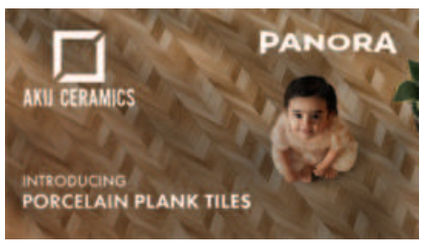

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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ADP spending plunges to 16-year low

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Lobbying frenzy in civil service, police

Officials jostle for posts eyeing new govt

BAHARAM KHAN *and* MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Intense lobbying has gripped the bureaucracy and police, with officials scrambling for coveted postings as the contours of a new BNP-led government begin to take shape.

From mid-ranking to senior officers across ministries, officials have been manoeuvring to secure positions in the incoming administration. Even retired bureaucrats have reportedly joined the fray, seeking a return to influential posts by using political connections, according to sources.

At the Secretariat, the heart of the civil bureaucracy, groups of officials were seen visiting the public administration secretary yesterday, pressing their cases and seeking assurances about postings and promotions -- a familiar pattern during political transitions, when civil servants move swiftly to align themselves with new

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus poses for a photo with officials and employees at the CA office in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday afternoon. His tenure ends today with the swearing-in of the new BNP-led government. PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

Struggle for a just Bangladesh must continue

Says Yunus in his farewell address

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, highlighting the interim government's initiatives to ensure democratic rights and values over the last 18 months, has called upon everyone to continue the struggle to build a just, humane and democratic Bangladesh

"I call upon everyone, regardless of party, creed, religion, caste and gender, to continue the struggle to build a just, humane, and democratic Bangladesh. With this appeal, I bid farewell with great optimism," he said in his farewell address to the nation last night.

Urging all to build a Bangladesh where possibilities are limitless, and dreams have no boundaries, the chief adviser said, over the last 18 months, the people

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Nation turns a new page today

18 months after the uprising, lawmakers-elect, cabinet take oath of office

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The arduous struggle for the restoration of democracy reaches its final step this afternoon, as an elected government prepares to take oath following the swearing-in of newly elected lawmakers this morning.

With this, the people turn to a fresh chapter of governance and hope, and it draws the curtain on 18 months of interim government rule that oversaw the long-awaited and widely accepted national polls.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday delivered a farewell address to officials and employees at his office in Tejgaon. Several advisers also bid farewell from their offices.

Yunus later made an address to the nation as well.

The BNP has yet to decide whether its members will separately take oath to join the Constitutional Reform Council.

Under the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, lawmakers of the 13th parliament are expected to play a dual role, serving as MPs to perform normal legislative work and as members of the council tasked with reforming 48 constitutional provisions, outlined in the July charter, within 180 working days.

They would therefore need to take two distinct oaths: one as legislators and another as council members.

Regarding the swearing-in of Constitution Reform Council members, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters yesterday outside the BNP chairperson's political office in Gulshan, "If the Constitution Reform Council is incorporated into the constitution, an amendment is made to that effect, and a form is included in the Third Schedule of the constitution for conducting the oath, specifying who will administer it, only after all these are done

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Work towards fulfilling the polls pledges

Tarique instructs MPs-elect of BNP

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman has instructed the newly elected party lawmakers to work to implement the party's election pledges.

Tarique, who will take oath as the prime minister today, reminded them about the party's priorities, saying that establishing the rule of law, accountability, discipline, people's welfare and national development would be his key targets.

He gave the directives during view-exchange meetings with the newly elected BNP members at the party chairman's office in Gulshan over the past two days, The Daily Star has learnt from people with direct knowledge of the discussions.

During the meetings, Tarique thanked them for their electoral victories and for what he described as the "long struggle" of the party's grassroots leaders and activists over the past 17 years.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

68.6% candidates blow past campaign spending limit

Finds TIB survey on 70 constituencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 68.6 percent of the candidates in the 13th national election exceeded the legal campaign expenditure limit, according to a report by Transparency International Bangladesh.

TIB came up with the figure after a survey on 210 candidates in 70 randomly selected seats. It also tracked other polls code violations in those constituencies.

The report, titled "13th National Election Process Tracking and Affidavits: TIB Observations", was launched at a press conference at the organisation's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

The average legal limit per candidate across constituencies is Tk 44.24 lakh.

However, the average total expenditure of the BNP in these 70 seats was Tk 1.89 crore per candidate, which is over 327 percent higher than the limit. As many as 94 percent of the party's candidates exceeded their limits.

"It is noteworthy that both principal rivals have raised allegations of bias against the commission, which may indirectly indicate the commission's effort to remain neutral."

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman

Among independents, it was Tk 1.76 crore per candidate, which is 315.2 percent higher than the cap.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami spent around Tk 1.11 crore per candidate, which is 159.1 percent higher than the limit. A total of 86.5 percent of the party candidates exceeded their limit.

Meanwhile, candidates of Jatiya Party spent an average of Tk 99 lakh each, which is 128.6 percent higher

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Jamaat will be a dutiful opposition

Says Shafiqur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has pledged his party's commitment to standing by the people as a responsible opposition in parliament, promising to play a constructive role in safeguarding public and national interests.

Speaking at an exchange meeting with the party's MPs-elect at Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's Moghbazar, Shafiqur emphasised the need for a healthy parliamentary culture where both the government and opposition perform their roles effectively.

He noted that core institutions had decayed, while the judiciary and other state organs became dysfunctional, leading to widespread disorder. He stressed that the ruling party bears primary responsibility for restoring these.

"If the government takes the lead with sincerity, it will be possible to reactivate

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

AMAR EKUSHEY

Before Bangla became a demand

A rare interview of Principal Abul Kashem

STAR REPORT

Principal Abul Kashem is an unforgettable figure in the history of the Language Movement. On September 1, 1947, under his leadership, Tamaddun Majlish, the initiating organisation of the Language Movement, was established.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

The pitchman's big promises but small gains

Investment chief Ashik Chy sold a dazzling dream but reality remained gloomy in 2025

JAGARAN CHAKMA

In officialdom, a microphone malfunction is usually seen as a sign of disorder. Yet in April 2025, at the Hotel InterContinental, Ashik Chowdhury transformed this familiar frustration into a piece of calculated theatre.

Just as he was about to begin his keynote at an investment summit, a "technical difficulty" stalled proceedings long enough to ripple nervous tension through the audience. Then, with the timing of a seasoned showman, Chowdhury revealed the glitch had been deliberate. "Without technical difficulty, any session is a waste of time," he quipped. "Sorry, that was actually intentional; we did it just to warm you guys up."

The room, filled with foreign dignitaries and local tycoons, erupted in relieved laughter. Even Muhammad Yunus, the chief adviser and Chowdhury's superior, smiled in amusement.

Chowdhury then invited investors to imagine a scene straight out of Back to the Future, a 1985 science fiction film. The year, he proposed, was 2035. Bangladesh had shed

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

70-year-old woman burnt in acid attack in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

An elderly woman suffered burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly carried out by the stalkers of her granddaughter in Natore early yesterday.

The 70-year-old is a resident of Adarsha village of Gurudashpur upazila.

Her family members said the victim's college-going granddaughter had been facing harassment and stalking for a long time.

The girl, along with her grandmother, was going towards the outhouse around 2:00am when criminals threw acid at the girl.

The girl's mother said, "My daughter managed to save herself, but my mother was severely injured in the attack."

The elderly woman was initially admitted to the Gurudashpur Upazila Health Complex. Later, she was moved to Natore General Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

Natore District Civil Surgeon Muktadir Arefin visited the patient around noon and assured her of all necessary treatment.

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman speaks with Islami Andolan Bangladesh Ameer Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim at the latter's residence in the capital's Siddheswari area yesterday evening.

PHOTO: **BNP MEDIA CELL**

5 of a family from Lakshmipur killed in KSA road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Noakhali*

Five of a family, including a one-and-a-half-year-old girl, from Lakshmipur's Ramganj upazila were killed early yesterday in a road accident while travelling from Makkah to Abha after performing Umrah in Saudi Arabia.

The victims are Mizanur Rahman, 45, of Panchrukhi village; his wife Farzana Yasmin, 30; and their daughters Meher Afroz Sumi, 10, Faiza Islam, 8, and 18-month-old Farjin Nur, confirmed family members and police.

Firoz Uddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Ramganj Police Station, said the accident took place approximately around 11:00pm (Saudi time) on Sunday (3:00am Bangladesh time yesterday) in the Taif region of Saudi Arabia.

Along with the five deaths, four others, including the driver, were injured and were in a critical condition in the ICU of a Saudi hospital, said the OC.

Baharul Alam, younger brother of the deceased Mizanur, said his brother was involved in hotel business in Abha, Saudi Arabia, for the past 20 years. On February 3, his wife and three daughters travelled to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah with him.

Mizanur, his wife, and their three daughters died on the spot, he said, adding that Mizan's friend, Md Titu, called him around 3:15am yesterday (Bangladesh time) and confirmed the news.

OC Firoz said police will cooperate with the family in bringing the bodies back to the country.

Lobbying frenzy

FROM PAGE 1

centres of power.

Meanwhile, in a dramatic development, the civil service saw two of its most powerful figures -- the cabinet secretary and the principal secretary -- resign in the last three days.

After Sheikh Abdur Rashid resigned as cabinet secretary on Saturday, the interim government gave M Siraz Uddin Miah, principal secretary to the chief adviser, the additional charge of cabinet secretary.

Siraz was relieved of the role of cabinet secretary yesterday, and Home Secretary Nasimul Gani was named as the new cabinet secretary. Siraz resigned as principal secretary the same day.

These came just before the new cabinet's oath-taking, scheduled to be held today.

Their departure, unprecedented in the 54-year history of the civil service, has further fuelled speculation about the scale of changes awaiting the bureaucracy once the new government assumes office.

Over the past two days, multiple groups of officers reportedly met Public Administration Secretary Ehsanul Hoque, demanding the removal of "fascists" from top positions.

Ehsanul could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Experts note that while changes in key posts are normal during a transition of power, those acting before the new government takes office are effectively making the incoming BNP-led government controversial.

Even the interim government took its oath under the then cabinet secretary Mahbub Hossain after the Awami League government was overthrown through the July uprising in 2024.

Though many expected his immediate removal, the government allowed him to complete his contractual term and retire normally.

Asked about the reason for his resignation as cabinet secretary just four days before the oath, Rashid told The Daily Star that he had intended to resign before the election, which was finalised on February 14.

However, Cabinet Division sources suggest that after BNP's victory, he sought to meet the party's top leader with the chief adviser's message for government formation, as per tradition, but was not given the chance. Rashid then resigned.

Moin Uddin, a deputy secretary-level official, wrote on Facebook:

"HT Imam conducted the Mushtaq government's oath, and recently Mahbub Hossain conducted the interim government's oath. Despite hostile environments, these are seen as bright examples of administrative norms."

Former officer Mahmudul Hasan commented on the post, "The departure of the cabinet secretary -- the highest civil official -- should be honourable. The way his contract was cancelled last Saturday feels indecent."

A new record has also been set in the appointment of cabinet secretaries. Typically, only one officer from a civil service batch reaches the post, but four from the 1982 batch have now held it. Besides Rashid, Siraz and Gani, former cabinet secretary Mohammad Shafiul Alam was an officer from that batch.

Calling this unprecedented, an official noted that more officers from the same batch are currently lobbying for the position.

A former cabinet secretary, requesting anonymity, said, "Administrative decline has reached a point where these incidents no longer seem unusual."

He said while it is normal for a government to choose preferred officers, such a situation is unexpected.

Public administration expert Firoz Mia echoed this view, saying, "If the incoming government fails to learn from this and restructure the administration, it is doubtful they can manage the situation."

POLICE

Political lobbying has also engulfed the police. Multiple sources in the force said lobbying has already started for top positions, including inspector general of police (IGP), Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner, and director general of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), as well as heads of key units such as Special Branch (SB) and Criminal Investigation Department.

A high-ranking officer at the Police Headquarters said officers aspiring to these posts have been contacting BNP leaders and influential quarters.

"The lobbying is likely to intensify after the cabinet is sworn in and ministers are appointed, particularly to the home ministry," said the officer, requesting anonymity.

An additional IGP, aware of the developments, said, "Huge lobbying and competition are taking place, especially for the IGP post."

Amid the situation, on Sunday evening, a rumour spread within the force that incumbent IGP Baharul Alam had resigned, nine months before the end of his tenure.

Police sources said he submitted a resignation letter to the home adviser, but it was not accepted. He was informed that the matter would be discussed after the new government assumes office.

Baharul was appointed as IGP on November 20, 2024, on a contractual basis for two years.

At least five additional IGP-rank officers, including two former officers, are being considered for the police chief post. All are known to be loyal to the BNP and were victims of suspension or attachment during the AL regime.

A superintendent of police, requesting anonymity, said, "A section of officers has spread the information about the IGP's resignation, which is unfortunate."

Regarding changes in top posts, he added, "Everything depends on the IGP post, and then it will change gradually. Things will escalate after the oath-taking ceremony."

Data shows that the tenures of both SB chief Golam Rasul and Rab chief AKM Shahidur Rahman will end on March 15, triggering lobbying for these two vital posts as well.

Former IGP Ashraful Huda said it would be "very sad, shameful, and unfortunate" if political influence returns to the force.

He said partisan grouping must not be allowed under any circumstances, adding that the responsibility to prevent it lies with everyone involved, including politicians.

Omar Faruk, professor of criminology and police science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said the situation was "very unfortunate" and would mean expectations of change would not be met.

After the fall of the AL government, the interim administration carried out sweeping changes in the police -- a key force in the deadly crackdown on July uprising protesters. Then police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun and several top officials were arrested, and cases were filed against at least 400 officials and members -- from former IGPs to constables -- in different police stations in the capital.

Contacted for comments, Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said partisan political influence in recruitment, postings, promotions, and even rewards and punishment was a key catalyst behind the dysfunction and professional bankruptcy of public institutions, which later became pillars of authoritarianism and kleptocracy that the July uprising fought against.

Giving in to any forces that compromise meritocracy, expertise, and experience would betray the spirit and aspirations of the uprising and open the door to a return of authoritarianism and kleptocracy.

"The new government must remember that the whole nation, including those now elected as public representatives, was a victim of deep and widespread politicisation of nearly all institutions and professions," he added.

68.6% candidates

FROM PAGE 1

than the cap.

The average total expenditure of the National Citizen Party was Tk 54 lakh per candidate, which is 19.0 percent higher than the limit. About half of the NCP candidates exceeded their limits.

In addition, 27.8 percent of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh candidates, and 42.9 percent of the Jatiya Party candidates spent more than the legal ceiling.

The candidates from the surveyed seats paid Tk 2.52 lakh to the parties to secure their nomination before the declaration of the election schedule, and Tk 3.09 lakh afterwards.

Banners, billboards, rallies, festoons and mass outreach campaigns each cost a candidate between Tk 1-2 lakh on average, said TIB.

Almost all the candidates violated one or more clauses of the electoral code of conduct, the research found, adding that all parties violated sound pollution limits and rules for postering.

Seventy-five percent of Jamaat candidates, 65.2 percent of the BNP candidates, 47.2 percent of IAB candidates, and 57.1 percent of independents conducted campaigns inside religious institutions -- a violation of the electoral code.

At least 33 percent of the BNP candidates and 5.8 percent of Jamaat's obstructed their opposition from campaigning.

Speaking at the report launch yesterday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "In many instances, contesting parties and candidates were not fully successful in complying with the code of conduct. Although the authoritarian government has fallen, the culture of 'must win at any cost' persisted among many parties and candidates."

Post-election, TIB found 45 incidents of violence between rival parties. There were 34 incidents in which parties threatened or harassed the voters, agents and supporters of their rivals, and 18 in which their homes and offices were attacked.

Iftekharuzzaman said, "At the beginning of the electioneering, we observed elements of healthy competition; however, as election day approached, this gradually turned into unhealthy competition."

He added that despite the Election Commission's active engagement and goodwill, various limitations prevented it from fully controlling irregularities committed by political parties as well as independent candidates.

"It is noteworthy that both principal rivals have raised allegations of bias against the commission, which may indirectly indicate the commission's effort to remain neutral."

Referring to the misuse of money, religion, muscle power, patriarchal and majoritarian forces in the election, TIB chief further said, "These factors disrupted the level playing field necessary for healthy competition. In many cases, such elements influenced nominations as well as campaign activities. As a result, the extent to which a truly level playing field was ensured is something that political parties need to reflect upon."

TIB also noted the role of the state-run television in creating a level-playing field.

BTV's 8:00pm bulletin gave disproportionate coverage to certain political parties, with the BNP receiving the most airtime, followed by Jamaat and the NCP.

Between October 1, 2025, and February 12, 2026, BTV spent a total of 593 minutes and 55 seconds covering political parties and candidates in its 8:00pm news bulletin -- 59.3 percent of which was spent on the BNP, 21.6 percent on Jamaat and 11.9 percent on the NCP.

Independent candidates received only 10 seconds of the channel's airtime.

TIB noted that this parliament will have the lowest number of directly elected women since 2008, while the youth make up three percent of the parliament.

The parliament is very highly educated, with 84.8 percent having completed tertiary education.

Meanwhile, 13 lawmakers' net worth is over Tk 100 crore each.

The number of lawmakers with loans is less than in previous parliaments, while the amount of loans they collectively have due -- Tk 11,356 crore -- is much higher.

Of the lawmakers with loan burdens, 62 percent are from the BNP, while 16 percent are from Jamaat.

Among landowners, the BNP's Shariatpur-2 candidate Shafiqur Rahman Kiron owns the largest -- 85.6 acres of land -- with Bandarban BNP's Saching Prue trailing behind with 77.9 acres.

Struggle for a just Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

of this country have gradually started to taste democracy, a welfare-oriented governance, freedom of speech, regain the ability to question and criticise power, and the ability to hold it accountable.

Yunus said the just-concluded national election was not merely a transfer of power, but the beginning of a new journey for the country's democracy.

"We have delivered a festive, free, impartial, peaceful, clean, and credible national election, through which the people have regained their right to vote," he said, expressing his deep respect and gratitude to those who were behind this achievement.

Yunus paid tribute to the young protesters who took to the streets in July 2024, as well as to those who were injured or lost their lives. "This transformation would not have been possible without their unprecedented sacrifice."

Reflecting on his tenure, the chief adviser said he and his colleagues have tried to honour the aspiration of the people.

"Where we have succeeded and where we have fallen short, that judgment rests with the people."

He emphasised that his government placed accountability above political considerations, prioritising the prosecution of crimes against humanity, corruption and systemic irregularities without regard for partisan interests or retribution.

Yunus said that when his administration assumed office, the country's law and order situation was deeply precarious.

"Police stations were empty, and public confidence had eroded, replaced by fear and uncertainty. Step by step, we have worked to restore stability and rebuild trust," he said.

"We have initiated administrative, commercial and financial reforms in fragile institutions to ensure that no future government can entrench itself against the will of the people," the chief adviser said.

Yunus expressed confidence that the people of Bangladesh and all political stakeholders will protect and enrich this democratic trajectory in the days ahead.

On matters of rights, independence and sovereignty, he urged steadfast commitment to building a beautiful Bangladesh for the next generation.

"On the eve of my departure from my duties, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you -- the children, teenagers, young people, students, men and women, young and old -- of the country. Please pray for me," the chief adviser said.

Work towards fulfilling

FROM PAGE 1

Before the election, he toured different parts of the country and addressed at least 64 public rallies, seeking votes for the party's electoral symbol, the "Sheaf of Paddy".

During the campaign, he made more than a dozen area-specific pledges, promising job creation, welfare measures, healthcare improvements and development in infrastructure and agriculture.

He also pledged to establish what it described as an accountable and "just state" directly answerable to the people.

During the meeting, Tarique sought support to run the country peacefully and implement the party's election pledges, Shahdat Hossain Selim, who was elected from Laxmipur-1.

"He has expected responsible behaviour from us. He asked us to strengthen our connection with the people," Selim told The Daily Star.

Party leaders said the chairman made it clear that the election result was not merely a political victory but a responsibility.

"We have received a mandate from the people. Now we must prove that we deserve it," a senior leader quoted him as saying.

During the discussions, Tarique stressed that the rule of law would form the foundation of the new administration.

He told the MPs that no one would be above the law and that public office must not be used for personal gain.

The lawmakers would have to remain answerable for their actions and decisions.

Senior leaders present at the meeting said that internal conflicts, group rivalry and reckless behaviour by party members would not be tolerated.

They reminded the newly elected MPs that their conduct would reflect on the entire party and its image.

Tarique also spoke about people's welfare and national development, saying that improving law and order, tackling corruption and reviving the economy would be among the government's immediate priorities.

He instructed the MPs to remain closely connected with their constituencies and to listen directly to people's problems and concerns.

According to insiders, Tarique directed lawmakers to maintain coordination with grassroots leaders and activists, but to ensure that all political activities remain within legal boundaries.

The top leaders said any wrongdoing at the local level would damage the party's credibility and weaken public trust.

During the meetings, Tarique stressed that the BNP must demonstrate that it can run the government responsibly and with maturity.

Several newly elected MPs expressed their commitment to supporting the chairman's vision and working in line with party directives.

Party leaders said Tarique's key message was that victory should not lead to arrogance. Instead, he urged humility, service and responsible conduct.

The leadership also instructed that no party member should engage in illegal activities, extortion, violence or any act that harms ordinary citizens.

"The party must set an example. If we break the law, we cannot speak about justice," he said, according to a participant.

Tarique also directed local leaders to cooperate with the administration and law enforcement agencies to help maintain peace in their respective areas.

Meanwhile, party leaders informed him about alleged irregularities during the election period, blaming rival groups for various incidents.

During the meetings, discussions were also held regarding the role of law enforcement agencies during the polls.

The leadership reiterated that BNP lawmakers must focus on governance and public service in the coming days, as the party prepares to assume office.

Jamaat will be a dutiful opposition

FROM PAGE 1

the organs of the state that have become ineffective," he said.

Shafiqur assured the government of cooperation on matters of national interest but vowed to act as a "watchdog" if public interest is undermined.

He called for improving law and order, restoring social discipline, and protecting citizens' rights.

Paying tribute to those killed or injured in the July uprising, he said their sacrifices should be remembered in the conduct of parliamentary affairs.

He also warned that forgetting the reasons behind the uprising may bring back a similar situation.

In a post on his Facebook page after the meeting, Shafiqur wrote, "Standing on the red blood of the July uprising, the entire nation is waiting to see how a new era of parliamentary politics begins from tomorrow."

He congratulated the people for participating in the election, adding, "Now begins the struggle to restore the people's looted rights."

Four dead in Israeli strike in Lebanon's east

AFP, *Beirut*

Lebanon said an Israeli strike on Sunday evening near the Syrian border in the country's east killed four people, as Israel said it had targeted operatives from Palestinian group Islamic Jihad.

Despite a November 2024 truce that sought to end more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, Israel has kept up regular strikes on Lebanon, usually saying it is targeting the Iran-backed group but occasionally also targeting its Palestinian ally Hamas.

It appeared to be the first strike Israel has claimed in Lebanon against Islamic Jihad, which is also allied with Hezbollah, since the truce.

An Israeli drone "targeted a car on the Lebanese-Syrian border", the state-run National News Agency said, adding that "four bodies" were inside the vehicle.

Lebanon's health ministry confirmed the toll in a statement.

The Israeli military in a statement said it "struck Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists in the Majdal Anjar area".

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Act now to prevent post-polls violence

37 noted citizens urge new govt, parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-seven citizens yesterday called on the Election Commission, the government and leaders of all political parties to take effective steps to prevent post-election violence reported in several districts.

In a statement, they expressed deep concern over incidents of violence following the 13th national parliamentary election and demanded immediate action to stop them.

Referring to the February 12 polls, the signatories said the election had set a rare example by being held nationwide without major violence or casualties from clashes between rival candidates and their supporters.

However, they noted that from the day after the election, media reports emerged of attacks and retaliatory violence between supporters of rival candidates in several districts. According to the statement, one person was killed and several others injured.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman calls on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the Chief Adviser's Office yesterday. Prof Yunus expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Army Chief for the Bangladesh Army's cooperation during his tenure, particularly in the national parliamentary elections.

PHOTO: PID

Hasina issue will not derail Dhaka-Delhi ties

Says Fakhrul in an interview with The Hindu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's relations with India will not be "captive" to a single issue, and the presence of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina in India will not "deter" Dhaka from pursuing broader ties with New Delhi, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said.

In an exclusive interview with the Indian daily The Hindu, Fakhrul said Bangladesh would expedite projects that serve its interests and intensify development cooperation with India.

"We believe Hasina has committed serious human rights violations. There is a popular demand to punish her, and we believe India should hand her over to us. But not handing her over will not be a deterrent to building broader relations, including trade and commercial ties," he said while talking to the Indian newspaper at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office in Dhaka.

He stressed that the overall India-Bangladesh relationship should not be "captive" to one issue.

The interim government has repeatedly urged India to

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

12 young MPs to join new parliament

DIPAN NANDY *and* AHMED DEEPTO

Twelve young lawmakers are set to join the national parliament formed in the wake of the July mass uprising, with their oath-taking scheduled for this morning at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. They account for 4.04 percent of the 297 elected members of parliament.

Five of the 12 young MPs were elected from the National Citizen Party (NCP), a political platform founded by leaders of the July uprising. The figures come from an analysis of the results of the 13th National Parliamentary Election held on February 12.

A report released yesterday by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), titled "Observation of the 13th National Parliamentary Election Process and Affidavit-based Assessment," found that the average age of elected MPs this year is 59.

According to the report, 3.3 percent of MPs are aged 25–34, 6.73 percent fall within 35–44, 18.86 percent are 45–54, 33.67 percent are 55–64, and 36.3 percent are above 65.

According to TIB, the inclusion of a significant number of fresh faces is expected to make this parliament more dynamic and youth-centric than its predecessors.

Data from TIB's "Know Your Candidate" portal indicates a rise in youth participation. Candidates aged 25–34 accounted for 9.41 percent this year, compared with 3.96 percent in 2024, 0.16 percent in 2018, and none in the 2014 election.

To take oath this morning at South Plaza

They make up 4.04% of 297 elected MPs

Five elected from NCP

Average age of elected MPs 59

Youth candidates (25-34) rose to 9.41% from 3.96% in 2024

Under the National Youth

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

New PM to decide on his official residence

Says adviser Adilur Rahman Khan

HELEMUL ALAM *and* BAHARAM KHAN

The new prime minister will decide on his official residence as the interim government has not finalised it so far, said Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan yesterday.

Adilur also said 37 houses have so far been prepared for the new ministers and state ministers across Minto Road, Dhanmondi and Gulshan, while preparations are underway to arrange a few more houses if necessary.

The adviser spoke to journalists at the Secretariat. He expressed hope that all residences would be ready by the swearing-in of the new cabinet.

Md Khalequezzaman Choudhury, chief engineer of the Public Works Department, said preliminary preparations have been made for the next prime minister's official residence, including a conceptual design for a specific location.

"We will show it to the new PM, and after his review, we will make a decision," he said.

Asked whether there had been any preliminary decision to temporarily move to Jamuna, he said no such decision had been taken.

AT A GLANCE

No decision yet on Jamuna

37 houses prepared for ministers, more if needed

144 NAM Bhaban flats being readied for MPs

50 cars and 50 drivers kept ready

Meanwhile, an official from the Department of Housing said there is no specific time frame mentioned regarding how soon the current advisers must vacate government housing after their term ends or upon resignation.

"Usually, they vacate the residence as soon as possible after their duties end. There are also instances where some leave even before their term is officially over," the official said.

After the fall of the Awami League government during the July mass uprising, the then PM Sheikh Hasina's official residence Gono Bhaban was transformed into the "July Memorial Museum" by the interim administration. As such, the issue of a new official residence for the prime minister has emerged.

Earlier on July 7, the Chief Adviser's Office formed a high-level committee led by Md Nazrul Islam to select a suitable residence for the upcoming PM.

The committee initially proposed merging the Speaker and Deputy Speaker's residences in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and submitted a report after an inspection. Another option in the Defence Ministry area was also considered.

Converting the state guest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Ekushey book fair to run from Feb 20 to Mar 15

Bangla Academy fixes dates despite publishers' demand

STAR REPORT

The Bangla Academy has decided to run the Amar Ekushey Book Fair from February 20 to March 15.

The head of the government will inaugurate the book fair. Preparations are underway accordingly, the Bangla Academy said.

The book fair traditionally begins on February 1. However, this year it was postponed due to the national election.

The academy's decision comes at a time when a platform of more than 300 publishers under the banner of Prokashok Oikya has been demanding the book fair begin after Eid-ul-Fitr and urged BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman's intervention to this end.

The platform's spokespersons, Mezbah Uddin of Ahmad Prokashoni and Mazharul Islam of Anyaprokash, said publishers are at risk of suffering losses if the fair is held during the month of Ramadan as there is a possibility of significantly fewer visitors during this time.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Teen stabbed to death in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 15-year-old madrasa student was stabbed to death allegedly by a group of teenagers in Dhaka's Jatrabari area on Sunday night, police said.

The victim, Mahim Mia, was attacked around 10:00pm in Kajla School Goli and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition, where doctors declared him dead at about 11:30pm, said Inspector Md Faruk, in-charge of the hospital's police outpost.

Police said Mahim, a Hifz student at a local madrasa, lived with his family in the Kajla area. He was originally from Kishoreganj Sadar upazila.

According to Mahim's father, Din Islam, a group of teenagers called his son into an alley in front of their house as he was returning from their fruit shop and later attacked him with sharp weapons.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

A customer looks at a plastic shelf displayed on a footpath at Chitrali Bazar on BIDC Road in Khulna. Traders have illegally occupied the busy footpath with shops and goods, forcing pedestrians onto the road, putting them at risk and disrupting traffic movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

No new vehicle registration without scrapping old one

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Vehicles without fitness for over one year may be scrapped

Guideline effective from Feb 13

Economic life set at 20yrs for buses, 25yrs for trucks

More than 80,000 BRTA-registered vehicles exceeded economic life

Violators face up to three months' jail or Tk 20,000 fine, or both

No one will be allowed to register a new or used motor vehicle without scrapping a vehicle that has exceeded its economic life, according to a new government guideline.

Under the Motor Vehicle Scrapping and Recycling Guideline–2026, authorities may also scrap vehicles that have remained without a valid fitness certificate for more than one year without reasonable cause.

Violation of the guideline will be treated as an offence under the Road Transport Act, 2018.

The Road Transport and Bridges Ministry issued a gazette on February 13, saying the guideline takes effect immediately.

The interim government introduced the guideline about eight months after fixing the economic life of buses and minibuses at 20 years and goods-carrying vehicles, such as trucks and covered vans, at 25 years. The guideline aims to ensure proper scrapping of outdated vehicles.

The move comes as more than 80,000 vehicles registered with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) have already exceeded their economic life, many of which are still in operation.

Officials also said several lakh vehicles are running without a valid fitness clearance.

BRTA Chairman Abu Momtaz Saad Uddin Ahmed said implementation would take time as several committees must be formed. "All these works will start after the formation of the new government," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

February 12 polls 'a mockery of the people'

Says Mamunul as Jamaat-led alliance leaders slam post-polls violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Ameer Mamunul Haque yesterday alleged that "subtle engineering" in the recently concluded polls was "a cruel mockery of the people".

Accusing the authorities of staging an "open drama of a peaceful election", he said "targeted individuals were obstructed from reaching parliament."

Addressing a protest rally organised by the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party electoral alliance in the Paltan area against "post-election violence, repression and arson across the country", Mamunul said people had hoped for a fair election in the "new Bangladesh achieved through many sacrifices".

"But on February 12, that right was cruelly mocked by announcing a staged and pre-planned result," he added.

According to him, "the administration, run with public money, was used to implement the agenda of the deep state."

Addressing the chief election commissioner, he warned that if the objections are not resolved through a proper investigation, people would once again take to the streets to reclaim their rights.

At the rally, Mia Golam Porwar, secretary general of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, said, "There is an attempt to deny the July charter written with blood by crafting narratives through various talk-show intellectuals."

He said people would resist such attempts.

He also urged the EC to immediately dispose of complaints filed over alleged irregularities in several constituencies.

Addressing the BNP, he said, "The nation is astonished by the post-election violence. Even after winning through manipulation, you have unleashed attacks on the nation -- killings, terror, arson attacks on homes, brutal beatings, and rapes of mothers and sisters. The scenes remind us of the fascists."

Locals from Char Majar Diar cross a sandbar to reach home after work in Rajshahi city. With the onset of the dry season, water levels in canals, wetlands and rivers have receded, leaving vast sandy stretches that resemble a desert. The photo was taken recently on a Padma River char in Rajshahi.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

'High schools to remain open for first 18 Ramadan days'

SC stays HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed a High Court order that directed the government to keep all high schools (Classes 6-10) closed throughout the month of Ramadan.

High schools will remain open for the first 18 days of Ramadan in line with the government decision following the apex court chamber judge's order, Acting Attorney General Md Arshadur Rouf told The Daily Star.

Chamber Judge Farah Mahbub also asked the government to file a leave to appeal petition with the court against the HC order

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Prioritise minorities

Christian leaders urge new govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's Christian church leaders have urged the new leadership of the country to pay attention to the underprivileged and minority communities of the country, support them in improving their quality of life and ensure peace and security.

In separate statements yesterday, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) and the United Forum of Church, Bangladesh (UFCB) congratulated the BNP and its chairman Tarique Rahman for the victory in the 13th parliamentary elections.

"After a long time, the people of the country have participated in exercising their right to vote in a spontaneous and festive atmosphere. This is a matter of joy and hope for all of us," said CBCB President Archbishop Bejoy N D'Cruze.

He said the active participation of citizens strengthens democratic practices and further paves the way for building a responsible, justice-based, and welfare-oriented state.

"Although small in number, we Christians have always made special contributions to the development of the country and the nation. While continuing this trend from our current position, we hope to strengthen your hands through our participation in education, healthcare, development, and constructive work, as well as service activities for the poor and needy," said Archbishop D'Cruze of Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Sharif N AS-Saber new VC of Stamford

STAR REPORT

Dr Sharif N AS-Saber has been appointed as the new vice-chancellor of Stamford University Bangladesh.

Sharif formally assumed office as VC in the presence of the chairman and members of the university's Board of Trustees, along with the university's deans, department heads and faculty members yesterday.

He is internationally recognised as an academic leader, strategist and governance specialist, with a career spanning more than three decades. Prior to joining Stamford, he served as a faculty member in the Department of Management under the College of Economics and Political Science at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.

Between 2023 and 2025, he served as vice-chair of the Middle East Chapter of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education.

Sharif earned his PhD from the University of Tasmania, an MBA from Monash University, and degrees in Law and International Relations from Dhaka University.

PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 17

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Cop among six hurt in Jhenaidah post-polls clash

STAR REPORT

At least six people, including a policeman, were injured in a clash between two groups of BNP men in the presence of police in Jhenaidah yesterday.

The incident occurred on Baruihuda Government Primary School playground in Shailkupa upazila at noon.

Police and locals said both groups were supporters of the newly elected BNP lawmaker of Jhenaidah-1 Md Asaduzzaman. They locked in a clash over rivalry stemming from the recent election campaign. Previously, the two groups clashed on the election day.

"Tension prevailed around 12:30pm today [Monday]. On information, police rushed to the spot, but the two groups clashed in the presence of police," said Shakil Ahmed, inspector (investigation) of Shailkupa Police Station.

A police constable, Sohel Rana, was injured after being hit by a brick. Additionally, four to five people from both sides sustained injuries, he also said.

No case was filed till yesterday evening. Police were trying to detain the culprits, he added.

Contacted, Md Asaduzzaman MP said, "I have heard the incident and asked police to take necessary legal action upon investigation."

Meanwhile, at a press conference on Sunday, BNP's defeated candidate in Chattogram-15 constituency, Nazmul Mostafa Amin, alleged that around 25 of his supporters were injured in 20 separate incidents of attacks by Jamaat activists since the election day.

He also demanded the removal of Lohagara Upazila Nirbahi Officer, alleging that the UNO has been playing a biased role towards Jamaat men.

Asked, Lohagara UNO Md Saiful Islam denied the allegation and said he performed his duties impartially.

Contacted, Ariful Islam Siddique, additional superintendent of police in Chattogram, said, "While we are yet to receive any official complaint in this regard, we have heard about some incidents and are investigating those."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

No new vehicle registration

FROM PAGE 3

Experts say old and unfit vehicles are a major cause of road crashes and air pollution. Older vehicles emit more toxic gases due to incomplete fuel combustion, they added.

In May 2023, the then government set the economic life of buses and minibuses at 20 years and trucks and covered vans at 25 years and prepared a draft scrapping guideline.

However, it later put the order on hold following pressure from transport associations, allowing outdated vehicles to remain on the roads.

In June last year, the interim government reinstated the age limits and announced a crackdown on outdated vehicles from mid-July.

But it also stepped back following pressure from the transport associations, who threatened to go on strike if the authorities did not halt the crackdown.

According to BRTA data updated on July 16 last year, some 39,169 buses and minibuses and 41,140 trucks, covered vans and tankers had exceeded their economic life.

WHAT THE GUIDELINE SAYS

Apart from vehicles that have exceeded their designated economic life or are unfit for operation, those declared unserviceable by government, autonomous, or private institutions can also be scrapped, the guideline says.

Vehicles damaged by fire, explosion, natural disasters or accidents where repairs are not financially viable can also be scrapped.

The same applies to vehicles declared unfit by a court, voluntarily handed over for scrapping, produced without authorisation, or modified without approval.

Vehicles without a valid fitness certificate for more than one year without reasonable cause are also eligible for scrapping.

BRTA officials could not provide the exact number of vehicles operating without fitness clearance for over a year. However, data shows that at least 6.26 lakh vehicles had not obtained fitness certificates as of July 24 last year.

BRTA will appoint private vendors for scrapping. An eight-member committee led by the BRTA director (Engineering) will determine the value of scrapped vehicles and identify recyclable parts.

A certificate will be issued for each scrapped vehicle.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

In exchange for a scrap certificate, an owner or lawful successor may receive government financial incentives when registering a new vehicle.

However, no one will be allowed to register a new or used vehicle without scrapping one that has exceeded its economic life.

The authority may allow registration if the owner's application for scrapping is accepted.

Violating the guideline will be punishable under Section 104 of the Road Transport Act, 2018, which provides for up to three months' imprisonment, a fine of Tk 20,000, or both.

New PM to decide

FROM PAGE 3

house Jamuna and using Minto Road bungalows were also discussed, but raised traffic concerns. The interim administration eventually left the final decision to the next elected government.

Regarding housing for ministers and state ministers, the PWD chief engineer said the ministry was preparing residences that are becoming vacant.

"At present, they have taken all preparation to get 16 ministers' bungalows and 10 ministers' apartments ready," he said on Sunday night.

"We are receiving updates daily. Former advisers are vacating residences, and once handed over, we will begin renovation work immediately. Hopefully, we will be able to allocate the houses on time."

Apartments for elected lawmakers are also being prepared, and currently 144 units are expected to be ready at the NAM Bhaban.

A PWD superintendent engineer said there are six buildings at NAM Bhaban, each containing 36 flats. Of these, four buildings are currently vacant, where cleaning and renovation work was ongoing.

Meanwhile, sources from the Transport Commissioner's Office said 50 cars and 50 drivers have been kept ready for members of the new cabinet.

"Perhaps, so many cars won't be required, but as per tradition, some extra vehicles are kept prepared," said an official concerned.

Teen stabbed

FROM PAGE 3

He alleged the attackers were known to Mahim.

Din Islam filed a murder case with Jatrabari Police Station, naming three individuals and accusing several unidentified others.

OC Mohammad Raju said one person has been arrested in connection with the incident.

Preliminary findings indicate Mahim knew those involved and that an ongoing dispute over a minor issue led to the attack, he said.

Police said drives are underway to arrest the remaining suspects.

Ekushey book fair

FROM PAGE 3

They have been demanding that the fair begin after Eid.

The platform said it would not participate in the book fair if it were held before Eid. However, the Bangla Academy remains steadfast in its decision to begin the fair from February 20.

To this end, the academy has decided to waive 55 percent of stall fees for participating publishers. A total of 525 stalls have been allocated to around 350 publishing organisations.

Bangla Academy sources said that amid the fair being organised during Ramadan, it will be held for a curtailed duration of 25 days.

Md Selim Reza, member secretary of the book fair organising committee, said the publishers' demand to hold the fair after Eid was illogical at a time when 80 percent preparations have been completed already.

"After Eid, during April, the weather will remain inclement due to nor'westers and rainfall, leading to significantly low number of visitors. As such, it is illogical to hold the fair during this time," he said.

"The committee unanimously decided the fair's date of inauguration, while reducing stall fees for the publishers compared to last year," he added.

Md Mafidur Rahman, secretary to the cultural affairs ministry, said the book fair is organised by the Bangla Academy while the ministry provides necessary support, and the head of state inaugurates it.

"Preparations are underway accordingly," he added.

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NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 144 of 2026
An application under Section 81(2), 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994
Md. Nazrul Islam Anik -----Petitioner
-VERSUS-
Headless Technologies Limited and another -----Respondent
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application on behalf of the Petitioner under Section 81(2), 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in holding AGM of **Headless Technologies Limited** was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, the Hon'ble Company Bench by its order dated 08.02.2026 was pleased to admit the said application and directed the petitioner to publish notices in the "Daily Star" and in the "Daily Songbad" within 3 (three) weeks from date and to file an affidavit-in-compliance within 3 (three) weeks from date and to file an affidavit-in-compliance. Any person or persons being interested in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on or before the date so fixed. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.
Md. Abdul Matin Sardar, Advocate, Supreme Court
Navana Rahim Ardent, Suite – C10, 39, Kakrial, Dhaka-1000.

Legal Notice
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
COMPANY MATTER N0:50 of 2026
An application under section 81(2), 85(3) read with section 396 of the Company Act-1994
AND
IN THE MATTER OF
Fariha Haque Daughter of M Wahidul Haque & Lutfun Nesa, Shareholder and Managing Director of Poribar Agro & Vet Limited. Of Flat # 4A, House # 32, Road #116, Gulshan #01, Dhaka, Petitioner
-VERSUS-
The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and others.
Respondents
Notice is here be given the an application under Section 81(2), 85(3) read with Section 396 of the companies Act 1994 was moved in petitioner in condonation of delay in holding the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Annual General Meeting of the Company named and style Poriber Agro & Vet Limited. Hon'ble Company Judge Mrs. Zinat Hoque. Justice has admitted the said application on 2nd February 2026. If any person interested in the said application may appear on the date of hearing either himself or through his Advocate. A copy of said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees:
Bhuiya Alamgir Hossain
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.
Room No: 318 (old),
Supreme Court Bar Association Building
Shahbag, Dhaka.
Mobile No: 01711289783

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Chief Medical Officer (East)
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattagram.

File no.- 54.01.1500.113.07.001.2024-2025.S. Date : 15 February 2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender has been invited in the national e-GP system portal (http:eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods/works.

S.N.	Name of Works	Tender ID No.	Last selling date and time
01	Procurement of Surgical items, Dental items, Laboratory reagents and accessories for the year 2025-2026.	1214227	25-Feb-2026 11:00
02	Procurement of Laboratory reagents and accessories for the year 2025-2026.	1163466	25-Feb-2026 11:00
03	Procurement of Laboratory reagents and accessories for the year 2025-2026.	1194451	25-Feb-2026 11:00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (http:eprocure.gov.bd).is required.

To get access to the Tender Document, the requred fee is to be deposited through any registered branch of enlisted banks on or before last selling date and time.

Further information and guidelines are availabe in the national e GP system portal and eGP help desk (http:eprocure.gov.bd).

16.02.26

এস(২৬)(১৮৩) **(Dr Ibne Safi Abdul Ahad)**
Chief Medical Officer/East
GD-316 Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram.

(একই তারিখ ও স্মারকে প্রতিস্থাপিত)
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"পুনঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থবছরে বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম-এর ষোলশহরস্থ প্রধান কার্যালয়ের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত "কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী" সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত সরঞ্জামাদি প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে পিপিআর, ২০২৫ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনকৃত) এর নিয়মানুসারে নিম্নলিখিত শর্তানুযায়ী সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম:নং	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয় ,বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
১।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান	বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম
২।	ক্রয়/সংগ্রাহকারীর নাম	সচিব, বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, ই১০-১৩, এম এ কে খলিল সড়ক, পশ্চিম পাহাড়, বাংলাদেশ বন গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট ক্যাম্পাস, ষোলশহর, চট্টগ্রাম। ফোন নং- ০২৪১৩৮০০৯৭
৩।	দরপত্র বিবরণ	"২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম-এর জন্য কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ"
৪।	অর্থের উৎস	জিওবি
৫।	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
৬।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও স্থান	২৬/০২/২০২৬ খ্রি: অফিস চলাকালীন পর্যন্ত, স্থানঃ সেবা শাখা, বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম।
৭।	দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০২/০৩/২০২৬ খ্রি: সকাল ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
৮।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম।
৯।	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	দরপত্রদাতাকে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে হবে এবং ১ টি চুক্তিতে ন্যূনতম ০৪ (চার) লক্ষ টাকার কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
১০।	কাজের মেয়াদ	কার্যাদেশ প্রাপ্তির ৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিনের মধ্যে।
১১।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	প্রতিটি ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরৎযোগ্য) দিয়ে সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে।
১২।	জামানত	১২,০০০/- (বারো হাজার) টাকা যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড- এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
১৩।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ; সময় ও স্থান	০২/০৩/২০২৬ খ্রি: সকাল ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা , স্থানঃ সম্মেলন কক্ষ, বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম
১৪।	দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্রাদির নমুনা	১। তফসিলি ব্যাংক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদ,ন্যূনতম তরল সম্পদের প্রত্যয়ক, হালনাগাদ বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন পত্রের কপি, জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের সত্যায়িত ছায়ালিপি, দরদাতার সদ্য তোলা ১(এক) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল এবং দরপত্র ক্রয়কালীন সময়ে মূল সনদপত্রসমূহ প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। ২। দরপত্রের সাথে সিডিউল মোতাবেক প্রতিটি আইটেমের ১টি করে নমুনা দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৬।	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ: **কম্পিউটার সামগ্রীঃ**	কিবোর্ড ১০টি, মাউস (ওয়্যারলেস) ১২টি, ডেস্কটপ ১০টি, পেনড্রাইভ ০৬ টি ভূল্লেক্স প্রিন্টার ০৪টি, মনিটর ০৪টি, ল্যাপটপ ০২ টি।

দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী:

১। দরপত্রে স্পষ্টাক্ষরে উদ্ধৃত দর অংকে ও কথায় লিখতে হবে। দরপত্রে কোন কাটাকাটি, ঘষামাজা করা যাবে না। দরপত্র অবশ্যই সীল মোহরযুক্ত খামে দাখিল করতে হবে।কোন অসম্পূর্ণ দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবেনা। দরপত্রের সকল কার্যক্রম পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে।দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী ও অন্যান্য তথ্যাদি অফিস চলাকালীন এবং ওয়েবসাইট www.rubberboard.gov.bd এর মাধ্যমে জানা যাবে।

২। দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট(সিডিউল) -এ বর্ণিত থাকবে।দরপত্রদাতাদের সিডিউলের শর্ত মোতাবেক দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। খামের উপর স্পষ্টভাবে **"২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে বাংলাদেশ রাবার বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম-এর জন্য কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ"** লিখতে হবে।

৩। দাখিলকৃত বিলের উপর বিধি মোতাবেক আয়কর ও ভ্যাট কর্তন করা হবে। অগ্রীম কোন বিল প্রদান করা যাবেনা।

৪। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সরকারী স্বার্থে দরপত্রের যে কোন শর্তাবলী পরিবর্তন/পরিবর্ধন প্রস্তাব করতে পারবেন এবং কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

১৬-০২-২০২৬
বিনশী সংঘোবি চাকমা
সচিব

GD-314

GAZA REBUILD

Board of Peace members pledge $5bn

Says Trump, tells Hamas to accept full disarmament

AFP, *West Palm Beach*

US President Donald Trump on Sunday urged Hamas to move forward with disarmament under his plan for postwar Gaza, and said members of his so-called "Board of Peace" had pledged $5 billion to the Palestinian territory's reconstruction.

"Very importantly, Hamas must uphold its commitment to Full and Immediate Demilitarization," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, ahead of a February 19 meeting of the board in Washington.

Disarmament is a key part in the second phase of the US-brokered ceasefire plan sealed in October between Israel and the Palestinian group to end the war triggered by Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023. The United Nations endorsed the plan in November.

The second phase stipulates that Israeli forces gradually withdraw from Gaza and Hamas should disarm, with an international stabilization force deployed to ensure security. Hamas has repeatedly said that disarmament is a red line, although it has indicated it could consider handing over its weapons to a future Palestinian governing authority.

Both sides accuse each other daily of ceasefire violations. Although originally intended to oversee Gaza's rebuilding, the charter for the "Board of Peace" does not seem to limit its role to the Palestinian territory.

"The Board of Peace has unlimited potential," Trump said Sunday in his post. After an initial meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos last month, the board is due to meet Thursday in the US capital.

Countries have been asked to pay $1 billion for permanent membership of the board.

This handout photo, taken and released yesterday by Police Cantonale Valaisanne, shows a regional train derailed in Goppenstein, southern Switzerland. Five people were injured, police said. The accident occurred as the region faced the second-highest avalanche warning. PHOTO: AFP

Iran's Guard Corps begins drills in Strait of Hormuz

FM Araghchi in Geneva for 2nd round of US talks

AGENCIES

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps began a series of military exercises in the Strait of Hormuz yesterday, state media reported, a narrow and strategic waterway in the Gulf.

Intensive drills were being conducted by the Guards' naval forces under supervision of the head of the IRGC, according to state TV, after the United States deployed a large naval force to the Gulf.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has arrived in Geneva ahead of a second round of negotiations with the United States, Iranian state television said yesterday, as Washington keeps up pressure on the Islamic republic.

According to Tehran, "indirect" Iran–US nuclear talks mediated by Oman will be held today, although Washington has previously pushed for other topics to be discussed including Iran's ballistic missiles and support for regional proxies, reports AFP.

Potential energy, mining, aircraft deals on table: Iran diplomat

Top US diplomat Rubio says Iran deal would be difficult

Considerable uncertainty surrounds the fate of Iran's stockpile of more than 400 kilogrammes of 60-percent enriched uranium that was last seen by nuclear watchdog inspectors in June.

Iran is pursuing a nuclear agreement with the US that delivers economic benefits for both sides, an Iranian diplomat was reported as saying on Sunday, reports Reuters.

"Common interests in the oil and gas fields, joint fields, mining investments, and even aircraft purchases are included in the negotiations," foreign ministry deputy director for economic diplomacy Hamid Ghanbari said, according to the semi-official Fars news agency.

"The foreign minister has arrived in Geneva at the head of a diplomatic and expert delegation to take part in the second round of nuclear negotiation," Iran's state-run IRIB wrote on its Telegram channel.

The top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi, later wrote on X that he would meet in Geneva with the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, "for deep technical discussion". He is also set to hold talks with his Swiss and Omani counterparts as well as other international officials.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said during a visit to the Hungarian capital Budapest yesterday that making a deal with Iran would be difficult.

Nepal launches post-uprising polls campaigns

Vote set to take place March 5

AFP, *Kathmandu*

Nepali candidates launched their campaigns yesterday for next month's parliamentary elections, the first since deadly anti-corruption protests toppled the previous government in 2025.

"This election will draw the future of the country," Sushila Karki, who is serving as interim prime minister until the March 5 vote, said ahead of the launch.

The youth-led protests were triggered by a brief social media ban, but were fuelled by anger at economic stagnation and an ageing elite seen as out of touch. More than 3,400 candidates are competing in the direct vote, 30 percent aged under 40.

Two weeks of campaigns will see a host of new, younger candidates promise to offer change, challenging veteran politicians.

A key election clash will see rapper-turned-mayor Balendra Shah, 35, face Oli in a head-to-head battle in the former prime minister's constituency.

Sharply dressed Shah, better known as Balen, has emerged as a symbol of youth-driven political change. He has joined the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), the fourth biggest in the last parliament.

NAVALNY POISONING

Kremlin rejects European accusations

REUTERS, *Moscow*

The Kremlin yesterday rejected accusations from five European countries that the Russian state had killed late Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny two years ago using toxin from poison dart frogs, saying the claims were "not based on anything".

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent domestic critic, died in February 2024 aged 47 in a far-flung Arctic prison, a month before Putin was re-elected in a landslide vote which Western nations said was neither free nor fair.

In a joint statement on Saturday, Britain, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands said that analyses of samples from Navalny's body had "conclusively" confirmed the presence of epibatidine, a toxin found in poison dart frogs in South America and not found naturally in Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday that Moscow took a very negative view of the European allegations, which he said were false.

"Naturally, we do not accept such accusations. We disagree with them. We consider them biased and unfounded. And, in fact, we strongly reject them," said Peskov.

Nation turns a new page today

FROM PAGE 1

can the swearing-in take place."

In a statement, the Parliament Secretariat said that the swearing-in of newly elected lawmakers and of Constitutional Reform Council members will take place in turns at the oath-taking room of the Jatiya Sangsad today. The ceremony will begin at 10:00am.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin will administer the oath to 297 newly elected MPs, the Election Commission confirmed in a statement.

This is the second time in the country's history the CEC is administering the oath to the lawmakers.

Many MPs refused to take oath from then Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury following the 1991 national polls, as he was an accomplice of military dictator HM Ershad, parliamentary affairs expert Nizam Ahmed told this newspaper.

Traditionally, the Speaker administers the oath. But the speaker of the 12th national parliament, Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, resigned following the student-led mass uprising that toppled the Hasina-led government on August 5, 2024. Deputy Speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku is in jail.

As per the constitution, if the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are unavailable or unable to perform the duty, the CEC is allowed to administer the oath to the newly elected members of parliament.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath-taking ceremony of the new government at the parliament's South Plaza.

Traditionally, the swearing-in of the new cabinet takes place at the Bangabhaban's Darbar Hall.

Today, representatives from over a dozen countries are expected to attend the event.

When asked yesterday how many members the cabinet would have, newly appointed Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani refused to comment.

He explained that once the list of cabinet members is received, arrangements must be made for each minister: a car, a bodyguard, housing, security measures, their office, and the appointment of personal staff to assist them. All these preparations have to be made. "The government is always prepared."

As per the rules, following the swearing-in ceremony of MPs, a meeting of the Parliamentary Party of BNP that has secured an overwhelming majority will be held to elect its parliamentary leader, according to a BNP source.

The leader of the House will then meet the president and inform him that the party commands an absolute majority in parliament, formally seeking appointment as the prime minister of Bangladesh.

Subsequently, the president will appoint the party leader as the prime minister, who will select other cabinet colleagues.

The president will administer the oath first to the premier, followed by ministers, state ministers, and deputy ministers, on the day.

On Friday night, the EC published the gazette for 297 out of 299 seats in the 13th national election.

BNP secured an absolute majority by winning 209 seats. For the first time, Jamaat-e-Islami is going to be the main opposition party with 68 seats.

Although elections are constitutionally held every five years, the 13th national election was held after just about two years (26 months) because the Awami League regime was ousted by the uprising in August 2024.

The spark came on July 1, 2024, when students protesting government job quotas were met with a harsh response, turning the fledgling movement into an all-out anti-government campaign demanding Hasina's resignation. She fled to India on August 5 as hundreds of thousands marched towards Dhaka.

The UN reported that around 1,400 people were killed during those few weeks of July and August.

On August 8, 2024, Prof Yunus assumed the leadership of the interim government, pledging reforms, justice for the July killings, and a credible election.

BNP and its allies initially demanded that the election be held by December 2025, seemingly unhappy at the government's indication that the polls may be delayed till as late as June 2026.

Amid strong criticism for delayed polls, the chief adviser said on June 13, 2025, that polls could be held the week before Ramadan in 2026 if preparations were complete. The announcement came after a meeting with Tarique Rahman in London.

But the much-promised reforms still remained elusive until mid-October when 25 parties signed the July charter after months-long negotiations among 30 parties at the National Consensus Commission. Five parties still refused to sign, including the National Citizen Party, considered the natural heir to the July uprising.

NCP, however, signed the charter yesterday.

On November 13, the government announced that the national election and the referendum would be held on the same day, and that an upper house would be introduced based on proportional representation of the votes cast.

On December 11, the EC confirmed February 12 as the election day. Adversarial rhetoric filled the airwaves during the campaigns, but the process remained comparatively peaceful compared to past elections.

The interim government managed to keep the election atmosphere largely free of violence -- a rare achievement in Bangladesh's electoral history -- thanks to the strong support of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies.

Following the election, all political parties respected the outcome and accepted the results, with some even announcing plans to form shadow cabinets to act as watchdogs.

One of the interim government's most notable initiatives was the preparation of the July charter, achieved through rare consensus among 30 political parties after multiple rounds of dialogue that brought divergent opinions together.

While the peaceful and fair election absolves the Yunus government to a significant extent, its legacy is also marked by appeasement of mobs and frequent capitulation to violent agitators, regardless of how unreasonable their demands were. The government's indecisiveness was most evident in these moments.

The 18-month period was also scarred by attacks on women, Sufis, bauls, and shrines across Bangladesh. Many individuals perceived as beneficiaries or sympathisers of the Awami League regime found themselves accused of murder. Those targeted included journalists, politicians, judges, lawyers, film stars, and even former sportsmen. A number of them were arrested and denied bail.

Chattogram Port also had ground to a halt for several days in the beginning of this month as workers and employees went on an indefinite work abstention over the government's move to lease the key New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to Dubai-based DP World.

The interim government also signed a sweeping trade agreement with the United States at the twilight of its tenure to secure a partial tariff relief, but the deal was made in exchange for significant concessions.

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
Dhaka South City Corporation
নগর ভবন, ঢাকা

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ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৭১৮০-৮১, ৯৫৫৭১৮৪, ৯৫৫৭১৮৬-৮৯, ৯৫৫৮২৫৫-৫৯, ৯৫৫৮৩৫৭-৬০, www.dscc.gov.bd

স্মারকঃ ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.১২.০০.২২৬.২০২৬ তারিখঃ ১৬/২/২০২৬

পুনঃ দরপত্র নোটিশ

বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কাজের গতিশীলতা ও মানোন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা প্রাপ্তির লক্ষ্যে নতুন নিবন্ধন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর আওতাধীন এলাকায় নিয়োজিত ০৪টি ওয়ার্ডের (ওয়ার্ড নং-৬৯, ৭০, ৭২ ও ৭৫) প্রাথমিক বর্জ্য সংগ্রহ সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য অগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত অনুসরণপূর্বক আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ক) প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলীঃ

১. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান কার্যক্রম অনলাইনে সম্পন্ন করতে হবে। ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নগর ভবন ও আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয় থেকে সরাসরি আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়/বিক্রয় এবং জমা প্রদান করা যাবে না।

২. আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের জন্য ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের চলতি হিসাব নং-২০০০১৭৮৩৯, সোনালী ব্যাংক, নগর ভবন শাখায় ১০,০০০/- (টাকা দশ হাজার মাত্র) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা প্রদান করে ব্যাংক রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

৩. ওয়েবসাইট https://dscc.gov.bd হতে নিবন্ধন আবেদনপত্র ও প্রযোজ্য শর্তাবলী/TOR (Terms of Reference) ডাউনলোড পূর্বক উল্লিখিত নির্দেশনা অনুয়ায়ী আবেদনপত্র যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে চাহিদাকৃত কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাবের অনুকূলে প্রযোজ্য সকল ডকুমেন্টস দাখিল করতে হবে।

৪. নিবন্ধনের জন্য আর্থিক প্রস্তাবে উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের সমপরিমাণ অর্থ মেয়র/প্রশাসক, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডারটি (মূলকপি) প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর, নগর ভবন, ঢাদসিক বরাবর জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে পে-অর্ডারটির স্ক্যান কপি অনলাইনে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।

৫. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ই' এর সাথে কারিগরি প্রস্তাব মূল্যায়ন সংক্রান্ত প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদি সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

৬. স্বাক্ষরিত আর্থিক প্রস্তাব তথা 'ফরম-ঈ' এর সাথে সংলগ্নি আকারে আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের ব্যাংক রশিদ এবং নিবন্ধন মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার জমা প্রদানের রশিদ জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আর্থিক প্রস্তাব গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

৭. কারিগরি প্রস্তাব ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব পৃথকভাবে সংযুক্ত করে ই-মেইলসমূহে cwmo@dscc.gov.bd, administrator@dscc.gov.bd, ceo@dscc.gov.bd প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

৮. ইতিমধ্যে যে সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদান করেছেন, তাদের পুনরায় আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় মূল্য ও নিবন্ধন মূল্য জমা প্রদানের প্রয়োজন নেই। এক্ষেত্রে শুধুমাত্র নিবন্ধন ফরম পূরণসহ চাহিত তথ্যাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।

খ) আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদানের সময় নিম্নে উল্লেখ করা হলোঃ

আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	আবেদনপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়
তারিখ ১৭/০২/২০২৬খ্রিঃ হতে ২২/০২/২০২৬খ্রিঃ সময়ঃ বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	তারিখঃ ২২/০২/২০২৬খ্রিঃ সময়ঃ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্যঃ নোটিশে উল্লেখিত সময়ের পরে কোন আবেদনপত্র ক্রয় ও জমা প্রদান গ্রহণযোগ্য বিবেচিত হবে না।

১৬/০২/২০২৬

মোঃ মাহাবুবুর রহমান তালুকদার
এয়ার কমডোর
প্রধান বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্মকর্তা
বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা বিভাগ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
ফোনঃ ০২২২৩৩৫০৩৭৫

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৮১/২০২৫-২৬

GD-317

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A parliament of firsts, youthful lawmakers

Integrity and restraint will determine success

The incoming 13th parliament promises renewal. More than two-thirds of lawmakers-elect will take their seats for the first time. The country will see a first-time prime minister, a first-time opposition leader, and six young members of parliament from the National Citizen Party who helped organise the 2024 July uprising. Eight parties will be represented, and five party chiefs will enter the House as first-time MPs. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which secured 209 seats, brings 132 newcomers. Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has 59 first-time MPs. While seasoned stalwarts, particularly within the BNP, remain, the overall composition of the parliament signals a more vibrant and diverse legislature, backed by an active opposition.

This marks a clear departure from recent parliaments led by Awami League, where the absence of a credible opposition reduced proceedings to ritual. The treasury benches were filled by the same figures elected through controversial polls. Instead of lively debate on public-interest issues and meaningful legislative scrutiny, the chamber too often became a stage for sycophancy. MPs competed in praising the prime minister, while dissenting voices, whether individuals or institutions, were branded "enemies of the state," with little opportunity for rebuttal. Arbitrary laws were passed unchallenged. Among the most damaging was the Digital Security Act, later recast as the Cyber Security Act, widely criticised for stifling freedom of expression and enabling arbitrary arrests. Such measures became symbols of a legislature that failed in its duty to safeguard democratic freedoms.

Hopefully, this time, the presence of many young MPs and a strong opposition bench should ensure substantive debate on legislation and policies affecting citizens' lives. Also, the opposition must remember that its role is to be constructive, not disruptive. The country cannot afford a return to habitual walkouts and street agitations that once paralysed parliamentary politics. Sharp disagreements are inevitable, but they must be addressed within the House, in language befitting its code of conduct. The Speaker's role will be pivotal. Neutrality and equal opportunity for all members to speak are key to restoring public trust in parliamentary procedures. Women MPs must be given equal time to speak.

With a two-thirds majority, the BNP bears special responsibility. Power demands restraint. More than half of the new MPs are businesspeople, many from the ruling party. This raises legitimate concerns about conflicts of interest, an issue that also plagued past parliaments. MPs must not exploit public office to advance private business. Party leadership must remain vigilant against such transgressions. There are also reports that 11 winning BNP candidates are loan defaulters; most of them secured court stay orders to contest. Under the Representation of the People Order, defaulters are barred from running. If loans remain unpaid beyond the stay period, or if fresh defaults occur, the Election Commission has the authority to cancel membership. That rule must be enforced without any bias.

This parliament has the numbers, diversity, and generational shift to reset democratic norms. Whether it succeeds depends on integrity, accountability, and respect for the institution it now represents.

Curb post-poll misinformation

False narratives must be shunned

Since the February 12 election, post-poll violence in various parts of the country has been reported in the media. While such incidents are not unprecedented in our country's political history, the rapid spread of disinformation and misinformation online raises serious concerns. An analysis by Dismislab, a fact-checking organisation, has shown that rival camps have circulated false claims, recycled videos, and misleading narratives to inflame tensions and implicate political opponents. Before the election, disinformation was deliberately spread to influence the election results, and now both misinformation and disinformation continue to circulate online.

According to Dismislab, multiple misleading claims alleged that activists and supporters of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami were attacked by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In other cases, claims were made that Jamaat itself had carried out attacks or was directly involved in clashes. Fact-checkers documented at least 13 instances of false claims related to post-election violence or protests on February 13 and 14. Old videos were recirculated with new captions. A month-old clip was falsely linked to alleged arson over voting for Jamaat. A seven-year-old video was presented as evidence of post-election reprisals by BNP at Dhaka University. Other unrelated footage was shared to suggest retaliatory marches by Shibir that never occurred. Such false claims on social media deepen mistrust, provoke outrage, and serve only political agendas.

Encouragingly, after this election, both the winning and opposition parties have shown a restrained response, which is unprecedented in our recent political history. The BNP, despite securing a two-thirds majority, has shown commendable courtesy and expressed its willingness to work with the opposition. BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman's recent visit with Jamaat and National Citizen Party chiefs signals a possible shift in the country's political culture.

While opposition parties may have grievances, these must be pursued through lawful and institutional channels, demonstrating political maturity. Any crime or act of violence should be addressed promptly and in accordance with the law. At the same time, vigilance is needed to protect minority communities, who have historically been vulnerable after elections. Protecting them from harm requires political commitment not only from the party forming the next government but also from the opposition. All political actors must send an unequivocal message that violence, intimidation, or misinformation will not be tolerated.

As the newly elected government is formally sworn in today, a pledge to shun the spread of misinformation, disinformation, or any attempts to disrupt the democratic transition must be made. Restraint, accountability, and truth must guide the nation to strengthen democracy and ensure stability.

What BNP should keep in mind as it assumes power

MACRO MIRROR

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Views expressed in the article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

BNP rightly deserves our congratulations for winning a decisive victory in the 13th parliamentary election. This outcome reflects an unequivocal mandate that is both politically and historically significant. Coming as it does at a critical point in Bangladesh's democratic journey, this moment marks more than a change of government; it signals a renewed public resolve to restore democratic norms, accountability, and institutional integrity.

The election came after years of severe distrust in the electoral process, questions over legitimacy, and institutional strain, so the poll's successful conduct has reinforced trust in the process as well as the principle that governments derive authority from the consent of the governed. For quite some time now, Bangladesh has faced deep polarisation, intolerance, and threats to its democratic foundations. Regressive and anti-democratic tendencies—whether institutional, ideological, or political—risked steering the country away from its foundational goals. BNP's decisive victory can therefore be interpreted as a call to reverse this trajectory, and a public desire for accountable, forward-looking governance rooted in liberal democratic principles.

However, the road ahead is going to be bumpy, to put it mildly. A broad mandate alone cannot resolve deep-rooted structural problems. The BNP government will likely continue to face economic challenges and institutional constraints for the foreseeable future. This will test its capacity and sincerity not only to govern but also to transform the culture of governance in the country.

Economic reform imperatives

A key challenge will be stabilising the economy, which continues to face mounting pressures: growth has decelerated, inflation has eroded people's purchasing power, foreign exchange reserves remain low, and public finances are tight. External debt has increased significantly in recent years, while the tax-to-GDP ratio has fallen to historically low levels. State-owned enterprises and the banking sector face persistent structural weaknesses, and confidence among both domestic and international investors remains fragile.

The new government should begin by restoring macroeconomic discipline. Containing inflation will need close coordination across ministries and agencies. Monetary policy must remain cautious and credible, free from political interference, while fiscal policy should prioritise stability rather than expand populist spending.

Tax reform is also unavoidable. The National Board of Revenue requires comprehensive modernisation, digitalisation, and total compliance. Broadening the tax base, especially by bringing all high-income groups and segments of the informal economy into the formal system, is crucial. Over time, reliance on indirect taxes such as value-added tax and import duties should be reduced, paving the way for a more progressive direct tax regime.

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

Banking sector reform is equally crucial. Proper asset quality reviews and regulatory oversight are necessary to rebuild confidence in the sector. Political patronage within the financial institutions must end. Without a resilient financial system, private investment cannot recover. As regards growth, the government should focus on diversifying exports beyond ready-made garments and deepening integration into regional value chains. Attracting foreign direct investment will depend on regulatory predictability and improvements in logistics and energy reliability. Ambitious growth targets must be matched by realistic implementation capacity.

Political challenges

Distrust among political actors, partly fuelled by fears of retribution and violence, is a reality that may persist. BNP will face pressure from its supporters to act quickly in addressing perceived injustices, but good governance demands restraint. If the new government resorts to or tolerates exclusion or retaliation, it will risk perpetuating the very cycle it has condemned.

Managing internal party discipline will also be crucial, as a large parliamentary majority can sometimes lead to complacency or factional rivalry. Strong leadership will be required to maintain unity while allowing constructive internal debate. BNP must also rebuild trust with minority communities and vulnerable groups. Elections often heighten anxieties among minorities, so a credible commitment to equal citizenship is crucial. BNP's political maturity will also be judged by how it treats or engages with its opponents. In this regard, Chairman Tarique Rahman's visits to the residences of top opposition leaders on Sunday marked a positive gesture, one that many hope will withstand the inevitable pressures or conflicts over governance in the coming days.

Strengthening democratic institutions

A central promise of this election was to restore democracy, which must now translate into concrete institutional reforms. Judicial independence needs constant safeguarding. Which means that appointment, promotion, and case management processes should be insulated from political influence. Parliamentary oversight committees must also function effectively, and the opposition's voice in parliament must be protected.

Electoral institutions also need reform, particularly along the lines of the July Charter. Continued credibility of the Election Commission will depend on transparency, professional management, and impartiality. Meanwhile, the civil service must be depoliticised. Appointments based on loyalty rather than merit have long undermined governance in the country. So the new administration must work on curtailing the influence of political networks to ensure a professional, impartial civil service. Media reform and digital rights also deserve careful attention. We must remember that democratic consolidation is built through institutional habits, and these habits must be established early.

Beyond winner-takes-all

Bangladesh's politics has long been characterised by a winner-takes-all mentality. Electoral victories have often resulted in monopolisation of power, marginalising opposition voices and weakening checks and balances. If BNP is serious about democratic renewal, it must consciously break with this tradition. Inclusive policy consultations will be a good starting point. Major economic and constitutional reforms should be based on cross-party dialogue and consensus. Appointments to constitutional bodies should be transparent and consultative, and parliamentary debates should be done with the letter and spirit of the July Charter in mind.

Meeting public expectations

The scale of public expectations now is naturally immense. Citizens want economic relief, employment opportunities, necessary institutional reforms, and improved governance. Managing these expectations will be quite difficult. Many reforms will not yield immediate results, and some may impose short-term costs. So it is imperative to ensure transparent communication about the associated timelines, trade-offs, and fiscal constraints.

Anti-corruption efforts must be credible and monitored at all times. Measures are needed to strengthen oversight institutions, improve transparency in public procurement, and expand digital service delivery to reduce opportunities for rent-seeking. Governance reform should be systematic, not selective or politically driven. Tangible improvements are urgently needed in public service delivery, particularly in health, education, social protection, and local government.

Finally, a word of caution: BNP's decisive victory presents both opportunities and risks. It can enable bold reforms but it also carries the danger of overreach. The key deciding factor here is political judgment. The question is, can our leaders deliver based on the mandate voters have given them?

GLOBAL TOURISM RESILIENCE DAY

Our tourism needs a policy reset

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SABBIR AHMAD

While our neighbours in Asia count billions in tourist dollars, it is unfortunate that we are still largely relying on garment exports or remittances for foreign currency. Just think: Thailand hosts 30-40 million international visitors annually. Vietnam attracts about 13 million tourists. Even the tiny island nation of the Maldives has built a sizeable percentage of its GDP on tourism. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, blessed with the world's longest natural beach and the mystical Sundarbans, struggles to attract international tourists. This is not just embarrassing; it is an economic upheaval hiding in plain sight.

As the UN commemorates Global Tourism Resilience Day on February 17, Bangladesh faces a dual challenge: we must simultaneously build a tourism sector capable of attracting foreign visitors while making it resilient enough to withstand the climate shocks and crises that inevitably lie ahead.

Our economy's overwhelming dependence on garment exports leaves us exposed to global supply chain disruptions, automation threats, trade policy shifts, etc. Tourism offers a useful means of diversification, and it brings foreign currency directly. Unlike exports that face challenges of tariffs and quotas, every dollar a foreign tourist spends flows immediately into local pockets, from beach vendors to hotel staff to tour guides. No intermediaries, no shipping costs, no trade barriers. Just direct economic impact.

While garment factories cluster in industrial zones, tourism can spread wealth geographically: Cox's Bazar's beaches, Sylhet's tea gardens, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Paharpur's archaeological sites. Such distribution is impossible to achieve through manufacturing alone. Tourism creates jobs across skill levels. A tourist doesn't just book a hotel; they eat at restaurants, hire guides, purchase handicrafts, and support entire supply chains. If Bangladesh attracted just five million international tourists annually, at an average spend of $1,000 per visit, you're looking at $5 billion in direct foreign revenue. Factor in the multiplier effect, and the amount reaches $15-20 billion in total economic impact.

What's Bangladesh's tourism brand? Most foreigners couldn't tell because we haven't created one. Every tourist choosing Phuket over Cox's Bazar represents lost revenue. Every cultural enthusiast visiting Angkor Wat instead of our ancient Buddhist sites is foreign currency we'll never see. The longer we delay in reversing this situation, the harder it becomes. Tourists going elsewhere build loyalty to competing destinations. Hotel chains investing in Vietnam and Thailand aren't investing here. International airlines adding routes to Colombo and Kathmandu aren't adding routes to Dhaka. The first-mover advantage is lost.

But here lies the paradox: we can't attract tourists without resilience, and we can't justify resilience investments without tourists. We must solve both simultaneously. As one of the planet's most climate-vulnerable nations, Bangladesh's tourism assets sit on the frontlines of rising sea levels and intensifying cyclones. Without resilience, our natural treasures will disappear along with potential tourism revenue. But resilience isn't just about absorbing the shocks of disasters. It's about creating consistent, reliable experiences that build confidence.

What should we do then? First, build world-class green infrastructure: solar-powered resorts, rainwater harvesting, and zero-waste hotels aren't just survival tools; they're also marketing advantages. Second, revolutionise accessibility: implement visa-on-arrival for key markets, improve flight connectivity, upgrade roads to tourist destinations, and train hospitality workers to international standards. Third, launch aggressive international marketing: hire world-class branding agencies, leverage social media influencers, and sponsor travel documentaries. Create a compelling national brand positioning Bangladesh as South Asia's undiscovered gem.

Fourth, diversify the tourism product: over-concentration in Cox's Bazar or the Sundarbans limits appeal and increases vulnerability. Our rivers offer significant cruise potential. Currently, Mughal and colonial-era heritage sites remain feloniously underutilised. The Chittagong Hill Tracts could rival any rival adventure destination. Sylhet's tea gardens offer Instagram-perfect landscapes. So, appeal to different segments—beach lovers, culture enthusiasts, adventure seekers, eco-tourists. Fifth, empower local communities to deliver authentic experiences that international tourists crave, while building natural resilience. And sixth, createprofessional crisis management systems through digital mapping of vulnerable zones, early-warning protocols, a top-class crisis response, etc.

The UN recognises tourism resilience as a "cross-cutting" issue spanning infrastructure, environment, governance, and social equity. But we must add economic urgency to this equation. Tourism isn't just about resilience; it's also about growth, diversification, and foreign currency earnings. Our delay in this regard only compounds our disadvantage. It is true that persistent political instability and security concerns in the country may put off many potential visitors, but this again reflects a policy failure that can, and must, be addressed.

The tourism boom is sweeping Asia, and it's happening without us. We can continue our narrow economic dependence while our competitors capture the tourism windfall, or we can finally commit to making tourism a pillar of national prosperity. The choice will determine whether the "land of six seasons" becomes a must-visit destination generating billions or whether it remains neglected and underutilised.

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Why the trade agreement with the US is problematic

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KALLOL MUSTAFA

On February 9, the interim government signed a trade agreement with the United States, apparently to reduce reciprocal tariffs imposed by the United States and thus preserve Bangladesh's export market. However, no other South Asian country, subjected to US reciprocal tariffs, has signed such an agreement with the US so far. As a result, the signing of this agreement just three days before the national election by a temporary interim government, while maintaining strict secrecy, has raised concerns, especially over the inclusion of strategic national security and geopolitical conditions alongside tariff concessions.

Through this agreement, the US-imposed reciprocal tariff on Bangladeshi exports has been reduced from 20 to 19 percent, which will be added to the existing average general tariff rate for entry into the US market—15.5 percent—bringing the total tariff burden on Bangladeshi products in the US market to 34.5 percent. The interim government has not disclosed the concessions Bangladesh must provide, but a contract released by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) shows that the country has been entangled in a wide range of conditions in exchange for a small tariff concession. This article will analyse those conditions to examine whether they serve Bangladesh's national interest.

Extensive tariff concessions for the United States

Under this agreement, Bangladesh will provide tariff concessions on 6,710 US products, while receiving reciprocal tariff concessions on 1,638 products. Among these, 4,500 products—including livestock, meat, fish, chemicals, textiles, machinery, and various industrial goods—from the US will enjoy duty-free access to Bangladesh from the very day the agreement comes into force. In addition, tariffs on 1,539 products will be reduced by half immediately after the agreement comes into effect. The remaining half will be reduced gradually to be completely duty-free over the next four years. Another 672 US products will get a similar duty-free advantage, but over nine years (Schedule 1, Annex I). These massive tariff concessions may expose local agricultural and industrial products to competition from US goods and may also reduce government revenue from tariffs.

Removal of non-tariff barriers to US industrial exports

The agreement places strong emphasis on reducing non-tariff barriers to US exports. It states that Bangladesh cannot implement import licensing policies such that they hinder the import of US goods (Article 2.2, Section 2).

Previously, even if US industrial and medical products were approved in the United States, they had to undergo additional testing and marketing approval before being exported to Bangladesh. The US identified this as a non-tariff barrier and obtained Bangladesh's commitment to remove it (Annex III, Section 1).

As a result, Bangladesh will have to make several concessions, including recognising US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) certification and prior marketing approval for medical equipment and pharmaceuticals (Article 1.1, Annex III); accepting vehicles manufactured according to US federal motor vehicle safety and emission standards (Article 1.2, Annex III); and removing any import bans or licensing requirements on US remanufactured products or components (Article 1.3, Annex III).

Bangladesh has also promised to reduce testing requirements for US agricultural and biotechnology products (Annex III, Section 1). These commitments include recognising US sanitary and phytosanitary measures and other standards as alternatives to Bangladesh's own standards for US food and agricultural products (Article 1.4, Annex III); recognising the standards of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service for meat, poultry, eggs, and similar products (Article 1.5, Annex III); formulating policies within 24 months of signing the agreement to allow biotechnology products recognised as safe in the US to enter Bangladesh without additional testing or labelling (Article 1.6, Annex III); and refraining from imposing import bans on poultry products from regions located more than 10 kilometres away from areas affected by avian influenza virus in the US (Article 1.8, Annex III).

This effectively means Bangladesh will lose the ability to ensure biosecurity in food and agricultural imports. Previously, US cotton had to undergo chemical pest treatment upon entering Bangladesh. That will no longer be possible. Controversial genetically modified products cannot be restricted under this deal, and Bangladesh cannot even require mandatory labelling, which may pose a threat to public health.

Mandatory import of costly US goods

Under the agreement, Bangladesh must purchase 14 aircraft from Boeing and US energy products, particularly liquefied natural gas (LNG), worth $15 billion (approximately Tk 1.8 lakh crore) over the next 15 years. In addition, Bangladesh must purchase US agricultural products worth $3.5 billion (approximately Tk 42,000 crore). Furthermore, Bangladesh will have to increase the purchase of military equipment from the US while reducing purchases from other countries (Section 6, Annex III).

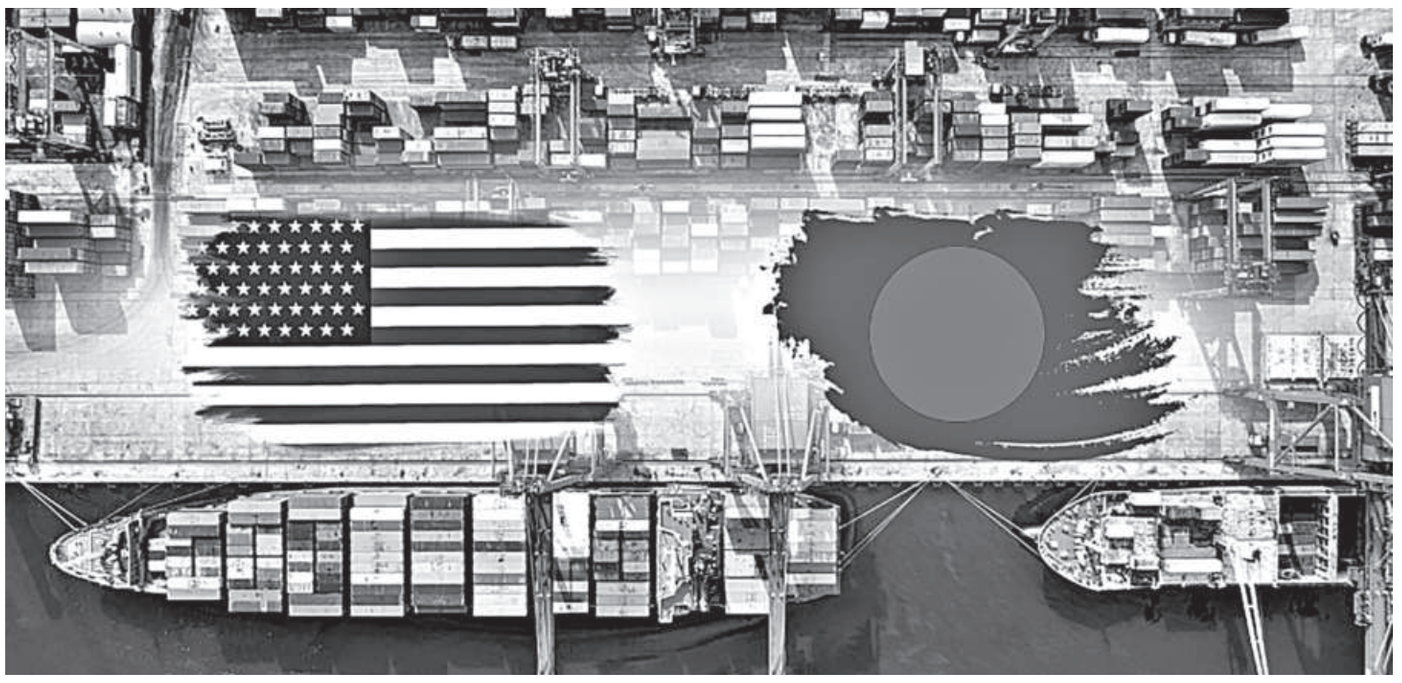
Traditionally, Bangladesh has imported limited quantities of US agricultural and energy products due to higher costs and longer delivery times. The new US deal prevents Bangladesh from importing these products at more competitive prices and faster delivery times from the international market. This will cause financial losses and may require subsidies or special incentives to private sector importers. Meanwhile, increased imports of military equipment from the US will raise both financial costs and geopolitical risks.

Granting US companies the same privileges as domestic firms

According to the agreement, Bangladesh must facilitate US investors in the extraction and export of mineral resources and provide US companies with equal opportunities in the power generation, telecommunications, transportation, and infrastructure sectors (Article 5.1, Section 5).

Additionally, Bangladesh will not be allowed to impose any limit on US capital investment in the oil, gas, insurance, and telecommunications sectors (Article 1.16, Annex III). The existing requirement for domestic and foreign private insurance companies to reinsure 50 percent of their business with the state-owned Sadharan Bima Corporation will not apply to US insurance companies (Article 1.15, Annex III).

US multinational corporations possess far greater financial and technological capabilities than domestic companies. Providing them with equal opportunities will harm local industries. It will also reduce sovereign control over these sectors. For example, despite domestic gas shortages, Bangladesh would still have to permit US companies to export gas.



FILE VISUAL: STAR BUSINESS

Restrictions on subsidies and protection for domestic industries

Developing economies often provide subsidies and incentives to domestic public and private institutions to overcome financial and technological limitations. Without such support, employment suffers and foreign dependency in strategic sectors increases. Under the agreement with the US, Bangladesh must refrain from providing non-commercial assistance or other subsidies to state-owned enterprises. Moreover, Bangladesh must disclose all subsidy and incentive information related to manufacturing organisations to the US and eliminate subsidies that distort market competition (Article 5.2, Section 5).

Bangladesh must also comply with WTO agreements on fisheries subsidies soon and control so-called "harmful subsidies" in the fisheries sector while reforming subsidy systems (Article 1.23, Annex III). Within six months of the agreement taking effect, Bangladesh must submit detailed information on all types of subsidies to the World Trade Organization (Section 6, Annex III).

Incorporation into the US national security framework

The trade deal effectively ties Bangladesh to the US national security framework. Under the agreement, if the US adopts border or trade measures in the interest of national security, Bangladesh must adopt "complementary restrictive measures" in alignment with US policies (Article 4.1, Section 4).

Bangladesh must also comply with US export bans and take effective measures to prevent violations of US export control laws. This will prevent Bangladesh from maintaining neutrality in conflicts between major powers and will effectively force Bangladesh to align with US sanctions or trade wars.

Additionally, Bangladesh must adopt technologies in its ports, terminals, and logistics networks that prevent data leakage to third countries and restrict the use of software considered harmful to US national security (Article 1-5, Section 3, Annex III).

Restrictions on agreements and trade with third countries

The agreement also includes provisions that may hinder Bangladesh's independent sovereign decision-making. It restricts Bangladesh from entering into any agreement or understanding with a third country that contains scientifically unsubstantiated, discriminatory, or biased technical standards that could harm US exports (Article 2.3 (3), Section 2).

Bangladesh will not be able to sign any digital trade agreement with another country that undermines US interests (Article 3.2, Section 3). Furthermore, if Bangladesh enters into any free trade or preferential economic agreement with a non-market-based country (China and Russia, as considered by the US) that undermines this agreement, the US will be able to cancel it and reimpose punitive tariffs (Article 4.3 (4), Section 4).

To summarise, this so-called trade agreement has effectively subordinated Bangladesh's sectors—from industry and agriculture to energy and infrastructure—to US commercial interests, establishing dominance over the country's economy, trade, and foreign policy. Bangladesh has been drawn into US geopolitical projects, and its ability to build relationships with third countries has been restricted.

This agreement is against the national interest and violates Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty. An agreement signed by a temporary interim government while keeping the nation in the dark cannot be considered legitimate. According to Article 6.6 of the agreement, it is supposed to come into effect 60 days after the completion of all legal processes. It is hoped that the newly elected government will take the initiative to cancel this agreement through discussion in the national parliament, as the deal runs contrary to national interests.

This is an abridged version of the article. Please visit our website to read the full version.

Rural growth demands capital, not paper promises

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SABA EL KABIR

In a small branch office of a bank in Kurigram, an elderly woman—let us call her Rahima Begum—waits in line. She holds a wad of cash wrapped in a handkerchief, the monthly remittance sent by her son in Malaysia. She is the ideal customer of Bangladesh's financial inclusion drive: banked, compliant, dependable.

Next to her sits her grandson. He is young, alert, and ambitious. He wants to buy a harvester. He has a business plan, local demand, and labour lined up. He is here to ask for the loan that will get him started.

When they reach the desk, the branch manager smiles at Rahima and accepts her deposit with practiced efficiency. But when he turns to the grandson, the smile fades. Money, it seems, is in short supply. The bank is happy to absorb the grandmother's deposit, but is unable to finance the grandson's potentially productive project.

Of course, the rejection letter was effectively drafted hundreds of miles away, inside a glass tower in the capitall. There, a large industrial conglomerate has just defaulted on a thousand-crore taka business loan. The consequences ripple through the banking system. Regulators demand provisioning. Capital ratios tighten. Balance sheets bleed. Within days, a quiet instruction travels from the Motijheel head office to every rural branch: maximise deposits and halt new lending.

The city takes what it can. The villages bear what they must.

Make no mistake: rural Bangladesh is cash-rich and has become the net supplier of capital to the banking system. And yet, only drips of the banking system's credit reach rural Bangladesh.

Faced with this reality, rural communities behave rationally. They avoid investing in fixed assets such as tractors or harvesters because returns are crushed by inflated input costs, weak logistics and infrastructure, and the absence of affordable credit. In a system where any rise in income is quickly offset by the high cost of living, rents, finance and power structures, long-term investment in productivity becomes a losing proposition rather than an opportunity.

Evaluating a Tk 50,000 loan for a farmer requires nearly the same (if not more) regulatory paperwork, compliance checks, and staff time as a Tk 50 crore loan for an industrialist. This asymmetry in cost structures makes small-ticket lending economically untenable for head-office credit risk management teams.

The standard defence is that rural lending is inherently risky. But the banking system's largest defaults are not rural; they are corporate. The government has attempted to counter these dynamics through ambitious agricultural credit targets. For the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year, Bangladesh Bank set a target of Tk 39,000 crore.

The headline number sounds transformative. The composition is not. Nearly half of agricultural credit is issued as short-term crop loans to buy fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation, seeds etc, while loans for irrigation and heavy machinery are capped at about two percent.

Much of the remaining credit is absorbed by revolving working capital, repeat crop

FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

lending, and institutionally convenient borrowers. State-subsidised funds often reach farmers only after passing through layers of financial markup, making asset accumulation technically possible but practically difficult.

The result is a cycle of subsistence financing. Money goes into the soil, the crop is harvested, the loan is repaid, and the farmer returns to zero. This is operational spending, not capital formation. It sustains output but does not compound it. Even as agricultural credit hit record levels, real wages in rural Bangladesh continued to erode as inflation outpaced earnings.

If this capital starvation persists, the consequence will not merely be lower yields. It will be the long-run exit of rural youth from agriculture, eroding the labour base required to sustain national food security.

None of this is structurally inevitable. Peer economies have addressed similar constraints through different institutional choices. In Kenya, digital lenders rely on mobile money transaction histories and related digital footprints to assess creditworthiness. Structured instruments such as warehouse receipt financing allow stored produce to be pledged as collateral. Vietnam's banking system has also developed mechanisms to channel credit toward productive agricultural and value-chain activities. A significant share of bank lending supports agri-exports and rural production, reflecting targeted financial support for strategic sectors.

Bangladesh remains bound to an analogue collateral regime. Landlessness is not marginal in rural Bangladesh; it is structural. More than half of rural households do not own land, and a large share of farm households cultivate plots they do not control. Without a title to pledge, many producers are structurally excluded from collateral-based lending. Credit access data reflect this reality. Collateral requirements and high transaction costs often restrict small and marginal farmers from accessing formal agricultural finance from state banks.

Access to bank accounts alone will not fix this problem. What is missing is structural discipline. District-level loan-to-deposit rules would be a credible start. If a bank collects Tk 100 crore from Cumilla, it should be required to lend a meaningful share back into the district. Geographic lending discipline does not eliminate risk; it prevents rural savings from underwriting urban balance-sheet stress.

Critically, the financial system must work toward recognising alternative credit data, including harvest records, warehouse receipts, and verified digital transaction histories. Capital must follow production, not paperwork. High-potential crowdfunding platforms, currently operating in a policy vacuum, should be brought under clear regulatory rules so they can earn public trust and scale responsibly.

The story of financial inclusion has become a narrative to console, a way to signal progress while avoiding a redressing of financial power. This arrangement may stabilise balance sheets of banks in Dhaka today, but it mortgages the country's future.

The village does not need more accounts. It needs its capital back.

Transcom

FROM PAGE 12

accused were discharged as there was no substance to frame charges against them.

The four other accused in the case are Transcom Group top officials Kamrul Hassan, Mohammad Mosaddaque and Abu Yusuf Md Siddik, and stamp vendor Shamsuzzaman Patwari.

Advocate Siddique said, "Today [yesterday] a hearing was held on the charge sheet submitted in the case. The investigator failed to provide any specific evidence in the charge sheet. Despite this, allegedly influenced by the complainant, the investigator submitted the charge sheet to the court. So, the court reprimanded the officer in this regard."

He further said that necessary steps would be taken to initiate departmental action against the officer for submitting a "false charge sheet".

"The complainant, Shahzreh Huq, had filed four false cases against her elder sister. With today's [yesterday] order discharging six individuals, there are now no pending cases against Simeen Rahman," he added.

According to the lawyers, Shahzreh Huq filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on February 22, 2024. Following an investigation, PBI Inspector Syed Sajedur Rahman submitted the charge sheet to the court on January 11 this year, accusing six individuals, including Simeen.

During yesterday's hearing, defence lawyers argued that in the share transfer forgery case, the charge sheet was submitted without recovering the share transfer deed Form-117 or conducting any expert examination. The charge sheet was filed considering some stamps printed in 2023 as affidavits regarding the transfer of shares in the case. However, the shares in dispute had been fully transferred in 2020 and accepted by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) in the same year. Therefore, stamps supplied in 2023 could not possibly have been used earlier, making their use before printing impossible. Finding no substance to frame charges, the court discharged the accused in the case.

Latifur Rahman was the founding chairman and CEO of Transcom Limited. He executed a deed of settlement on June 12, 2020, regarding the future management of the company and the distribution of his personal shares after his death. In addition to Latifur, all family members -- his wife Shahnaz Rahman, eldest daughter Simeen Rahman, younger daughter Shahzreh Huq and son Arshad Waliur Rahman -- signed the deed, agreeing to all its terms. It was later approved at a board meeting.

Following the execution of the deed, Latifur signed share transfer Form-117 issued by the RJSC and transferred 14,160 of his 23,600 shares in Transcom Limited to Simeen, 4,720 shares to Shahzreh, and 4,720 shares to Arshad. Later, when the Form-117s were submitted to the RJSC, the RJSC updated the shares as usual and issued Schedule-X containing the number of shares to the shareholders.

Latifur passed away on July 1, 2020. For nearly four years after his death, the company continued to operate smoothly. In the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 tax years, his offspring also declared in their personal income tax returns the shares transferred to them from the total of 23,600 shares.

Nearly four years after Latifur's death, on February 22, 2024, Shahzreh filed three cases with Gulshan Police Station against Simeen, who was then leading the company, and their mother, while they were in Singapore for medical treatment. These were registered all under similar allegations and sections. As a result of these cases, Simeen and her mother faced restrictions on entering Bangladesh and filed a writ petition in the High Court, which allowed them to return on March 21, 2024. Allegedly to obstruct Simeen's return, Shahzreh also filed a murder case with the same police station on March 22, 2024, centring the natural death of Arshad, which had occurred nine months earlier. The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) investigated the murder case and, finding no evidence, submitted a final report. The court later accepted it and exempted the accused.

All four cases were investigated by the PBI. In one case, it was alleged that after Latifur's death, his wife Shahnaz -- as nominee -- withdrew his money and bought 9,000 shares of Transcom Electronics Limited. After investigation, the PBI found no irregularities in the withdrawal or the purchase of the 9,000 shares and submitted a final report, which the court later accepted, exempting the accused.

In another case, filed on the allegation that the deed of settlement executed by Latifur had been created through forgery, the investigator seized the deed and documents of the meeting at which it was approved and had them examined by experts at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). According to the expert opinion, the signatures of Latifur, Arshad, and even the complainant Shahzreh on the deed of settlement and the board meeting documents were found to be genuine. Based on this, the PBI submitted a final report, which the court accepted and exempted the accused.

Before Bangla became a demand

FROM PAGE 1

On September 15, 1947, he published Rashtro Bhasha Bangla Na Urdu?, the first booklet containing the demand for Bangla as a state language. He was also the founder of the Language Movement's mouthpiece, Weekly Sainik.

Here, we publish translated excerpts from an interview with this historical figure. The interview was published in Bhasha Andolon Shatchallish Thake Baana (1993), compiled by Mostafa Kamal.

How was the Language Movement initiated?

The Language Movement was initiated through the Tamaddun Majlish (TM). On September 1, 1947, it was established at 19, Azimpur. I was a professor in the Physics Department and used to live at 19, Azimpur. I used to think deeply about Bangla as a state language and as a medium of instruction. I shared my ideas with my friends. Syed Nazrul Islam and Shamsul Alam were directly involved in the establishment of TM.

What were the primary actions that TM took to create awareness about Bangla as the state language?

Organising literary meetings and seminars in different places, including the university campus, was among the many primary initiatives of TM. These meetings used to take place on the lawn, which back then was adjacent to the south-west of the University of Dhaka, and at the Muslim Hall auditorium. Moreover, to create public opinion, we used to publish statements and handbills. The first book that demanded Bangla as the state language, Pakistaner Rashtrobhasha Bangla Na Urdu?, was published by me as its editor. The main point of the book was that the language which ensures that the strength of the nation is not wasted, and the language which its citizens can easily learn, speak, and write, should be the state language of the country.

What kind of attention did Rashtro Bhasha Bangla Na Urdu? receive from university students?

To be honest, we did not find even five people on the campus willing to buy this book. The attainment of Pakistan had captivated the whole nation. At that time, everyone used to try to make us understand how "dangerous" it would be to raise the issue of more than one state language, and how "unrealistic" a proposal it would be for Pakistan, in particular, to have two state languages.

Did you carry out any activities outside the campus back then?

Yes. We discussed this issue with certain government officials and litterateurs, and achieved some success there. At that time, we collected the signatures of several eminent personalities of the country and prepared a memorandum. The memorandum was presented to the government and published in some newspapers. The local newspapers of that time did not give this issue much importance. Ittehad, based in Kolkata and edited by Abul Mansur Ahmad, and Weekly Insaf, gave tremendous support to this cause.

How did Sainik start its historic journey?

Sainik, a weekly publication, was first published on November 14, 1948. A few sincere employees helped me to publish this revolutionary newspaper as the mouthpiece of TM. It played a historic role in the Language Movement.

When was the Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad formed? Why did you feel the necessity to establish such a platform?

After the meeting at Fazlul Haq Hall [October 1947], we, the members of TM, decided to form the Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad. There were various discriminatory practices against Bangla, such as the use of only Urdu and English on postcards, money order forms, rail tickets, and currency, as well as the omission of Bangla from the syllabus of the Pakistan Central Public Service Commission.

The Education Minister, Fazlur Rahman, even pleaded that Urdu should be the only state language. Unfortunately, students, teachers, and the intellectual community were quite lenient about the degrading status of their mother tongue. We feared that the government would try to impose Urdu as the sole state language by exploiting this state of leniency. So we took the initiative to mobilise people against this one-sided decision.

How did the Parishad start working?

We went to meet the Education Minister, Fazlur Rahman, at Nazira Bazar. We had a heated debate over the question of Bangla as a state language. He treated us badly, and that infuriated us. We took the initiative to present a memorandum demanding Bangla as a state language. We collected thousands of signatures in favour of this demand and submitted the memorandum to the East Pakistan government. We appealed to the government to immediately declare Bangla as the state language and the medium of instruction in East Pakistan.

Can you remember the statement issued against the decision of the Pakistan Central Public Service Commission to omit Bangla from the syllabus of the Civil Service Examination?

In November 1947, the Secretary of the Pakistan Central Public Service Commission issued a circular to the public universities outlining the syllabus of the civil service examination. There were 31 courses, of which nine were on languages such as Urdu, Hindi, English, German, French, and even dead languages like Latin and Sanskrit. But Bangla, the language of the majority of Pakistan, was omitted from the syllabus. This was proof of sheer disregard and negligence towards the Bangla language. I sent a statement of protest to Ittehad, severely criticising this malicious intent of the government. It was published around the end of December, along with an editorial by Abul Mansur Ahmed, who also vehemently opposed the government's decision. Later, the concerned ministry expressed regret, describing it as an inadvertent mistake. This casual response infuriated us even more.

Did the Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad take a lead role in launching the programmes of March 11, 1948, demanding Bangla as the state language?

Yes, a meeting was held by the Sangram Parishad on March 7 at Fazlul Haque Hall, where it was decided that a strike would be observed on March 11 in Dhaka and across the state. The programme was highly successful. The police charged the crowd with batons and tear gas. Many students were injured, and many others were arrested. As a result of the movement of March 11, the demand for Bangla as the state language gained new momentum.

[The interview has been translated by Samia Huda]

Defence deals needed, but their timing 'questionable'

FROM PAGE 12

(defence studies) at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, said the signing of these deals should have taken place much earlier.

"Such deals are important to improve Bangladesh's defence capability because there was almost no buying of jet fighters over the last 15 years.... During that period, there was development of infrastructure and the equipment mainly for the UN Peacekeeping missions, but not much for our own security."

He added Bangladesh has some fighter jets but there is no air defence system, which should be part of building a credible deterrent.

He, however, said one may question the timing of the deals given that this is an interim government but these deals have far-reaching implications.

Security analyst Air Cdre (Retd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury said it is important to boost Bangladesh's defence, equip the military with advanced technologies and skills as the world has rapidly progressed in this regard. "We don't have an enemy to fight, but we need to improve defence technologies for both deterrence and UN Peacekeeping Missions. UN Peacekeepers are a soft diplomacy for us."

For long, Bangladesh's major source of defence equipment has been China. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Bangladesh bought about 72 percent of its total arms from China between 2019 and 2023.

Ishfaq said from the diversification point of view, Japan, the UK, and Turkey are also good sources. "Even, South Korea can also be included."

Security analyst Brig Gen (Retd) Shahedul Anam Khan said while Bangladesh needs to boost defence as well as diversification of the sources, "too much of diversification is not a good idea".

"When needs arise, alignment of technologies becomes very important. If there are too many technologies, the alignment becomes more complex."

While both Anam and Ishfaq agreed that boosting defence and building a credible deterrent of the country's armed forces is imperative, they said it is not ideal for the interim government to sign such deals.

"It is because the elected government will have to take responsibility for economic and diplomatic implications, if any," Anam said.

Large-scale defence purchases require large amounts of money and whether the economy permits that at this moment or the near future is something that should be decided by the political government, he added.

"Defence purchases have long-term implications in foreign relations. For example, buying fighter jets from Pakistan would create concerns for India.

"What we want and how we want as far as defence purchase is concerned are crucial issues to be weighed with utmost care."

About these last-minute agreements, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said the deals signed by the interim government are meant to make things easier for the next government, "not to leave behind any burden".

"The agreements -- trade or defence -- did not emerge suddenly; rather the initiatives had begun earlier.

"Over the past 1-1.5 years, we followed them up and brought them close to fruition. In fact, some could have been concluded a month earlier, but we found a few points that we were not satisfied with, so we renegotiated them."

The pitchman's big promises but small gains

FROM PAGE 1

its image as a struggling delta and emerged as a "regional manufacturing powerhouse," a bridge connecting the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. In this cinematic future, his successor would be addressing the 10th investment summit, celebrating a nation that had seamlessly integrated East and West.

It was a slick, high-energy performance, typical of Chowdhury's near-empty tenure. There were references to emotional selfies from the 2024 uprising and even a playful promise to "throw a Nobel Prize winner" (Yunus) at investors to secure their confidence. The narrative was intoxicating: a nation energised and ready to leapfrog into the ranks of Asia's economic giants.

Yet, as the applause faded, the gap between Chowdhury's overly optimistic vision and the sepia-toned reality began to resemble not a bridge, but a chasm.

Chowdhury -- an avid skydiver and former banker -- has been among the most visible salesmen Bangladesh has fielded in years. Yet, while he spun visions of a 2035 utopia, the economic machinery of 2025 slowed, and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) under his leadership showed little meaningful progress.

Holding a dual mandate as CEO of the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), Chowdhury sought to transform a controversial port deal with the UAE-based DP World into a logistical revolution. His focus was on the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) at Chittagong Port. The proposal, initiated under the previous Awami League administration, became central to Chowdhury's own agenda.

The strategy appeared simple and compelling: by pursuing a government-to-government arrangement with the UAE, the interim administration hoped to bypass the complexities and opacity of traditional open bidding. However, the deal ultimately collapsed under mounting protests, exposing the limits of Chowdhury's authority and offering a bruising lesson to the interim government.

BLEAK INVESTMENT DATA

Data compiled by The Daily Star reveals a sobering reality: the apparent recovery in early 2025 was little more than a mirage, followed by a renewed collapse.

The downturn had begun earlier. In 2023, net foreign direct investment slipped to $1.46 billion from about $1.51 billion the previous year. Then came 2024, another year of decline. Even before the political upheavals of August, investor confidence had weakened significantly. In the first half of 2024 (January-June), inflows fell to $675 million. In the second half, marked by unrest and uncertainty, inflows dropped further to $594 million, leaving the annual total at just $1.27 billion.

The story of 2025 was one of uncertainty. During the first half (January-June), inflows nearly doubled to $1.09 billion year-on-year. This figure became a convenient talking point for the government, suggesting that interim stability was restoring confidence. It provided the "pitchman" with a hopeful narrative. In the third quarter (July-September), inflows touched $315 million, bringing the total to only $1.4 billion so far, according to available data. How Chowdhury performed in the fourth quarter remains to be seen.

Even more troubling was the collapse in the investment pipeline. According to the Economic Review 2025, registered private investment projects dropped by 58 percent year-on-year. This forward-looking indicator suggested that the cautious "wait-and-see" approach of 2024 had hardened into a decisive "go elsewhere" stance by 2025.

Private-sector credit growth also slowed to a four-year low of 6.1 percent, far below the central bank's target. When domestic entrepreneurs -- who understand the landscape best -- hesitate to borrow and expand, it is unrealistic to expect a surge in foreign investments.

"Unless local investors have the confidence to invest, one cannot expect foreign investors to do so," said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Foreign direct investment consists of three components: equity capital, reinvested earnings, and intra-company loans. Equity capital -- the infusion of fresh funds to build factories and expand operations -- is the most critical indicator of long-term commitment. Yet in fiscal 2024-25, this key component weakened. Equity capital fell nearly 17 percent to $554.77 million. A decline in equity signals hesitation among new investors.

"Without a credible medium- to long-term roadmap, investment will remain in low gear well into 2026," said M Masrur Reaz, chairman and chief executive of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, describing the past year as one of missed opportunities.

REFORMS IN THE SLOW LANE

Chowdhury's flagship reform, the One Stop Service (OSS), reflects this broader dysfunction. Last year, he promised a "true" OSS, complete with relationship managers who would guide investors much like corporate bankers.

The image was reassuring. The reality, however, resembles a digital façade masking deeper inefficiencies. By Chowdhury's own admission, of the 194 government-to-business services required to establish and operate a company, only 51 are available online -- and just eight are fully digital.

In practice, the OSS remains a "many-stop" obstacle course. The remaining 143 services require investors to physically navigate ministries and offices, where files often move at a glacial pace. Chowdhury himself acknowledged that manual systems continue to dominate and undermine efficiency. Yet recognition alone does not amount to reform.

For an agency chief to lament the state of digitisation 18 months into his tenure suggests limited political leverage. BIDA was supposed to clear red tape; instead, it is becoming a spectator, curating digital brochures for polished presentations.

In an interview, Chowdhury identified energy shortages as the greatest constraint on growth. "If we can't guarantee uninterrupted gas and electricity, other reforms won't matter," he said.

Perhaps the most damaging issue is Bangladesh's strategic isolation in global trade. Chowdhury spoke frequently of a "regional market". In truth, it remained aspirational. The modern global economy operates through networks of preferential trade agreements. Vietnam, for example, has signed more than 60 agreements granting its exporters duty-free access to major markets. Bangladesh has signed none.

Toward the twilight of the interim government, Chowdhury himself sounded frustrated. He noted that foreign investors face a stark choice: Vietnam or Cambodia, where zero tariffs apply, or Bangladesh, where input tariffs range from 12 to 24 percent and other duties remain high. "Why would they come here?" he asked.

Amid this climate of retreat and resistance, one foreign investor offered a rare positive signal. Hong Kong-based Handa Group increased its planned investment in Bangladesh to over $250 million, up from $150 million pledged at the investment summit. The revised plan includes three factories -- two garment units and one knitting and dyeing facility -- expected to create around 25,000 jobs.

Another institutional initiative, however, stalled amid bureaucratic inertia. Chowdhury had proposed merging six investment-related bodies -- BIDA, BEZA, BEPZA, BHTPA, BSCIC, and PPPA -- into a single unified authority. Although the proposal received endorsement from BIDA's governing body, it failed to progress further.

In April 2025, Chowdhury's Back to the Future performance entertained his audience, but it missed the film's essential message. In the movie, the protagonists travel through time to correct present mistakes that threaten their future. BIDA, by contrast, appears content to imagine a prosperous future while leaving the problems of the present unresolved.

The vision of a "regional manufacturing powerhouse" remains little more than a polished slide in a compelling presentation to an audience still waiting for the government machinery to begin working.

Tarique gives up

FROM PAGE 12

According to the RPO, a vacant parliamentary seat must be filled through a by-election within 90 days of declaration. The EC is therefore required to arrange a by-poll in Bogura-6 following completion of the gazette process.

The 13th parliamentary election was held on February 12 across 299 constituencies. In Sherpur-3, polling was cancelled following the death of a Jamaat candidate.

The EC must now also conduct a fresh election in Sherpur-3 alongside the Bogura-6 by-election.

Meanwhile, Tarique has resigned from the post of acting editor and publisher of the Dainik Dinkal, a Bangla-language newspaper. Atiqur Rahman Rumon, convenor of Amra BNP Poribar, has replaced him.

NCP signs July

FROM PAGE 12

On October 17, the charter was signed at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad by the National Consensus Commission and 24 political parties, with another party joining a few days later, bringing the total to 25.

Speaking at yesterday's signing event, Yunus said, "The nation always believed that NCP would sign this charter, and today that belief has been fulfilled. With NCP's signature, the July National Charter is now complete. I thank NCP for joining this noble effort."

He said everyone must remain constantly aware so that the document helps build a new Bangladesh, a more humane Bangladesh, through action at every step.

The chief adviser also said the newly elected members of parliament will take the oath today and wished everyone well in the days ahead.

Police file GD

FROM PAGE 12

complaint, it will be registered as a regular case."

He, however, declined to disclose the contents of the GD despite repeated requests.

Dr Shirin Sultana, head of the medical team in charge of the case, told reporters yesterday that they have conducted the tests following the letter from the police. "Samples have been sent to the Noakhali Government Medical College laboratory for DNA testing, with results expected within three to five days."

MA Wadud, sub-inspector of the hospital's One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), noted that medical examinations in such cases should ideally be conducted within 72 hours, "but legal complexities caused the delay".

Noakhali Civil Surgeon Dr Maryam Simi emphasised that while 72 hours is the ideal window, forensic evidence can still be collected from clothing or through DNA testing even if samples have dried.

However, the OCC's legal officer Mohsina Akter Simu on Sunday said the hospital authorities had already collected and preserved the woman's samples ahead of the police order.

The 32-year-old mother of three alleged she was raped and tortured at her home in Hatia on February 13 for supporting National Citizen Party candidate Abdul Hannan Masud in the recently concluded national election.

Speaking to reporters from the hospital on Saturday, she claimed that three men broke into her house around 11:00pm on Friday and detained her husband, before raping her.

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

Hossain denied the allegations, claiming he does not even know the woman. He added that he was attacked by NCP supporters on Friday night and admitted to hospital around 10:30pm in an injured state, presenting medical documents to support his claim.

Israel's West

FROM PAGE 12

Jonathan Mizrachi, the Israeli NGO's co-director, told AFP yesterday that the measure would attribute new resources for land registration in the occupied West Bank.

The process will take place only in Area C, which constitutes some 60 percent of West Bank territory and is under Israeli security and administrative control.

"There was a lot of ambiguity regarding the land, and Israel decided now to deal with it," he said, adding that the existing ambiguity over Area C land ownership is likely to be used against Palestinians.

"A lot of land that Palestinians consider theirs, they will find out it's not theirs under this new registration process," he said, adding the move will further the Israeli right's annexation agenda.

Palestinians see the West Bank as foundational to any future Palestinian state, but many on Israel's religious right want to take over the land.

Act now to prevent

FROM PAGE 3

They also mentioned an allegation from the hill district of Khagrachhari that a fine was imposed as punishment for voting for a particular party.

The statement said that if activists or supporters of any party or candidate were involved in such incidents, the primary responsibility lay with those parties and candidates to restrain them from violence.

At the same time, the citizens urged the interim government and law enforcement agencies, particularly the police and BGB members working in the field, to strengthen visible and effective action.

They demanded impartial enforcement of the law and called for any attempt to disrupt citizens' security or violate the rights of individuals or groups to be addressed in accordance with the law.

The statement added that the army had ensured citizens' safety with dedication in recent months, especially before and on election day.

The signatories expressed hope that the army would continue that role and take necessary steps against the ongoing violence and the "unfortunate and undesirable" incidents already reported.

They observed that the interim government was taking steps to transfer power peacefully to the newly elected majority party or alliance. In that context, they said, violence and conflict -- even if instigated by certain unseen quarters -- are unacceptable to the people of Bangladesh.

The citizens urged the top leadership of all political parties to ensure peace and order and protect the safety of all citizens, including women, children, minorities, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and the elderly.

"We hope that the fulfilment of your commitments and responsible conduct will quickly be reflected at the grassroots level and that the nation will regain confidence in you," the statement said.

The signatories include Hameeda Hossain; Sultana Kamal; Prof Anu Muhammad; Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE); ZI Khan Panna, president of Ain o Salish Kendra; Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST); and Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reforms and Development, among others.

Prioritise minorities

FROM PAGE 4

In another statement jointly signed by UFCB President Archbishop Bejoy N D'Cruze and Secretary Rev David Aniruddha Das, they said Christians, like all other citizens of the country, want Bangladesh to be free from corruption, and a humane, just, discrimination-free state, and a country of communal harmony.

They said they want to ensure rule of law, women's rights, climate-friendly programmes, religious freedom, and freedom of speech.

"We express our firm commitment that we will continue to provide all kinds of cooperation in all your positive steps, and our prayers will continue for everyone who will take the responsibility of the upcoming government under your competent leadership," the statement said.

Cop among six hurt

FROM PAGE 4

Jamaat's newly elected lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury could not be reached by phone for comment.

In Sirajganj, the district BNP unit suspended two of its activists on Sunday over allegations of intimidating people after the election, said a press release.

The suspended BNP men are: Mostafizur Rahman Mondal, former general secretary of Ward-4 unit BNP under Belkuchi municipality; and Shihab Mondal, organising secretary of Belkuchi municipal unit Chhatra Dal.

(Our correspondents from Jhenaidah, Chattogram and Sirajganj contributed to the report.)

High schools

FROM PAGE 4

after receiving its certified copy.

The stay order will continue until the filing of the leave to appeal petition, the judge said in the order.

The chamber judge passed the order following a petition filed by the government seeking a stay on the HC order.

On Sunday, the HC bench of Justice Fahmida Quader and Justice Md Ashif Hasan ordered the government to keep all high schools (Classes 6-10) closed throughout the month of Ramadan.

The bench, however, said both private and public schools can conduct scheduled public exams, if there are any, during this period, Deputy Attorney General Md Shafiqur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Hasina issue will not

FROM PAGE 3

extradite Hasina and several senior Awami League leaders who fled to India after the July uprising. India has not responded to those requests.

Fakhrul said there is a legal process underway for Hasina, her ministers and bureaucrats accused of murder and other criminal acts during the uprising. "That process will continue," he said.

The BNP is set to form the new government on Tuesday after securing a landslide victory in the 13th Parliamentary Election.

Ahead of taking office, Fakhrul acknowledged that India-Bangladesh relations involve difficult issues but said these should not overshadow areas of cooperation.

"America and China have many difficulties in bilateral ties, yet they are working with each other. We should not stick to just one issue in India-Bangladesh relations," he said.

During the interview, he also noted that the renewal of the Ganges Waters Treaty, including the Farakka water-sharing issue, will come up before next year.

Border killings also remain a matter for discussion, he added.

"We can't fight a war with India. We need to talk. Those who talk about fighting India are speaking like the insane," said Fakhrul.

Fakhrul added that revenge and violence are detrimental to building a healthy democratic environment in Bangladesh.

He said the interim government failed to achieve reconciliation after the July uprising because "the leaders of the uprising chose Prof Yunus".

"Prof Yunus could not go outside of the brief that the leaders of the uprising gave him," he said.

He also highlighted the BNP's 31-point agenda as an opportunity for Bangladesh and India to deepen cooperation in trade, commerce, capacity building and digital infrastructure.

12 young MPs to join

FROM PAGE 3

Policy 2017, citizens aged 18 to 35 are officially classified as youth.

The youngest elected MP is Abdul Hannan Masud of the NCP, aged 26, elected from Noakhali-6.

Fellow NCP leaders Md Nahid Islam and Abul Hasnat (Hasnat Abdullah), both 27, secured seats from Dhaka-11 and Cumilla-4, respectively.

Akhtar Hossain, 28, was elected from Rangpur-4, while Abdullah Al Amin, 30, won from Narayanganj-4.

Outside the NCP, Md Abu Talib, 29, and Md Amir Hamza, 33, were elected from Jhenaidah-4 and Kushtia-3, respectively.

Two lawmakers elected from Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Muhammadullah from Mymensingh-2 and Saeed Uddin Ahmed Hanzala from Madaripur-1, are both 29.

Among the remaining young MPs, BNP candidate Sofiqur Rahman Kiron, 28, was elected from Shariatpur-2.

Nurul Haque Noor, 32, leader of Gono Odhikar Parishad and former DUCSU vice president, won from Patuakhali-3.

Independent candidate Md Abdul Hannan, aged 35, secured victory from Chandpur-4.

"Politics in our country has turned into a business enterprise. As a result, we are witnessing a severe deterioration of democracy. I hope the youth will break out of this situation and engage in politics for the public good by bringing fresh ideas and a fresh attitude," said Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar.

Election expert and former additional secretary of the Election Commission Jesmin Tuli said youth participation could revitalise parliamentary proceedings.

"In the first parliament of 1973, many young individuals who had played significant roles in student politics became members of parliament. After a long hiatus, we are once again seeing the youth in parliament. I hope they will make the parliament vibrant with their modern and timely ideas," she said.

"We expect to see many exceptional and realistic ideas from the youth that will be in harmony with the current era."

Bangladesh Bank

Common Services Department-2
(Mechanical Engineering Wing)
Head Office, Dhaka-1000

Invitation for Tender (Goods & Related Works) Through Web

01	Procuring entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
02	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM), National.
03	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	CSD-2(MES): 6/1/2026-240 Date: 15/02/2026
04	Source of funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05	Name of the work	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Fire Fighting System, Gas & Foam Suppression System at Bangladesh Bank, Sylhet.
06	Web address for submission e-Tender	www.bb.org.bd www.etender bb.org.bd
07	Tender document price	Tk 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand only)
08	Last date and time of selling tender document	01/03/2026 before 5.00pm
09	Last date & time e-Tenders through web	02/03/2026 on or before 3:00pm.
10	Last date & time and name & address of the office for receiving original tender security and other documents	02/03/2026 on or before 3:15pm. Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
11	Name & address of the office opening tender	Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor of 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000 on 02/03/2026 at 3.30pm (Intending tenderers or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend the tender opening).
12	Eligibility of the tenderer	a) Tenderer shall have at least 10 (Ten) years of overall business experience in the supply and installation of mechanical machineries. (b) Tenderer shall have a Manufacturer's Authorization/ Agency/ Distributorship certificate in current issue from the internationally reputed proposed Fire Pump Manufacturer. (c) Tenderer shall have specific experience for supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Fire Fighting System in any govt/semi-govt./autonomous organization worth not less than Tk. 3.90 crore, in a single contract in the last (05 (five) years. (d) The minimum amount of liquid asset i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 4.70 crore only. In case of credit facilities, Bank shall ensure that the abovementioned credit limit will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor. (c) Tenderer shall have to furnish the certificate in this respect from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent and shall meet all other criteria, terms & conditions as specified in the tender documents without which the tender will not be considered.
13	Tender security	BDT 14,00,000.00 (Taka fourteen lac only).
14	Work completion time	09 (Nine) months from the date of Award of Contract.
15	Address of official inviting tender	Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker, Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7th Floor, 30th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
16	Contact details of inviting official tender	Phone: 88-02-9530490, Fax: +88-029530321
17	Special instructions	(i) The Tenderer shall submit the tender through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & shall have a valid e-mail address for participating in e-Tendering. (ii) Original PO/BD/BG as Tender Security has to be sent to Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. (iii) Scanned copy of the tender security shall be submitted with the tender through web. (iv) Tenderer shall submit all documentary evidence (attested or original), failing which the Tender may be considered as non-responsive. (v) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1 (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2 (Tenderer Information sheet) as per format given in Tender Document. (vi) PG3-1 form shall be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the Letter-Head Pad and scanned copy of it shall be attached during submitting tender and original will have to send to Director (Engineering-E/M), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. (vii) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of the tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. (viii) All sorts of Security and Safety measures shall be carried out by the Contractor during execution of the work. (ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard

DCP: 48/2026-459
Date: 16-02-2026

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker
Director (Engineering-E/M)
Phone: 02-9530490

GD-319

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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তারিখ: ০৩ ফাল্গুন ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ / ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড, বাজেট শাখা'র ২০/০১/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখের ৩১.০২.০০০০.০০০.০১৪.২০.০০৭৬.২১.৩৭ নং স্মারকের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কক্সবাজার জেলার ০৮ (আট) টি উপজেলা ভূমি অফিসের নিরাপত্তা পাহারা সেবা প্রদানের জন্য ০৮ (আট) টি নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী সেবার বিপরীতে "আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা গ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০২৫" অনুযায়ী নিম্নোক্ত শর্তে ছকে বর্ণিত সেবা ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত সরকার কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক	সেবার নাম	সেবাকর্মীর সংখ্যা	সেবার ক্যাটাগরি	যোগ্যতা	বয়সসীমা	মন্তব্য
০১	নিরাপত্তা ও প্রহরী সেবা, মাসিক সাকুল্য সেবামূল্য- ১৬,৬৭৩/- টাকা ও নির্ধারিত সরকারি অন্যান্য সুবিধা।	০৮ জন	ক্যাটাগরি-৫	সেবাকর্মীর শারীরিক ও মানসিক সক্ষমতা থাকতে হবে।	১৮-৬০ বছর	আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় নির্ধারিত সেবার মূল্য প্রযোজ্য হবে।

শর্তাবলী:

০১। দরপত্র আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে জেলা প্রশাসক, কক্সবাজার এর অনুকূলে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর বিনিময়ে আগামী ২৫-০২-২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ এর মধ্যে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কোন রূপ ফটোকপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। দরপত্রের শর্ত ও প্রক্রিয়া দরপত্রে উল্লিখিত শর্ত মোতাবেক নির্ধারিত ও সম্পাদিত হবে।

০২। আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা গ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০২৫-এর তফশিল-খ অনুযায়ী জনপ্রতি সেবার মূল্য নির্ধারণ করতে হবে।

০৩। সেবাকর্মীকে জাতীয় পেনশন কর্তৃপক্ষের অধীনে পরিচালিত সর্বজনীন পেনশন স্কিমের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হতে হবে।

০৪। সেবাকর্মীর মাধ্যমে সেবা গ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে সেবা প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের সার্ভিস কমিশনের হার ন্যূনতম ৫% হবে।

০৫। আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা প্রদানকারীর সেবামূল্য তার নিজ নামীয় ব্যাংক হিসাবে সেবা ক্রয়কারী কর্তৃক প্রদেয় হবে।

০৬। সেবা ক্রয়ের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ এর বিধি-বিধান অনুসরণ করতে হবে।

০৭। আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় নিরাপত্তা প্রহরীর সেবাক্রয়ের ক্ষেত্রে আনসার সদস্যদের অগ্রাধিকার দিতে হবে।

০৮। বাংলাদেশ শ্রম বিধিমালা, ২০১৫ এর অনুচ্ছেদ-৭ অনুযায়ী সেবাকর্মী সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদার সংস্থার রেজিস্ট্রেশন ও নবায়নকৃত লাইসেন্স থাকতে হবে।

০৯। অর্থ বিভাগের পূর্বানুমতি ব্যতিত সেবা ক্রয়ের মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি করা যাবে না।

১০। সেবা ক্রয়ের মেয়াদ ৩০/০৬/২০২৭ খ্রি. তারিখ পর্যন্ত কার্যকর থাকবে।

১২। নির্বাচিত জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে চুক্তি সম্পাদিত হবে। কোন ব্যক্তির নামে নিয়োগপত্র ইস্যু করা হবে না।

১৩। আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে সেবা গ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে সরকার কর্তৃক সময়ে সময়ে জারীকৃত আইন, বিধিমালা, নীতিমালা নির্দেশনা ইত্যাদি অনুসরণযোগ্য হবে।

১৪। জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়/ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়/ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড কর্তৃক অনুমোদন ও বাজেট প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে নিয়োগ কার্যকর করা হবে এবং বেতন প্রদান করা হবে।

১৫। জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ/নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন, ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থ বছরের আয়কর প্রদান ও সনাক্তকরণ নম্বর (TIN) থাকতে হবে এবং সরকারি প্রকল্পে জনবল সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে কমপক্ষে ০৩ (তিন) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

১৬। আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের জন্য অনুমোদিত রেজিস্টার্ড প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে উপযুক্ত প্রমানপত্র দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।

১৭। নিয়োজিত কর্মচারীকে ছুটির দিনে বা স্বাভাবিক সরকারি অফিস সময়ের পরেও দায়িত্ব পালন করতে হবে। দায়িত্ব পালনকালে সরবরাহকৃত জনবলকে সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত নির্ধারিত পোষাক পরিধান ও উক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের পরিচয় পত্র বহন করতে হবে।

১৮। আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে নিয়োজিত কোন কর্মচারীর অদক্ষতা বা অবহেলার কারণে কোন ক্ষতি হলে জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তার দায় বহন করতে হবে।

১৯। নির্বাচিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের দাখিলকৃত বিল থেকে নিয়মানুযায়ী ভ্যাট/ট্যাক্স কর্তন করা হবে।

২০। জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের সঙ্গে সম্পাদিত চুক্তি যে কোন পক্ষ ০১ (এক) মাসের নোটিশ দিয়ে বাতিল করতে পারবে।

২১। নির্বাচিত আউটসোর্সিং প্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে ৩০০/- (তিন শত) টাকা মূল্যের নন-জুডিশিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পে চুক্তিপত্র সম্পাদনের পরই নিয়োজিত জনবল কাজ শুরু করতে পারবে।

২২। আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে দরপত্রে নির্ধারিত ছক অনুসরণপূর্বক আগামী ২৬-০২-২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখ দুপুর ১:০০ টার মধ্যে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিটি পদের ০১ (এক) মাসের দর উল্লেখ করে সত্যায়িত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদ ও অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ ইত্যাদিসহ নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে (রাজস্ব শাখায়) রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাক্সে দরপত্র /প্রস্তাব দাখিল করতে অনুরোধ করা হলো। একই তারিখে বেলা ৩:০০ টার সময় দরপত্র/প্রস্তাবসমূহ দরদাতাগণের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।

২৩। নিয়োজিত কর্মচারীগণের প্রতিস্থাপন প্রয়োজন হলে সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান প্রতিস্থাপন করতে বাধ্য থাকবেন। তবে কোন জনবল কাজ করে দক্ষতা অর্জন করলে তাকে প্রতিস্থাপনের ক্ষেত্রে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সম্মতি নিতে হবে।

২৪। দরপত্র বাতিল বা গ্রহণ করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং সর্বনিম্ন দরদাতার দরপত্র গ্রহণ করতে কর্তৃপক্ষ বাধ্য নয়।

মো: আ: মান্নান ১৬/০২/২০২৬
জেলা প্রশাসক
কক্সবাজার
ফোন নম্বর: ০২৩৩৪৪৬২২০
ই-মেইল: dccoxsbazar@mopa.gov.bd

GD-320

Star
DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2026, FALGUN 4, 1432 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
T20 World Cup
Canada vs New Zealand
Live from 11:30 am

Ireland vs Zimbabwe
Live from 3:30 pm

Nepal vs Scotland
Live from 7:30 pm

SONY SPORTS
Champions League
Galatasaray vs Juventus
Live from 11:45 pm

Benfica vs Real Madrid
Monaco vs PSG
Dortmund vs Atalanta
Live from 2:00 am (Wednesday)

England, South Africa into Super Eights

AGENCIES

England survived a spirited challenge from Italy to seal a 24-run victory and book their place in the Super Eights of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup on Monday.

An unbeaten 53 from 22 balls by Will Jacks proved decisive as the two-time champions posted 202 for 7, their highest total of the tournament. England were wobbling at 105 for 5 in the 13th over when Jacks arrived, but he transformed the innings with four sixes and three fours, helping his side plunder 88 runs in the final six overs. Sam Curran added a brisk 25, ensuring England crossed the 200 mark.

Italy, playing in their maiden World Cup, refused to fade quietly. After slipping to 22 for 3, they rebuilt through Ben Manenti and Justin Mosca, who shared a 92-run stand to revive hopes of a major upset. Manenti struck 60 off 25 balls, including six sixes, while Mosca contributed 43.

The game remained alive until the 19th over, when Curran dismissed Grant Stewart for 45 with Italy needing quick runs. Jamie Overton then wrapped up the tail as Italy were bowled out for 178. Curran and Overton finished with three wickets apiece.

England ended Group C with three wins, progressing alongside West Indies.

Elsewhere, South Africa advanced to the Super Eights from Group D without taking the field, their qualification confirmed after Afghanistan defeated the United Arab Emirates in New Delhi.

RASHID hits 700

Afghanistan kept their flickering campaign alive in Delhi, riding Azmatullah Omarzai's all-round show to a five-wicket win over the UAE in a T20 World Cup Group D fixture yesterday.

Put in to bat, UAE recovered through Sohaib Khan's 68 to post 160-9. Omarzai then ripped through them with 4-15 before blasting an unbeaten 40 off 21 balls as Afghanistan got home with four balls to spare -- their first victory of the tournament.

Afghanistan now need Canada to spring an upset against New Zealand today to stay alive.

While Omarzai sealed the win, Afghanistan spin king Rashid Khan became the first bowler in T20 history to reach 700 wickets.

*Rashid has led the format's wicket charts since overtaking Dwayne Bravo (631) in February 2025 and now sits 69 clear of the West Indian.

*Sunil Narine (613), Imran Tahir (572) and Andre Russell (508) round out the top five.

PHOTO: AFP

SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh in semis of Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars

Bangladesh Women's 'A' team eked out a three-wicket win over Thailand in a low-scoring Group B match to seal a place in the semifinals of the Women's Asia Cup Rising Stars at the Terdthai Cricket Ground, Bangkok on Monday. This was Bangladesh's second win in as many games as they had earlier beaten Sri Lanka by four runs in their tournament opener.

BCB boss Bulbul off to Australia

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul has departed the country on Monday citing family reasons, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury confirmed to The Daily Star. "Bulbul bhai has gone out of the country due to family reasons. He will be in Australia to meet his family. He will be returning in a few weeks," Nizamuddin informed.

Carlsen wins first FIDE Freestyle World Championship

Norway's Magnus Carlsen added another crown to his collection on Sunday by becoming the first official FIDE Freestyle Chess world champion after a comeback win over Fabiano Caruana in Germany. Carlsen has now won 21 world titles in various formats.

** Read full stories on The Daily Star website

BFL restart in limbo

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite most clubs continuing costly training camps, the Professional League Management Committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation appear reluctant to resume the Bangladesh Football League (BFL) since its first phase ended on January 3.

The league was expected to restart after the month-long mid-season break but was postponed due to the February 12 national elections. Five days after the polls, clubs are yet to receive even a draft fixture list.

"We have been training and spending money without purpose," said a top club coach, requesting anonymity.

While the top division remains stalled, the second-tier Bangladesh Championship League resumed on Sunday, and the final round of the Bangladesh Women's Football League was completed on Friday.

A federation source said the BFL could restart later this month.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Muhtasin Ahmed Ridoy of Dhaka University, the number one table tennis player of the country, plays against Sakib Khan Redoy of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University during the men's team event on the opening day of the Inter-University Table Tennis Fest at the Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday. Ridoy won in straight sets.

India-Pakistan: An illusion of a rivalry

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

When was the last time you were ripped off?

Getting ripped off is pretty much a universal human experience. Kids get tricked into buying shiny toys that break down in the first try, adults get talked into investing in a pyramid scheme and lose their savings, and the elderly get duped into buying a supposed all-curing cream from online, which ends up giving them rashes.

Usually, people learn their lesson after getting duped once, and steer well clear of it. However, there are some people who never seem to learn their lesson and keep getting deceived the same way.

On Sunday, every cricket fan who tuned in to watch the India-Pakistan Group A match of the ICC T20 World Cup hoping to see a competitive game of cricket, one that lives up to all the hype surrounding the encounter, fell into this category.

In terms of generating interest, the India-Pakistan cricketing rivalry is going through a golden age -- just not where it matters.

Just consider the buildup to Sunday's match in Colombo. For weeks, the entire cricketing world was intently following the multilateral communications to convince Pakistan to reconsider their decision to boycott the match, a stance they had taken in solidarity with Bangladesh, who were replaced by Scotland in the World Cup for refusing to play in India over security concerns.

Experts weighed in, rumours swirled, ramifications of an India-Pakistan match not happening were discussed, and eventually Pakistan reverted its stance, to the relief of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and all other stakeholders.

After that part was sorted, attention moved to the non-handshake issue, which India had started last year when its players refused to go through the customary post-match handshakes with the Pakistan team -- an unprecedented virtue-signalling move in international cricket.

Before Sunday's match, both captains were asked about it, but no decisive answers were given, which inevitably built up more drama over what would happen.

On game day, the captains did not shake hands at the toss, and the two teams did not share the customary greeting after the match either, and in between, India completed an absolute demolition of Pakistan.

India won the match by 61 runs, but the margin of defeat does not properly reflect India's dominance.

Having posted 175-7 after being put in to bat on a pitch that was holding up and providing turn, India killed the match inside the first five overs of the Pakistan innings by sending back four batters.

India toyed with the Pakistani batters afterwards, giving rank part-timers like Tilak Verma and Rinku Singh three overs collectively, even though all three of their frontline spinners had overs in the tank.

The only cricketing aspect that was getting any attention before the game was the curious bowling action of Pakistani spinner Usman Tariq. In the match, the off-spinner did decently with the ball, taking 1-24, and was the last Pakistan batter dismissed, getting clean bowled for a duck by Hardik Pandya and then giving a wry smile, indicative of the embarrassment Pakistan had just been dealt with.

The worst part of the entire affair is how unsurprising it all was.

Pakistan has not beaten India in any format since 2022. Overall, they have only ever won three T20Is against India and lost 13. India are the defending champions and ranked No.1 in the format, while Pakistan have not won the tournament since 2009 and are sitting at No.6.

Now, every rivalry has its ups-and-downs. In the 80s and 90s, Pakistan used to dominate India, and had a much higher win percentage.

But what has been disheartening about their encounters in recent times is the lack of fight in the Pakistani players, especially batters, who seem to get overwhelmed by the occasion and allow India to walk all over them.

Still, fans all over the world tune in to see this match in record numbers because of nostalgia, as they remember the heydays of this rivalry, when both sides used to play with their hearts on their sleeves, cricketers would battle tooth and nail for their flag and at the end of it all, a sense of camaraderie would prevail. As the gulf between Pakistan and India widens, the prospect of those fierce matches returning grows dimmer. Still, nostalgic fans will continue tuning in every time these perennial rivals face off and then go away with the sinking feeling of getting ripped off.

Real seek payback against Benfica

STAR SPORTS DESK

Benfica host Real Madrid at the Estadio da Luz on Tuesday in the rematch everyone wanted -- a Champions League play-off first leg dripping with narrative.

Their last meeting, on the final matchday of the league phase, produced bedlam. Goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin thumped in a 98th-minute header, the final kick of the phase, sealing a 4-2 win that carried Jose Mourinho's men into the play-offs on goal difference and shoved Madrid from third to ninth -- outside the automatic spots.

For a club that has lifted this trophy 15 times, it was a jolt.

Mourinho expects a reaction.

"They are wounded. And a wounded king is dangerous," said the former Madrid boss.

"We will play with our heads, ambition and confidence. We know what we did to the kings of the Champions League."

Benfica squeezed through in 24th, their league phase a mix of grit and gamble: three wins, five defeats, qualification decided by that wild night against Madrid.

Yet form has hardened since. The Eagles have won four of their last five in all competitions, drawing the other, and arrive on the back of a 2-1 victory away at Santa Clara. At the Luz, they believe anyone can fall.

Madrid's aura has flickered too. Across their last 11 Champions League outings, they have lost six and won five.

Still, Mourinho urged calm over first-leg mathematics.

"Trubin won't be in the attack," he quipped. "People think you need a certain result in the first leg. I say there is no definitive result. It will be very demanding, without a doubt."

Monaco vs PSG

Monaco host holders PSG in an all-French duel. They have never met in Europe, though Monaco won 1-0 domestically in November. A weekend defeat at Stade Rennais FC left Luis Enrique's men a point off the Ligue 1 summit with 12 games left. Yet PSG's knockout record under the Spaniard is fierce in the Champions League: 10 wins from 15, far stronger than their league-phase return.

Qarabag vs Newcastle

A draw against PSG on MD8 wasn't enough for Newcastle United to finish inside the top eight but despite a 2,529-mile haul to Azerbaijan -- the longest distance ever travelled by an English team for a Champions League away match -- Eddie Howe will fancy to get the job done against Qarabag.

Club Brugge vs Atletico Madrid

Club Brugge meet an Atletico Madrid side fresh from smashing FC Barcelona 4-0 in the Copa del Rey, then losing 3-0 to Rayo Vallecano. The head-to-head record between these two sides is finely balanced across eight previous European meetings, with three wins each and two draws. Atletico have conceded in eight straight Champions League games, shipping 15 goals. Another game without a clean sheet would mark their longest such run in the competition.

Dortmund vs Atalanta

Dortmund and Atalanta both stumbled late in the league phase. Dortmund, though, are flying domestically, thrashing Mainz 4-0 for a sixth straight Bundesliga win, while Atalanta have lost their last five Champions League knockout ties.

REMEMBRANCE

"Repent for all your sins and ask for forgiveness. Allah almighty is the most merciful, the greatest and the mightiest."

Mr. Ekram Uddin Mollah
(30th January 1991-17th February 2019)
Honorable Director, Osman Group of Industries

We remember with respect to his 7th death anniversary

We pray for the forgiveness of his departed soul in the court of almighty Allah. May allah accept his all good deeds and blessed him highest place of Jannatul Ferdaous. (Ameen)

We will always cherish your immense love
Osman Group of Industries Family
Osman

NCP signs July charter without notes of dissent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday signed the July National Charter on the condition that the people's verdict on the referendum would be implemented in its entirety, without the notes of dissent.

The signing took place at the state guest house Jamuna in the presence of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam and Member Secretary Akhter Hossen signed the charter on behalf of the party.

Nahid said the party had not signed the July charter earlier because its legal basis had not been confirmed, and clarity was needed on the note of dissent.

He said the signing of the charter was a formality and that it was signed without the note of dissent. He added that the signing would help ensure a smooth path for the swift implementation of reforms in line with the public referendum order.

Akhter also said they signed the charter without the note of dissent and subject to the full implementation of the referendum result.

Also present at the ceremony were National Consensus Commission Vice President Prof Ali Riaz, commission member Badiul Alam Majumdar, and the Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Monir Haider.

Other members of the NCP delegation included Monira Sharmin, Sarwar Tusher, Javed Rasin, and Jahirul Islam.

Earlier, Nahid had said his party would not sign the July charter unless there was a clear "legal foundation".

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka celebrates after scoring a century in their eight-wicket win over Australia in an ICC T20 World Cup Group B match in Kandy yesterday. Chasing 181, Nissanka smashed an unbeaten 52-ball 100 to guide Sri Lanka home with 12 balls to spare. The victory sealed a Super Eight spot for the Lankans and left Australia on the brink of an early exit. PHOTO: AFP

Transcom chairman, CEO cleared in last case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transcom Group Chairman Shahnaz Rahman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Simeen Rahman and four others were discharged yesterday from a fraud case filed by the CEO's sister.

With this, Simeen, Shahnaz and other top officials of Transcom Group have been cleared in four cases in total.

Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman passed the order following two discharge petitions filed by the defence, said Simeen's lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah.

The court order stated that the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

LAND REGISTRATION

Israel's West Bank move draws outcry

Cabinet clears path for settlers to buy plots directly

AFP, *Jerusalem*

Israel's government has approved a process to register land in the West Bank as "state property", drawing condemnation from Arab nations and critics who said it would accelerate annexation of the Palestinian territory.

Israel's foreign ministry said the measure, approved late Sunday, would enable "transparent and thorough clarification of rights to resolve legal disputes" and was needed after unlawful land registration in areas controlled

- Palestinians condemn 'de-facto annexation'
- The process will take place only in Area C
- Egypt, Qatar, Jordan criticise the move as illegal

by the Palestinian Authority.

But Egypt, Qatar and Jordan criticised the move as illegal under international law. In a statement, the Egyptian government called it a "dangerous escalation aimed at consolidating Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories".

Qatar's foreign ministry condemned the "decision to convert West Bank lands into so-called 'state property'," saying it would "deprive the Palestinian people of their rights".

The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority called for international intervention to prevent the "de facto beginning of the annexation process and the undermining of the foundations of the Palestinian state".

Israeli anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now called the measure a "mega land grab".

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

HATIA 'RAPE'

Police file GD; victim's medical tests done 2 days after admission

ANWARUL HAIDAR

A general diary was filed over the alleged rape and torture of a woman in Noakhali's Hatia upazila on Sunday, after which a forensic test of the victim was conducted at Noakhali General Hospital yesterday -- two days after she was admitted on Saturday.

Hospital sources had earlier said they were unable to conduct the tests due to legal complications, as neither the victim's family nor the police had filed a complaint.

Following a letter from the National Human Rights Commission on Sunday, urging Hatia police to take necessary legal steps over the allegations, the police filed the general diary that night.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Md Saiful Alam, officer-in-charge of Hatia Police Station, said they filed the GD on Sunday night and sent a formal letter to the hospital authorities yesterday morning, requesting a medical report.

"If the family later submits a formal

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Defence deals needed, but their timing 'questionable'

Analysts say interim govt should have left long-term agreements to elected govt

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh's interim government has signed a series of defence deals with foreign countries that may be strategically necessary but have come at a questionable time, according to security analysts.

They said the technological modernisation of the country's defence sector is long overdue for credible deterrence, but such purchases carry long-term strategic and diplomatic implications.

> **The deals signed by the interim government are meant to make things easier for the next government, not to leave behind any burden.**
>
> Foreign Adviser **Touhid Hossain**

Therefore, they believe an elected government should sign such agreements.

Over the last two months, Bangladesh has signed at least five deals related to defence purchase, production and transfer.

On December 9 last year, the Bangladesh Air Force and European Leonardo S.p.A, an Italian multinational company, signed a Letter of Intent to buy Eurofighter Typhoon fighter aircraft as a step to include modern Multi-Role Combat Aircraft. The number of aircraft to be purchased was not announced.

On January 27, the BAF and China Electronics Technology Group Corporation International signed a government-to-government agreement for establishing a drone (unmanned aerial vehicle/UAV) manufacturing and assembly plant in Bangladesh, as well as for technology transfer.

On February 3, the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division and Japan signed an agreement on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, a move expected to accelerate Bangladesh's defence modernisation and strengthen bilateral strategic ties.

On February 8, the Bangladesh Navy and the UK Ministry of Defence signed an agreement for buying HMS Enterprise, a former Royal Navy vessel meant for hydrographic and oceanographic survey in Bangladesh.

Reports suggest that the interim government has also advanced discussions with Turkey on buying the SIPER long-range air defense system, and with Pakistan on buying JF-17 Thunder fighter jets.

On January 26, the government revealed its decision to earmark around 850 acres of land in Chattogram's Mirsarai to develop a defence industrial zone, aiming to build domestic capability and tap into the growing global defence production market.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Mohammad Ashique Rahman, senior research fellow

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

Tarique gives up Bogura-6

Quits Dinkal; by-polls within 90 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman has formally given up his Bogura-6 parliamentary seat after securing victory in two constituencies in the 13th national parliamentary election, Election Commission officials confirmed.

"Tarique Rahman submitted a written notification to the commission, opting to retain the Dhaka-17 seat and giving up Bogura-6. The commission is now processing the gazette notification to declare Bogura-6 vacant," Election Commission Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

Under Article 19(2) of the Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972, a candidate elected from more than one constituency must inform the Election Commission in writing within 30 days of gazette publication which seat they wish to retain. Failure to do so empowers the commission to declare one seat valid and the others vacant at its discretion.

In Bogura-6, Tarique secured a decisive victory with 216,284 votes, defeating Abidur Rahman Sohel of Jamaat-e-Islami, who got 97,626 votes.

In Dhaka-17, Tarique won a narrower contest, receiving 72,699 votes against Jamaat candidate SM Khaliduzzaman, who secured 68,300 votes.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Blaze ravages five-storey building in Karwan Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a five-storey building in the capital's Karwan Bazar last night.

The fire erupted inside a room of the building in the Kathpotti area around 10:30pm and engulfed the third, fourth, and fifth floors.

There were boards, wood, tissue paper, stationeries, diapers, among other things, stored in the building, which are highly flammable materials. The upper floors were used as warehouses. The ground floors housed sawmills.

Eleven fire engines were trying to douse the flames until 12:38am today, said Talha Bin Zashim, an inspector at the media centre of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Army personnel were helping the firefighters.

Md Jewel, a staffer of Anwar Motor Works, said their one-storey tin-shed workshop is located right next to the five-storey building. "Right after the building caught fire, we took the cars out from our workshop, but our shop was destroyed."

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Firefighters try to douse a blaze that broke out at a five-storey building in the capital's Karwan Bazar last night.

Medieval tunnel found in Germany linked to cult rituals

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists have discovered a medieval underground tunnel running beneath a German village, which was the likely site of cult rituals.

Researchers stumbled upon the tunnel during excavations that unravelled a Stone Age burial site near the German village of Dornberg.

A trapezoidal trench dating to the fourth millennium BC was first discovered along with several poorly preserved, late Neolithic remains from the third millennium BC.

Then further excavations revealed a stone slab and a long, oval pit, measuring around 6.5ft long and 2.5ft wide, intersecting the Stone Age burial ditch at a right angle.

Initially assumed to be another grave, researchers soon found that the pit extended and was actually a tunnel system.