



Israeli strikes kill a dozen Palestinians in Gaza
P5



Advisers' asset disclosures and a test for the new govt
P6



The weight of a supermajority in parliament
P7



In Focus: The forgotten debate over Pakistan
P10

13TH JATIYA SANGSAD MPS Two-thirds are first-timers

Likely leader of the House, opposition leader have never been lawmakers either

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR

The new parliament will feature a significant number of new faces, with first-time lawmakers set to take up the roles of both the leader of the House and the opposition leader for the first time in the country's history.

The BNP, led by Tarique Rahman, has secured a two-thirds majority, while the Jamaat-e-Islami, under the leadership of Shafiqur Rahman, has emerged as the second-largest party.



TOTAL MPs 297
At least 209 (70%) first-timers

BNP MPs 209
First-timers 132 (63%)

Jamaat MPs 68
First-timers 59 (86%)

NCP MPs 6
All of them first-timers

Independent MPs 7
First-timers 6 (86%)

6 MPs from IAB, Bangladesh Khlefat Majlis, Khlefat Majlis, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Gano Samhati Andolan are all new.

Neither of the two has ever held the position of lawmaker, yet they will steer the future of the 13th parliament. Like them, more than two-thirds of the lawmakers elect will sit in the House for the first time, according to affidavits submitted to the Election Commission.

A total of eight parties will have representation in the new parliament, with top leaders of five of the parties being elected as MPs for the first time. They include National Citizen Party leader Nahid Islam; Gano Samhati Andolon leader Zonayed Saki; and Gono Odhikar Parishad leader Nurul Haque Nur.

Parliamentary affairs expert Nizam Ahmed said it is "unprecedented" that both the leader of the House and the opposition leader will be first-time MPs.

He recalled that in the first parliament, formed through the 1973 national polls, there was officially no opposition leader. There were only seven lawmakers on the opposition bench, who were referred to as an "opposition group".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman exchanging greetings with Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman at the latter's residence. Tarique yesterday visited Shafiqur, after the two parties dominated Thursday's national election.

PHOTO: SHAFIQR RAHMAN'S OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE

Tarique trying to balance fresh faces with old hands

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

By carefully choosing candidates for key posts, BNP seeks to build a competent, controversy-free cabinet that will send a positive message to the people, party insiders said.

Sources added that BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman is personally overseeing discussions ahead of the swearing-in of the BNP-led cabinet tomorrow.

The cabinet is expected to have 25 to 30 members. The leadership will consider former ministers from the BNP-led 2001 government, Standing Committee members, and new faces in an attempt to balance seasoned leaders with younger figures.

Tarique Rahman is poised to become prime minister, taking charge of at least five ministries, including defence.

Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir may become the next president, though the appointment process could take time.

In the meantime, he is expected to helm a key ministry.

The cabinet is expected to have 25 to 30 members, and the leadership will consider former ministers from the BNP-led 2001 government, Standing Committee members, and new faces.

Former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas and former textiles and jute minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed are likely to return in ministerial roles.

Former commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and former information minister Abdul Moyeen Khan are also being considered. Other names include former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, former communications minister Salahuddin Ahmed, and former state minister for power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku.

BNP Standing Committee members Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and AZM

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Heads of govt, ministers to be at swearing-in ceremony

Indian speaker to represent Modi

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Maldivian Prime Minister Mohamed Muizzu, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Lok Sabha Om Birla and foreign ministers of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan will attend the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected government of Bangladesh led by BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman tomorrow.

The interim government invited the heads of government from more than a dozen countries including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim as well as foreign ministers from other countries.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

NEW PARLIAMENT Businesspeople far outnumber politicians

ZYMA ISLAM

Businesspersons will make up more than half of the new parliament, according to affidavits filed with the Election Commission during the election.

In total, 178 lawmakers declared "business" as their profession in the affidavits. Except for two of them, who did not declare their incomes, the average annual income of these lawmakers is Tk 1 crore.

The second-largest group is lawyers, with 40 elected to parliament. Their average annual income is Tk 26.8 lakh.

Fourteen lawmakers identified themselves as farmers or involved in agriculture, with an average annual income of Tk 11.7 lakh.

The lowest-earning farmer is Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's Md Golam Rabbani of Rangpur-5, who earns Tk 40,000 per year. However, he has movable assets worth Tk 22.9 lakh, while his wife has movable assets worth Tk 16.5 lakh.

At least 28 teachers were elected to parliament, all but four of them from Jamaat.

Only nine people identified themselves as politicians. From the BNP, they are Chairperson Tarique Rahman; Khulna-4 lawmaker Azizul Bari Helal; Chandpur-1's ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon; Khagrachhari's Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan; Barishal-2's Sarder Sharfuddin Ahmed; Bhola-4's Md Nurul Islam; and Manikganj-2's Moinul Islam Khan.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Workers cleaning and preparing the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday for an open-air oath-taking ceremony of cabinet members and members of parliament to be held tomorrow. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Congratulations!

Global Insurance PLC is pleased to announce that its esteemed Chairman, **Mr. SAYEED AHMED**, has been elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for the **Shariatpur-1** constituency in the 13th National Parliamentary Election.

This accomplishment is not only a personal milestone for him but also a source of great pride for the entire Global Insurance family, including the Sponsors, Board of Directors, officers, employees and well-wishers.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Mr. Sayeed Ahmed on this achievement.

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Gaibandha AL leader dies in jail custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A local Awami League leader of Gaibandha's Palashbari upazila died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital while in jail custody early yesterday.



The deceased, Shamikul Islam, 60, of the Bairiharimari area of Palashbari municipal town, was the president of Palashbari upazila Awami League. He had been serving as vice principal of Palashbari Mohila College, said police.

Anwar Hossain, jail superintendent of Gaibandha District Jail, said Shamikul was sent to jail on October 18, 2025 in a case filed over vandalism and assault. He had long been suffering from heart disease and diabetes.

Last night, when he suddenly felt unwell, he was taken to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was quickly referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Harpada Sarkar, head of the Cardiology Department at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said that Shamikul was admitted to the hospital around 2:50am today (yesterday). At that time, he was suffering from breathing difficulties and chest pain. He died around 3:50am while undergoing treatment.

Hospital sources said after the autopsy, the body will be handed over to his family.

The Gaibandha jail sources said after the Awami League-led government was ousted from power on August 5, 2024, multiple cases were filed against Shamikul. In one of the cases, he was arrested in Dhaka on December 8 of that year and remained in jail for a long time. Although he was later released on bail, he was re-arrested in another case and sent to jail last year.



BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman speaks with NCP Convener Nahid Islam at his residence on Bailey Road in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

NUCLEAR DEAL WITH US

Ready for compromise if US lifts sanctions: Iran

AGENCIES

Iran is ready to consider compromises to reach a nuclear deal with the United States if Washington is willing to discuss lifting sanctions, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC in an interview published yesterday.

Iran has said it is prepared to discuss curbs on its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of sanctions, but has repeatedly ruled out linking the issue to other questions including missiles.

Takht-Ravanchi confirmed that a second round of nuclear talks would take place tomorrow in Geneva, after Tehran

and Washington resumed discussions in Oman earlier this month.

"(Initial talks went) more or less in a positive direction, but it is too early to judge," Takht-Ravanchi told the BBC.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed at a White House meeting on Wednesday that the US would work to reduce Iran's oil exports to China, Axios reported, citing two US officials briefed on the issue.

"We agreed that we will go full force with maximum pressure against Iran, for example, regarding Iranian oil sales to China," Axios reported on Saturday,

quoting a senior US official.

Asked about the report, China's foreign ministry said yesterday that "normal cooperation between countries conducted within the framework of international law is reasonable and legitimate, and should be respected and protected."

China accounts for more than 80 percent of Iran's oil exports. Any reduction in that trade would mean lower oil revenue for Iran, reports Reuters.

Iranian authorities have without prior warning transferred Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi to a prison in the north of the country as concern grows over her health, her family said on Saturday.

Reconciliation key to post-polls confidence Says ANFREL

UNB, Dhaka

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) said yesterday that the confidence gained on Election Day in Bangladesh will last only if post-election governance focuses on reconciliation through transitional justice and accountability under the rule of law.

In its interim assessment, ANFREL also stressed the need for enforceable oversight of political and campaign finance, clear complaint mechanisms, and reforms to reduce patronage, coercion, and recurring political unrest.

The group, Asia's first regional civil society network on elections and monitoring, based in Bangkok, said governance remains central to building long-term public confidence.

Bangladesh's 2026 parliamentary elections and referendum took place in a transition context shaped by the July 2024 youth-led uprising and amid heightened public scrutiny of state institutions.

Against that backdrop, ANFREL observed an Election Day environment that was generally peaceful, orderly, and safe in the areas covered.

This was a product of the Bangladesh Election Commission's visible operational planning and its coordination with security forces, including risk-based deployments and the use of transparency measures such as centralised monitoring and technology-enabled oversight.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE

Nine more hurt in five districts

STAR REPORT

At least nine people were injured and a house was set on fire in post-election violence in five districts on Saturday.

Six of them were wounded as two groups of BNP activists clashed in Natore's Lalpur upazila at night.

Farzana Sharmin Putul contested the election with the party ticket and won, while Taiful Islam Tipu, BNP's expelled assistant office secretary of the central committee, ran as an independent candidate.

Locals and police said tension had been prevailing between the groups for the last few weeks over the polls. They clashed at Walia Bazar around 9:00pm on Saturday.

"At least six people were injured during the clash," said Md Mojibar Rahman, officer-in-charge of Lalpur Police Station.

Two were arrested and a firearm was recovered from the spot. A case was filed in this connection, he added.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7

Two-thirds are first-timers

FROM PAGE 1

According to parliamentary records, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina served as the Leader of the House five times. She first assumed the role in the seventh parliament, and then for four consecutive terms from the ninth to the 12th parliament. She was first elected a lawmaker in 1986.

BNP leader Khaleda Zia, who was elected an MP for the first time in 1991, held the position of the leader of the House three times. She first assumed the role in the fifth parliament, and then in the sixth and eighth parliament.

The position was also held by leaders from other parties. Jatiya Party leaders Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Moudud Ahmed assumed the role in turn in the fourth parliament; JP leader Mizanur Rahman Choudhury in the third parliament; BNP leader Shah Azizur Rahman in the second parliament; and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL leader Mansur Ali in the first parliament.

Two JP leaders also held the position of the opposition leader — GM Quader in the 12th parliament, and Raushon Ershad in the 11th and 10th parliament.

Khaleda held the position in the ninth and seventh parliament, while Hasina assumed the role in the eighth, fifth and third parliament. JSD leader ASM Abdur Rab held the position in the fourth parliament as the representative of the Combined Opposition Parties (COP), and Asaduzzaman Khan, leader of an AL faction, in the second parliament.

THE 13TH PARLIAMENT

In the new parliament, at least 209 out of 297 lawmakers (70 percent) are first-timers.

Businesspeople far outnumber politicians

FROM PAGE 1

From Jamaat, they are Rangpur-2's ATM Azharul Islam and Rajshahi-1's Md Mujibur Rahman.

At least 10 doctors were elected to parliament — three from Jamaat and the rest from the BNP.

While the highest-earning doctor is Jamaat's Md Moseleuddin Farid, who practices and earns abroad, the average income of the doctor-lawmakers is Tk 18 lakh annually.

Other members of parliament include retired professionals, private job holders and scientists.

The top earner in parliament is BNP's Zakaria Taher from Cumilla-8, with an annual income of Tk 59.1 crore. He also has the highest movable assets, amounting to Tk 172.3 crore.

Zakaria, however, is an outlier. The second-highest earner is Dhaka-8's Mirza Abbas from the BNP, whose

The BNP, which won 209 seats, has 132 newcomers, meaning 63 percent of its parliamentary contingent will enter the House for the first time. In comparison, Jamaat has a higher ratio of first-timers than BNP — 59 of the 68 MPs (86 percent) from the Islamist party are newcomers.

Smaller parties are entirely represented by first-time lawmakers. All six NCP lawmakers are first-timers as are the six MPs from Islami Andolon Bangladesh; Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis; Khelafat Majlish; Gono Odhikar Parishad; and Gano Samhati Andolon.

Moreover, six of the seven independent lawmakers are first-timers.

The February 12 polls were Tarique's first-ever electoral contest. He contested two seats — Bogura-6 and Dhaka-17 — and won both.

Shafiqur vied for Moulvibazar-2 in the 2001 and 2018 elections, but lost. As Jamaat was banned from taking part in the 2018 polls, he contested Dhaka-15 with the BNP's electoral symbol, but lost. This time, he has won the constituency.

In 2018, Saki contested Dhaka-12 on Revolutionary Workers Party ticket but suffered defeat. This time, he has won Brahmanbaria-6, using his party symbol, but with BNP's support.

Gono Odhikar Parishad leader Nurul Haque Nur won Patuakhali-3 in his first-ever electoral contest with BNP's backing.

Similarly, Nahid Islam, one of the front-line leaders of the July mass uprising, contested for the first time and won Dhaka-11. Five other NCP leaders also won the polls in their first attempt. They all were part of the Jamaat-led 11-party alliance.

Nizam Ahmed, also a former

professor of public administration at Chittagong University, said that at the beginning, the first-time lawmakers will face some problems in following the rules of procedure of parliament.

They will have to follow the principle of "learning by doing", as it will be difficult to learn everything at once, he said.

Prof Sk Tafique M Haque, director of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance at North South University, hopes that the first-timers will be able to learn the rules of procedure quickly.

It is not correct that newcomers won't be able to run parliament effectively. Past records show that it is the old parliamentarians who made the Jatiya Sangsad dysfunctional, he said.

"If we look at the period from 1991 to 2008, the traditional leaders were in charge — be it in the opposition or in the government. They failed to make parliament effective. In other words, the established politicians of both parties bear this responsibility."

Having new members in parliament creates an opportunity for change, especially because change in leadership was one of the major aspirations of the 2024 mass uprising, he observed.

If the newcomers can bring a change in mindset, debates and dialogue will take place inside parliament, and political parties will not take to the streets to air their grievances.

Tafique believes that the surge in the number of first-time parliamentarians reflects the aspirations of the mass uprising.

"People wanted a change in old leadership. They wanted new faces, they wanted young people," he added.

annual income is Tk 9.26 crore.

The candidate with the second-highest value of immovable assets is BNP's Md Jalal Uddin of Chandpur-2. The assets were valued at Tk 55.2 crore at the time of purchase, but their current value has risen to Tk 220.7 crore.

Meanwhile, the lawmaker with the lowest income is also from the BNP — Noakhali-4's Md Shahjahan, whose annual income is Tk 32,822 from share investments.

Shahjahan, however, has nearly Tk 18 lakh in cash, while his wife has Tk 12.3 lakh in cash. His bank deposits are Tk 31.5 lakh, and both he and his wife have Tk 1.25 crore each in bonds and stocks. He also owns vehicles worth Tk 60 lakh, while his wife has immovable properties worth Tk 1.9 crore.

BNP lawmaker Naser Rahman of Moulvibazar-3 has the highest

immovable assets at Tk 56.6 crore, with a stated current value of Tk 87 crore.

All of the top 20 lawmakers with the highest movable and immovable assets belong to the BNP.

Independent lawmakers have the highest annual income on average — Tk 37.5 lakh.

The average annual income of BNP lawmakers is Tk 20.9 lakh, while Jamaat lawmakers average Tk 5.9 lakh.

The sole Islami Andolon Bangladesh lawmaker, Barguna-1's Oli Ullah, has total assets worth Tk 1 crore.

Among parliamentarians from the National Citizen Party, Dhaka-11 lawmaker Nahid Islam has the highest income, earning Tk 16 lakh from consultancies, while Kurigram-2 elect Atikur Rahman Mojahid earns the least. He also has the lowest assets, amounting to Tk 7.32 lakh.

Heads of govt, ministers to be at swearing-in ceremony

FROM PAGE 1

Modi would not be able to attend due to the India-AI Impact Summit taking place in New Delhi from February 16-20 and would be represented by Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

In a statement, India's external affairs ministry said Birla's participation at the important event underscores the deep and enduring friendship between the peoples of India and Bangladesh and reaffirms "India's steadfast commitment to the democratic values" that bind the two nations.

"As neighbours united by a shared history, culture and mutual respect, India welcomes Bangladesh's transition to an elected government under the leadership of Tarique Rahman, whose vision and values have received an overwhelming mandate of the people," it added.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri is likely to attend the ceremony, said a diplomatic source in Dhaka.

Leaders of China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE, Qatar and Brunei were invited, among others.

"We are expecting at least two heads of government and foreign ministers of other countries. Some countries will send their ambassadors to the event as their representation," a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star.

The newly elected MPs will take their oaths tomorrow morning, while

the new cabinet led by Tarique will be sworn in by President Mohammed Shahabuddin at the South Plaza of the national parliament around 4:00pm.

Meanwhile, more foreign leaders and organisations have congratulated the people of Bangladesh and Tarique on the successful election and the BNP's victory.

The Japanese embassy in Dhaka said they wholeheartedly appreciate the credible conduct of the 13th parliamentary elections by the people of Bangladesh.

"We would like to extend our sincere congratulations to all the political parties and leaders, particularly to the BNP and its Chairman, Mr. Tarique Rahman, for their victory. We expect the smooth and peaceful formation of a new government and look forward to further advancing our Strategic Partnership," it said in a statement.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Australia and Bangladesh share a strong partnership and they look forward to deepening cooperation with Bangladesh for the peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

The Thai embassy in Dhaka wished Bangladesh every success in this new chapter of democratic development and the implementation of political reforms.

"Thailand looks forward to forging

even closer ties and strengthening the enduring friendship between our two nations in the years ahead," it said in a statement.

Bangladesh Christian Association (BCA) President Nirmol Rozario and Secretary General Hemanta I Corraya have extended their heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the BNP and Tarique.

In a statement, they said they firmly believe the newly elected government will be capable of playing an effective role and providing strong leadership in upholding communal harmony, human dignity, modern state-building and ensuring the rightful and just rights of all citizens.

They also expressed hope that this victory would mark the beginning of a new chapter of overall progress and stability for Bangladesh, one in which the people's aspirations, responsible leadership and the nation's future potential would be brought together in unity.

The BCA expressed its strong commitment to standing beside it with a spirit of cooperation for the welfare of the nation.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development also extended their congratulations to Tarique.

Tarique trying to balance fresh faces

FROM PAGE 1

Zahid Hossain are expected to join the cabinet. Newly elected MPs such as Shama Ubaed (Faridpur-2), Afroza Khanam Rita (Manikganj-3), and Barrister Farzana Sharmin Putul (Natore-1) are also under consideration.

For technocrat posts, the party has shortlisted Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan, Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Joint Secretary General (International Relations) Humayun Kabir, and Advisory Council Member Ismail Jabiullah. Either Nazrul or Rizvi may serve in the Prime Minister's Office, in which case only one of them will be included in the cabinet.

Other potential names from the list of MPs include Fazlur Rahman (Kishoreganj-4), Abdul Awal Mintoo (Feni-3), Muhammad Naushad Zamir (Panchagarh-1), Sayeed Al Noman (Chattogram-10), and ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon (Chandpur-1).

Habiganj-1 winner Reza Kibria,

who joined the party ahead of the polls, and Bhola-1 winner Andaleev Rahman Partho, chairman of Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), are also likely to be included.

Party Vice Chairman Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad, Chairperson's Adviser Khandaker Abdul Muktedir, Executive Committee member Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, Joint Secretary General Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee, Student Affairs Secretary Rokibul Islam Bakul, Publicity Secretary Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, Kishoreganj BNP President Shariful Alam, and Co-Organising Secretary Mir Mohammad Helal Uddin — all of whom won in the election — are also on the draft list.

Some senior leaders not likely to be included in the new cabinet may instead be appointed to Tarique's advisory council.

Meanwhile, sources noted little enthusiasm within party leaders about taking responsibility for the home or information ministries, as not many are willing to shoulder the

pressure or public scrutiny.

According to insiders, Tarique has already held discussions with several Standing Committee members, seeking their opinions and exploring possible ministerial roles for them.

Meanwhile, senior party leaders said the chief is seeking individuals free from controversy, without corruption charges or allegations of abuse of power.

Sources said the party believes it has been voted to power to curb corruption, leaving little chance for those facing such allegations to enter the cabinet.

The high command is prioritising skilled, competent, and educated leaders.

The BNP will place special emphasis on the foreign, finance, law, and information ministries, which the party considers crucial in the post-uprising context.

Leaders also noted that ensuring representation of women and minority communities in the new cabinet is under consideration.

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'Ensure impartial
probe into post-
polls violence'Demands Human Rights
Forum Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) yesterday expressed deep concern over incidents of violence in several districts following the 13th national parliamentary election, including two reported deaths and an allegation of rape.

In a statement, the rights platform called for swift and impartial investigations into the incidents.

It said violence was reported in different parts of the country after the polls, leaving two people dead.

Citing media reports, HRFB said one person was killed in Munshiganj and another in Bagerhat in incidents linked to post-election violence.

The forum also referred to reports of attacks in Sylhet, Cumilla, Narsingdi, Feni, Gazipur, Natore, Jhalakathi, Narail, Pabna, Bogura, Faridpur, Barguna, Jhenaidah, Chandpur, Patuakhali, Kishoreganj and Dinajpur, where many people were reportedly injured.

At the same time, a woman alleged that she was raped by supporters of a political rival for taking part in election campaigning on behalf of a party, the statement said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A Dhaka City Corporation worker uses a makeshift wooden rod to remove the banner of a national parliamentary election candidate. Though the Election Commission had prohibited their use for campaigning, many disregarded that rule. The photo was taken on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

JS spruced up
ahead of MPs',
cabinet oath

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Refurbishment, repairs and cleaning were underway at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday as preparations intensified for the swearing-in ceremonies of the newly elected MPs and the new cabinet.

Work was seen going on to clean the South Plaza and the surrounding areas. The parliament complex is also being refurbished, with damaged areas being repaired and spaces cleaned to welcome the new members.

A senior official of the parliament secretariat said the interior of the parliament building and MPs' designated rooms had been rearranged and redecorated.

Preparations have been ongoing since Saturday under the supervision of the Cabinet Division and the Parliament Secretariat, he said.

The newly elected MPs of the 13th parliament will be sworn in tomorrow at 10:00am at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, said Law Adviser Asif Nazrul.



The swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet will also be held at the same venue at 4:00pm, he said while talking to reporters at his office at the Secretariat yesterday.

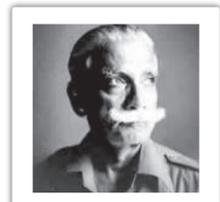
CEC AMM Nasir Uddin is likely to administer the oath to the MPs, while President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath to the members of the cabinet, the law adviser said.

"We have been informed by the BNP that, immediately after taking the oath there (South Plaza), they will elect the leader of their parliamentary party. That may take place around 11:30am or 12:00pm," Asif Nazrul said.

In response to a question about whether there was any reason for holding the swearing-in ceremony at the South Plaza instead of Bangabhaban, Nazrul said the BNP had expressed its intention to hold the ceremony at the South Plaza.

"My understanding is that this parliament is somewhat different. The sacrifice of the July students and people, this mass uprising, so much sacrifice, so much suffering, so much pain, so many lives lost - in exchange for all that, we have obtained this parliament."

"Considering all these matters, perhaps they expressed such an intention. We have arranged it accordingly," he added.

MAG Osmani's
42nd death
anniv today

STAR REPORT

The 42nd death anniversary of General MAG Osmani, the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces during the War of Liberation, is being observed today.

On the occasion, a prayer session and discussion organised by Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) will be held at the RAOWA Helmet Hall at 10:30am today, said a press release.

Eminent personalities
SEE PAGE 4 COL 5Jamaat, allies
seek recount
in 32 seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Jamaat-led 11-party alliance have alleged irregularities in vote counting in the 13th national election and demanded a recount in 32 constituencies.

They said although the polls were largely peaceful, the final stage of the process was flawed.

"The start was good, but the end was not," Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad told reporters at the Election Commission headquarters in Agargaon yesterday.

"Fake votes were rampant, black money flowed, and intimidation and clashes took place in several areas. These have cast doubt on the fairness of the election," he said.

Earlier, representatives of the 11-party alliance met four election commissioners at the EC building.

After the meeting, Azad said the environment necessary for fair counting was absent in many centres.

He alleged that some result sheets showed overwriting and erasures, and in several cases, agents' signatures were missing.

He said the alliance had submitted a list of 32 constituencies where they believe narrow defeats

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

POLLS-RELATED VIOLENCE

'10 killed, 2,503 hurt
since Oct last year'

HRSS calls election day largely peaceful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were killed and 2,503 injured in violence linked to the 13th national parliamentary election between

October 2025 and February 14, 2026, the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) said yesterday, while describing polling day as largely peaceful.

Presenting its "Election and Referendum Observation Report," HRSS Executive Director Md Ijazul Islam said the organisation recorded more than 700 incidents during the period.

Of the 10 deaths, three occurred after the results were announced. At least 34 people sustained bullet injuries, while more than 500 houses, vehicles,

businesses, election offices and polling centres were vandalised, looted or set on fire.

From the election schedule announcement on December 11, 2025, to

AT A GLANCE

HRSS documented 700+
incidents in the periodFrom Dec 11 to Feb 11, it
logged 254 incidents,
with 1,650 hurt, 5 killedPost-result violence
spread to 30 districts,
with 200+ clashes

February 11, 2026, HRSS documented 254 violent incidents, leaving 1,650 injured and five killed. At least 24 people were shot, and more than 200 houses and establishments were attacked.

Of those 254 incidents, 68 stemmed from internal clashes among BNP supporters, injuring 595 and killing three, HRSS said. A further 100 clashes between BNP and Jamaat supporters injured 915 and killed one.

At least 12 BNP-NCP clashes left

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

লাখেরও অধিক
গ্রাহকের আস্থাNexusPay
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লেনদেনের রেকর্ড নিয়ে আজ দেশেরসেরা ডিজিটাল অ্যাপ
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Internal rifts cost BNP seats in Pabna Jamaat takes 3, BNP wins two

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

While the BNP secured a significant victory nationwide in the 13th parliamentary election, the party faced challenges in its traditional strongholds in Pabna district.

Out of the five constituencies in Pabna, BNP candidates won in two, while Jamaat-e-Islami candidates secured three seats, including two long-standing BNP bastions.

Of the five constituencies, Shamsur Rahman Shimul Bishwas won in Pabna-5 constituency, and Selim Reza Habib won in Pabna-2 constituency for BNP, while Nazibur Rahman won in Pabna-1 constituency, Md Ali Asgar won in Pabna-3, and Abu Taleb Mondol won for Jamaat in Pabna-4.

Of them, BNP's Selim Reza Habib is an old parliamentarian, while the other four are first-time lawmakers. Internal divisions within the BNP appear to have been the primary cause for the party's losses in Pabna-3 and Pabna-4, said party sources.

In Pabna-3, BNP nominated Hasan Zafir Tuhin, president of Jatiyatabadi Krishakdal. However, former BNP lawmaker KM Anwarul Islam ran as a strong opponent. Jamaat's Md

Asgar Ali won with 1,47,475 votes, narrowly defeating Tuhin, who got 1,44,206 votes, while the rebel candidate Anwarul Islam secured 38,027 votes.

In Pabna-4, a similar scenario unfolded, where BNP's Habibur Rahman was defeated with 1,33,874 votes. Jamaat's Abu Taleb Mondol won with 1,37,675 votes, as BNP rebel candidate Jakaria Pintu drew away 27,970 votes. This mirrors the 2001 election results, where internal conflict led to a similar loss.

In a notable reversal, BNP's Shamsur Rahman Shimul Bishwas won the Pabna-5 (Sadar) seat, which has historically been a Jamaat stronghold. He secured 1,81,925 votes against Jamaat's Md Iqbal Hossain, who received 1,64,994 votes.

Local BNP leaders noted that this victory broke previous records in the district headquarters seat.

In Pabna-1, Mohammad Nazibur Rahman maintained his family's legacy by securing 1,29,974 votes, defeating BNP newcomer Shamsur Rahman, who received 1,04,245 votes.

Masud Khondokar, member secretary of the Pabna district BNP, told The Daily Star that while the party took organisational action against rebel candidates, the impact on the final tally was significant.

Local voters observed that a large portion of BNP activists supported independent candidates, directly influencing the outcome in favour of Jamaat.

Local voters observed that a large portion of BNP activists supported independent candidates, directly influencing the outcome in favour of Jamaat.



Workers busy setting up stalls for the upcoming Amar Ekushey Book Fair, scheduled to run from February 20 to March 15. Despite objections from notable publishing houses, this year's fair is being held during Ramadan. The photo was taken yesterday at Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Grabbers try to occupy Bakkhali riverbank

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Grabbers attempted to reoccupy land along the Bakkhali river in Cox's Bazar town on the night of February 11 by constructing around 30 makeshift structures.

A number of the structures were still being constructed, as seen during a visit to the site yesterday.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said it has sent letters urging the district administration, law enforcement agencies and other relevant authorities to take urgent action.

The occupiers returned to grab the land again by taking advantage of law enforcers being busy with poll duties, said Md Abdul Wakil, port officer of BIWTA in Cox's Bazar.

"More than 30 makeshift structures have already been erected and several others are under construction," he said.

According to a letter sent on



Saturday, BIWTA conducted an eviction drive between September 1-5 last year in the Kasturaghat area along the river, demolishing around 497 temporary and permanent

structures to recover around 63 acres of land.

Later, when BIWTA officials attempted to install boundary pillars, they were allegedly attacked by people linked to the grabbers. The operation was subsequently suspended.

BIWTA filed three cases and police filed one case against 40 named and several unnamed individuals in this connection.

Since the night before the election, illegal construction resumed between Kasturaghat river port and Kurushkul new bridge along the river.

Meanwhile, activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's Cox's Bazar town unit demolished several

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

FIVE NARSINGDI SEATS 27 candidates lose deposits

JAHIDUL ISLAM, Narsingdi

Across the five parliamentary constituencies of Narsingdi, 27 out of 41 candidates forfeited their election deposits after receiving less than one-eighth (12.5 percent) of the total valid votes cast.

The information was revealed based on an analysis of unofficial results signed by Deputy Commissioner and Returning Officer Mohammad Anwar Hossain.

Number of candidates who lost deposits: six in Narsingdi-1 (Sadar), three in Narsingdi-2 (Palash), five in Narsingdi-3 (Shibpur), seven in Narsingdi-4 (Monohardi Belabo), and six in Narsingdi-5 (Raipura).

Of them, Kazi Shariful Islam of Bangladesh Congress (Narsingdi-4) received the lowest 163 votes. BNP won all five seats in Narsingdi.

Among the parties, candidates of Jatiya Party lost their deposits in all five seats.

In Narsingdi-1, the candidates who forfeited deposits were Mohammad Mostafa Jamal of Jatiya Party, Md Ashraf Hossain of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Shahiduzzaman Chowdhury of Gonoforum, Shirin Akter of Gono Odhakar Parishad, Sakawat Hossain of Bangladesh Islami Front, and Hamidul Haque Parvez of Insanayat Biplob Bangladesh.

In Narsingdi-2, Asif Iqbal of Islamic Front Bangladesh, ANM Rafiqul Islam Selim of Jatiya Party and Mohammad Ibrahim of Insanayat Biplob Bangladesh forfeited their deposits.

In Narsingdi-3, the candidates were Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem Ali Pathan of Zaker Party, AKM Rezaul Karim of Jatiya Party, Md Wayezz Hossain Bhuiyan of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Md Mostafizur Rahman of Jamaat-e-Islami, and Raihan Mia of Insanayat Biplob Bangladesh.

In Narsingdi-4, the candidates who forfeited deposits were Abu Darda Md Maj of Janatar Dal, Kazi Shariful Islam of Bangladesh Congress, Kazi Sazzad Zahir of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Muhammad Milan Mia of Insanayat Biplob Bangladesh, Mohammad Nasir Uddin of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Md Kamal Uddin of Jatiya Party, and Md Saifulah of Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

In Narsingdi-5, the candidates were Jamal Ahmed Chowdhury (independent), Tahmina Akter of Insanayat Biplob Bangladesh, Tawfiqur Rahman (independent), Moshirur Rahman of Bangladesh Islamic Front, Meherun Nesa Khan Hena of Jatiya Party, and Md Solaiman Khandakar (independent).

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Adamdighi, Bogura.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No.-46.02.1006.000.07.001.26-3732 Date: 15-02-2026

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice Number: **01/2025-26 [OTM]**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works detailed are given below:

Sl. No	Tender Proposal II & Upazila	Name of the Scheme With Package No.	Tender Document last selling Date & Time	Tender closing Date & Time
01	1226324 Adamdighi	1). Construction of RCC Road at Upazila Nirbahi Officer Residence, Under Adamdighi Upazila, District: Bogura. 2). Repair & Renovation Work of Upazila Administrative Building (Old), Under Adamdighi Upazila, District: Bogura. 3). Repair & Renovation Work of Upazila Residential Building (Rupsha), Under Adamdighi Upazila, District: Bogura. [ADP/Rvenue/Maint/2025-26/W01]	01-03-2026 17.00 pm	02-03-2026 15.00 pm


 (Ripon Kumar Shaha)
 Upazila Engineer,
 LGED, Adamdighi, Bogura.
 Phone: 02585887287
ue.adamdighi@lged.gov.bd

GD-312

Ensure impartial

FROM PAGE 3

"These incidents have raised concern about the overall security situation and the state of legal protection in the country during the post-election period," HRFB said.

The forum said retaliatory violence, politically motivated attacks, violence against women, and assaults on powerless or disadvantaged communities are unacceptable in a democratic society.

It identified religious and ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, culturally diverse groups, and persons with disabilities as particularly vulnerable during periods of political tension.

HRFB urged all political parties to send clear and strict messages at both the central and grassroots levels to ensure that all forms of violence, retaliatory attacks, intimidation, violence against women, and attacks on minority or marginalised communities stop immediately.

The forum also called on the Election Commission, law enforcement agencies, and relevant government authorities to investigate each incident promptly and impartially, identify those involved, and bring them to justice.

The statement was

signed by HRFB members, including human rights expert Hameeda Hossain; rights activist Sultana Kamal; Raja Devasish Roy; Zi Khan Panna, chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra and acting convener of HRFB; Shaheen Anam, steering committee member of HRFB and executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; and Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust.

Other signatories include Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum; Itteharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; and Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reforms and Development, among others.

MAG Osmani

FROM PAGE 3

will be present and deliver speeches on the occasion. Retired senior officers of the armed forces will also be present.

At the programme, the participants will highlight the life of Osmani and his contribution to the Liberation War.

Osmani was born in Sunamganj, Assam Province, during the British era, on September 1, 1918, and died in London on February 16, 1984.

He was educated in Assam and Sylhet and graduated from Aligarh Muslim University in India.

LOST

I have lost my Rajuk Purbachal New City Plot No. 05, Road No. 401, Sector 04, original Dalil. Dalil Number 8360, Uttara West Police Station GD Number: 928, Date 10.2.2026, Tracking number: PHMRA3.

Nasrin Anowar
Address: H-01, R-7/C, Sector-03, Uttara-1230. Mobile: 01819215544

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

Memo No-25.36.2680.534.14.170.26-1704 Date: 15/02/2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP portal:

Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date	Opening Date
1229917 & 1229918	01/03/2026	01/03/2026

This tenders are 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 portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


 (Javed Bin Haidar)
 Executive Engineer (EM)
 PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division,
 Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
 Email: ee_wood@pwd.gov.bd

GD-306

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Planning
Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

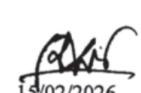
No- 21.00.0000.000.005.30.0330.25-321 Date: 15/02/2026

Invitation for e-Tender (Goods)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Purchase of Goods. Details are given below:

Package No	Description	Tender ID No	Closing Date & Time
GR-3.1/25-26/IMED	Purchase of Computer Accessories	1219793	26-Feb-2026 Time-12:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system. (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)


 15/02/2026
 (Md Masudul Haque)
 Joint Secretary

GD-305

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Bridge Construction & Maintenance Circle
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka.
Phone: 02-8879337, 01730-782559
E-mail- sebmc.rhd@gmail.com, sebmc@rhd.gov.bd

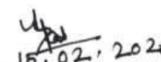
Memo No:35.01.0000.152.07.035.26.77 Date: 15.02.2026

Amendment of e-GP Tender Notice

Package Title: Sub-soil Investigation of Mongla Bridge over the Mongla River at Daulatdia-Faridpur-Magura-Jhenaidah-Jashore-Khulna-Mongla (Digraj) National Highway (N7) at Bagerhat District during the year 2025-26
Package No: PSN/e-PPS3/BCMC/01/2025-26
Name of Procuring Entity: Superintending Engineer, Bridge Construction and Maintenance Circle, RHD

Reference	Existing Provision	Amended Provision
Tender ID: 1223797	The assignment involves carrying out detailed ground investigation works for the proposed Mongla Bridge project. The scope includes borehole drilling up to 110 m depths (offshore), Standard Penetration Tests (SPT), Cone Penetration Tests (CPT), Seismic Down-Hole Tests (SDHT), collection of soil samples, laboratory testing including physical properties, index properties, engineering properties, geo-chemical tests, and preparation of a geotechnical investigation factual report.	The assignment involves carrying out detailed ground investigation works for the proposed Mongla Bridge project. The scope includes borehole drilling up to 110 m depths, Standard Penetration Tests (SPT), Cone Penetration Tests (CPT), Seismic Down-Hole Tests (SDHT), collection of soil samples, laboratory testing including physical properties, index properties, engineering properties, geo-chemical tests, and preparation of a geotechnical investigation factual report.

Other texts, terms and conditions of the tender document and the tender notice will remain unchanged.


 15.02.2026
 (Abdur Rahman Kaoser)
 (ID No. 601960)
 Superintending Engineer, RHD (C.C)
 Bridge Construction and Maintenance Circle
 Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka

GD-308

North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
Soydabad, Sirajganj

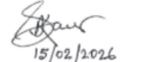
Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.14.16 Date: 15/02/2026

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief description of tender	Publication date	Last selling date & time	Opening date
1	1226602 (Re-Tender of TI-1185703)	Supply of carbon molecular sieve and other materials for nitrogen generator and instrument air compressor.	15/02/2026	25/02/2026, 15:45	26/02/2026

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


 15/02/2026
 Engr. Brojendra Kumar Sarker
 Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
 Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
 NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj

GD-307

'Putin is a slave to war': Zelensky Claims Russian attacks cripple every power plant in Ukraine

AFP, Munich

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky denounced Russia's Vladimir Putin as a "slave to war" in a speech to the Munich Security Conference Saturday evening, adding that Russia's attacks had damaged every power plant in the country.

Zelensky also drew parallels between the current Russia-Ukraine talks over territorial concessions and the 1938 Munich Agreement, when Hitler forced territorial concessions from the European powers — a year before World War II.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian drones damaged an oil depot in Russia's southern Krasnodar region and caused several fires, Russian officials said yesterday.

Zelensky was speaking days before the fourth anniversary of Moscow's invasion, which has killed hundreds of thousands, decimated eastern Ukraine and forced millions to flee.



Kyiv and its Western allies have accused Moscow of deliberately freezing Ukraine's population with its attacks on the energy grid.

"There is not a single power plant left in Ukraine that has not been damaged by Russian attacks," Zelensky said. "Not one."

"But we still generate electricity," he added, praising the thousands of workers repairing the plants.

Once again, he appealed to the West to deliver air-defence systems to Ukraine more quickly.

Of Putin, who launched the war in February 2022, Zelensky said: "He may see himself as a tsar, but in reality he is a slave to war."

Russia and Ukraine will hold US-brokered talks next week, and Zelensky said Kyiv was doing "everything" to end the war. Zelensky also met with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the Munich conference.

Russia has demanded that Ukraine withdraw from its Donetsk region and wants Kyiv to recognise its claim to the swathes of Ukraine that it occupies. Ukraine has ruled out surrendering its eastern regions.



Palestinians displaced by Israeli strikes comfort each other during the funeral of several victims in southern Gaza, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Israeli airstrikes kill 12 Palestinians in Gaza

Tent sheltering displaced hit despite ceasefire

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency reported that Israeli strikes killed at least 12 people since dawn yesterday, while a military official said the attacks were carried out in response to "violations of the ceasefire".

Despite a US-brokered truce that entered its second phase last month, violence has continued in the Palestinian territory, with Israel and Hamas trading accusations of violating the agreement.

The civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue force under Hamas authorities, said one strike hit a tent of displaced people in northern Gaza and another targeted an area in southern Gaza.

Five people were killed and several others injured when an Israeli air strike targeted a tent sheltering displaced people in Jabalia in the north, the agency said.

Five more were killed and several injured in a separate strike during the early hours in the southern city of Khan Yunis, the agency reported, adding that one more was killed in Israeli shelling in Gaza City.

The Al-Shifa and Nasser hospitals confirmed they had received the bodies of at least seven people.

A military official said Israeli forces were striking in response to Hamas violations of the ceasefire deal.

"The violation included an identification of several armed terrorists who took cover under

debris east of the yellow line and adjacent to IDF troops, likely after exiting underground infrastructure in the area," the official said.

"Crossing the yellow line in the vicinity of IDF troops, while armed, is an explicit ceasefire violation, and demonstrates how Hamas systematically violates the ceasefire agreement with intent to harm the troops," the official added.

Under the terms of the ceasefire, which took effect on October 10, Israeli troops withdrew to positions behind a so-called "Yellow Line", though they remain in control of more than half of the territory.

Gaza's health ministry says at least 601 people have been killed since the truce began.

Tarique meets Shafiqur, Nahid at their homes

FROM PAGE 1

Soon after the meeting, Shafiqur posted photographs on his official Facebook page at 7:40pm, congratulating Tarique in advance on his election as the incoming prime minister of Bangladesh.

He wrote that the visit marked a "significant milestone in the national political journey".

"We welcome this engagement in a spirit of dialogue and responsibility, and we hope it signals a new chapter of institutional maturity and mutual respect," he said.

Shafiqur further said, "We will cooperate fully on matters of national interest, yet we will discharge our constitutional duty as a firm and principled opposition. Where the government acts in the public interest, we will support. Where accountability is required, we will speak."

"Our objective is not confrontation but

correction; not obstruction, but oversight," he said, adding that the people of Bangladesh expect a parliament that safeguards justice and citizens' rights while ensuring stability and progress.

Jamaat Nayeb e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher also welcomed Tarique's call on Jamaat Ameer, calling it "a good beginning" and a sign of "a new political culture".

Taher also said Jamaat would not join any national government and would instead play what he described as a "constructive" and "strong" role as an opposition party.

"This kind of new culture among ourselves is a qualitative change. It is a good beginning," he said, adding that the discussion took place in a helpful atmosphere.

According to Taher, Shafiqur raised several priority issues during the meeting, including the law and order and public

security.

They also discussed the economy and urged priority attention to people's basic needs, including food, housing, and education, he said.

After visiting Shafiqur's home, Tarique went to Nahid's residence in the capital's Bailey Road area around 8:30pm. Nahid welcomed the BNP chief with a floral wreath. They held a meeting there.

NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen and Northern Region Chief Organiser Sarjis Alam were also present.

As he left Nahid's home, people from the area, including women and children, greeted Tarique. Children gave him flowers, books and chocolates.

Afterwards, NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen told a press conference, "Despite differences among ourselves, we spoke about how we can work together for the country

and discussed how the question of reforms can be addressed, and we talked about justice."

Responding to a question on whether the NCP had received invitation to join a BNP-led cabinet, Akhter said the meeting was a post election courtesy call and such issues were not discussed.

The meetings came a day after Tarique called for cooperation and unity from all political parties in the interest of Bangladesh.

BNP is set to form the government after securing a stunning landslide with 209 seats in Thursday's national election. Jamaat won 68 seats, while the NCP secured six.

The newly elected MPs will be sworn in at 10:00am on February 17 at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. The swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet will also be held at the same venue at 4:00pm, according to Law Adviser Asif Nazrul.

Reconciliation key to post-polls confidence

FROM PAGE 2

These efforts helped stabilise polling operations and contributed to public confidence in the conduct of voting on Election Day.

It said the suspension of the former ruling party Awami League continued to shape perceptions of inclusiveness and political competition. At the same time, the referendum result strengthened expectations for credible follow-through on reform commitments under the July Charter.

The presence of both domestic and international observers was widely regarded by stakeholders as an important confidence-building measure and a safeguard for electoral transparency.

However, observer organisations were required to secure both accreditations from the Bangladesh Election Commission and prior operational clearance for funded activities.

Observer identification cards were issued only shortly before polling, preventing systematic observation of voter registration, campaigning, and dispute resolution processes.

As a result, observation focused mainly on Election Day processes, with limited opportunity for transparency measures across earlier phases of the electoral cycle.

Establishing timely accreditation, recognising long- and short-term observation, and enabling monitoring across the pre-election, Election Day, and post-election phases would strengthen public oversight, deter violence, and reinforce confidence in future elections, said the organisation.

British and Canadian prime ministers Keir Starmer and Mark Carney both visited Beijing in January, seeking to bolster relations with China and pivot from the increasingly mercurial United States.

China grants visa-free entry to Canada, UK

AFP, Beijing

China confirmed that Canadian and British citizens will be able to visit the country visa-free from tomorrow, alter the two countries' leaders had announced such agreements following official trips to Beijing.

British and Canadian prime ministers Keir Starmer and Mark Carney both visited Beijing in January, seeking to bolster relations with China and pivot from the increasingly mercurial United States.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Eastern Zone of Bangladesh Railway Project
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram
Mobile No. 01711-506101
E-mail: pd.trep@railway.gov.bd

1st Corrigendum e-Tender Notice

Reference No. 54.01.1500.109.07.067.25-1011 Date: 15.02.2026

The following e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP Portal System (<http://eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Goods:

Sl. No.	Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Procurement nature and name	Tender method	Field name	Old value	New value
1.	E-Tender/GD-1/2025-2026	1191055	Goods Procurement of Rails	OTM (ICT)	Document last selling date & time	17-February-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.	03-March-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.
					Opening date & time	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.
					Closing date & time	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	18-February-2026 at 11:00 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 11:00 Hrs.
2.	E-Tender/GD-2/2025-2026	1200707	Goods Procurement of Sleepers & Fittings	OTM (ICT)	Document last selling date & time	17-February-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.	03-March-2026 at 17:00 Hrs.
					Opening date & time	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.
					Closing date & time	18-February-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 12:30 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	18-February-2026 at 11:30 Hrs.	04-March-2026 at 11:30 Hrs.

N.B.: All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

MD. TANVIRAL ISLAM
Project Director

Department of Pharmacy, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail-1902
Phone: 0921-62313, Fax: (+88) 0921-51900.

Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project, Window 2
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.

Ref: HEAT-12326-MBSTU-Tender Notice-1 Date: 16/02/2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) system by the SPM office, HEAT/12326-MBSTU, department of Pharmacy, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail-1902 for the procurement of following item:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of Goods/Works	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time	Opening Date & Time
1229608	MBSTU/12326 /G-4	Supply and Installation of Lab Equipment	02 March 2026 04.00 PM	3 March 2026 10.00 Am	3 March 2026 10.00 AM

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).

(Professor Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman Moghal)
SPM, HEAT Project (PIN:12326)
Department of Pharmacy
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University,
Tangail-1902, Bangladesh.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

A chance to break the cycle of retribution

Tarique Rahman's call for ending the politics of vengeance welcome

Elections in Bangladesh are seldom calm civic exercises. More often, they resemble winner-takes-all contests in which the victor claims the spoils while the defeated braces for reprisal. Our political history has long been trapped in a cycle of retribution between our two dominant dynastic forces, deepening divisions and weakening institutions. In the aftermath of a landslide victory that swept the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) back to power after 20 years, Tarique Rahman, party chairman and prime minister-in-waiting, has struck a note that is both welcome and urgent: unity over vengeance.

Speaking to the press in Dhaka on Saturday, Rahman called for a "safe and humane Bangladesh." His first address since BNP secured a two-thirds majority in the February 12 election avoided the triumphalism that so often curdles into retaliation. Instead, he congratulated all 51 parties that took part in the polls, from Jamaat-e-Islami to the Gono Odhikar Parishad, and urged his supporters to ensure that election-time tensions do not metastasise into "revenge or retaliation." The tone was deliberate and clearly aimed at resetting expectations in a country weary of political score-settling.

Bangladesh emerges from years marked by the authoritarian excesses of the Awami League era. Rahman is inheriting a fragile economy and institutions weakened by partisanship. In such an environment, the temptation towards tit-for-tat politics would be understandable. Rahman's explicit warning against allowing disputes to slide into "revenge or retaliation" is therefore more than mere rhetoric, or so it seems. By declaring that "division is our weakness," he may interrupt a destructive pattern in which state machinery has too often been wielded as a partisan weapon. We hope he means it.

In the same address, Rahman outlined three central priorities: reviving the economy, restoring law and order, and depoliticising state institutions. Each presents a formidable challenge. He inherits an economy strained by structural weaknesses—persistent inflation, sluggish investment, and a banking sector crippled by chronic loan defaults. Re-establishing order will require curbing the recurring outbreaks of mob violence that accompany political transitions. Most difficult of all will be repairing institutions hollowed out by years of politicisation. Winning a landslide is easier than rebuilding a battered state.

Restoring the rule of law will be the true test. A credible commitment demands a judiciary independent enough to prosecute wrongdoing without becoming an instrument of political harassment. If the promise of depoliticisation is to mean anything, it must be visible in how power is exercised, not merely in how it is described. By framing unity as a "collective strength" and division as a national weakness, Rahman has set a new benchmark for his party. Words, however, are only the beginning. If he can impose the discipline he now demands and translate his party's 31-point programme from aspiration into policy, he may fulfil the promise of this moment.

Bangladesh has heard calls for unity before; what it needs now is proof.

Publishers' concerns must be heeded

Bangla Academy should balance tradition and practicality in book fair decision

The concerns raised by major mainstream publishers over the timing of this year's Ekushey Book Fair, scheduled to begin on February 20, deserve careful consideration. This is more so given the convergence of significant national events in quick succession—the parliamentary election held on February 12, the impending formation of the new government, and the start of Ramadan this week.

Last year, in September, Bangla Academy decided that the month-long event would begin on December 17, 2025. The director general of the academy then cited election preparation, Ramadan, Eid holidays, and April storms as reasons to justify the fair's preponement. A week later, however, the academy issued a notice mentioning that the fair would be held after the election, citing a decision by the home ministry. Then, on December 17, 2025, the academy decided that the fair would run from February 20 to March 15. These frequent date changes by the academy raise the question of whether all the stakeholders, including the publishers, were duly consulted during decision-making.

Against this backdrop, more than 300 publishers recently threatened to boycott the fair—the largest literary event in the country—citing fears of economic losses. Some have also written an open letter to BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman, urging Bangla Academy to reconsider the fair dates, preferably rescheduling it to after Eid ul-Fitr. While we acknowledge the historical sentiment and cultural significance of holding or starting the Ekushey Book Fair in the month of February, the practicalities of rescheduling the event should also be considered.

The demand for books is likely to be limited during Ramadan. Besides, many who work and volunteer at the fair—mostly students—may choose to return home during the Ramadan and Eid holidays. Furthermore, visitor numbers might also be affected, both during the day and in the evening, given it collides with iftar and special prayers hours.

Although the Ekushey Book Fair has its ties to February, commemorating the historic Language Movement, there are precedents of the fair taking place later than February. Therefore, at a time when publications are incurring losses all year, with some reporting as big as almost a 60 percent drop in sales, measures should be taken to make the fair profitable and a success for all the stakeholders.

Therefore, we call upon the authorities to be open to renegotiating the fair dates with the publishers, all while acknowledging the logistical challenges that might follow. After all, the spirit of Ekushey Book Fair exists in the heart of all those who participate in it, having its core in its commitment to language and literature, not in rigid adherence to a particular date on the calendar.

Advisers' asset disclosures and a test for the new government



Dr. Iftekharuzzaman is executive director at Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The interim government's (IG) disclosure of the assets of advisers on February 10, just days before the scheduled end of its tenure, was not only delayed by 533 days after its commitment to do so, but was also incomplete, flawed, and unfit for purpose. It represents a high-level breach of public trust and is merely the tip of the iceberg of the departing government's failures to set credible examples of transparent and accountable governance. Over the past months, numerous such failures have been reported and commented on through columns like this, whether in the exercise of authority or in initiatives taken as an interim administration tasked with laying the foundations for state reform, including ordinance-making.

Disappointing as these developments are, this façade of IG asset disclosure at least leaves behind a clear message for the incoming BNP government that prepares to take office on Tuesday. The message is on how it can do this better. Unlike the IG, it may begin by proactively making such disclosures timely, easily verifiable, and complete to ensure the

all public servants. Later, a gazette was issued on September 22, 2024, making the submission of wealth statements by government servants mandatory and prescribing a format for the purpose. On October 1 that year, the government also issued a "policy on disclosure of income and asset statements of advisers of the interim government and persons of equivalent rank." No one knows why the advisers' disclosures were parked for so long, nor whether any submissions by government servants actually took place; no disclosures, of course, have been made public.

The disclosure commitment had raised high expectations, and for good reason. It reflected a recognition of one of the most effective global best practices that Bangladesh has long failed to adopt, a failure that not only contributed to deepened and widened public-sector corruption with implications for the entire state

and society but also enabled about 16 years of authoritarian kleptocracy that was eventually defeated at a high cost in lives, bloodshed, human rights violations, and injustice. It is therefore obvious that this pledge was among the many aspirations for state reform that eventually formed the basis of the July Charter.

But the IG took almost 18 months to prepare and upload a set of asset descriptions that it may claim fulfilled its pledge. It may be argued that the disclosure per se was a notable exception, as no previous government had done this before. However, the real question is whether the interim government can truly be credited for having walked the talk.

First, the disclosure was delayed without any explanation. There is no way to justify why it took so long—unless, perhaps, the government did

concealment. What has been disclosed instead consists merely of aggregated financial and non-financial assets, with no granularity or comparability to assess the level of transparency and accountability. The base and closing periods of the information (June 2024–June 2025) do not serve the purpose of meaningful disclosure or comparative analysis, which is the primary objective of such practices worldwide, including in some of Bangladesh's regional neighbours.

There are no statistics on income and expenditure, no disclosure of sources thereof—including salary and business interests—or major heads of expenditure for the period. The information is not accompanied by relevant documentation such as bank statements, property titles, or tax returns. The principal purpose of such disclosures is not only to ensure accountability for inconsistency or non-disclosure, but also to prevent corruption, including illicit enrichment through abuse of power and conflicts of interest. It is therefore highly unlikely that the information disclosed by the IG would withstand critical scrutiny for accuracy, completeness, comparability, or truthfulness. In this connection, one can also question the lack of disclosures by those appointed as special assistants to the chief adviser, or contractual recruits in key positions, at least those who drew government salaries.

So the key message for the new government here is that it has an opportunity, and obligation, to demonstrate a stronger commitment to practising what it preaches. This will require consistency of delivery with regard to public expectations of accountable governance as reflected in BNP's 31-point Outline of Structural Reforms, its election manifesto, and the July Charter approved through the referendum. Notably, as per the charter, all political parties consented—without any note of dissent—to the commitment that "all public representatives at all levels will submit to the Election Commission statements of income and wealth of self and family within three months of taking office and renew them annually, which shall be published on the EC website".

The IG undermined the mandate for transparent and accountable governance derived from the uprising, at least as far as asset disclosure is concerned. It now remains to be seen whether the new government refrains from similarly ignoring the sacred authority it derived from the overwhelming popular mandate of the election thanks to the pledge to ensure corruption-free, transparent, and accountable governance.

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full transparency and accountability of power-holders, including public representatives and government servants at all levels.

We may recall that the head of the interim government, in his first address to the nation on August 25,

all public servants.

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not realise at the time of making the pledge that it had been entrusted with state power to demonstrate that promises are meant to be kept. Or perhaps it didn't realise how hard the internal resistance would be. This may explain why, as demands for compliance from civil society and the media grew, the disclosure was eventually uploaded as a parting eyewash. It is no coincidence that this approach is consistent with the IG's broader governance record: secrecy to deny, or at best minimise the scope of, accountability.

There are several reasons why the IG disclosure amounts to little more than eyewash. Asset declarations by publicly exposed persons—including public representatives, government leaders, and public servants—should, as per global good practice, allow for assessment of consistency between legitimate income and assets acquired. They should also allow for robust scrutiny and checks against any



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

A woman's message to the government we just elected



Naziba Basher is a journalist at The Daily Star.

NAZIBA BASHER

On Thursday, for the first time in my adult life, I stood in a voting line that felt real. There was no whispered certainty about the result the night before, no hollow theatre dressed up as democracy, no ballot cast only to decorate a predetermined victory speech.

For the first time, my generation did not perform citizenship—we practised it. And we made a choice that was neither romantic nor naive.

On one side stood a politics that openly imagines a future where women shrink; where our public lives are conditional, negotiated, permitted in moderation. On the other stood a party whose history carries the smell of muscle, patronage and street power, a past heavy with intimidation and extortion.

We did not vote because we were inspired. We voted because we calculated. We chose the lesser danger so the greater one would not become law. We chose you.

Understand what that means. This was not loyalty; it was conditional trust. We escorted you

into parliament knowing exactly who you have been, and hoping—not assuming—who you might become. You were handed a probationary contract, and women were central to that. Many of us voted against fear more than for ideology. We voted to prevent our lives from being negotiated in theological committees. We voted so our ambitions would not require permission slips. We voted because even flawed secular politics still leaves room to argue, organise, and resist. We voted because space matters, even imperfect space.

Now, that space is your responsibility. So, here is the message: do not misunderstand our vote as forgiveness for your past. It was an investment in your future behaviour.

You promised governance instead of gangs. Deliver it. You promised rule of law instead of influence. Prove it. You promised safety in streets and workplaces. Enforce it.

Women do not need symbolic respect; we need structural protection. Make cities where a woman returning home at night is routine, not bravery.

Fix public transport so harassment is punished swiftly and visibly. Reform policing so reporting violence does not feel like negotiating humiliation. Train officers who record complaints instead of interrogating character.

In workplaces, safety cannot remain a corporate slogan. Strengthen labour monitoring, ensure that complaint mechanisms actually function, and

Women do not need symbolic respect; we need structural protection. Make cities where a woman returning home at night is routine, not bravery. Fix public transport so harassment is punished swiftly and visibly. Reform policing so reporting violence does not feel like negotiating humiliation. Train officers who record complaints instead of interrogating character.

punish retaliation against women who speak up. Sexual harassment policies exist on paper across the country; your job is to make them exist in consequence.

Online spaces, too, are now part of public life. Digital abuse silences women faster than censorship ever could. Treat coordinated harassment,

threats and image-based abuse as civic crimes, not personal inconveniences.

And understand something deeper: women's participation in society is not preserved by protectionist speeches about honour. It is preserved by predictable justice. When systems work, freedom survives. When systems fail, control replaces it.

We did not vote so you could "allow" women to live freely. We voted so you would build a state where freedom does not depend on who is in power.

Also, clean your own house. Remember this, if extortion continues under new banners, we will notice. If student wings become private militias again, we will notice. If local strongmen become untouchable because they wear your colour, we will notice.

This election gave you legitimacy, but your behaviour will determine whether you deserve it.

Our generation did not grow up trusting politics. We grew up studying how it failed us. That makes us patient but not forgiving. We understand compromise, but we do not accept betrayal. We voted because we want a country where "choosing the lesser evil" is no longer the only rational choice.

So, here is the simplest way to honour that vote: make it possible for the next election to be decided by hope instead of fear. You now govern not just a state, but a moment—the fragile moment when citizens tried believing again.

Do not waste it.

The weight of a supermajority in parliament

A CLOSER LOOK

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TASNEEM TAYEB



Large mandates are usually treated as moments of political triumph. In institutional terms, however, they are something else: a change in the conditions under which power operates. Beyond a certain parliamentary threshold, debates give way to convenience. The real test begins later, in how systems run when resistance is no longer a risk.

A parliamentary majority is familiar territory in democracies. Governments win them, lose them, negotiate around them. A two-thirds majority belongs to a different category. It alters the temperature of the room. It changes how institutions behave, where allies place themselves, and most importantly, how opponents calculate their moves. The numbers look like celebration material. Administratively, they function more like a structural shift.

That distinction is easy to miss in the first days after a result. Public attention tends to rest on spectacle—gestures, statements, the choreography of optics. Systems, however, respond to incentives, not spectacle. And incentives change when parliamentary arithmetic crosses certain thresholds. What becomes possible on paper begins to influence behaviour in practice. Not immediately. Gradually. Sometimes almost humbly.

Tarique Rahman's political story has long unfolded at a physical distance. For years, his presence in Bangladesh's political life was shaped by absence. That absence carried a curious advantage. Distance allows projection. Supporters imagine possibilities. Critics imagine risks. Neither has to confront the administrative reality of governance. Proximity removes that buffer. Once authority is exercised from within the system, expectations acquire weight. They stop being rhetorical. They start becoming procedural. Earlier in December, I wrote about the expectations surrounding his return in an article published in this daily. That question has already been answered. The one that matters now is how power settles once it arrives.

A supermajority adds another layer to that



FILE PHOTO: AFP

The BNP-led alliance achieved a decisive victory in the general election, winning 212 seats.

transition from expectation to execution. While it reduces friction, challenges arise when legislative resistance becomes harder to organise. Committees fall into alignment more easily. Amendments that once required negotiation start looking easily achievable, at least numerically. None of this is automatically harmful. Some governments use strong mandates to clear policy backlogs or stabilise long stalled reforms. If leveraged correctly, this can be a benefit for a political landscape such as ours that is still navigating a deeply unsettled institutional transition.

For a start, the prime minister designate has identified the right pressures. Speaking at his first press conference following the results, he framed his message around unity rather than division, restraint rather than retaliation, and order rather than spectacle—acknowledging, at least rhetorically, the institutional anxieties that tend to surface

when mandates become overwhelming. How Tarique Rahman will translate these assurances into actions will determine how institutions—and by extension the nation—will read the mandate itself.

The watchout is that institutional atmosphere shifts all the same. The system senses that fewer obstacles remain between intention and implementation.

Political history suggests that this is

redesign without institutional consultation. The difference lies less in ideology than in method. In international perception, stability is essentially behavioural before it is political.

Inside the parliament, the atmosphere is more textured. A dominant majority narrows the space available to opposition actors. Sometimes that encourages constructive adaptation. Most of the time, though, it encourages withdrawal. Much depends on how the governing side treats the absence of immediate challenge. Systems tend to function best when authority acts as though scrutiny were constant, even when it is not. Administrative restraint, practiced early, often prevents built-up confrontation. Once institutions begin adjusting defensively, restoring confidence becomes slow work.

There is also a subtler institutional question beginning to form. Large mandates can create a sense of political invulnerability within the ruling party itself. Members feel they are participating in a turning point. That sentiment can enervate unrestrained ambition. It can also test patience with procedural delays. Bureaucratic caution, judicial review, regulatory pacing: these can start to look like obstacles rather than safeguards. Whether they are treated as pain points or as stabilisers will shape how this phase is remembered.

None of this predicts inevitability. Democratic systems around the world have accommodated dominant governments before. Some used their position to deepen institutional credibility. Others discovered, too late, that numerical strength does not automatically translate into sustainable authority. Longevity in office has rarely depended on margins alone. It has depended on whether governance practices convince citizens and stakeholders that rules still matter when they become inconvenient. The 2024 toppled regime has learnt this lesson the hard way.

For a first-time prime minister, the learning curve is rarely about politics. It is about managing administration. Decisions that look straightforward in opposition often become layered once one sits inside the machinery of state. Issues resurface with new challenges or urgency. Laws overlap or contradict with other laws. Agencies operate according to routines that resist change. Navigating this landscape requires a different discipline from mobilising voters. It requires patience with process, as a matter of method and discipline.

This is where large mandates change the

test facing leaders, especially when they are holding overwhelming power for the first time. When parliamentary numbers guarantee passage, debate inside the parliament becomes less necessary. The real persuasion shifts elsewhere: toward civil institutions, professional bodies, regulators, courts, and international partners. They cannot be directed in the same way as party members are directed. They respond to signs of continuity, legality, predictability and stability. If those signals are steady, confidence grows. If they fluctuate, uncertainty spreads faster than official assurances can contain it.

Bangladesh has seen moments of political consolidation before. Each has left behind a different institutional aftertaste. Some periods strengthened administrative coherence. Others generated long rippling consequences that outlasted the governments that produced them. The pattern suggests that outcomes are shaped by what power decides to do once resistance becomes nominal.

That choice appears in ordinary decisions. Whether an appointment prioritises competence or loyalty. Whether criticism is answered with explanation or dismissal. Whether procedural delay is tolerated or circumvented. Whether disagreement is treated as a platform for inclusive decision-making or dissent. While individually these might look like isolated acts, together they form the behavioural pattern of a government.

The true weight of power is measured not by how it is won, but by how it is exercised when it no longer needs to prove itself to mobilise vote banks.

The moment power stops needing permission is the moment it requires discipline. The current result carries a responsibility that is heavier than triumph. It places the ruling party leadership in a position where constraint must increasingly come from within. External limits have already thinned. Internal discipline will have to thicken to compensate for it.

Voters have delivered their verdict. The institutional story begins now.

Earlier, the question was whether expectation would weigh on Tarique Rahman. That question has already run its course. A different burden now begins. The one Kundera described belongs to the phase before power settles. This one arrives afterward, in the period when authority must prove it can govern. What lies ahead is not the weight of expectation, but the treacherous lightness of power.

Without SME-friendly steps, green funds won't work

RMG NOTES

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MOSTAFIZ UDDIN



A news report published in The Daily Star early this month highlighted many factory owners' struggle to access the much-heralded Green Transformation Fund (GTF). As a garment factory owner, the struggle felt uncomfortably familiar to me. Everyone agrees we must modernise. Everyone says "go green." Yet, when a factory tries to invest, our financial system too often responds with delays, duplicated paperwork, and shifting requirements. If we, as garment makers, fail to shift to renewable energy and cleaner production, our customers will go elsewhere. That is the direction of travel in global sourcing.

Brands are setting climate targets, investors are asking questions and regulators are tightening rules on carbon claims. Buyers are increasingly demanding evidence from their supply chains, which include factories like mine. Bangladesh Bank's Tk 10,000 crore GTF was meant to be a solution to many of the challenges factories face in accessing so-called green finance. Yet, SMEs struggle to access it, while larger, better-connected groups are more successful.

The 2024 white paper on financing highlighted three distinct dimensions: availability, accessibility, and affordability of funds. On paper, availability is not the core problem. Bangladesh does have green funds. The deeper issue is accessibility. Many facilities are effectively directed towards top-tier companies with scale, strong balance sheets, and the in-house expertise to navigate complex financial processes, including energy managers and corporate counsel to structure deals. Affordability is the third dimension, and it is critical. Interest rates are closely linked to credit ratings. SMEs, by definition, are more likely to face higher

borrowing costs. Even where funds exist, the total cost of capital can make projects unviable.

At the same time, the cost of "going green" is real upfront. Consider the example of rooftop solar. This is often the first project factories consider when going green because it is visible, measurable and, in many cases, economically sensible. Global cost projections for rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems show that around \$530 per kilowatt is needed for investment, depending on system design and scale. For an industrial facility requiring several megawatts of capacity, that translates into significant capital expenditure. In a sector already squeezed by tight margins, volatile order books and rising compliance costs, that is not a minor decision.

Then there is the wider "green factory" push. Bangladesh is rightly proud of its LEED-certified garment factories and has become a global leader in the number of LEED-rated facilities. But building or upgrading to green standards can require 20 to 30 percent additional investment compared to conventional construction. For a large group with cheap capital, that may be manageable. But for an SME, the same can be prohibitive.

Meanwhile, the demands from brands know no end. H&M has publicly stated ambitions to source 100 percent renewable electricity in its garment production supply chain by 2030, covering tiers 1 to 3, and has said it will not onboard new factories using on-site coal. Inditex expects at least 50 percent of the electricity used in manufacturing processes in its supply chain to come from renewable sources by 2030.

A large factory group can spread the cost of an energy manager, an

environmental engineer, and a compliance team across multiple sites. An SME cannot. A large group can negotiate better loan terms, access corporate Power Purchase Agreements or co-invest with developers. An SME is often asked for hard collateral, bank guarantees, or even personal assets that are already pledged to banks.

If we are serious about implementation, several improvements are needed. Access must be simpler. Application and due diligence processes should be streamlined, with clear documentation requirements and predictable timelines. Factories should not face multiple layers of repetitive scrutiny from different agencies for the same project.

Even when green investment pays back over time, the cash flow gap is the killer. You cannot tell a bank, "This will save energy in year three," if you cannot survive year one. Nor can you promise a buyer renewable energy by 2030 if you cannot secure financing this year.

This is why credit guarantees are so critical, and why their design matters. If such facilities are structured as effectively risk-free instruments that only support the strongest borrowers, they will never reach those who actually need support. Credit risk guarantees must address multiple dimensions of risk.

First comes the risk of project implementation. SMEs may have lower technical capacity, fewer specialised staff, and less experience managing complex renewable installations. A well-designed guarantee should recognise this and incorporate technical assistance, not penalise it. Second, payment risk. SMEs often operate with thinner margins and more volatile cash flow. Guarantee structures

must reflect the reality of vulnerable borrowers rather than assuming uniform repayment profiles. Third is interest rate risk. If interest rates remain high because of perceived credit risk, the entire logic of making a green transition collapses for SMEs. Charging high rates to finance decarbonisation undermines the purpose of climate finance.

If we are serious about implementation, several improvements are needed. Access must be simpler. Application and due diligence processes should be streamlined, with clear documentation requirements and predictable timelines. Factories should not face multiple layers of repetitive scrutiny from different agencies for the same project.

Risk sharing must be realistic. Finance should not be designed only for the perfect borrower with the perfect project and a ribbon

tyed around it. SMEs with credible, well-structured projects should have a viable route to funding even if their balance sheets are smaller. Verification requirements should also be proportionate. For some schemes, including projects financed through Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), factories are required to report onerous proof-of-performance and face penalties if external auditors disagree on measured outcomes. Excessive post-project verification increases uncertainty and hidden costs.

Moreover, the total cost of capital must be reduced. Beyond nominal interest rates, there are transaction costs, consultancy fees, monitoring expenses and ongoing reporting requirements. Collateral requirements must also be reconsidered. Alternative approaches, including partial guarantees or cash flow-based lending, should be explored.

Bangladesh has the opportunity to use renewables efficiently to strengthen competitiveness, cut exposure to volatile fuel prices, and meet buyer expectations. But the pathway must work for the majority of factories, not just the largest ones. Brands, too, must share responsibility. If buyers want supplier decarbonisation, they should support longer-term commitments, co-financing mechanisms and credible structures that help suppliers secure capital.

Climate and competitiveness are now inseparable. If we delay for another two or three years, the market will not wait. If one sourcing country cannot offer a credible pathway to renewable energy and lower emissions, another will. If we can get this right, we can protect jobs, attract long-term customers, and build resilience. If we get it wrong, we will keep talking about "green transformation" while orders move elsewhere.

e-Tender Notice

Ref: HEAT-11026-MBSTU-Tender Notice-1 Date: 16/02/2026

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP portal System and no offline/hard copied will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal system by the office of the sub project manager (BMB-11026), Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail for the procurement of following items:

SL No.	APPID, Tender ID, Package No.	Package Name	Type of Tender	Online Tender Notice Publication Date & Time	Online Tender Closing/Opening Date & Time
1.	221342, 1224554, MBSTU/11026/G-6	Laptop and Desktop, Printer, High performing computer for NGS analysis	NTC, OTM	Date: 16/02/2026 Time: 11:59 am	Date:08/03/2026 Time: 5:30 pm

e-Tender details can be downloaded from as stated above on e-GP system for purpose. The fees for the e-Tender documents from the e-GP system must be deposited online through any registered bank. e-Tenders will be accepted within the date and time stated and accepted tenders will be opened online immediately. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal system and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Professor Dr. Mohammad Johirul Islam)
SPM, HEAT Project (PIN: 11026),
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University,
Tangail-1902, Bangladesh.

GD-303

Tuning into the psychedelic vibes of SHONAR BANGLA CIRCUS



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHARMIN JOYA

Three of the four band members—Probar Ripon (lyrics, tune, vocals, acoustic guitar), Shakil Haque (bass), and Saad Chowdhury (keys)—visited The Daily Star's office recently. Over cups of coffee, they spoke at length about their creative process, philosophy, and future plans.

We also connected with guitarist Seth Panduranga Blumberg, who has been on vacation miles away at his home in California. Though joining from afar through the internet, his presence added a new dimension to the conversation.

Probar Ripon begins by explaining the idea behind the new album and the time it took to bring it to life. "If you ask why it took us nearly three years to prepare this album, the answer is simple—it has 17 songs, and the arrangements are massive," he says. Unlike *Hyena Express*, which relied mainly on the traditional rock setup of guitar, keyboard, bass, and drums, *Mohashoshan* embraces a much broader musical canvas. "This time we worked with an ensemble of instruments that are carefully layered—multiple layers of dhol, violin, and more."

He recalls how quickly their previous album came together. "We recorded *Hyena Express* in just four days, and the mixing and mastering

took only two months," Ripon adds. "But this is a full-fledged studio album—and a double album at that—so naturally it demanded much more time."

Beyond the studio, other factors also slowed the process. The band was actively performing concerts, like every month, around 12 shows, and the country's political situation further disrupted their momentum. "All of that affected our progress," he says, "But in the end, the time allowed the album to grow into what it needed to be."

What sets Shonar Bangla Circus apart from other local bands? One undeniable factor is their conscious attempt to break away from the established Bangladeshi rock lineage. They are effortlessly 'non-traditional', refusing to conform to familiar structures or expectations. Still, we wanted to hear how the band members themselves define that difference.

"It's more like lyrical music theatre—or even opera," Ripon explains. "Our psychedelic approach sets us apart right from the start. Beyond that, we are a group of people who connected because we think alike."

Keyboardist Saad Chowdhury, whose native language is not Bangla, has been part of the band a little bit later after the band was

formed. For him, music remains the strongest binding force. "Music is what connects me with the team the most," Saad reiterates. "Even if I don't always grasp the deeper meaning of the lyrics, I can still relate to them musically. The intensity remains the same because we're communicating

Creating music, he says, begins without a fixed agenda. "For us, it's like standing in front of a white canvas. We pour everything into it, and whatever emerges—that becomes Shonar Bangla Circus."

beyond language." He points out that some meanings remain elusive even to local listeners. "In the end, it's the music that holds us together. I've never faced any challenge connecting with these people musically."

What Saad values most, he says, is the band's open-mindedness. He singles out Seth Panduranga Blumberg, fondly known as Pandu, whom he met in 2012. "It was refreshing. I found someone who just goes wherever the guitar takes him.

That freedom is deeply inspiring for me. I didn't even realise I was like that myself until I met Pandu."

Bassist Shakil Haque adds that the bond between Pandu, Ripon, and Saad predates the band itself. "They've been connected for more than 15 years," he says. "Raju was also part of that circle at one point." That long-standing familiarity, he implies, naturally translated into the band's musical chemistry.

When the conversation turns to the music of *Mohashoshan*, Shakil offers a broader philosophical reflection. "Birth and death are inevitable phenomena of life, yet we rarely speak about them in their most natural form," he explains. "They are either turned into moments of celebration or mourning. But what we're addressing in this album and in the previous one as well, is how universal this experience really is."

Hegestures toward the larger world. "Look at our planet—where is death not happening? Where are people not suffering?" For Shonar Bangla Circus, this is not a commentary on isolated events but a timeless, global reality. "We're not making a statement about something happening somewhere. This is something that is always happening, everywhere. It's less about establishing a message and more about feeling and realising it."

Creating music, he says, begins without a fixed agenda. "For us, it's like standing in front of a white canvas. We pour everything into it, and whatever emerges—that becomes Shonar Bangla Circus."

For Ripon, discomfort is an essential part of truth. His lyrics are meant to provoke that unease. "Look at the mirror, and you will see who you are," he says. "It is not my responsibility to manipulate the mirror to make someone look beautiful. My responsibility is to show the mirror. The truth it reveals can be uncomfortable at times—and that is the intention."

Looking ahead, the band plans to continue their solo tour across the country under the title *Mohashoshan Jatra* this April, if the political situation remains stable. This time, they are also hopeful about taking their music beyond borders, with international tours firmly on the horizon.



(L) Seth Panduranga Blumberg, Saad Chowdhury, Shakil Haque, with Probar Ripon at centre. PHOTO: TANZIM BIJOY

After a long gap following 'Hyena Express', released in 2020, the indie rock band Shonar Bangla Circus has returned with a dual studio album featuring 17 tracks last month. Titled 'Mohashoshan 1' and 'Moshashoshan 2', both discs offer ear-soothing tunes and also stay true to the band's signature style—lyrics that unsettle, provoke, and compel listeners to think deeply.

NEWS

BNP wins nearly half the votes

FROM PAGE 12

3.73 crore votes, while Jamaat and its alliance partners got about 2.73 crore votes.

The EC said 59.44 percent out of 12.77 crore voters cast their votes in the February 12 polls.

PAST POLLS

In the 1991 polls, a total of 3,41,03,777 voters exercised their franchise. BNP obtained 1,05,07,549 votes, which was 30.81 percent of the total votes, and won 140 seats. It later formed the government with the unconditional support of Jamaat.

Jamaat secured 41,36,661 votes, amounting to 12.13 percent, and achieved success in 18 seats.

In June 1996, a total of 4,28,80,576 people cast their votes. BNP received 1,42,55,986 votes, or 33.60 percent, and won 116 seats, becoming the opposition party. Jamaat obtained 36,53,013 votes, which was 8.61 percent, and won three seats.

The total number of votes cast was 5,57,36,625 in 2001. BNP and Jamaat contested as members of the four-party alliance. BNP secured 2,28,33,978 votes (40.97 percent) and won 193 seats, while Jamaat obtained 23,85,361 votes (4.28 percent) and won 17 seats. The alliance went on to form the government.

In 2008, both parties again ran the race as part of the four-party combine. A total of 7,06,48,485 people voted in the polls. BNP obtained 2,27,57,101 votes (32.50 percent) and won 30 seats. Jamaat received 32,89,967 votes (4.70 percent) and won two seats.

People will remember

FROM PAGE 12

for what the source described as tireless work by officers and soldiers to complete the assignment successfully.

Referring to the army's role in stabilising what he called an unstable political environment, Waker said, "The country and the people will remember this service of the army."

He also quoted a verse from the holy Quran, saying, "Indeed Allah rewards the patient."

In one part of his address, the army chief said the election was completed after significant hardship and that the result was accepted by all, according to the sources.

"You have, after so much hardship, reached this stage and achieved

PARTY, CANDIDATES	SEATS WON	VOTES RECEIVED
BNP (291)	209	49.97%
Jamaat (228)	68	31.76%
NCP (32)	6	3.05%
IAB (258)	1	2.70%
BD Khelafat Majlish (34)	2	2.09%
Gono Odhikar Parishad (94)	1	0.33%
BJP (2)	1	0.14%
Gano Samhati (17)	1	0.14%
Khelafat Majlish (20)	1	0.76%
Independents (275)	7	5.79%

Both parties boycotted the 2014 and 2024 polls.

In 2018, a total of 8,26,45,218 people cast votes in the election. BNP secured 99,77,319 votes (12.07 percent) and won six seats. Political analysts noted that these results did not reflect the party's actual strength, as the polls were widely considered controversial due to ballot box stuffing on the night before the election and intimidation faced by BNP supporters from the then ruling Awami League.

Election expert Abdul Alim, also a former member of the Election Reform Commission, said years of repression against BNP, including thousands of cases, attacks, torture, disappearances, and even lawsuits against respected party figures, were

success. Our hardship has been worthwhile. We have been able to complete an acceptable, fair election, and this election has been acceptable to everyone. This success has been possible because of you," the army chief was quoted by the source about his address to members of all ranks.

Sources said Waker also urged personnel to uphold religious values and encouraged them to live a good life, describing it as important for living well.

The issue of returning troops to barracks also came up at the darbar, the sources said. However, the army chief did not issue any directive on an immediate return, according to the sources.

not accepted by the public.

"The party chairperson was sick, imprisoned, and there were repeated attempts to break the party, yet it did not collapse. In this situation, public support grew, and so did voter turnout for BNP," he explained.

On increasing voter turnout for Jamaat, Alim noted, "First their registration was cancelled. Since 2014, Jamaat has been outside elections. During the movement, an executive order banned them as a party. Despite this repression, they quietly reorganised. That also drew public interest."

He added another factor, true for all parties, is the presence of swing voters.

Alim said, as a new political party, NCP received a respectable share of votes.

Instead, he said the timing would depend on government decisions and the overall law and order situation, and that it could take some time.

One source quoted him as saying people were now understanding that the army could perform its duty, adding that the purpose of the deployment had been to ensure security so that a democratic process could be carried out properly.

The 13th parliamentary election concluded on February 12, without any major occurrences reported across the country. It was held in a calm atmosphere, free of major violence, with law enforcement and the armed forces receiving broad praise for keeping voters safe.

Dismislab finds rivals peddling falsehoods

FROM PAGE 12

misinformation has also been spread claiming that Jamaat carried out the attacks or was involved in the clashes.

A review of the websites and Facebook pages of nine fact checking organisations that verify information related to Bangladesh shows that, in the two days following the election—February 13 and 14—at least 13 fact-checks were published addressing false claims about post-election violence or protests. When multiple organisations published fact checks on the same piece of misinformation, it was counted only once.

MISINFORMATION INVOLVING JAMAAT

Several pieces of misinformation circulated online claiming that Jamaat supporters were subjected to violence.

One such claim involved a Facebook video alleging that homes were set on fire because residents voted for Daripalla (Jamaat's electoral symbol) in Debidwar, Cumilla. However, verification reports found that the video was old, and had been circulating on Facebook for at least a month before the election.

Another video was spread with conflicting claims, including that BNP activists attacked homes belonging to minority communities in Cumilla after the election victory, or that houses were vandalised simply because people had voted for the Jamaat. This, too, was later fact-checked and debunked.

A third piece of misinformation involved a seven-year-old video claiming that BNP's student wing, Chhatra Dal, forcibly evicted members of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and Jamaat's student organisation, Islami Chhatra Shibir, from residential halls at Dhaka University.

During this period, several other



An old video falsely circulated claiming it showed a DUCSU protest against BNP attacks on dissenting voters (left); a screenshot from another old video spread with the claim that the BNP, after coming to power, was attacking people for voting freely (right).

unrelated videos were also shared on social media with the false claim that they showed Shibir protest marches in response to post-election attacks.

MISINFORMATION IMPLICATING BNP

A number of misleading and fabricated claims have also been circulated online implicating the BNP. One such claim was spread through a Facebook video, presented as footage of post-election attacks. In the caption, the poster accused the party that "came to power" of assaulting people for voting for the opposition. However, fact-check revealed that the video actually showed a clash between BNP and Jamaat supporters during the election

campaign, not a post-election attack.

Another video was shared with the false claim that BNP activists gang-raped a female leader of NCP.

False information has also circulated targeting Jamaat in the context of election-related violence. A video shared on the social media platform X alleged that Islamist groups were attacking Hindu communities after Jamaat's defeat in the election.

Fact check showed that the video was unrelated to the 2026 election. It actually depicted an incident in which a man was assaulted for chanting "Joy Bangla" during the funeral of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

UN chief renews push for 'immediate ceasefire' in Sudan

AFP, Addis Ababa

The United Nations is "fully committed" to piling on pressure for an immediate ceasefire in Sudan, which has been devastated by nearly three years of civil war, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday.

Since April 2023, the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have been locked in a bitter struggle for control of the country.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people and forced more than 11 million from their homes, sparking what the UN has called the

world's worst humanitarian crisis.

"We have been very actively engaged... with the African Union, with the Arab League, with the Quad and with other key actors, in order to put effective pressure for an immediate ceasefire," Guterres said.

"We must look first of all to create the conditions to put pressure on the two parties of the conflict," he told reporters on the sidelines of an African Union summit in Ethiopia.

He also stressed the need to tackle foreign actors "supporting and arming" both sides -- "some in the African continent and some outside".

India rout Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12

and Agha again declined to shake hands at the toss—not the first such instance, as Suryakumar had also skipped handshakes in all three Asia Cup meetings in Dubai last year, including the final.

After Salman chose to field, India welcomed back Abhishek Sharma from a stomach bug, but he fell for a second ball duck. Kishan counterattacked, reaching his fifty in 27 balls and scoring 77 of India's 88-2 in 8.4 overs before Ayub bowled him.

Tilak Varma (25) became Ayub's second victim, trapped lbw at 126-3. Hardik holed out next ball, giving Ayub hat-trick hopes as he finished with 3-25.

Suryakumar made 32 before falling in the penultimate over. Shivam Dube was run out for 27 in the final over, Axar fell off the last ball, and Rinku Singh remained unbeaten on 11.

US cotton-made RMG to get duty-free access

FROM PAGE 12
"After nine months of structured discussions led by the Ministry of Commerce, supported by the National Board of Revenue, other ministries, and the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, Dhaka successfully bargained the mutual tariff down to 19 percent," the statement said.

The agreement covers a wide range of areas, including goods, services, customs procedures, trade facilitation, rules of origin, SPS measures, technical barriers, investment, e-commerce, government procurement, labour, environment, competition, and transparency.

The statement noted that Bangladesh's prior

commitments under WTO and ILO conventions meant no new conditions were imposed.

Special provisions were included for the textile and apparel sector, under which garments produced in Bangladesh using US cotton and synthetic fibres will enjoy duty-free entry into the US market.

The deal also grants Bangladesh duty-free access for roughly 2,500 products, including medicines, agricultural goods, plastics, and wood products.

In return, the US will receive duty-free access to 7,132 tariff lines in Bangladesh, phased in over five to ten years.

Bangladesh has a total of 7,458 tariff lines, and all but 326 U.S. products

will receive duty-free treatment.

Of the 7,132 products, 4,922 tariff lines became duty-free immediately upon signing, including 441 items that already enjoyed zero tariffs.

For another 1,538 products, tariffs will be reduced to zero within five years, with half slashed in the first year and the remainder proportionately over the following four years.

A further 672 products will see tariffs phased out over ten years, beginning with a 50 percent cut in the first year and the rest gradually removed over the next nine years.

The statement highlights that unlike agreements with Malaysia

and Cambodia, the Bangladesh-US pact does not impose restrictions on digital trade negotiations.

It also mentions a phased tariff reduction schedule, absent in other US trade deals.

The agreement further addresses paperless trade, IPR enforcement, e-commerce, SPS recognition, conformity assessment, anti-corruption measures, environmental safeguards, labour law updates, and investment liberalisation in sectors such as energy and telecom.

Bangladesh also secured a withdrawal clause, allowing exit from the agreement -- a feature not present in other US bilateral trade pacts.

5 killed, 12 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed and 12 others injured in road accidents across three districts over the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Cumilla, two people were killed and seven others injured after a passenger bus plunged into a ditch beside the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Daudkandi area yesterday.

The accident occurred around 3:50pm in Jingtali area when a Chattogram-bound Econo Paribahan bus lost control, collided with an auto-rickshaw, and skidded off the road, said Daudkandi Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Iqbal Bahar Majumder.

The deceased were identified as auto-rickshaw driver Faruk, 42, of Bahadurkholia village in Daudkandi, and bus passenger Mizanur Rahman, 48, of Chudanga Sadar upazila.

Dr Habibur Rahman, upazila health officer at Daudkandi Upazila Health Complex, said five injured passengers were referred to Dhaka, while two others received primary care.

The bus driver and his assistant fled the scene, police said.

In Tangail, two people were killed in a head-on collision between a private car and a battery-run rickshaw-van on the Dhaka-Tangail-Jamuna Bridge highway in Kalihati upazila yesterday.

Sharif Uddin, 41, was declared dead

at Tangail General Hospital, while rickshaw-van driver Mohammad Amir Ali, 40, died on the way to Dhaka, said Shariful Islam, sub-inspector of Jamuna Bridge East Police Station.

In Kishoreganj, constable Nazrul Islam, 52, was killed and five others, including three policemen, were injured after a CNG-run auto-rickshaw carrying police personnel collided head-on with a bus in Padorgati area of Hossainpur upazila on Saturday, said Hossainpur Police Station OC Muhammad Rashedul Islam.

Nazrul was returning to the police station with an accused when the crash occurred. The accused and the auto-rickshaw driver were among the injured.

Record complaint over alleged rape

FROM PAGE 12
"You [police] are instructed to immediately record the victim's complaint and take necessary legal action in accordance with the law."

The Daily Star has seen the copy of the letter, which mentioned a report run by the daily Jugantor.

Contacted by this correspondent, the station's Officer-in-Charge Saiful Alam said the NHRC had communicated with him. "There were some queries, and I complied with those."

He added that he visited the alleged victim's area yesterday and found evidence of attack and assault.

As of early today, no complaint was filed.

Speaking to the media while under treatment at the Noakhali 250-bed General Hospital, the woman said three men broke into her house around 11:00pm on Friday. They assaulted her before one of them raped her after detaining her husband in a room.

She alleged the attackers were activists of local BNP and its youth wing, including Jubo Dal leader Rahman Hossain, 30, along with another individual. She added that while Hossain raped her, others stood guard at the door.

Rahman denied the allegation.

The woman further told reporters that around 6:00am on Saturday, another five men entered her home, dragged her and her husband outside, beat them severely, and attempted to rape her again.

She claimed she was raped and tortured for supporting National Citizen Party candidate Abdul Hannan Masud in the just concluded national election.

The woman was admitted to hospital on Saturday afternoon and is currently receiving treatment at the gynaecology ward.

The hospital's Deputy Director Dr Farid Uddin Chowdhury said a medical board has been formed

regarding the incident. "However, we are awaiting a formal requisition letter from the police or the court to conduct the official forensic rape examination."

Mohsina Akter Simu, legal officer of the hospital's One-Stop Crisis Centre, said the hospital authorities have collected and preserved the woman's samples. "If a police requisition is received, they will conduct a forensic examination ... In such cases, police themselves can file a case, in which Hatia Police Station would be the complainant."

Abu Tayyab, additional superintendent of police (admin and finance) of Noakhali, said three female police officers and one male officer have been deployed at the hospital for the woman's security.

Hannan Masud, newly elected MP for Noakhali-6 from NCP, visited the victim at the hospital on Saturday night and demanded exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

10 killed, 2,503 hurt since Oct

FROM PAGE 3
58 injured, three BNP-Awami League clashes injured three, two NCP-Jatiya Party clashes injured 23, 14 BNP-other party clashes injured 46, and three other incidents injured 10.

Of the five killed in this phase, three were BNP supporters, one was a Jamaat supporter, and one was affiliated with Inqilab Moncho, HRSS said.

After the results were declared, violence spread to at least 30 districts, HRSS said. It recorded more than 200 clashes involving supporters of BNP, Jamaat and independent candidates, leaving over 300 injured and at least 350 offices, businesses and homes vandalised or set on fire.

HRSS said no one was killed on polling day, February 12. It deployed 565 observers to monitor voting in 1,733 centres across 100 constituencies. Of them, 347 remained present during vote counting, but Ijajul alleged that at least 48 were denied entry to counting rooms or obstructed.

HRSS said it found irregularities in at least 21 centres, including centre occupation allegations, obstruction of observers, ballot-related irregularities, advance signing and sealing of ballot counterfoils, and failure to display results.

HRSS Programme Officer Saiful Islam said 393 incidents of irregularities and clashes were recorded on polling day, leaving 145 injured.

These included disorder at 149 centres, 105 clashes between supporters, 59 allegations of ballot stuffing, 19 expulsions of polling agents, 13 cases of negligence by officials, 18

instances of obstruction to voters, six assaults on candidates, three ballot box snatching incidents, two arson cases, and 31 other irregularities.

HRSS also reported 50 arrests, withdrawal of 13 presiding and polling officers, and 55 cases resulting in imprisonment or fines. Five journalists were injured, voting was cancelled in three centres, and 64 incidents involved misinformation spread using artificial intelligence tools.

However, a separate state-run intelligence report documented unrest in the 48 hours following the polls, with at least three people killed and 98 injured in 45 incidents across 38 constituencies.

On February 13, 42 incidents were recorded across 36 constituencies, leaving 95 injured and one person killed in Munshiganj in a clash between BNP and independent candidate supporters, it said. BNP activists were involved in 41 incidents.

It also recorded at least 13 BNP-Jamaat clashes and four clashes involving the National Citizen Party.

On February 14, three incidents were reported. Two people were killed and three injured in Chapainawabganj in an explosion while they were allegedly making crude bombs.

In Pabna, BNP and Chhatra Dal leaders attacked a Shibir-linked library and vandalised houses of its activists.

Meanwhile, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) expressed concern over post-election violence and attacks on political opponents, urging restraint and accountability.

In a statement, the rights organisation called

Grabbers try

FROM PAGE 4
of the structures on Saturday night after information about the attempted land grabbing surfaced.

Shafayet Munna, former joint secretary of Cox's Bazar town JCD unit, said following instructions from newly elected lawmaker Lutfur Rahman Kajol, they went to the spot and removed the illegal structures.

"The formerly evicted grabbers were trying to misuse BNP's name to reoccupy the land. No illegal structures would be allowed on the riverbank," he added.

Jamaat, allies seek

FROM PAGE 3
resulted from counting errors.

"We have formally asked the commission to recount these seats," he said.

Azad added that even after publication of the gazette, the law allows three stages of appeal -- through the commission, a tribunal, and the High Court -- and the alliance plans to pursue legal remedies.

The alliance also announced a protest rally and demonstration at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in Dhaka today at 4:30pm, condemning what it described as "electoral violence".

On whether the alliance would take oath, Azad said, "We have decided positively. We will join parliament and play a constructive role. At the same time, the streets will remain open to us."

In a post on his verified Facebook page yesterday, Asif Mahmud Sajeb Bhuiyan, spokesperson of the National Citizen Party (NCP), an alliance partner, said they were preparing to form a "shadow

Grabbers try

FROM PAGE 4
of the structures on Saturday night after information about the attempted land grabbing surfaced.

Shafayet Munna, former joint secretary of Cox's Bazar town JCD unit, said following instructions from newly elected lawmaker Lutfur Rahman Kajol, they went to the spot and removed the illegal structures.

"The formerly evicted grabbers were trying to misuse BNP's name to reoccupy the land. No illegal structures would be allowed on the riverbank," he added.

cabinet".

"The shadow cabinet will work as a watchdog to ensure transparency and accountability and oversee overall activities," he wrote.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said they would not bow to any "evil force".

He urged party members to build strong protests and resistance with the people wherever attacks occur and to stand by the oppressed.

Later that morning, Shafiqur visited the family of deceased Jamaat supporter Shah Alam -- who died of a heart attack on February 8 while on his way to an election rally -- in the Shimulbak Dakkhinhati area of Itna upazila in Kishoreganj and attended a memorial meeting.

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 16

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
5:25	12:45	4:30	5:57	7:15

JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

People's Republic of Bangladesh

Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Court, Dhaka.

Present: Mr. Md. Sabbir Faiz
Metropolitan Senior Special Judge, Dhaka.

Permission Petition No.21/2026

Order No.- 01, Date: 07-01-2026

Investigation officer Mr. Md. Johir Raihan, BP no.9119222775, Sup-inspector of Police, Financial Crime, Bangladesh Police, CID, Dhaka submitted a petition under Motijheel P.S case no.11, Dated-09.10.2023 under sections 4(2)(4) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 (ammendment-2015) to freeze assets of accused Md. Yeasin and others and 11 Bank accounts and also related to his interests under section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

The petition is taken up for hearing,

Heard learned Additional Public Prosecutor and gone through the petition as well as the records. It is found that an enquiry is undergoing against the aforesaid alleged accused Md. Yeasin and others and 11 Bank accounts and his family members and also related to his interests under section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

It appears from the record that the alleged offender has acquired huge amount of illegal wealth beyond their known source of income by adopting illegal means and if those assets are not attached and freed those assets will be laundered or transferred and those can not be possible to be forfeited after trial which will frustrate this case. Hence those assets need to be freed and attached.

Considering the facts and circumstances, I am convinced to allow the petition submitted by Investigation officer Mr. Md. Johir Raihan, BP no.9119222775, Sup-inspector of Police, Financial Crime, Bangladesh Police, CID, Dhaka and accordingly the assets as mentioned in the petition are hereby freed and attached until further order as per section 14(1) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

It is hereby further ordered that the copy of this order be issued to the 1) Managing Director, Mercantile Bank PLC, Head Office, 61 Dilkhusa Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 2) Managing Director, Mutual Trust Bank PLC, Head Office, MTV Center 26 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan 01, Dhaka; 3. Managing Director, Bank Asia PLC, Corporate Branch, Rangs Tower, 68 Old Paltan, Dhaka; 4. Managing Director, Islami Bank PLC, Head Office, Islami Bank Tower, 40 Dilkhusa, Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 5) Managing Director, NRB Bank PLC, Head Office, Uday Sanj, Block (SE/A), Plot- 2/B, Road- 134, South Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212; 6. Managing Director, South East Bank PLC, Head Office, Yunus Trade Center, 52-53 Dilkhusa, Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 7) Managing Director, East Bank PLC, Head Office, 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212; Manager, Standard Chartered Bank PLC, City Center Branch, 18-20 Aliko Building, C/A Toynbee Road, Dhaka-1000; 9) Managing Director, BRAC Bank PLC, Head Office, Anik Tower, 220/B Tenzgaon Gulshan Link Road, Tenzgaon, Dhaka to the effect that while the freezing order is in effect regarding the said accounts, the account holders will not be allowed to withdraw any money. But they will be at liberty to deposit only.

Let this order be published in the Government Official Gazette along with widely circulated one daily Bengali and one daily English newspaper under section 14(3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 for information of the citizens at large.

Let this order along with the photocopy of the application be sent to Investigation officer Mr. Md. Johir Raihan, BP no.9119222775, Sup-inspector of Police, Financial Crime, Bangladesh Police, CID, Dhaka and Publication department, Tejgaon, Dhaka; 1) Managing Director, Mercantile Bank PLC, Head Office, 61 Dilkhusa Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 2) Managing Director, Mutual Trust Bank PLC, Head Office, MTV Center 26 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan 01, Dhaka; 3. Managing Director, Bank Asia PLC, Corporate Branch, Rangs Tower, 68 Old Paltan, Dhaka; 4. Managing Director, Islami Bank PLC, Head Office, Islami Bank Tower, 40 Dilkhusa, Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 5) Managing Director, NRB Bank PLC, Head Office, Uday Sanj, Block (SE/A), Plot- 2/B, Road- 134, South Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212; 6. Managing Director, South East Bank PLC, Head Office, Yunus Trade Center, 52-53 Dilkhusa, Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000; 7) Managing Director, East Bank PLC, Head Office, 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212; Manager, Standard Chartered Bank PLC, City Center Branch, 18-20 Aliko Building, C/A Toynbee Road, Dhaka-1000; 9) Managing Director, BRAC Bank PLC, Head Office, Anik Tower, 220/B Tenzgaon Gulshan Link Road, Tenzgaon, Dhaka, and other concerned authorities for necessary action.

Inform all concerned Authorities at once.

Directed & Corrected by me.

Sd/-
Metro. Sessions. Spl Judge, Dhaka.
Memo Number: ২০৭ (০২)২৬

Sd/-
(Md. Sabbir Faiz)
Metro. Senior Special Judge, Dhaka.
Date: ০৭/০২/২৬

Jinnah vs Fazlul Huq

The forgotten debate over Pakistan



A. K. Fazlul Huq and Muhammad Ali Jinnah at a Muslim League Council meeting in Bombay in the early 1940s.

PHOTO: DAWN / WHITE STAR ARCHIVES

In the wake of Bangladesh's mass uprising of 2024, the partition of India in 1947 has re-emerged as a subject of renewed political and historical interest. A range of narratives has surfaced that seeks to frame the 2024 uprising not in continuity with the popular movements of 1971 or 1990, but instead by drawing parallels with the political moment of 1947. Some of these voices go further, presenting the events of 1947 and 2024 as part of a shared historical trajectory and claiming joint authorship of both moments.

Party of Punjab and the Krishak Praja Party (KPP) of Bengal can be placed in this category. Even before the formation of the KPP, the public meetings that Fazlul Huq held across East Bengal on issues of agriculture and peasant welfare were attended in large numbers by Namashudras as well, as they too were oppressed by zamindars.

Following its initial formation and reorganisation, by 1934–35–36 Fazlul Huq had emerged as 'Huq Saheb', a mass leader of Bengal through the praja movement. This found its structural expression in the first broad-based election in Bengal's history in 1937. Although his party secured fewer seats than the Muslim League, he emerged as the most popular leader in Bengal.

Although both began their political lives within a non-communal framework, after 1937 Jinnah advanced the Pakistan Movement grounded in Muslim nationalism through the Two-Nation Theory. Huq, however, was marked by deep contradictions. While calling for separation from the League platform through the Lahore Resolution, he simultaneously remained nationally associated with 'Indian nationalist' Muslim-majority organisations such as the Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Hind, the Khudai Khidmatgar, and the Momin Conference.

In pre-1947 politics, these 'Indian nationalist' Muslim-majority organisations, in terms of organisational reach, were ahead of the League across much of India. Yet they lacked a central leader capable of confronting Jinnah. As a result, they failed to stem the tide of the Pakistan Movement. As part of this failure, in the 1946 elections the KPP secured only four seats in Bengal, while the League won 113 seats.

Even in the face of this League wave, however, Huq Saheb won both his seats, demonstrating that he remained the principal mass leader of Bengal's agrarian society. Before the election, Jinnah had effectively declared war against Huq. Suhrawardy, Nazimuddin, Ispahani, and Akram Khan carried that battle down to the village level. To prove the Huq-Shyama Progressive Coalition government a failure in Bengal, the British administration also displayed heightened activism.

In the middle of the last century—during the peak phase of its development—the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was divided into two sub-factions centred around a few individuals. One may be described as the 'Calcutta group' led by Suhrawardy, and the other

between these two factions. The former represented the emerging middle class within the League, while the Khwajas primarily drew support from large wealthy families and landed elites.

Although these two groups were constantly engaged in intense internal conflict, they shared a common political adversary: 'Huq Saheb'.

Under the patronage of Jinnah, Suhrawardy, and Hashim, hundreds of public meetings were organised across East Bengal during this period against Huq, portraying him as a traitor to the Muslims. Evidence of how the League's anti-Huq Saheb, communally charged propaganda further polluted Bengal's communal atmosphere can be seen in the riots that later erupted in Noakhali and Dhaka.

Huq's relationship with Jinnah deteriorated sharply in September 1941. Among the many causes of this conflict was the question of Muslim policy towards the British Raj during the Second World War, particularly in July of that year. As Prime Minister, Huq favoured unconditional support for the British war effort. Jinnah, on the other hand, wanted to use the war as leverage to bargain with the British over the Pakistan question,

February 1945, Huq described the Muslim League as a "reactionary organisation". His argument was that, through the Pakistan movement, the League had adopted a reactionary position within an undivided India. Ironically, he rejoined the same party the following year. By then, after sustained attacks from the League, he was politically weakened. Congress also bore responsibility for his political defeat: nationally, Congress leaders accepted the Two-Nation Theory in practice by elevating Jinnah as the sole spokesman of the Muslims, while in Bengal they aided the League's growth by refusing to form a government with Huq Saheb.

One of Jinnah's key political strengths was his strategic use of economic considerations in shaping Bengal's politics. During the 1946 elections, he mobilised major Urdu-speaking business families—such as the Adamjees and the Ispahani—in support of the League, indirectly weakening the KPP. Alongside the League's older propaganda outlets (*Star of India*, *Azad*, and others), Abul Hashim launched a new weekly, *Millat*, which played a significant role in popularising the idea of Pakistan. To counter this,



The cartoon featuring Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was published in the December 1942 issue of *Mohammadi*, a monthly magazine opposed to Huq and supportive of the Muslim League.

while keeping exclusive control over decision-making on this issue. In December, Fazlul Huq was expelled from the League.

In February 1942, Jinnah visited Sirajganj and accused Fazlul Huq at a public meeting of betraying the Muslims of India. Around the same time, Suhrawardy was seen mobilising public opinion against Huq in Calcutta.

Eventually, the League succeeded in removing Fazlul Huq from power in 1943. Earlier, on 20 June 1942, Huq had sent a letter to League leaders in various provinces accusing Jinnah of running the party like Emperor Pharaoh. Since 1937, Jinnah had steadily expanded the powers of the party president within the League's constitution, making Huq's accusation far from baseless.

During this period, Fazlul Huq even filed a court case challenging Jinnah's abuse of power within

Huq Saheb brought out *Nabajug*, but with little success.

To draw Muslim votes away from the KPP, the League brought Maulana Sabbir Ahmed Usmani from the United Provinces. In the face of the League's electoral surge, the KPP could not even field candidates in all constituencies; it managed to contest only 43 seats, and 63 per cent of its candidates forfeited their deposits.

Although the League was the KPP's principal rival, Huq, observing the growing popularity of the Pakistan idea on the ground, began claiming at public meetings that he himself was the originator of this concept through the Lahore Resolution. This only added momentum to the League's wave.

At the same time, the KPP's core political appeal—its demand for the abolition of the zamindari system—lost much of its distinctiveness when the League incorporated the same demand into its manifesto.

Beyond the failure in the pre-Partition elections, another major failure of Huq in the subsequent period was his inability to play a decisive role in preventing the partition of Bengal—despite his desire to see his beloved city of Calcutta remain with East Pakistan. Although the Lahore Resolution he presented envisaged the creation of multiple Muslim-majority states, when Jinnah narrowed it down to a single Pakistan by 1946, hardly any major Bengali politician opposed him, apart from Abul Hashim, the League's provincial general secretary, and Jogendranath Mandal. At that time, Fazlul Huq sought to move forward with an initiative to establish an all-party government in Bengal, but neither the League nor Congress was willing to accord him the importance he expected. In this way, both nationally and regionally, Jinnah's project emerged victorious.



All-India Muslim League Working Committee at the Lahore Session, March 1940.

Against this backdrop, the noted researcher Altaf Parvez turns to the past to interrogate how Islamist parties positioned themselves during the creation of Pakistan in 1947. He has already written in four instalments on the three-way debate between M. A. Jinnah, Maulana Maududi, and Maulana Madani. In the final piece of this series, he briefly turns to the conflict that unfolded in Bengal during the Partition period between Jinnah and the Muslim League on the one hand, and the Krishak Praja Party and Fazlul Huq on the other.

Editor, *Slow Reads*

Before and after 1947, there were many Islamist claimant parties in the Indian subcontinent. Alongside them existed a few parties that, while Muslim-majority in composition, also included non-Muslims, though in smaller numbers. The Unionist

During this period, he maintained organisational links with both the Congress and the League; at the time, it was possible for one individual to be associated with multiple parties. However, the KPP remained very much 'his own party'.

After winning the election, and in the face of Congress's reluctance, Fazlul Huq first formed a government with the League and later with the Hindu Mahasabha, becoming Prime Minister of Bengal. Ultimately, however, his government fell due to opposition from the League and Jinnah.

Fazlul Huq's conflict with Jinnah was not confined merely to the question of provincial autonomy within the League. From the very beginning of their political lives, the trajectories of the two men diverged. Huq's political career began with the Khilafat Movement and praja politics, and his organisational focus lay primarily in provincial politics. Jinnah, by contrast, was indifferent to the Khilafat Movement and was chiefly concerned with power politics at the centre.



After the fall of the Huq-Shyama Prasad cabinet in April 1943, this cartoon was published in the Muslim League-aligned magazine *Mohammadi*. Shyama Prasad is shown in the foreground, with Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Huq behind him.

as the 'Dhaka group' led by Khwaja Nazimuddin. There were clear economic and social differences

the League. He withdrew the case in 1946. However, before that, during court proceedings on 2

Altaf Parvez is a researcher specialising in history. The article has been translated by Samia Huda.



All-round Windies first team into Super Eights

The West Indies produced a comprehensive all-round display at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday, hammering Nepal by nine wickets with 28 balls to spare to become the first team to secure a Super Eight spot in the ongoing T20 World Cup. Led by Jason Holder's 4/27, the Windies restricted Nepal to 133/8 before skipper Shai Hope's unbeaten 61 off 44 balls and Shimron Hetmyer's 46 not out from 32 deliveries guided them home in just 15.2 overs.

- » West Indies have hit form in the tournament, winning all three of their group-stage matches so far. They beat Scotland and England comfortably before yesterday's convincing victory. They will face Italy in their final group game in Kolkata on Thursday.
- » The 92-run second-wicket stand between Shai Hope and Shimron Hetmyer is West Indies' second-highest partnership for the wicket in T20 World Cups -- just behind the 95-run stand between Devon Smith and Shivnarine Chanderpaul against Bangladesh in Johannesburg in 2007.
- » This is only the second time West Indies have won by a margin of nine wickets in a T20 World Cup match, with the first instance coming against the USA in 2024.
- » The result also means that Nepal, who provided England a scare in their first group game but eventually lost the contest by just four runs, are eliminated. They also suffered a 10-wicket thumping to Italy, and will play their final game against Scotland on Tuesday.

Pressure mounts as Australia meet Sri Lanka

AGENCIES
 There are three matches in Monday's fixtures, but all eyes turn to Pallekele when Australia meet Sri Lanka in what feels like a defining clash of Group B.

For Australia, the equation is brutally simple after their shock loss to Zimbabwe: win or risk sliding toward an early exit. Their campaign has already been shaken by injuries and disruption, and the defeat exposed a bowling unit still searching for rhythm and control.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, look calm and confident despite losing Wanindu Hasaranga, arriving with real momentum after beating Ireland and Oman in their first two group games.

Pallekele is traditionally Sri Lanka's highest-scoring T20 venue, so expect a tactical balance between spin and pace -- and a contest decided by who handles pressure better. A Sri Lankan win would virtually secure their progression; an Australian victory keeps the group wide open.

Earlier in the day's first match, Afghanistan face UAE knowing their World Cup hopes are hanging by a thread. After two painful defeats -- including a dramatic double Super Over loss -- they must reset mentally and treat this like a knockout game.

UAE, buoyed by their recent win over Canada, believe they can make things interesting, but their qualification route remains narrow and dependent on results elsewhere.

The second fixture brings a fresh subplot as England meet T20 World Cup debutants Italy in Kolkata. England, boosted by a key win over Scotland, know victory will seal their Super Eights place. Italy arrive full of belief after an emphatic 10-wicket win over Nepal, driven by the Mosca brothers, and will try to turn sporting rivalry into a cricketing surprise.



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named four squads for the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) one-dayers tournament, set to begin later this month. Speedster Taskin Ahmed, who was amongst the players who had individual training sessions at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday, has been rested from the tournament as part of his workload management.

'A World Cup is a World Cup'

Bangladesh cricketers have been enjoying a rare extended time off after the Odommo Bangladesh T20 Cup, which ended on February 9. While the pangs of missing out on the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka is still raw, most of the players are using this break to spend time with family. One of them, the 24-year-old speedster Shoriful Islam, talked to The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi about the ongoing World Cup and how he is spending time away from cricket during an exclusive interview. The excerpts are as follows.

DS: Have you been watching the ICC T20 World Cup?

SI: Truth be told, I haven't really been watching the ongoing World Cup. I have seen about one or two matches. Since we have not gone to the World Cup, I have not been watching the matches all that much. We have gotten an extended break after a while following the Odommo T20 Cup. So, that's why I have been focusing on spending time with family in my village.

DS: The Odommo T20 Cup was arranged to somewhat make up for the lack of cricket due to not playing in the World Cup. How was the tournament itself?

SI: As cricketers, we put in the same effort during the games. But the vibe of a World Cup and some bilateral series or a tournament is completely different. A World Cup is a World Cup, every player prepares for the whole year to play the World Cup. So, it would be a mistake to compare it to some other tournament.

DS: You were one of the 15 cricketers who



got picked in Bangladesh's World Cup squad. After Bangladesh were removed from the tournament, what did you feel?

SI: We can't regret about something that is not in our fate. What's done is done. Whatever comes next, I will focus on that and try to achieve something good.

DS: Not getting to play a World Cup was understandably a blow for all cricketers.

But has any positive come out of it?

SI: The best outcome for me was that I have been able to spend time with my family. I have returned home, been playing a lot with my boy and am around my parents.

The break feels great since we were playing continuously. At times things become dull or the body gets fatigued. Since there are no games, I have a lot of time for the family. As you know, we don't get a lot of family time, so in that regard, it has been refreshing.

DS: The BCL one-dayers tournament is coming up. What are your plans for that?

SI: We have been playing only T20s for a while now. We will be playing one-dayers now, so, definitely, we need to prepare for that. Everyone has been preparing individually, including me. We are also going to play an ODI series against Pakistan after that which is likely to happen around Eid-ul-Fitr [from March 12-16].



USA stay alive

REUTERS
 The United States kept their hopes of reaching the Twenty20 World Cup's Super 8 stage alive as they ended their Group A campaign with two straight wins, after beating Namibia by 31 runs on Sunday.

Captain Monank Patel and Sanjay Krishnamurthi led with half-centuries as the Americans chose to bat and posted 199-4 in Chennai. Namibia fell well short as Shadley van Schalkwyk (2-27) and Saurabh Netravalkar (1-27) restricted their flow of runs.

Patel, who scored 52 off 30 balls, got USA off to a fast start and combined with Krishnamurthi for an 87-run partnership for the fourth wicket to get his team to their highest total in the campaign.

Krishnamurthi hit six sixes and four boundaries in his unbeaten knock of 68 from 33 balls, his first half-century in T20 internationals.

Namibia started well with Louren Steenkamp (58) guiding them to 97-1 in 10 overs, but struggled after Steenkamp got caught at point in the 13th over, ending their innings at 168-6 to lose their third straight game.

Ridoy, Mou headline first Inter-University TT Fest

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) is set to launch the first-ever Inter-University Table Tennis Fest today at the Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium, with around 30 public and private universities competing in the two-day event.

Nearly 200 paddlers, including 39 women, have registered for the tournament. The competition features two events -- women's singles and the men's team event. The federation opted to stage only a singles competition for women due to the shortage of female participants, while retaining the men's team format in line with international practice in inter-university competitions.

The presence of several national ranking players in both categories has added a competitive edge to the inaugural tournament. National champion and country's top-ranked player Muhtasin Ahmed Ridoy, national runner-up and women's number two Sadia Rahman Mou, and ninth-ranked Samantha Hossen Tushi will lead Dhaka University.

Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) will field national runner-up and men's number two Ramhim Lian Bawm as well as former ranked player Reefat Mahmud Sabbir. Northern University will feature fourth-ranked Imrul Kayes Imon.

Daffodil International University will rely on ninth-ranked Mufradul Khair Hamza Shajib, 17th-

ranked Promit Khisa Chakma and 20th-ranked Barkat Ali Sazin in the men's section, while ninth-ranked Nourin Sultana Mahi will compete in the women's singles.

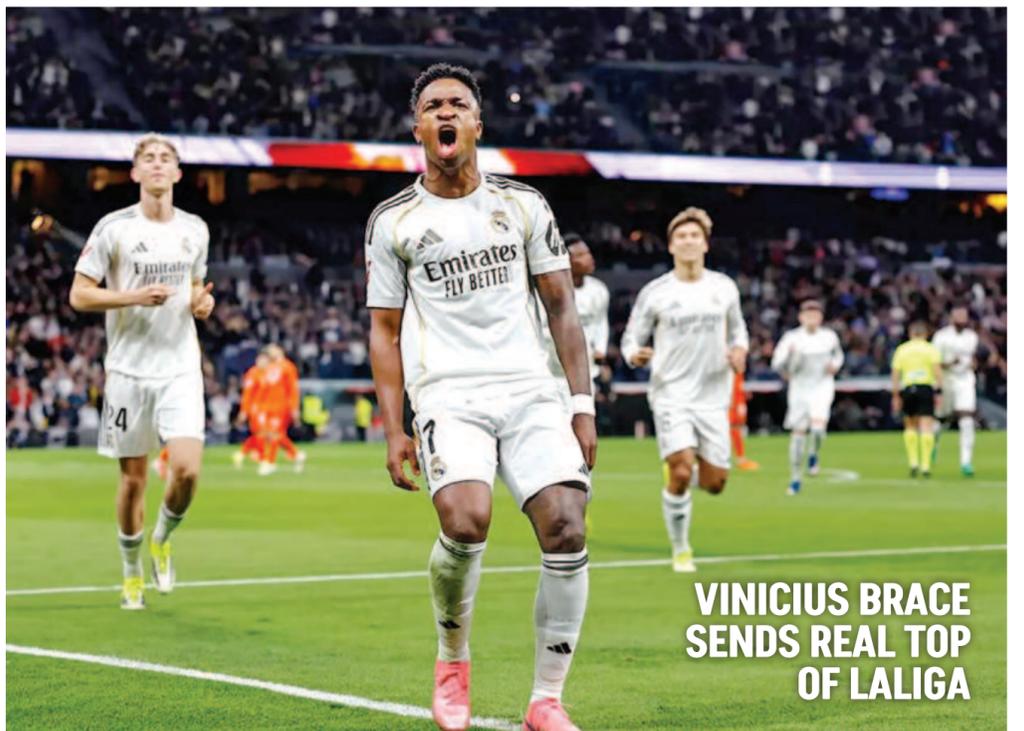
"Organising an inter-university table tennis tournament is a good initiative because the sport will now be visible at university level and it will spread further across campuses," Ridoy told The Daily Star.

"Since getting admitted to Dhaka University as an athlete, everyone has had a good perception of us. I am now proud to represent Dhaka University in an inter-university competition. I will try to bring laurels for our university," he added.

Former four-time national champion and BTTF joint secretary Nasimul Hasan Kochi also welcomed the initiative, saying the federation has long aimed to expand the sport's reach across the country.

"I can't remember whether the federation ever organised an inter-university tournament, though such tournaments were held outside without the federation's involvement. It's a good initiative to revitalise table tennis at university level, where it can flourish," said Kochi.

The federation hopes the tournament will serve as a platform to broaden participation and strengthen the sport's grassroots presence at university level.



VINIICIUS BRACE SENDS REAL TOP OF LALIGA

PHOTO: REAL MADRID
 Vinicius Junior struck twice from the penalty spot as Real Madrid surged to a 4-1 win over Real Sociedad, moving provisionally top of La Liga with 60 points. Trent Alexander-Arnold impressed on his first start in two-and-a-half months, while American coach Pellegrino Matarazzo suffered his first defeat after nine unbeaten matches in charge.

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'People will remember the army's service'

Gen Waker thanks soldiers for polls duty

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman described the just-concluded polls as an "acceptable, fair election", saying the outcome was widely accepted and made possible by soldiers' "responsibility and efficiency".



He made the remarks while addressing members of all ranks at a Chief of Army Staff (CAS) darbar yesterday at the Senapranagan.

Members deployed in United Nations peacekeeping missions were also included in the address. At least three sources, who were present at the darbar, confirmed the developments to The Daily Star.

"The darbar was organised to thank members of all ranks for a peaceful, fair, and acceptable national election," a source told the newspaper, requesting anonymity.

During his speech, the army chief praised troops for what he termed "excellent responsibility" and efficiency while performing election duties, and expressed gratitude

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Boatmen struggle to drag an empty boat across the Surma River, as sandbars, silt, and waste have choked the flow and blocked passage. Traders once reliant on the river for low-cost transport can no longer move goods by boat. Households are forced to fetch water from afar. A river that once sustained the city now looks to its people for survival. The photo was taken yesterday in Sylhet city's Kazirbazar. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Record complaint over alleged rape in Hatia

NHRC asks police

ANWARUL HAIDER, NOAKHALI

The National Human Rights Commission yesterday sent a letter to Hatia Police Station in Noakhali, asking the law enforcers to register a complaint and take necessary legal steps over the alleged rape and torture of a woman there.

In the letter, the NHRC said, "The commission has been monitoring media reports and taking necessary steps over allegations of human rights violations.

"According to media, a 32-year-old mother of three alleged she was raped and physically tortured at her home in Hatia upazila on the night of February 13 for voting for the 'Shapla Koli' [waterlily bud] symbol."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

BNP wins nearly half the votes, Jamaat a third

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami recorded significant gains in vote share and seats compared to 1991, each rising by nearly 20 percentage points.

In the February 12 election, BNP secured 49.97 percent of the vote and won 209 seats, a sharp increase from the 30.81 percent vote share and 140 seats it achieved in 1991.

Jamaat also made remarkable progress, winning 31.76 percent of the vote and 68 seats this time, compared to just 12.13 percent of the votes and 18 seats in 1991, according to Election Commission data.

According to EC Public Relations

Officer Ruhul Amin Mollik, in terms of vote share, the National Citizen Party, led by student and youth leaders of the July uprising, came in third. Fielding candidates in 32 constituencies, the party secured 3.05 percent of the vote. NCP contested the polls as part of the Jamaat-led II-party alliance.

Islamic Andolon Bangladesh, led by Charmonai Pir Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim, competed in 257 constituencies and secured 2.70 percent of the vote.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, a partner of the II-party combine, gave tickets to candidates in 34 constituencies and got 2.09 percent of the vote.

Jatiya Party, which had representation in the past three parliaments, nominated candidates in 199 constituencies. The party failed to secure any seat in this election and got only 0.89 percent of the votes.

Altogether, 50 political parties took part in the polls and 44 of them received less than one percent votes.

Meanwhile, 275 independent candidates bagged 5.79 percent votes.

The EC did not release the popular vote count. However, based on the votes obtained by winning candidates and their nearest rivals, BNP and its allies secured around

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

India rout Pakistan to seal Super 8 spot

AGENCIES

India routed bitter rivals Pakistan by 61 runs yesterday to qualify for the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup in a clash that had been in doubt until a few days ago.

Suryakumar Yadav's side posted 175-7 after a flying start from Ishan Kishan's 40-ball 77 and then bowled Pakistan out for 114 in 18 overs.

India have now won eight of nine T20 World Cup meetings between the sides, along with all eight of their ODI World Cup encounters.

Pakistan's chase of 176 began disastrously. Sahibzada Farhan topped a slog off Hardik Pandya to mid-on for a duck, and it became 6-2 when Jasprit Bumrah trapped Saim Ayub (6) lbw with his second ball. Captain Salman Agha (4) followed, mistiming another slog off Bumrah as Pakistan slumped to 13-3. When Axar Patel bowled Babar Azam for five, they were 34-4 in the fifth over.

Usman Khan offered resistance with 44 off 34 balls, including six fours and a six. But after charging Axar and being stumped by Kishan, Pakistan lost three wickets for five runs to collapse to 78-7, effectively ending the contest.

Earlier, Suryakumar

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

US cotton-made RMG to get duty-free access

Govt explains: Bangladesh gains 2,500 duty-free items, US over 7,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has disclosed parts of the recently signed trade agreement with the United States, under which the reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi goods was reduced from 20 percent to 19 percent after nine months of negotiation.

According to an official statement issued last night, garments produced in Bangladesh using imported US cotton and synthetic fibres will enter the American market duty-free. About 80 percent of Bangladesh's total exports to the United States consist of apparel.

Bangladesh will also have zero-tariff access to 2,500 products, while the United States will gain duty-free entry for more than 7,000 tariff lines in Bangladesh.

Tariffs for many of these products will be reduced in phases, a provision that, according to the statement, places Bangladesh in an advantageous position.

Overall, the government expects the Bangladesh-US trade agreement to strengthen Dhaka's competitive position in the American market, expand global trade, attract investment, and deliver economic benefits.

On April 2, 2025, Washington imposed reciprocal tariffs on most countries, including Bangladesh. In response, Bangladesh's chief adviser and commerce adviser wrote to US authorities seeking talks to reduce or withdraw the tariffs. Following negotiations, the rate for Bangladesh was set at 20 percent on August 30.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



India pacer Jasprit Bumrah celebrates with teammates after dismissing Pakistan opener Saim Ayub during their T20 World Cup Group A clash at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Bumrah returned figures of 2-17 as India delivered a dominant display, bowling Pakistan out for 114 in 18 overs after posting 175-7. The 61-run victory sealed a Super Eight spot for India.

PHOTO: REUTERS

POST-POLL MISINFORMATION Dismislab finds rivals peddling falsehoods

STAR REPORT

Since the day after the February 12 national parliamentary election and referendum in Bangladesh, news outlets have reported incidents of post-election violence in various parts of the country. Such clashes are not unprecedented, but this time the situation has been inflamed by the spread of misinformation online.

While accurate information about the incidents has been reported, false claims have also circulated, using misleading narratives to implicate rival political groups.

An analysis of Dismislab, a fact-checking organisation, shows that in most cases false claims have been circulated alleging that activists and supporters of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami were attacked by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In some instances,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

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 - প্রতিবন্ধী সন্তানের পিতা/মাতার পাসপোর্ট এর ফটোকপি (অনলাইন ও সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে);
 - প্রবাসী মৃত্যুবলকর্মী কর্মীর ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত NOC (সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে);
 - সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিবন্ধী সন্তানের ০২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবি এবং অনলাইনে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে ০১ (এক) কপি ছবি;
 - উপজেলা সমাজসেবা অফিস কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সুবর্ণ ন্যায়িক পরিচয়পত্র/কার্ড এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি (অনলাইন ও সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে);
 - প্রতিবন্ধী সন্তানের পিতা/মাতার বিএমইটি'র বহির্ভিন্ন ছাড়পত্রের পৃষ্ঠাসহ পাসপোর্ট এর ফটোকপি (সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে যোগ্যতা);
 - শ্রেণীভিত্তিক পিতা/মাতা/অভিভাবকের (ব্যাকে রাউটিং নাথার সহ) ব্যাকে হিসাবের স্টেটমেন্ট (অনলাইন ও সরাসরি আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে);
 - আবেদনের প্রক্রিয়াঃ
 - অনলাইনে আবেদন-
 - অনলাইনে আবেদনের লিংকঃ <https://portal.wewb.gov.bd/>
 - অনলাইনে আবেদন গ্রহণের সময়ঃ ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০২৬ হতে ৩১ মার্চ ২০২৬ পর্যন্ত;
 - সরাসরি আবেদন-
 - ওপুমা ০১-১২-২০০৪ইং তারিখের পূর্বে ইস্যুকৃত পাসপোর্টে ম্যানুয়াল বহির্ভিন্ন ছাড়পত্রের ক্ষেত্রে বোর্ডের উপ-পরিচালক (তথ্য ও জনসংযোগ) অথবা সহকারী পরিচালক/সহকারী পরিচালক (ভারসাহা) প্রবাসী কল্যাণ সেন্টার কর্তৃক মূল পাসপোর্ট উপস্থাপনপূর্বক সত্যায়ন করে আবেদন সাপে জমা দিতে হবে;
 - সরাসরি আবেদনের জন্য ওয়েব আর্নালিস কল্যাণ বোর্ডের প্রধান কার্যালয়/ বোর্ডের ওয়েবসাইট www.wewb.gov.bd/ প্রবাসী কল্যাণ সেন্টার হতে আবেদনপত্র বিনামূল্যে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে;
 - সরাসরি আবেদন গ্রহণের সময় ও ঠিকানাঃ আবেদনপত্র যথার্থভাবে পূরণ করে প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ ০১ মার্চ ২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে ওয়েব আর্নালিস কল্যাণ বোর্ড, ৯ম তলা (ডেসপাশ শাখা), প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ভবন, ইকুটিন গার্ডেন, রমনা, ঢাকা'র ঠিকানায় পৌঁছাতে হবে;
 - আবেদনে তথ্য ভুল প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন তথ্য অসম্পূর্ণ থাকলে আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে;
 - প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা প্রদান সত্ত্বেও যে কোন বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে;
 - ২০২১, ২০২২, ২০২৩, ২০২৪ এবং ২০২৫ সালে "প্রতিবন্ধী ভাতা" গ্রহণের আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই;
 - যে কোন তথ্যের জন্য প্রবাসিবন্ধু কল সেন্টারে (দেশ থেকে: ১৬১৩৫ টোল ফ্রি, বিদেশ থেকে +৮৮০৯৬১০১০১০০) যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

মোঃ সাইদুর রহমান
উপসচিব
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