsion does not always bring the solution," Idris told The Daily Star. "If the party could have made him withdraw his candidacy, our candidate would have surely won."

In Chattogram-15 (Satkania-Lohagara), as expected, Shahjahan Chowdhury of Jamaat-e-Islami maintained his dominance.

A former ameer of the party's city unit and a tested veteran, Chowdhury secured 1,72,061 votes, defeating BNP's Nazmul Mustafa Amin by over 45,000 votes.

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:25 12:45 4:30 5:57 7:15
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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conflict within the party. Besides, they were also misled after expecting votes from Awami League supporters."

A similar view was expressed by Zakir Hossain Sarkar, the defeated candidate from the Kushtia-3 (Sadar) seat and member secretary of Kushtia district BNP.

"There were problems within our party. At the beginning, many did not join the campaign. Some even opposed the candidates as their preferred leaders were not nominated," he said.

Talking to at least 50 general voters across the Kushtia region, it was found that leaders and activists of the winning party, Jamaat-e-Islami, visited them five to six times. In contrast, many voters said BNP leaders did not reach out to them even once. They appeared indifferent to both victory and defeat.

Bottail, a suburban village under Kushtia Sadar upazila, lies just six kilometres from the town. In an area called Shishir Math in that village, several residents, including Sharif, Zahir and Salma, claimed no one came to seek their votes.

Abu Bakar Siddique, head of the BNP media cell formed during the election campaign, said there was resentment among party leaders and activists over the district, upazila and union committees formed after August 5. That frustration was reflected in the election results.

Since independence, Jamaat had won only once in the Kushtia-2 (Mirpur,

Bheramara) constituency in the 1986 election. This time, the party secured three seats in the region.

Asked about the reasons behind the success, Suja Uddin Joardar, secretary of Kushtia district Jamaat-e-Islami, said, "In recent times, the negative activities of BNP leaders and activists and the party's internal conflicts worked to our advantage. At the same time, our leaders' engagement with the public helped us reach the shore of victory. Broadly speaking, these three factors played a major role in our win."

Obaidul Haque, a teacher at Islamic University, said campaigning often plays a crucial role in elections.

"Perhaps this time Jamaat leaders and activists were able to reach more voters and communicate their goals effectively. Ultimately, voters made their choice. Beyond that, I do not see any sweeping reason," he said.

Political

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aside divisions and the outcome of the election, carried a positive political message.

"We are all from the same area. In the interest of development, we will work together for peace and order in the area, regardless of party or opinion, and will provide all-out support to the newly elected candidate," he said.

In Kishoreganj-3 constituency, Farruk received 1,12,466 votes while Jihad got 1,02,476.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Rapid Action Battalion-7
Patenga, Chattogram
www.rab.gov.bd

Invitation for e-Tender (Re-Tender)

For financial year 2025-2026, e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

Sl	Tender ID No. & Reference No.	Description of goods	Last selling date & time	Closing/opening date & time
1.	1226521, RAB-7/7453/Q/RAB/Part-1/565 Date: 05 Feb 2026	High Quality Local Mashur Dal	22 Feb 2026 09:00	22 Feb 2026 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Tenderer having clarity requirements are requested to contact at 01777-710705 (Assistant Director, Quartermaster).

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GD-300