

# THE NEW CABINET



**MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR**  
**Ministry:** Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives  
**Constituency:** Thakurgaon-1  
**Background:** Ex-state ministers for civil aviation; agriculture



**AMIR KHOSRU MAHMUD CHOWDHURY**  
**Ministries:** Finance; Planning  
**Constituency:** Chattogram-11  
**Background:** Former commerce minister



**SALAHUDDIN AHMED**  
**Ministry:** Home Affairs  
**Constituency:** Cox's Bazar-1  
**Background:** Former assistant private secretary to PM; former state minister for communications



**IQBAL HASSAN MAHMOOD**  
**Ministry:** Power, Energy and Mineral Resources  
**Constituency:** Sirajganj-2  
**Background:** Former state minister for power, energy and mineral resources



**MAJ (RETD) HAFIZ UDDIN AHMED**  
**Ministry:** Liberation War Affairs  
**Constituency:** Bhola-3  
**Background:** Former minister for jute, commerce and water resources



**AZM ZAHID HOSSAIN**  
**Ministries:** Women and Children Affairs; Social Welfare  
**Constituency:** Dinajpur-6  
**Background:** Personal physician of former PM Khaleda Zia



**DR KHALILUR RAHMAN**  
**Ministry:** Foreign Affairs  
Technocrat minister  
**Background:** Security adviser in the outgoing interim government



**ABDUL AWAL MINTOO**  
**Ministry:** Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
**Constituency:** Feni-3  
**Background:** BNP Vice Chairman



**KAZI SHAH MOFAZZAL HOSSAIN KAIKOBAD**  
**Ministry:** Religious Affairs  
**Constituency:** Cumilla-3  
**Background:** Former state minister for religious affairs



**MIZANUR RAHMAN MINU**  
**Ministry:** Land  
**Constituency:** Rajshahi-2  
**Background:** Two-time former mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation



**NITAI ROY CHOWDHURY**  
**Ministry:** Cultural Affairs  
**Constituency:** Magura-2  
**Background:** Former minister of youth and sports



**KHANDAKAR ABDUL UKTADIR**  
**Ministries:** Commerce; Industries; Textiles and Jute  
**Constituency:** Sylhet-1  
**Background:** Former MP



**ARIFUL HAQUE CHOWDHURY**  
**Ministries:** Labour and Employment; Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment  
**Constituency:** Sylhet-4  
**Background:** Former mayor of Sylhet City Corporation



**ZAHIR UDDIN SWAPON**  
**Ministry:** Information and Broadcasting  
**Constituency:** Barishal-1  
**Background:** Former state minister for LGRD; Top student leader in anti-Ershad movement



**AMIN UR RASHID**  
**Ministries:** Food; Agriculture; Fisheries and Livestock  
Technocrat minister  
**Background:** Agriculture policy expert and former academic with experience in rural development



**AFROZA KHANAM RITA**  
**Ministry:** Civil Aviation and Tourism  
**Constituency:** Manikganj-3  
**Background:** Convener of BNP's Manikganj district unit



**SHAHIDUDDIN CHOWDHURY ANEE**  
**Ministry:** Water Resources  
**Constituency:** Lakshimpur-3  
**Background:** Former MP and was active in parliamentary committees



**ASADUL HABIB DULU**  
**Ministry:** Disaster Management and Relief  
**Constituency:** Lalmonirhat-3  
**Background:** Former state minister for food and disaster management



**SHAIKH RABIUL ALAM**  
**Ministries:** Road, Railways; and Shipping  
**Constituency:** Dhaka-10  
**Background:** Previously served on transport and communication-related parliamentary committees



**MD ASADUZZAMAN**  
**Ministry:** Law and Parliamentary Affairs  
**Constituency:** Jhenaidah-1  
**Background:** Outgoing interim government's attorney general. Previously dealt with BNP's legal affairs and constitutional matters



**ZAKARIA TAHER**  
**Ministry:** Housing and Public Works  
**Constituency:** Cumilla-7  
**Background:** Engineering and construction business. Previously served in parliamentary committees related to infrastructure



**DIPEN DEWAN**  
**Ministry:** Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs  
**Constituency:** Rangamati  
**Background:** Former state minister for CHT Affairs



**ANM EHSANUL HOQUE MILON**  
**Ministries:** Education; Primary, Mass Edn  
**Constituency:** Chandpur-1  
**Background:** Former state minister for education



**SARDER MD SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN**  
**Ministry:** Health and Family Welfare  
**Constituency:** Narsingdi-4  
**Background:** Public health advocacy and social welfare initiatives



**FAKIR MAHBUB ANAM**  
**Ministries:** Post, telecom; Science and Technology  
**Constituency:** Tangail-1  
**Background:** ICT policy discussions and digital governance advocacy

## ADVISERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER (WITH THE STATUS OF MINISTER)



**MIRZA ABBAS**  
BNP Standing Committee member  
**Constituency:** Dhaka-8  
**Background:** Former mayor of Dhaka City Corporation; former minister for housing and public works



**RUHUL KABIR RIZVI**  
Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP  
**Constituency:** Did not contest  
**Background:** Former Chhatra Dal president; former Ruvsu VP



**NAZRUL ISLAM KHAN**  
BNP Standing Committee member  
**Constituency:** Did not contest  
**Background:** Former chief of BNP Election Steering Committee



**MD ISMAIL ZABIULLAH**  
Adviser to BNP chairman  
**Constituency:** Did not contest  
**Background:** Retired bureaucrat



**DR RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR**  
Professor of Development Studies Department at Dhaka University  
**Constituency:** Did not contest  
**Background:** Worked in academia, governments, think tanks, int'l orgs



**A RENEWED MANDATE:  
A STRONGER BANGLADESH**

MCCI extends its congratulations to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on its victory in the 2026 National Elections.

The outcome reflects the electorate's expectations for stability, effective governance, and continued economic progress.

MCCI affirms its commitment to working with the incoming government to support investment, enhance competitiveness, and promote sustainable national development.



METROPOLITAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, DHAKA



**Left:** Ministers taking oath at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday afternoon. **Right:** BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman signing the oath register after being sworn in as prime minister of Bangladesh at the South Plaza yesterday afternoon. **Bottom:** Newly elected BNP lawmakers take oath at the oath chamber of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday morning.



PHOTOS: MEHEDI HASAN, COLLECTED



# TARIQUE TAKES THE REINS

## A LEGACY RECLAIMED

His journey from exile to office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time since independence, a third member of the same political family has taken the country's helm, with Tarique Rahman having become Bangladesh's first male prime minister in 35 years.

After more than 17 years in exile in the UK, the

**Tarique gradually grew more measured, as years in exile left their mark on him – shaping his vision of greater tolerance in Bangladeshi politics.**

60-year-old returned home last December to contest – for the first time in his political career – one of Bangladesh's most consequential elections.

Tarique took over as the BNP chairman after his mother, former prime minister and party chair Khaleda Zia, passed away on December 30 last year.

From then on, he worked tirelessly to mobilise the party ranks, touring districts with promises of curbing corruption, implementing electoral reforms, and ensuring socio-economic development.

He drew thousands of supporters to his

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and WASIM BIN HABIB

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman was sworn in as the prime minister of Bangladesh yesterday, as the party returned to power after nearly two decades.

A new political figure as prime minister for the first time in 30 years, Tarique sprang surprises in his choices

and 24 state ministers separately at a ceremony at the South Plaza of the parliament complex.

Previously, such ceremonies were held at the Bangabhaban.

The senior BNP leaders left out of the cabinet include Mirza Abbas, Abdul Moyeen Khan, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Nazrul Islam Khan, Selima Rahman, Amanullah Aman, Gayeshwar

## Shafiqur leader of opposition

Taher deputy, Nahid chief whip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman and its Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher have been made the Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition respectively in the 13th Parliament.

Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP), an ally in the Jamaat-led I-party alliance, has been made the Opposition Chief Whip in parliament.

At 12:23pm yesterday, the newly elected Jamaat candidates took oath as

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Economy, rule of law, governance to be the focus

Say ministers after taking oath

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After taking the oath of office yesterday, several ministers said that economic reforms, improvement of law and order, and good governance would be among the top priorities of the new government.

Pledging to ensure stability and inclusive growth, they said that coordinated efforts would be made to boost investments, create employment, and address institutional weaknesses.

Describing the new cabinet as "a good one", Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, who is set to assume the role of finance minister, said the new government would prioritise investment and create a more business-friendly environment.

"We want to steer the country out of the oligarchic economic system created under the fascist regime. We want an economy where everyone can take part. We will make sure that the benefits reach everyone. Bangladesh's democratic transition has already begun," he told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Early snag for Constitution Reform Council

BNP, allied MPs skip oath; Jamaat, NCP sworn in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Constitution Reform Council suffered a setback yesterday as BNP's elected representatives took oath as MPs but declined to be sworn in as members of the council.

Three lawmakers from BNP allies, along with several independents, followed suit.

The decision by more than two-thirds of the MPs has cast uncertainty over the formation and functioning of the Council, proposed under the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025.

The move initially drew a strong reaction from Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party and their allies, whose elected candidates at first refused to take oath.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## The new council of ministers features 40 first-time entrants – 16 ministers and all 24 state ministers. Only nine had previously served as ministers or state ministers in past BNP governments.

for the council of ministers, dominated by new faces with only a handful of old guards. Among the notable inclusions is the interim government's national security adviser Khalilur Rahman, who was appointed as a technocrat.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath of office and oath of secrecy to Tarique, 25 ministers,

Chandra Roy, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi. Abbas, Nazrul and Rizvi were later named advisers to the new PM with the rank of minister.

The new council of ministers features 40 first-time entrants – 16 ministers and all 24 state ministers. Only nine had previously served as ministers or

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prof Muhammad Yunus, along with local and foreign dignitaries, attends the swearing-in ceremony of the cabinet at the Jatiya Sangsad's South Plaza yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

## New JS must meet within next 30 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th Parliament will have to go into its maiden session within 30 days of the oath-taking of the newly elected MPs, according to the Constitution.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin will convene the session by exercising the power vested in him under the Constitution.

As Speaker of the 12th Parliament, Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has reportedly resigned from the post, a senior BNP lawmaker will preside over

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Foreign dignitaries congratulate Tarique

Modi invites new PM, family to India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

World leaders have congratulated Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and the BNP government, while looking forward to advancing their relationships with Bangladesh as the country begins a new chapter in its democratic journey following the mass uprising.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Pakistan Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhury, Nepal Foreign Minister Bala Nanda Sharma, UK Under-Secretary for Indo-Pacific Seema Malhotra, Sri Lankan Minister of Health and Mass Media Nalinda Jayatissa and Turkish Under-Secretary Beris Ekinci flew to Dhaka to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet yesterday.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



Abdur Rouf Chowdhury  
Founding Chairman  
(1937–2023)

*In Loving Memory*

A visionary leader whose impact was profound and whose legacy remains everlasting

Bank Asia

## THE STATE MINISTERS



**M RASHIDUZZAMAN MILLAT**

**Ministry:** Civil Aviation and Tourism  
**Constituency:** Jamalpur-1  
**Background:** Treasurer at BNP



**ANINDYA ISLAM AMIT**

**Ministry:** Power, Energy and Mineral Resources  
**Constituency:** Jashore-3  
**Background:** An organising secretary at BNP



**SHARIFUL ALAM**

**Ministries:** Commerce; Industries; Textiles and Jute  
**Constituency:** Kishoreganj-6  
**Background:** An organising secretary at BNP



**SHAMA OBAID ISLAM**

**Ministry:** Foreign Affairs  
**Constituency:** Faridpur-2  
**Background:** An organising secretary at BNP



**SULTAN SALAHUDDIN TUKU**

**Ministries:** Food; Agriculture; Fisheries and Livestock  
**Constituency:** Tangail-5  
**Background:** Publicity secretary at BNP



**BARRISTER KAISER KAMAL**

**Ministry:** Land  
**Constituency:** Netrokona-1  
**Background:** Law affairs secretary at BNP



**FORHAD HOSSAIN AZAD**

**Ministry:** Water Resources  
**Constituency:** Panchagarh-2  
**Background:** Rural development secretary at BNP



**MIR MOHAMMAD HELAL UDDIN**

**Ministry:** Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs  
**Constituency:** Chattogram-5  
**Background:** An assistant organising secretary at BNP



**MD ABDUL BARI**

**Ministry:** Public Administration  
**Constituency:** Joypurhat-2  
**Background:** Former bureaucrat



**MIR SHAHE ALAM**

**Ministry:** Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives  
**Constituency:** Bogura-2



**ISHRAQUE HOSSAIN**

**Ministry:** Liberation War Affairs  
**Constituency:** Dhaka-6  
**Background:** Former Dhaka mayor candidate from BNP



**FARZANA SHARMIN**

**Ministries:** Women and Children Affairs; Social Welfare.  
**Constituency:** Natore-1  
**Background:** A Supreme Court advocate



**SHAIKH FARIDUL ISLAM**

**Ministries:** Environment; Religious Affairs; Law  
**Constituency:** Bagerhat-3



**YASSER KHAN CHOWDHURY**

**Ministry:** Information and Broadcasting  
**Constituency:** Mymensingh-9  
**Background:** Convener of BNP's Nandail Upazila unit



**M IQBAL HOSSAIN**

**Ministry:** Disaster Management and Relief  
**Constituency:** Mymensingh-3



**MA MUHITH**

**Ministries:** Health and Family Affairs; Science and Technology; Posts, Telecommunications  
**Constituency:** Sirajganj-6



**AHAMMAD SOHEL MONZOOR SUMON**

**Ministry:** Housing and Public Works  
**Constituency:** Pirojpur-2



**ALI NEWAZ MAHMOOD KHYOM**

**Ministry:** Cultural Affairs  
**Constituency:** Rajbari-1



**BOBBY HAJJAJ**

**Ministry:** Education, Primary and Mass Education  
**Constituency:** Dhaka-13



**ZONAYED SAKI**

**Ministries:** Finance; Planning;  
**Constituency:** Brahmanbaria-6



**NURUL HAQUE NUR**

**Ministries:** Labour and Employment; Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment  
**Constituency:** Patuakhali-3



**MD AMINUL HAQ**

**Ministry:** Youth and Sports  
**Technocrat state minister**



**RAJIB AHSAN**

**Ministries:** Railways; Shipping  
**Constituency:** Barishal-4  
**Background:** BNP executive member



**HABIBUR RASHID HABIB**

**Ministry:** Road Transport and Bridges  
**Constituency:** Dhaka-9  
**Background:** BNP executive member

## ADVISERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER (WITH THE STATUS OF STATE MINISTER)



**HUMAYUN KABIR**

Joint Secretary General (international relations) of BNP



**BRIG GEN (RETD) SHAMSUL ISLAM**

Chief Security Officer of BNP chairman



**ZAHEDUR RAHMAN**

Physician-turned-political analyst



**MAHDI AMIN**

Adviser to BNP chairman



**REHAN ASIF ASAD**

Chief of BNP Research and Monitoring Cell



PHOTO: PTD

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin administers the oath to elected representatives from Jamaat-e-Islami as members of parliament at the oath chamber of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

## Tarique takes the reins

FROM PAGE 1

state ministers in the BNP governments led by Tarique's mother and late BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Only three of the ministers and state ministers are women -- all first timers.

Two ministers are leaders of BNP's allied parties and three are technocrat appointees.

After taking the oath, Tarique, dressed in a black suit and white shirt, signed both the oath of office and the oath of secrecy. Accompanied by his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman, he arrived at the South Plaza at 4:02pm to warm applause.

A few minutes later, the president arrived at the venue, and the swearing-in ceremony began at 4:08pm.

Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani conducted the proceedings, which opened with the national anthem and a recitation from the holy Quran.

Then chief adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin, advisers of the interim government, Supreme Court judges, chiefs of the three forces, diplomats, newly elected lawmakers, political leaders, journalists, and top civil and military officials attended the event.

Among foreign dignitaries present were Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and Pakistan's

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary.

Hundreds of people, including supporters of the new MPs, thronged the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban since morning to catch a glimpse of the oath-taking ceremony, which was broadcast live on internet and TV. The crowd, allowed to assemble along Manik Miah Avenue, erupted in cheers each time the names of ministers and state ministers were announced.

Earlier in the day, the BNP Parliamentary Party at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban elected Tarique as its leader.

The new cabinet will hold its maiden meeting today at the Secretariat at 3:00pm, according to sources.

Region-wise, almost half of the council of ministers are from Dhaka and Chattogram divisions, while only two ministers are from the Sylhet division. Dhaka division has the highest representation with four ministers and eight state ministers. Chattogram division has nine ministers and two state ministers.

Three ministers and one state minister are from Rangpur division, while Rajshahi has two ministers and four state ministers; Khulna two ministers and two state ministers; Barishal two ministers and three state ministers; and Mymensingh four state ministers.

The swearing-in ceremony came six days after the BNP secured a stunning landslide in the 13th

national election. The party alone won 209 seats, with Tarique himself entering parliament for the first time after winning two constituencies. Its allies fetched three seats.

Jamaat-e-Islami, which is the main opposition party now, secured 68 seats, while its allies got nine.

In the morning, all 212 newly elected lawmakers of the BNP and its allies, 76 of Jamaat and its partners, and seven independents were sworn in by CEC Nasir Uddin at the oath chamber of the Sangsad Bhaban.

The BNP lawmakers, however, opted not to take oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council -- a body for the implementation of July charter reforms following the victory of "Yes" in the referendum.

Jamaat and National Citizen Party lawmakers were sworn in in sequence after the BNP, although they had earlier indicated that they would refrain from taking any oath unless the BNP joined the reform council process.

Jamaat and NCP did not attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new council of ministers. After taking oath as MP, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman said the BNP showed "disrespect" to July uprising martyrs through its refusal to take oath as reform council members.

With the swearing-in ceremony, the curtain fell on the 18-month-long Yunus-led interim government rule. The interim government was formed in August 2024 after the Awami League regime was ousted by the student-led July uprising.

Yesterday, the interim government was formally dissolved through a gazette notification issued by the Cabinet Division, marking the end of the Advisory Council that governed during the transitional period.

The notification stated that the president appointed Tarique as prime minister, recognising him as an MP who commands the confidence of the majority in parliament, and giving consent for the formation of a new government under his leadership.

The eldest son of late president Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda, Tarique returned home to an ecstatic welcome in December last year after over 17 years in exile in the UK.

**WHO GETS WHICH MINISTRY**  
Although the Cabinet Division usually publishes a gazette distributing portfolios among the cabinet members after the oath-taking ceremony, no gazette was issued as of writing this report at 1:00am.

According to a post published by the BNP on its verified Facebook page, party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was given the charge of the local government and rural development ministry while Standing Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury was appointed finance and planning minister.

Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed was assigned the home ministry, while fellow members Iqbal Hasan Mahmud and Maj (retired) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed were entrusted with the power, energy and mineral resources portfolio and the Liberation War affairs ministry

respectively.

Khalilur was given charge of the foreign affairs ministry. Another technocrat minister, BNP Chairman's Adviser Mohammad Amin Ur Rashid, was assigned the agriculture, fisheries and food portfolios.

Standing Committee Member AZM Zahid Hossain was assigned the women and children affairs and social welfare ministries; BNP Vice-Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo the environment ministry; Vice-Chairman Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad the religious affairs ministry; BNP Chairman's Adviser Mizanur Rahman Minu the land ministry; Vice-Chairman Nitai Roy Chowdhury the cultural affairs ministry; BNP Chairman's Adviser Khandaker Abdul Muktedir the commerce, industries, jute and textiles ministries; BNP Chairman's Adviser and former Sylhet City Corporation mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury the labour and employment and expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministries; and BNP Chairman's Adviser Zahir Uddin Swapon the information and broadcasting ministry.

ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon was given the education and primary and mass education ministries; BNP Joint Secretary General Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee the water resources ministry; Divisional Secretary (Rangpur) Asadul Habib Dulu the disaster management ministry; immediate past Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman the law ministry; BNP Executive Committee's Employment

Affairs Secretary Zakaria Taher the housing and public works ministry; Sarder Md Sakhawat Hossain the health and family welfare ministry; Fakir Mahub Anam the post and telecom, and science and ICT ministries; BNP National Executive Committee Member Shaikh Rabiul Alam the road, rail and shipping ministries; and BNP Chairman's Adviser Dipen Dewan the Chattogram Hill Tracts affairs ministry.

BNP Advisory Council Member Afroza Khanam Rita is the only woman to be a minister. She got the civil aviation and tourism ministry.

**10 ADVISERS**  
The new government yesterday appointed 10 advisers to Prime Minister Tarique, granting them the status of ministers and state ministers, according to an official gazette notification issued by the Cabinet Division.

Apart from BNP Standing Committee members Abbas and Nazrul, and Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi, the five advisers who will hold the rank of ministers are BNP Advisory Council Member Ismail Jabiullah, and Dhaka University development studies teacher Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir.

The five advisers with the rank of state minister are BNP Joint Secretary General (international relations) Humayun Kabir; party chairman's Adviser Mahdi Amin and Chief Security Officer Brig Gen (retired) Shamsul Islam; writer and political analyst Zahed Ur Rahman; and Rehan Asif Asad.

Enjoy Your Golden Years with  
**SENIOR CITIZEN PUBALI DEPOSIT SCHEME (SCPDS)**

- ✓ Any Bangladeshi individual aged 59 years and above can open account under this scheme.
- ✓ Attractive Interest Rate / Profit [6 Months FDR rate plus 1% p.a.]

**AAA**  
Rated Bank

**পূবালী ব্যাংক পাবলিসি.**  
**PUBALI BANK PLC.**

ISO/IEC  
27001:2022

Open your  
**Account**  
from anywhere

PI Banking-  
a Pubali Bank apps

ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



## Language debate in Pak era went beyond religion

Speakers tell *Star* Itihas Adda



Speakers at the event yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The debate over the language of Bangalee Muslims during the Pakistan period was shaped not only by religion but also by questions of power, region, economy, and democracy, speakers said yesterday.

They made the remarks at the 12th session of The Daily Star's Itihas Adda, titled "The Language Question of Bangalee Muslims: Pakistan Period," held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Writer and thinker Firoz Ahmed said debates over Urdu and Sanskrit vocabulary are often reduced to Hindu-Muslim binaries, though the issue is more complex. "When we debate the use of Urdu or Sanskrit words, we assume it is only about a Hindu-Muslim division. But it is not simply a communal issue," he said.

He referred to the historic East-West divide within Bengal. Citing an 1885-86 controversy, he said a Kolkata-based publication had described eastern Bengal's language as "impure" and suggested that writings from the region be edited in western Bengal. "Who gives them the authority to fix the standard of language?" he asked, adding that debates over linguistic purity were also contests over cultural authority.

He said words such as "Bondobosto" had long been part of Bangla and rejected the idea that vocabulary could be imposed from above. "No one can push a word into a language by force. A word survives only if people use it," he said.

Firoz also cautioned against discarding either Arabic-Persian or Sanskrit vocabulary. Referring to Abul Mansur Ahmad's idea of a "middle path", he said language should not be driven to extremes.

Removing words from either tradition would weaken Bangla rather than strengthen it, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



## SCENES FROM THE DAY



Newly elected Prime Minister Tarique Rahman receives warm applause from BNP lawmakers after being chosen as leader of the House yesterday. President Mohammed Shahabuddin also extended his greetings to Tarique after administering the oath of office. Immediate past Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also offered him best wishes. Earlier, Tarique arrived at the oath-taking ceremony for members of parliament accompanied by his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman. The event was attended by foreign dignitaries and other distinguished guests, including Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman. Meanwhile, NCP leaders elected in the 13th parliamentary election also took their oaths.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN, CHIEF ADVISER'S PRESS WING, REUTERS



## Only three women in the new cabinet

TANGILA TASNIM

Only three of the 49 members in the newly announced cabinet are women, accounting for just 6 percent of the government's top executive body.

Afroza Khanam Rita, newly elected MP for Manikganj-3, is set to become minister for civil aviation and tourism, said BNP sources.

Party sources also said Shama Obaid Islam, member of parliament for Faridpur-2, will serve as state minister for foreign affairs, while Farzana Sharmin Putul of Natore-1 will become state minister for two ministries -- women and children affairs and social welfare.



Afroza Khanam Rita



Shama Obaid Islam



Farzana Sharmin Putul

Men will hold around 94 percent of cabinet posts under the new formation.

Notably, three previous cabinets had higher female representation than the incoming one.

The 2019 cabinet had four women among 47 members -- about 8.5 percent. They were then prime minister Sheikh

Hasina, Dr Dipu Moni, Begum Monnujan Sufian, and Begum Habibun Nahar.

Dipu Moni served as education minister, Begum Monnujan Sufian as state minister for labour and employment, and Begum Habibun Nahar as deputy minister for environment, forest and climate change.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



# প্রথম আলো

Artist  
Mahbubur Rahman

This exhibition is built upon the burnt down structure of Prothom Alo and its remnants, incorporating artworks, kinetic objects, light, sound, images, videos, and a range of both animate and inanimate elements.

The exhibition is open to all.

Venue

Prothom Alo Office, 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka

Time

18 February 2026 : 4:00 PM-7:00 PM  
19-28 February 2026 : 11:00 AM-1:00 PM  
3:00 PM-5:00 PM

প্রথম আলো

## প্রবাসী ভাইদের অনন্য অবদান

- ▶ ৩.৩০ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: দেশের ইতিহাসে মাস হিসেবে সর্বোচ্চ রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে গতবছর মার্চ মাসে;
- ▶ ৩০.৩২ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছরে রেমিট্যান্স এসেছে আগের বছরের তুলনায় প্রায় ২৭ শতাংশ বেশী;
- ▶ ১৯.৪৩ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার: জুলাই ২০২৫ থেকে পরের সাত মাসে এসেছে রেকর্ড পরিমাণ রেমিট্যান্স।



প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-329

## Woman to die for Dhanmondi double murder

UNB, Dhaka

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a woman to death in a case filed in connection with the Dhanmondi double murder in 2019.

Judge of Dhaka Additional Metropolitan and Sessions Judge Court-7, Tahida Akter handed down the punishment.

The convict is Surovi Akter, domestic help of deceased Afroza Begum.

The court also fined her Tk 50,000, in default of which she will have to suffer five months more in rigorous imprisonment.

The court also acquitted Bachhu Mia, a worker of the house, as allegations brought against him could not be proved. According to the prosecution, police recovered the bodies of Afroza Begum, 65, and her housemaid Diti, 18, from a house in Dhanmondi on November 1, 2019.

A case was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on November 3, 2019. Police submitted a charge sheet against Surovi and Bachhu Mia on February 1, 2022.



A dense swarm of rickshaws, almost all of them battery-operated, causes severe traffic congestion in the Agargaon area, Dhaka. Despite occasional police raids, poor enforcement against unauthorised vehicles on main roads continues to create congestion and safety hazards across the capital. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Only three women

FROM PAGE 3

The 2014 cabinet included five women among 57 members (8.77 percent). Alongside then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, were agriculture minister Matia Chowdhury, state minister for public administration Ismat Ara Sadek, state minister for women and children affairs Meher Afroz Chumki, and state minister for information Tarana Halim.

The 2009 cabinet recorded the highest female participation, with five women among 31 members – around 16.12 percent. They included then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Sahara Khatun, Dipu Moni, Matia Chowdhury, and Munnunjan Sufian.

Dipu Moni became the country's first female foreign minister, Sahara Khatun served as the first female home minister, and Matia Chowdhury was agriculture minister.

Experts warned that the decline in women's representation at the cabinet level could undermine decades of

progress in political empowerment.

At just 6 percent, the latest figure highlights the gap between women's share of the population and their role in policymaking, they said.

Kamrun Nahar, a member of women's rights group Naripokkho, said the low representation was not surprising.

"This is nothing new. But we had hoped for a more reasonable level of representation," she said.

She added that the government must prioritise women in decision-making roles. "With political support from the top, meaningful change can happen, and women will be able to engage in politics more actively," she said.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
FEBRUARY 18

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:20	12:45	4:30	6:03	7:30
JAMAAT 5:55	1:15	4:45	6:07	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Language debate in Pak era went beyond religion

FROM PAGE 3

"The best terminology often comes from the languages that historically shaped our intellectual and cultural formation. To discard them out of narrowness weakens the language," he said.

Researcher Mamun Siddiqui of Bangla Academy said the language question during the Pakistan era was inseparable from land, democracy and economic rights.

He said discussions over Pakistan's state language began even before the state was formed. "It was like speaking of the Ramayana

before the birth of Ram," he said.

Citing Abdul Haq, Mamun said, "If linguistic freedom is not secured, political freedom remains incomplete."

"Besides, Enamul Haq had warned that imposing Urdu would bring 'political, cultural and economic death' to East Pakistan," he added.

Referring to Abul Mansur Ahmad, Mamun said, "If the language of the people and the language of the state do not coincide, that state cannot be democratic."

He said newspapers

and magazines from Chattogram, Cumilla, Sylhet and Dinajpur carried arguments in favour of Bangla as the state language, showing that the demand extended beyond Dhaka-based elite.

"These writings prepared people's minds," he said, stressing that the 1952 Language Movement did not emerge suddenly.

He described the language struggle as linked to economic and political emancipation, arguing that without that connection, "no language movement can succeed."

Prof Tariq Manzoor of the Bangla department at Dhaka University said, "If we think of 'Bangalee Muslim' as a combined identity, that is largely a post-1947 development," noting that before partition

the terms were often treated separately.

On language, he distinguished between spoken and written forms, saying linguistics prioritises speech while prescriptive grammar focuses on written norms.

He said attempts after 1947 to reshape Bangla through script reform, spelling changes and heavy insertion of Arabic-Persian vocabulary largely failed because language cannot be sustained through artificial imposition.

On the state language debate, he said from the perspective of a religion-based state, the push for Urdu as a lingua franca followed a certain logic. However, Bangla's demographic majority and rich literary heritage made it impossible to sideline, he

added.

"A language spoken by the majority and backed by a strong literary tradition cannot be denied state status," he said.

Although Bangla received constitutional recognition in the 1950s, its administrative implementation remained limited during the Pakistan period. Recognition was granted, but practical application lagged far behind, he added.

## Man shot

FROM PAGE 5

Unidentified attackers set the house on fire around 1:00am over the feud. Stored crops, wooden furniture and other household items were burnt, but no one was injured, the family members said.

Riazul Islam Tinku, however, denied the allegation and said neither he nor any of his followers was involved in the incident.

A case has been filed in this connection, but none had been arrested till yesterday evening, said Narail Sadar Police Station OC Md Oli Miah.

J a m a a t - e - I s l a m i - nominated candidate Ataur Rahman won the election in the constituency.

(Our correspondents from Brahmanbaria and Bagerhat contributed to the report.)

**Expression of Interest (EOI) Franchise Ownership Rights**  
Women's Bangladesh Premier League T20 (WBPL T20)

Ref No: BCB/Franchise Ownership Rights/WBPL T20/2026/109 Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**FRANCHISE OWNERSHIP RIGHTS**

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from reputed business houses, entities and companies for acquiring the Franchise Ownership Rights of the Women's Bangladesh Premier League T20 (WBPL T20) for a period of Three (03) consecutive editions/- seasons, namely the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition/Season of the WBPL T20.

**Note:** A minimum of Three (03) eligible business houses, entities, or companies demonstrating satisfactory financial capability will be shortlisted for awarding of Franchise Ownership Rights for the inaugural edition (1<sup>st</sup> Edition) of the Women's BPL T20.

**Non-Eligibility :**

- 1) Companies involved in Tobacco, Alcohol (both surrogate and non-surrogate), Betting, or Online betting and its surrogate shall not be eligible to participate in this EOI process.
- 2) Any person or entity having an existing unresolved dispute with the BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be deemed ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI process.

**EOI Submission Procedure:**

A detailed document (EOI Guideline) containing the submission requirements, franchise model and financial structure will be available from **Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026** at:  
BPL Office, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216  
Official Websites: www.tigercricket.com.bd & www.bpl20.com.bd

Interested parties must submit their EOI applications in a sealed envelope addressed to the **Chairperson, WBPL Governing Council, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)** at the BCB Management Office, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, by the close of business hours on **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

**Documents to be Submitted with EOI:**

- a) Company Profile and Profiles of Individual Directors/Owners.
- b) Latest Auditor's Report on Financial Statements (each consortium member must submit separately).
- c) Bank Solvency Certificate along with Bank Statement.
- d) Certified copy of Memorandum & Articles of Association with Certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- e) Updated VAT Registration, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN).
- f) In case of consortium/ Joint Venture (JV) - a Notarized Consortium/ JV Agreement.

BCB reserves the unconditional rights to accept or reject any or all EOIs at its sole discretion at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever during the EOI process. BCB also reserves the right to amend, postpone or cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing further addendum(s) at any time prior to the commencement of the EOI selection process.

**WBPL Governing Council**  
Bangladesh Cricket Board  
Management Office: Sher-E-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216

**NOTICE**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 99 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF:  
Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) --- Petitioner  
VERSUS  
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms and Others. --- Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81 (2) read with section 85 (3) and section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Limited for the calendar year 2025. Upon preliminary hearing, Ms. Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque was pleased to admit the said application by an order dated 02.02.2026 and also directed to submit the affidavit in compliance. Anyone interested may appear before the Hon'ble Court. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of charges.

Md. Yasir Munir  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.  
ML Village (3rd Floor), 147, Shantinagar, Dhaka.

**Legal Notice**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 65 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF: Md. Mostafizur Rahman Khan ..... Petitioner  
DELMON PROPERTIES LTD. and another ..... Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that Md. Mostafizur Rahman Khan filed an application under section 81(2), 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 ("the application") seeking an order to hold Annual General Meeting for the calendar year 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 of respondent No. 01 Company, Delmon Properties Ltd. for submitting the audited balance sheet and profit and loss account for the year ended on 30th June 2021, 30th June 2022, 30th June 2023, 30th June 2024 and 30th June 2025, before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, the Hon'ble Justice of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque was pleased to admit the application by an order dated 02.02.2026 and further the petitioner is directed to publish this notice in two daily newspaper namely The "Daily Star" and "The Daily Jugantor" within 3 (three) weeks from date of said order and also the petitioner is further directed to file an affidavit-in-compliance on or before 04.03.2026. The petitioner is further directed to put in requisites forthwith. Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on the date so fixed. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K.M. Mahbul Alam Bhuiya, Advocate  
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Suit No. 15, kabokash Supermarket, Kawranbazar, Dhaka.

**EAST WEST UNIVERSITY**  
Progoti Foundation for Education and Development  
Permanent Sanad Holder

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**

East West University (EWU) is inviting tenders from bona fide and interested suppliers or firms for the following items:

1. Shifting and Modernization of Dr. S. R. Lasker Library of EWU.
2. Procurement of Two (02) Types of Computers with Monitor, Graphics Card, and Online UPS for East West University Center for Research and Training (EWUCRT).
3. Seepage Control and Waterproofing of the Fountain Area of the Lower Basement of EWU.

The detailed tender schedules, along with terms and conditions, may be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (1<sup>st</sup> Floor) of the University up until **11 March 2026** during office hours (until 2:00 P.M.) on working days.

The tender schedule for Item No. 02 will also be available through the e-tendering portal: <http://etender.ewubd.edu>

Price of Tender Schedule (Non-Refundable):  
\* Item No. 01: Tk.2,000/- (Taka Two Thousand only)  
\* Item No. 02 & 03: Tk.500/- (Taka Five Hundred only)

Interested bidders are requested to submit their tenders by **12 March 2026, 11:00 A.M.** through the e-tendering process (as specified in the schedule), or hard copy tenders may be dropped in the tender box kept on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Office of the Treasurer (Room No. 316) of the University.

The tenders received within the deadline will be opened on the same day (**12 March 2026**) at **11:30 A.M. in the Conference Room (4<sup>th</sup> Floor)** of EWU in the presence of bidders' representatives.

Bidders must clearly mention the name of the item at the top of the envelope. Failure to do so will result in cancellation of the bidding document.

East West University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders, either in whole or in part, without assigning any reason whatsoever, and its decision in this regard shall be final.

Chief of HR & Logistics

**Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)**  
Engineering Department  
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
[www.tcb.gov.bd](http://www.tcb.gov.bd)

**e-Tender Notice**  
Memo: 26.05.0000.006.26.023.25.164 Date: 17 February, 2026  
**e-Tender Notice No: 06/2025-26**

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following Packages:

Tender ID No.	Name of works	Tender Publication Date	Tender Security	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1223035	Supply and installation of two passenger lifts with voltage stabilizers at TCB Bhaban, Kawrabazar, Dhaka.	18 February 2026	9,00,000/-	03 March 2026 16:00 pm	04 March 2026 12:00 pm	04 March 2026 12:00 pm
1219493	Construction of Tin shed Godown, Internal RCC road and miscellaneous works at TCB Regional Office, Molvibazar.	18 February 2026	18,00,000/-	11 March 2026 16:00 pm	12 March 2026 12:00 pm	12 March 2026 12:00 pm
1219476	Repair and maintenance of boundary wall, water proofing of the warehouses, RCC road and including miscellaneous works of the TCB's Regional office, Chattogram.	18 February 2026	40,00,000/-	15 March 2026 16:00 pm	16 March 2026 12:00 pm	16 March 2026 12:00 pm

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration on e-GP system ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is mandatory for more details contact e-GP help desk. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason what so ever.

Executive Engineer  
Phone: 02-55013923

## Trial of Quader, 6 others begins at ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The trial against Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader and six other party leaders began yesterday at International Crimes Tribunal-2 in a case over crimes against humanity committed during the July 2024 uprising.

Proceedings opened with the submission of the prosecution's written opening statement before the three-member tribunal, after which the first prosecution witness began testifying. However, minutes into the testimony, the tribunal adjourned the hearing until today following a prosecution plea.

The first witness, MA Razzak, is the father of Asif Iqbal, who was shot dead at Mirpur-10 while taking part in protests during July-August 2024.

The other accused are AFM Bahauddin Nasim, AL joint general secretary; Mohammad Ali Arafat, former state minister for information; Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash, chairman of Jubo League; Moinul Hossain Khan Nikhil, its general secretary; and Saddam Hussain and Sheikh Wali Asif Enan, president and general secretary of Chhatra League respectively.

According to the prosecution, the accused directly instigated, encouraged and provoked the use of lethal weapons against students and civilians, allegedly following instructions from former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

They are also accused of aiding and abetting the government's crackdown to suppress what the prosecution described as a peaceful movement of unarmed students and civilians, including by enforcing a nationwide curfew and deploying lethal force.

In his opening statement, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam described Hasina as the latest addition to a long list of autocrats and fascists in world history, many of whom eventually faced trial.

He said the trial was not merely about the disposal of a single case, but carried a strong message for the nation.

Meanwhile, three defence witnesses were scheduled to testify yesterday before ICT-2 in the crimes against humanity case against JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu, but the defence failed to produce them.

One of Inu's counsels, Sifat Mahmud, said the scheduled witnesses were Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, immediate past shipping adviser; Hasib Al Islam, a former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination; and talk show host Jhumi Rahman.

The defence later sought the tribunal's permission to produce three alternative witnesses, including a foreign crimes expert. The tribunal allowed two of them and set February 22 for the next proceedings, but rejected the plea to include the foreign expert.

## Abdus Sattar appointed PM's principal secretary

STAR REPORT

Former secretary ABM Abdus Sattar has been appointed as the principal secretary to the prime minister on a contractual basis for one year.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued a gazette notification in this regard yesterday.

Sattar, who previously served in senior roles within the civil service, will now assume the highest administrative post in the Prime Minister's Office.

He was appointed private secretary to BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman last month.



## Youth hacked to death in Rajbari

UNB, Rajbari

A young man was hacked to death in broad daylight by miscreants in Rajbari Sadar upazila yesterday, said police and family sources.

The incident took place around 1:00pm on a paved road in Char Narayanpur area under Mizanpur union.

The victim was identified as Zahid Hasan Fakir, 27, son of Mahtab Fakir of Binodpur area in ward 9 of Rajbari municipality.

Family members claimed Zahid was killed after he demanded repayment of Tk 2,500 he had lent, while police said the murder was likely linked to prior enmity.

According to locals, Zahid received a phone call around noon and left home, saying he was going to collect the money.

Shortly afterwards, miscreants attacked him with sharp weapons about 200 yards from his house, leaving him critically injured before fleeing the scene in an autorickshaw.

Locals rushed him to Rajbari Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

His mother Momena Begum said her son had left home after receiving the call and promised to return soon after collecting the money.

## ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

# Keya forests face fresh threat

### Trees allegedly felled for resort construction

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox's Bazar

Natural Keya or fragrant screw pine (Pandanus odorifer) forests on St Martin's Island are allegedly being ravaged days after the tourism season ended on January 31.

Locals alleged that numerous Keya trees are being felled along the seafloor in the Dakkhin-para area to clear land for resort construction.

Tayeb Ullah, a local resident, said he recently visited the area and saw that a portion of the forest had already been cleared, while more Keya trees had been felled and left to dry.

"This dense Keya forest protects the island's residential areas from the intrusion of tidal water. Several resorts have already been built after clearing Keya forests to give tourists a direct view of the sea," he said.

He said last year, seawater entered some residential areas during high tide, damaging freshwater ponds and threatening residents' livelihoods.

Foyezul Islam, chairman of St Martin's Island union parishad, said he had heard about the indiscriminate felling of Keya trees in the Dakkhin-para area along the beach but was not certain who was involved.

"A beach worker was sent to the spot for inspection on Sunday. Necessary steps will be taken following an investigation," he said.

He also said the land where the trees were cleared is privately owned. "It is possible that a local person sold the land to a resort businessman from Dhaka. However, it cannot be



confirmed why the trees were felled. It may have been for resort construction, or someone may have cut them for roofing purposes," he added.

Jamir Uddin, director of the Cox's Bazar district office of the Department of Environment, said they were aware of the incident and were treating the matter seriously, and that a preliminary investigation had already begun.

"The entire St Martin's Island has been declared an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA), and destroying any natural forest there is illegal. Those found involved will be identified through investigation and legal action will be taken under the Environment Conservation Act," he added.

## Preserve works of Jibananda

### Speakers demand at poet's 127th birth anniversary programme

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

The 127th birth anniversary of celebrated poet Jibananda Das was observed in Barishal yesterday with a series of programmes organised by local poets, writers, and cultural activists.

In the morning, members of Pragati Lekhak Sangha and Barishal Kabita Parishad paid floral tributes at a mural of the poet at the Jibananda Das Memorial Auditorium and Library, established at his ancestral home.

Speakers at a discussion meeting, chaired by poet Tapankor Chakraborty, called for the establishment of a

research centre, a large-scale library, and a museum dedicated to the poet at his ancestral residence, Sarbananda Bhaban, also a portion of the current Department of Public Health Engineering office.

They highlighted that Jibananda Das taught English at Government Brajamohan College from 1935 to 1946, noting that although a dormitory bears his name, little has been done to promote research and study of his works.

"Visitors from outside Barishal often leave disappointed as the poet's legacy is not properly preserved here," one speaker said.





### দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন

ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ

"সবাই নিলে গড়ব দেশ, দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ"

#### Invitation for Tenders

Memo No- 00.01.0000.000.103.51.0003.25-9405 Date: 17-02-2026

1. Agency, Procuring Entity, Code & District	: Anti-Corruption Commission, Dhaka.
2. Invitation for	: Supply of Printer for Anti-Corruption Commission
3. Invitation Ref No & Date	: 00.01.0000.000.103.51.0003.25-9405, Date: 17/02/2026
4. Procurement Method	: OTM
5. Budget and Source of Funds	: Revenue Budget for ACC
6. Tender Publication Date	: 18-02-2026
7. Tender Last Selling Date	: 05-03-2026
8. Tender Closing Date and Time	: 08-03-2026, Time-12:00 PM
9. Tender Opening Date and Time	: 08-03-2026, Time-12:15 PM
10. Selling Tender Document place & Address of the office	: Admin Wing, Anti-Corruption Commission, Head Office, 1 Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
11. Receiving Tender Document place & Address of the office	: Admin Wing, Anti-Corruption Commission, Head Office, 1 Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
12. Opening Tender Document place & Address of the office	: Room no-101, Anti-Corruption Commission, Head Office, 1 Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
13. Price of Tender Document	: Each set 1000/- Tk (Non Refundable)
14. Tender Security	: Tenderer must submit 50,000/- (Fifty thousand) tk PO or Bank Draft in favour of DDO, ACC, Head Office, Dhaka. Otherwise tender will be rejected.
15. Tender Validity period	: 120 Days from the opening of tender.
16. Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	: (a) Minimum 03 years of general experience; at least 01 (one) contracts (regarding supplying of similar items successfully) completion within the last 03 (Three) years, with a value of at least Tk. 14 Lac. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital/credit line(s) shall be at least Tk 21 Lac. (b) Tenderer should have up-to-date Trade Licence, VAT & Income Tax Payment Certificate.
17. Special Instruction for the Tenderer	: (a) The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings. (b) Tender details are in STD. (c) If tender not receive in due time for unavoidable circumstances tender will receive in following day.
18. Name & Designation of Official Inviting Tender	: Mohammad Nazmul Hasan, Director (Finance)
19. Address of Official Inviting Tender	: Anti-Corruption Commission, Head Office, 1 Segunbagicha, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
20. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	: Telephone- 02-58316476. d.finance@acc.org.bd

GD-322

## Three of a family murdered in Cumilla's Homna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Three members of an expatriate's family were murdered in Monipur village under Homna upazila of Cumilla on Monday night, according to law enforcers.

The victims were identified as Papiya Akter Sukhi, 22, wife of Saudi Arabia expatriate Zahirul; their son Hossain, 4; and Zubayer, 5, son of Zahirul's brother Sattar.

Informed by locals, police went to the spot and recovered the body yesterday morning, said Dinesh Dasgupta, inspector (Investigation) of Homna Police Station.

The victims' bodies bore injury marks from sharp weapons, he added.

According to locals, both Zahirul and his brother Sattar are currently living abroad.

The bodies have been sent to Cumilla Medical College morgue for autopsy, said Morshedul Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The OC also said police are investigating the incident to determine the motive, identify and arrest those responsible.

Filing of a case in this connection was underway, he added.

### সংশোধিত সম্পূর্ণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখে পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে কক্সবাজার জেলায় জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি এর শর্তাবলীর ১নং ক্রমিকের দরপত্র মূল্য ১,০০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা মর্মে উল্লেখ ছিল। সরকারি নির্দেশনা অনুসারে উক্ত দরপত্রের মূল্য ১০০০ টাকার স্থলে ১৫০০ টাকা হবে। বর্ণিত অবস্থায় দরপত্রমূল্য ১০০০ টাকার স্থলে ১৫০০ টাকার পে-অর্ডার অথবা ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

## POST-POLLS VIOLENCE

# Man shot in B'baria, house set on fire in Narail

STAR REPORT

A man was shot in Brahmanbaria on Monday night and a house was set on fire in Narail early yesterday in connection with polls-related feuds.

In Brahmanbaria, Emon Miah, 24, a resident of Thollakandi village under Nabinagar upazila, was attacked by 14-15 armed men and hit by three bullets near his residence around 7:45pm on Monday.

"The armed attackers came on CNG-run autorickshaws and fired at Emon before fleeing the scene quickly," said Toufiqul Islam, Emon's elder brother.

Emon was a supporter of Kazi Nazmul Hossain Taposh, a defeated independent candidate from Brahmanbaria-5. As a result, he faced rivalry from supporters of the elected BNP lawmaker Abdul Mannan, Toufiqul alleged.

In November last year, two people were killed in a clash between two local rival groups. Emon is a witness in that murder case, he also said.

Emon was rushed to a local hospital, where doctors advised shifting him to Dhaka for advanced treatment, he added.

Contacted, Abdul Mannan MP said he did not know about any such incident. "It may be a result of an internal feud between two criminal gangs. It is not connected with my election," he added.

Contacted, Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Shah Md Abdur Rauf confirmed the incident and said police were investigating.

In Narail, the house of Humayun Molla, president of Hobkhali union BNP unit, was set on fire early yesterday in Bill-Dumurtala village under Sadar upazila.

Humayun's family members said he was a supporter of Monirul Islam, a defeated independent candidate from Narail-2. He has been facing rivalry from the union BNP unit's former president Riazul Islam Tinku, who is a supporter of Fariduzzaman Farhad, the BNP-nominated candidate who was also defeated in the election.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



### পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি

## POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd

স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.২৬৩৪.৪১৬.১৭.১০২.২৬.১৩৭৪ তারিখঃ ১৫/০২/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

### ৪০০ কেভি বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইন চালুর সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি-এর অধীন ৪০০/২৩০/১৩২ কেভি জিএনডি প্রকল্পের আওতায় নির্মিত ২৩০ কেভি বোড়াশাল সুইচিং স্টেশন হতে নির্মাণাধীন ৪০০/২৩০/১৩২ কেভি পূর্বচল গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র পর্যন্ত ৪০০ কেভি ডাবল সার্কিট বোড়াশাল-কালীগঞ্জ-পূর্বচল সঞ্চালন লাইনটির নির্মাণ কাজ সম্পন্ন করা হয়েছে। বর্ণিত বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইনটি গাজীপুর জেলার কালীগঞ্জ উপজেলার জামালপুর (নোরগানা, বালুয়াড়িটা, মেন্দিপুর, কলাপাটুয়া, খাগরার চর), বাহাদুরসাদী (দক্ষিণবাগ), বক্তারপুর (ভাটরা, ফুলদি, বেরুয়া, খেকড়া), তুমুলিয়া (চুয়ারিখোলা, জয়রেখার), নাগরী (শিমুলিয়া, পিপুলিয়া), উলুখোলা (বিপান, ভোরান, খোপাপাড়া, বড়কাউ, মঠবাড়ী, দাহিন্দী, নিমতলা); গাজীপুর সদর: বাড়ীয়া (বাড়ীয়া, বড় কয়ের, পূর্বাইল); ইউনিয়ন, গাজীপুর সিটি কর্পোরেশন ওয়ার্ড নং-৪১ (সোতানী পাড়া, ছিকলিয়া, উখুর); ওয়ার্ড নং-৪২ (সমরসিং) এবং ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ৪৪ নং ওয়ার্ডের স্নান ঘাটা মৌজা/এলাকার উপর দিয়ে অতিক্রম করেছে। সঞ্চালন লাইনটি আগামী ১৯/০২/২০২৬ তারিখ; বৃহস্পতিবার, সকাল ১০:০০টার সময় ২৩০ কেভি ভোল্টেজ (২,৩০,০০০ ভোল্ট) দ্বারা বিদ্যুতায়িত করা হবে এবং পরবর্তিতে সার্বজনিক চালু অবস্থায় থাকবে। উক্ত এলাকার জনসাধারণকে বর্ণিত বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইনটির তার বা টাওয়ারের সংস্পর্শে না আসার জন্য বিশেষভাবে সতর্ক করা হলো এবং টাওয়ারের সাথে গবাদী পশু বাঁধা, কাপড় শুকানো ইত্যাদি থেকে বিরত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পর উক্ত বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইন ও টাওয়ারের সংস্পর্শে এসে অথবা আরোহন করে কোন প্রকার দুর্ঘটনার সম্মুখীন হলে পাওয়ার গ্রিড কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না।

মোঃ ফরিদ আহম্মদ  
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (প্রধান প্রকৌশলী)  
৪০০/২৩০/১৩২ কেভি জিএনডি প্রকল্প

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Procurement Division

Directorate General of Food

Ministry of Food

16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka.

Website : www.dgfood.gov.bd

No. 13.01.0000.091.47.22.2026.224 Dated: 17/02/2026.

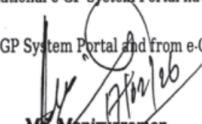
### e-Tender Notice (GR-229)

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following goods:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of Tender	Schedule Selling and Tender Opening Date
1.	1231905 (Goods-OTM) (GR-229)	Procurement of 1,50,000 (One lakh fifty thousand) Pieces 50 kg Capacity Cut Size B-Twill new Gunnies made in the year 2026 or latest (HALISHAHAR CSD, CHATTOGRAM-1,50,000 Pcs).	Up to 17:00 PM 04-March 2026; Opening 10:00 AM 05-March 2026.

- This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP Portal
- No offline/hard copies will be accepted;
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) will be required;
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branch.

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

  
Md. Moniruzzaman  
Director  
Procurement Division  
Phone: 41050178  
e-mail: dproc@dgfood.gov.bd

GD-325

# Drone attack on Sudan market kills 28

AFP, Khartoum

A drone attack on a crowded market in central Sudan killed 28 people, a rights group reported Monday, as the army and its paramilitary rivals traded aerial strikes in their battle for territory.

The attack occurred in a paramilitary-controlled area in the far north of Sudan's Kordofan region, currently the fiercest frontline in the three-year-old war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

According to the Emergency Lawyers, a group monitoring atrocities in the conflict, several drones hit the al-Safiya market outside the town of Sodari in North Kordofan on Sunday.

"The attack occurred when the market was bustling with civilians, including women, children and the elderly," the group said, adding that the toll was preliminary. It gave no indication of who carried out the strike.

Sodari, a remote town where desert trade routes cross, is around 230 kilometres (132 miles) northwest of El-Obeid, the state capital of North Kordofan, which the RSF



Palestinian municipal workers clean a street in the old city of Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday as people prepare for Ramadan. PHOTO: REUTERS



has been trying to encircle for months.

The Kordofan region has seen a surge in deadly drone attacks as both sides fight over the country's vital east-west axis, which links the western RSF-held region of Darfur, through El Obeid, to the army-controlled capital Khartoum and the rest of Sudan.

Across vast stretches of territory, attacks by both sides — many on remote towns and villages — have killed up to dozens of civilians at a time.

Last Wednesday, two children were killed and a dozen wounded in one strike on a school, while another severely damaged a United Nations warehouse storing famine relief supplies. After consolidating their hold on Darfur last year, the RSF has pushed east through oil- and gold-rich Kordofan, in an attempt to seize Sudan's central corridor.

Since April 2023, the war between the army and the RSF has killed tens of thousands of people.

# Kyiv must negotiate 'fast'

## Says Trump as Ukraine-Russia peace talks begin in Geneva

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump said Monday that he hopes Ukraine reaches a deal with Russia "fast," as Washington-brokered peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv began in Geneva.

"Ukraine better come to the table, fast," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One while en route to Washington.

Negotiators from Ukraine and Russia gathered in Geneva yesterday for two days of US-mediated peace talks that will focus on the main sticking point of land.

Trump is pressing Moscow and Kyiv to reach a deal to end Europe's biggest war since 1945, though Zelensky has complained that

» Land in focus at Geneva peace talks

» Kyiv says Russian drone kills 3 energy workers

energy workers near the industrial town of Sloviansk, Kyiv said.

Zelensky called for Kyiv's allies to increase pressure on Russia to reach a "real and just" peace deal via tougher sanctions and weapons supplies to Ukraine, reports Reuters.

Trump pointed to Ukraine when asked by reporters what he was expecting from the talks in Geneva, which will follow a morning of negotiations between US and Iranian officials at a different venue in the Swiss lakeside city.

"Well, we have big talks," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. "It's going to be very easy. I mean, look, so far, Ukraine better come to the table fast. That's all I'm telling you."

his country is facing the greatest pressure to make concessions.

Ahead of the talks, Russia carried out heavy airstrikes overnight across swathes of Ukraine, inflicting severe damage on the power network in the southern port city of Odesa, which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said left tens of thousands without heat and water.

A Russian drone strike on east Ukraine early yesterday killed three

# NORTHWEST PAKISTAN 17 killed in bomb attacks, gunfight

AFP, Peshawar

Two bomb attacks and a gunfight between police and militants in northwest Pakistan killed at least 14 security personnel and three civilians including a child, officials said.

The separate incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Monday, which left dozens more wounded, come as Pakistan's security forces battle intensifying insurgencies in southern and northern provinces that border Afghanistan.

This month the Islamic State (IS) group claimed responsibility for a massive suicide blast at a Shia mosque in the capital Islamabad that killed 31 people and wounded 169 others.

The latest attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa targeted a checkpoint and a police station, according to a military statement and a security official.

Militants rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a wall near a checkpoint in Bajaur district, killing 11 security personnel and a girl, the military said yesterday.



# Russian military police building collapses

AFP, Moscow

A Russian military police building collapsed on the grounds of an army base outside Saint Petersburg, the local governor said yesterday, adding that authorities were probing the causes of the incident.

"I have instructed the security forces to assist the military in clearing the rubble and rescuing victims following the collapse of a military police building on the territory of a military unit in Sertolovo," governor Alexander Drozdenko said.

"The causes of the incident are being investigated," he added.

Sertolovo is a small village just outside Saint Petersburg, Russia's second-biggest city.

Local media outlet 47news reported that three people died in the incident, citing emergency services.

**Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of The Director  
Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.  
E-mail: manikganjmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Ref:- Mgmch/Admin/Annual Tender/25-26/2026/410 Date: 17/02/2026

### e-Tender Notice

Sl no	Tender ID No	Package No & Name of the Tender	Last Date & Time of Selling Tender Document	Tender Closing & Opening Date & time
1.	1229273	MGCH/Outsourcing/2026/Code-3211131 Procurement of Outsourcing Manpower Service for MGMCH	04-03-2026 10:00 AM	04-03-2026 02:00 PM
2.	1229272	MGCH/Washing/2026/Code-3211102 Procurement of Washing Service for MGMCH	01-03-2026 10:00 AM	01-03-2026 02:00 PM
3.	1229270	MGCH/Diet/2026/Code3252104 Procurement of Diet for MGMCH	01-03-2026 10:00 AM	01-03-2026 02:00 PM
4.	1229268	MGCH/Computer/2026/Code3255101 Procurement of Computer Accessories for MGMCH	01-03-2026 10:00 AM	01-03-2026 02:00 PM
5.	1229267	MGCH/Monihari/2026/Code3255105 Procurement of Monihari Items for MGMCH	01-03-2026 10:00 AM	01-03-2026 02:00 PM
6.	1229266	MGCH/Cleaning items/2026/Code3211102 Procurement of Cleaning Items for MGMCH	01-03-2026 10:00 AM	01-03-2026 02:00 PM

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://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches.

(Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam)  
Director  
Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.

GD-326

**Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh**  
Bangladesh Police  
Office of the Superintendent of Police,  
Thakurgaon

Memo no-316/E Date: 17/02/2026

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of Works as follows:

Tender ID	Package name	Online Tender Notice Publication Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date and Time	Method of Tender
1220113, THA/S0004	Repair and maintenance work of 400 Police Barack at Thakurgaon Police Line, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:30 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220199, THA/S0019	Repair and maintenance works of Officer In-Charge-Quarter at Thakurgaon Sadar Thana campus, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:42 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220786, THA/S0028	Repair and maintenance works of Officer In-Charge-Quarter at Baliadangi Thana campus, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 13:35 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220787, THA/S0012	Repair and maintenance work of Police Hospital at Police Lines, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:37 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220788, THA/S0010	Repair and maintenance works of Drill Shed at Police Lines, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:38 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220789, THA/S0027	Repair and maintenance works of Baliadangi Thana Office Cum Barrack, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:35 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220790, THA/S0014	Repair and maintenance works of Ranisankail Thana Office Cum Barrack, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:35 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220791, THA/S0006	Repair and maintenance works of Vehicle office at Police Lines, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:30 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM
1220792, THA/W0011	Repair and maintenance works of all toilet, Kitchen and Dining room at Pirganj Thana, Thakurgaon.	17-FEB-26 12:30 PM	04-MAR-26 11:30 PM	OTM

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

The fees for last downloading e-Tender document from the national e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to date & time.

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

(Md. Belal Hossain)  
BP-7506117876  
Superintendent of Police  
Thakurgaon.  
Phone- 02589931960, Fax- 02589931963  
Email- [spthakurgaon@police.gov.bd](mailto:spthakurgaon@police.gov.bd)

GD-331

**Office of the Sub Project Manager**  
"PIN 13362 Advancing Climate-Smart Low-Trophic Extractive Mariculture: Integrating Research, Capacity Development, and Coastal Livelihood Resilience to Foster the Blue Economy of Bangladesh" Sub-Project  
Department of Marine Bioresource Science  
Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Khulshi, Chattogram

Memo No. CVASU/DMBS/HEAT/16&17//2026/31 Date: 17/02/2026

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of goods/works	Tender notice publication date	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
1231042	CVASU/PIN13362/G-3	Supply and installation of Laboratory equipment for water quality analysis, histology and biochemical analysis	18-Feb-2026 09:00am	04-Mar-2026 12:00pm	04-Mar-2026 14:00pm	04-Mar-2026 14:00pm
1231479	CVASU/PIN13362/W-2	Renovation and maintenance of non-residential building (hatchery shed of bivalves and tissue culture units of seaweed)				

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.

Signed/-  
Prof. Dr. Md. Asaduzzaman  
SPM, HEAT, SP-13362, CVASU

GD-324

## Cuba a 'failed' nation: Trump Urges Havana to strike deal with US, dismisses regime-change plans

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump on Monday said Cuba was a "failed nation" and called on Havana to make a deal with the United States, though he dismissed mounting a regime change operation.

"Cuba is right now, a failed nation," the US leader told reporters aboard Air Force One. However, when asked if the United States would oust Cuba's government, as Washington did when it raided Venezuela and captured president Nicolas Maduro, Trump said: "I don't think that will be necessary."

The island is facing major fuel shortages and blackouts as Trump intensifies the decades-long US embargo on the country and presses other



countries to stop sending Havana oil, reports AFP.

"It's a humanitarian threat," Trump admitted of the fuel shortages biting the country.

Garbage has begun to pile up on street corners in the Cuban capital of Havana, attracting hordes of flies and reeking of rotten food, in one of the most visible impacts of the US bid to prevent oil from reaching the Caribbean's largest island.

State-run news outlet Cubadebate reported this month that only 44 of Havana's 106 rubbish trucks were able to keep operating due to fuel shortages, slowing garbage collection.

Cardboard boxes, used bags, plastic bottles and rags have piled up on street corners across the capital, as some residents sorted through the waste looking for scraps they could re-use, while motorists, pedestrians and bikers are forced to circumvent the imposing heaps.



People carry "Lion and Sun" pre-Iranian Revolution national flags as they gather near the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland, yesterday, as the second round of nuclear talks between the US and Iran takes place. PHOTO: REUTERS

## France's Macron eyes fighter jet deal in India

Urges Delhi to back 'moratorium on strikes' against Ukraine civilians

AFP, Mumbai

French President Emmanuel Macron met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mumbai yesterday, as he began a three-day visit to India focused on artificial intelligence cooperation and a potential multibillion dollar fighter jet deal.

France is seeking to expand its military partnership with New Delhi, with discussions expected on a possible contract for 114 additional French Dassault Rafale fighter jets.

Modi, in a statement on social media addressed to his "dear friend" Macron, after he began his trip with his wife Brigitte in India's financial capital, said he looked forward to "advancing our bilateral ties to new heights".

Modi said he was "confident that our discussions will further strengthen cooperation".



Macron praised the "remarkable acceleration" of ties with India, after the meeting. He said the shift came in response to the "changing international order", adding that both countries did not want to "be subjected to any form of hegemony" or the "conflict of a few".

Macron urged India to back "moratorium on strikes" against Ukraine civilians.

Macron, on his fourth visit

to India since taking office in 2017, began yesterday with a programme including honouring the victims of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and meeting Bollywood film stars, including Shabana Azmi and Manoj Bajpayee.

The visit follows New Delhi's confirmation last week that it intends to place a major order for Rafale jets, as well as the signing of a landmark free trade agreement between India and the European Union in January.

Macron will travel to New Delhi for an artificial intelligence summit today and tomorrow.

New Delhi has sought over the past decade to reduce its dependence on Russia, its traditional main supplier of military equipment, turning to other countries while also pushing for more domestic production.

## France frees suspected Russia tanker after fine

AFP, Marseille

France yesterday released a tanker suspected of being part of Russia's sanctions-busting "shadow fleet" called "Grinch" after its owner paid a fine of several million euros, a minister said.

French forces and their allies boarded the oil tanker last month between Spain and Morocco after it started its journey in Russia, before escorting it to a port outside the southern city of Marseille.

Ship tracking websites marinetraffic and vesselfinder said the vessel had been flying a Comoros flag. "The tanker 'Grinch' is leaving French waters after paying several million euros and enduring a costly three-week immobilisation in Fos-sur-Mer," Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on X.

## SECURITY CO-OPERATION Nigeria announces arrival of 100 US soldiers

AFP, Lagos

Some 100 US soldiers are being deployed to Nigeria as part of increased military cooperation to fight insecurity in the West African country, the Nigerian defence ministry announced Monday.

The ministry did not specify when the "US military trainers" arrived or were due to arrive.

"The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) wishes to announce the arrival of about 100 United States military personnel and associated equipment at Bauchi Airfield," the statement said.

"The arrival is planned and deliberate following a formal request by the Federal Government of Nigeria to the US government to support a clearly defined military training requirement, technical support and intelligence sharing with the members of the Armed Forces of Nigeria."

Nigeria is facing a longstanding jihadist insurgency in the northeast, a conflict between farmers and herders in north-central regions, separatist violence in the southeast, and kidnappings for ransom in the northwest.

US President Donald Trump has claimed that Christians in Nigeria are being "persecuted" and are victims of "genocide" perpetrated by "terrorists".

But Abuja and most independent experts say the violence in Nigeria indiscriminately affects both Christians and Muslims.

## India court clears mega project on sensitive island

AFP, Mumbai

India's environmental court has given the go-ahead to the strategically significant Great Nicobar infrastructure project despite widespread concerns of ecological damage to the island in the Andaman Sea.



The National Green Tribunal on Monday dismissed a batch of petitions objecting to the mega project on ecologically sensitive Great Nicobar island, saying "adequate safeguards" had been taken into account.

The infrastructure plan involves building a transshipment port, airport, power plant and a township on the island, located close to the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is looking to pour billions of dollars into connecting the island to global trade routes, after the project was granted initial environmental approvals in 2022.

India's environment minister last September called it a project of "strategic, defence and national importance".



A youth wearing hockey gear is embraced outside the Dennis M Lynch Arena, an indoor ice-skating rink, after a shooting in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, US, on Monday. At least two people were killed and three others wounded in the attack. PHOTO: REUTERS

স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.

# শ্রীনিবন্দন

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
তারেক রহমান

সমৃদ্ধি, স্বনির্ভরতা ও আধুনিকায়নের  
এই পথচলা সফল হোক

স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ইসলামী ব্যাংক-এর পক্ষ থেকে  
আপনাকে আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
গাজীপুর-১৭০৪

স্মারক নং- ০১(৮৯৬) জাতীয় বিঃ/প্রশাঃ/২০১০(অংশ-৪)/১/৫৪৩৩

তারিখঃ ০৩ ফাল্গুন ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ  
১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যাপক (গ্রেড-৩) পদে ইংরেজি (১টি), কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স (১টি); সহযোগী অধ্যাপক (গ্রেড-৪) পদে আইন (১টি), টুরিজম এন্ড হসপিটালিটি ম্যানেজমেন্ট (১টি) এবং সহকারী অধ্যাপক (গ্রেড-৬) পদে ইংরেজি (১টি), শিক্ষা (১টি), হিসাববিজ্ঞান (১টি), আইন (১টি), পরিসংখ্যান (১টি), নিউট্রিশন এন্ড ফুড সায়েন্স (১টি) এর স্থায়ী শূন্য পদে শিক্ষক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে জনস্বার্থে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে ১৭/০২/২০২৬ থেকে ১৬/০৩/২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত Online-এ আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সকল শর্তাবলী ও আবেদন ফরম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট [jobs.nu.ac.bd](http://jobs.nu.ac.bd) এ পাওয়া যাবে।

ড. মোঃ আশেক কবির চৌধুরী  
রেজিস্ট্রার (চলতি দায়িত্ব)  
জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-323

## A moment to unite and deliver

Govt, opposition must work together for the sake of the country

With hope and aspiration for a better tomorrow, we welcome Bangladesh's new prime minister, Tarique Rahman, his cabinet members, and the members of the 13th parliament from both the ruling coalition and the opposition. The oath-taking ceremony of the new legislative and executive bodies on Tuesday marked the beginning of our country's transition back to parliamentary democracy. Empowered by ballots, they now bear the responsibility of shaping the nation's future for, hopefully, the next five years.

The greater responsibility, however, rests with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which formed the government with a two-thirds majority. Given our less-than-encouraging experience with majoritarian governments, particularly in the recent past, the new ruling party must take care not to misuse that power. Encouragingly, Tarique Rahman's measured words and gestures following the election results signalled a positive shift. So far, both the victors and the opposition alliance have shown relative restraint in their post-election reactions, something that has often been absent during previous transitions.

BNP's decision to refrain from taking the oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council may create some confusion. Under the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, members of the 13th parliament are also to serve on the Constitution Reform Council. While several independent MPs, along with lawmakers from Jamaat-e-Islami, the National Citizen Party, and Islami Andolon, took the oath as council members on Tuesday, BNP MPs and independent Rumeen Farhana did not. BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters that once parliament constitutionally approves the council, rules regarding members' swearing-in can be framed. He further argued that, under the existing constitution, lawmakers were not elected specifically as members of the Constitution Reform Council. While this justification merits consideration, as the ruling party the BNP must make sincere efforts to bridge differences with the opposition on this issue through dialogue. All the parties must remain resolute in their commitment to the principles and spirit of the July Charter, which they have all signed, the BNP included, who placed notes of dissent regarding some clauses.

Aside from the minor hiccup regarding the Constituent Reform Council, the new government's start has been promising. The decision by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami lawmakers to forgo duty-free vehicles and government-allotted residential plots is commendable. At a time of inflationary pressure, such restraint could translate into meaningful national savings. We hope this spirit carries over into broader public expenditures as the executive assumes office.

As we watched emerging young leaders and seasoned stalwarts pledge to make our voices heard in the halls of democracy—the Jatiya Sangsad—we were reminded of the thousands whose sacrifices led to the ouster of an authoritarian regime during the July 2024 uprising. The 18-month interim administration that followed, despite its failure to implement many promised reforms, did deliver a credible election, and for that it deserves acknowledgment. Now, both the ruling party and the opposition must ensure that this hard-won democratic renewal does not falter again.

## Contain price hike during Ramadan

Authorities must act swiftly to stabilise supply before prices spiral further

With Ramadan approaching, prices of essential goods have started to rise again. This is happening even though imports have increased in recent months. Traders say the rise is due to goods being stuck at the port, delays in unloading, and higher demand following the election holidays. According to a report in the daily *Samakal*, a total of 110 ships are stranded on water waiting to unload at Chattoogram port. Half of these vessels are loaded with rice, lentils, chickpeas, dates, sugar, edible oil, and other daily necessities.

A prolonged work stoppage at the port, followed by the election holidays and restrictions on vehicular movement, has caused severe congestion. Normally, around 5,000 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) containers are cleared daily. During the disruption, that number fell to nearly one-third of the usual volume, and on some days, no containers were cleared at all. As a result, around five million tonnes of goods are now stuck aboard vessels, while container backlogs at the jetties have climbed to over 41,000, making the situation worrying. Importers had reportedly brought in goods early this year, anticipating the proximity of Ramadan and the election. However, many have been unable to release their consignments on time. Even though port authorities say they are prioritising Ramadan goods, traders say that it may take another week, or even longer, to clear the backlog.

The impact is already visible in wholesale markets such as Khatungani. Within a week, prices of onions, garlic, ginger, chickpeas, lentils, and vermicelli have increased. Date prices have risen by Tk 50-100 per kg, chickpeas by Tk 5-10 per kg, garlic by Tk 15, and vermicelli by up to Tk 150 per maund. Onions and lentils have also become more expensive. Together, these increases place significant pressure on household budgets.

There are reports that some traders may be deliberately holding back goods or exploiting the port congestion to raise prices. Weak market monitoring during the election period appears to have allowed such practices to go unchecked. If syndicates or unscrupulous traders are manipulating supply to drive up prices, authorities must act quickly to identify and stop them.

The government must ensure the uninterrupted clearance of essential commodities at the port. Special logistical arrangements, extended working hours, and coordinated transport support may be necessary to clear the backlog. Equally importantly, market monitoring must be strengthened. Authorities should verify stock levels, enforce transparent price displays at wholesale and retail markets, and take swift action against hoarding or collusive practices. If imports are indeed higher than last year and demand forecasts are clear, there is little justification for excessive price volatility ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

# The govt will be stronger with more women at the table



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

The 2026 election has been touted as one of the most historic in the country, remarkable for many reasons. It is the direct outcome of a bloody mass uprising led by students. It kept Awami League completely out of parliament, allowed Jamaat-e-Islami—a party bearing the unresolved legacy of 1971—to emerge as the main opposition, and brought BNP back to power with a two-thirds majority, giving Tarique Rahman the opportunity to demonstrate that he is the right leader to steer the country towards stability and progress.

Despite all this, what this election has not achieved is a respectable representation of women at the highest levels. Only 85 women contested in the election, including 66 with party nominations and 19 as independent aspirants. Eventually, only seven made it to parliament, including six from BNP and one formerly attached to BNP politics. It has been disheartening to see that candidates as accomplished and dedicated to public interest as Tasnim Jara, Taslima Akhter, and Manisha Chakraborty, among others, did not secure the required votes.

The continued sidelining of women in the country faded into near invisibility by the time the election came. A movement born in the name of justice and equality has eventually resulted in a parliament less representative of half the population than ever before.

Tragically, the interim government, despite being a product of an anti-discrimination movement, ended up discriminating against women's political participation. This occurred through its overindulgence of parties openly opposed to women's role in governance or their equal rights in public spaces. Political parties, meanwhile, did not bother to adhere to the minimum 5 percent representation despite pledging to do so by signing the July National Charter. The result, therefore, is hardly surprising.

But does this mean there is no way out of this absurd situation? Perhaps not.

A practical starting point would be



'Women MPs must have resources, visibility, and the mandate to influence decisions in their constituencies.'

FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

the women's reserved seats, which can provide at least some immediate corrective. Ideally, as recommended by the Women's Affairs Reform Commission—whose proposals, by the way, received zero attention during the Consensus Commission talks—proper representation in elections would have significantly strengthened women's political participation by giving them a direct mandate from voters. Since that has not happened, a more logical course is available: instead of adhering to the age-old practice of "rewarding" party loyalists by selecting their wives, daughters, or other female relatives, why not fill the reserved seats with competent women already invested in politics? These seats are allocated according to each party's proportion of parliamentary seats, a formula that gives parties both responsibility and opportunity.

BNP, because of its parliamentary majority, is in a particularly strong position and can choose more women candidates than other parties. This is an opportunity it should not miss. By selecting honest, competent, qualified women committed to public service, the party can send a powerful message that merit, not patronage, will shape the new chapter of governance.

Similarly, despite the general

sentiment within Jamaat to keep women out of leadership positions, it could serve the nation, and surprise many, by selecting accomplished professionals for the reserved seats.

However, merely allocating reserved seats to capable women will not bring meaningful change unless those seats come with real empowerment. Women MPs must have resources, visibility, and

and the entrenched influence of money and muscle. They campaigned on terrain hostile to their very presence. Their clean image, resilience, and steadfastness signal political courage.

Tasnim Jara, a physician and former member of the National Citizen Party (NCP), raised campaign funds through crowdfunding and built support by directly engaging ordinary people in her constituency. Her manifesto pledged to ensure improved healthcare and education, public safety, and greater accountability of MPs. Her campaign demonstrated organisational skills, public trust, and financial transparency, qualities essential for effective governance.

Manisha Chakraborty, another physician from the Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), contested in Barishal-5. A familiar face who had run as a mayoral candidate before, she raised funds through small public donations by distributing clay banks and secured 22,486 votes, which she rightly views as evidence of a growing vote bank seeking change from the "politics of plunder, corruption and communalism." Her appeal to young, middle class, and working-class voters suggests the capacity to build broad-based coalitions.

Taslima Akhter, an activist, photographer, president of Garments Workers Solidarity, and member of the NTCC and Labour Reform Commission 2024, ran from Ganosambhati Andolon in Dhaka-12. Her campaign focused on transparency and accountability and advocated for a "citizen council" through which voters could hold representatives responsible.

These are just some of the names that immediately come to mind. There are many others who also deserve consideration. It is encouraging that three women MPs have already been given ministerial positions. We hope to see more in the top tiers of the government.

Imagine a parliament and cabinet with a significant number of competent, capable, and honest women members. Such inclusion would not weaken the government; it would make it stronger, more credible, and better equipped to address the developmental and economic challenges ahead. A government born out of the sacrifices and aspirations of ordinary people should reflect the full strength of its people. Empowering qualified women is not charity or concession; it is sound political judgment.

## The economics of everyday extortion



Dr Abdullah A Dewan is professor emeritus of economics at Eastern Michigan University in the US. He can be reached at aadewan@gmail.com.

ABDULLAH A DEWAN

In its idealised form, an economic system such as capitalism—often known for rewarding productivity, risk-taking, and innovation—is one in which profits follow value creation, competition disciplines excess, and institutions protect exchange. Yet across much of the developing world—and in several middle-income economies—what operates under the label of capitalism increasingly functions through coercion rather than production. Markets exist, money circulates, and transactions occur, but the logic animating them has shifted. Value is no longer primarily created; it is extracted. This is not a mere market failure, but a sophisticated, predatory mutation of the system.

This phenomenon draws from my ongoing research identifying ten slightly overlapping faces of capitalism, each shaped by institutional design and power relations. One of these distorted offspring I describe as "extortion capitalism". It emerges when systematic coercive extraction replaces productive accumulation as the dominant economic logic. In such systems, the pursuit of profit is no longer tethered to efficiency, innovation, or service delivery. It is anchored instead in control over permits, roads, ports, files, licenses, and ultimately, fear. The gatekeeper replaces the entrepreneur; the innovator, by the enforcer.

In Bangladesh, extortion is not a marginal deviation or an underground aberration; it is embedded in the very

architecture of everyday economic life. Transport operators, traders, contractors, and small businesses face payments that are neither taxes nor fees, but compulsory extractions enforced through political muscle, bureaucratic discretion, or outright intimidation. Economic survival depends less on entrepreneurship than on compliance with informal toll regimes. The price of doing business is not innovation, but submission. Markets function, but they function as corridors of rent extraction rather than arenas of competition.

The abstraction becomes concrete when one examines mass-contact state institutions. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Citizen Perception Survey 2025, as reported by *The Daily Star* on December 25, 2025, shows that nearly one-third of citizens paid bribes to obtain public services, with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and passport offices emerging as the most corruption-prone interfaces. These are not elite gateways; they are universal points of contact that citizens must face repeatedly. When routine access to mobility and legality itself depends on informal payments, coercion ceases to be episodic and becomes structural. The citizen is not paying to break the law, but to access it. Formal compliance costs more than informal negotiation. In such a setting, corruption is not merely a moral failure; it is an economic toll. Citizenship becomes conditional, and a silent lesson is learned: voice does

not work—money does.

A closely comparable pattern appears in Nigeria, where police checkpoints, port clearances, fuel distribution, and public procurement operate as layered extraction points. Businesses factor bribes into operating costs much as they would electricity. Political power becomes a mechanism for monetising access to markets rather than regulating them. The distinction between public authority and private predation blurs, producing an economy where compliance is rewarded more reliably than competence.

In Pakistan, the mechanism is more institutionalised but no less coercive. Access to land records, utilities, and judicial relief frequently requires unofficial payments mediated by politically connected intermediaries. Elections rotate elites and slogans evolve, yet the extraction structure remains remarkably stable. What persists is not ideology but incentive: controlling chokepoints yields higher returns than producing goods.

The logic becomes starkly visible in Haiti, where armed groups openly control roads, ports, and fuel depots. Tolls are imposed on movement, trade, and basic survival. While the institutional form differs from South Asia or West Africa, the economic principle is identical: income is generated through coercive control rather than production. The absence of a functioning state does not eliminate capitalism; it mutates it into a raw system of enforced extraction.

In Afghanistan, this system has persisted across radically different regimes. Whether under warlords, transitional governments, or religious authority, trade routes are taxed, and households coerced. The continuity reveals an uncomfortable truth: extortion capitalism is not tied to doctrine. It is tied to the profitability of coercion. A hybrid version is evident in Myanmar, where businesses face overlapping demands from military-

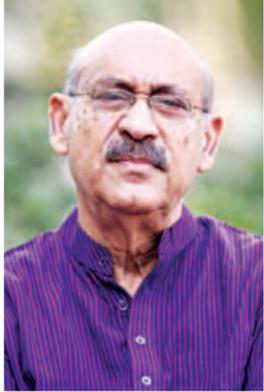
linked firms and informal enforcers. Participation requires continuous payments, crowding out efficiency and innovation. Capital accumulation becomes defensive rather than productive—aimed at survival, not expansion. Even in Venezuela, access to foreign exchange and licences has long depended on political loyalty and unofficial payments. As output shrank, the state compensated not by reforming, but by tightening control over remaining economic arteries.

These countries differ in culture and geography, yet they converge on a common pattern. When coercive extraction becomes more profitable than production, capitalism mutates. Markets still exist, prices still signal scarcity, and money still changes hands, but the engine has changed. Value creation gives way to predation. Entrepreneurship narrows into rent-seeking. Innovation withers because its returns are appropriated before they can compound. Labeling this simply as "corruption" understates the problem. Corruption implies deviation from a norm; extortion capitalism is a stable economic equilibrium. Once entrenched, it does not self-correct through market forces because the market itself has been repurposed as an extraction device.

Recognising this pattern is essential because policy remedies fail when the diagnosis is wrong. Privatisation, deregulation, and investment incentives cannot work where coercion—not competition—sets the rules. Development strategies premised on market efficiency collapse when the market rewards access over ability. Understanding extortion capitalism is therefore not an academic exercise. It is a prerequisite for meaningful reform—and for distinguishing capitalism's productive potential from its most corrosive deformation. Until we dismantle the checkpoints of coercion, we are not building markets; we are merely financing their hijackers.



# Showbiz veterans voice hopes for new government



Abul Hayat



Tariq Anam Khan



Salahuddin Lavlu



Gias Uddin Selim



Masum Reza

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## SHAH ALAM SHAZU

With the country entering a new political chapter following the parliamentary election, attention is also turning to the future of the cultural sector. Artists across disciplines are hoping for stability, institutional support and an environment where creative expression can thrive without fear or disruption.

Five prominent cultural figures; Abul Hayat, Tariq Anam Khan, Salahuddin Lavlu, Gias Uddin Selim and Masum Reza — shared their expectations with The Daily Star.

## ABUL HAYAT:

**Seeking the freedom to work**  
Veteran actor Abul Hayat said he wishes to continue working as he always has, but without obstacles or restrictions. He hopes that

more meaningful and refined work, beneficial to the country, will be created. Artists, he said, should have the freedom to work independently while remaining responsible and accountable. According to him, artistic work should reflect the voices and concerns of the people, and the new government should ensure a positive and open environment for cultural practice.

## TARIQ ANAM KHAN: Less control, more opportunities

Tariq Anam Khan emphasised the importance of culture as a reflection of a country's identity. Music, theatre and films, he noted, have taken the nation's reputation to the international stage. However, over the past year and a half, the cultural

sector; especially theatre—has faced significant challenges.

He said that the less the government intervenes, the better it will be for the sector. Although Dhaka has expanded considerably, the number of theatre halls has not increased. Even in areas such as Uttara, Gulshan and Dhanmondi, adequate performance venues remain scarce. He expects the new government to develop infrastructure and safeguard freedom of expression.

## SALAHUDDIN LAVLU: The arts need security and investment

Salahuddin Lavlu said the country must prosper overall, as the cultural sector cannot advance without a strong national economy. Having

spent his life in acting and directing plays, he hopes for more work opportunities and greater investment in culture. At the same time, he stressed the importance of ensuring the safety and security of artists and those involved in the industry.

## GIAS UDDIN SELIM:

**Culture builds a strong nation**  
Gias Uddin Selim believes the arts play a crucial role in building a strong nation. He said the cultural sector has often been neglected since the country's birth, adding that the more culture is practised, the more the nation will progress.

He noted that the sector cannot move forward with limited budgets and neglect. Alongside economic prosperity, he said, the country must also

invest in cultural development.

## MASUM REZA:

### No restrictions on festivals and exhibitions

Masum Reza said that in recent months, many drama performances and cultural festivals were cancelled. Numerous events organised outside Dhaka were also called off, including a major festival planned in his home district of Kushtia.

He said no clear explanation had been provided for these cancellations. Many Baul and traditional artists were also unable to perform regularly. He hopes the new government will ensure that artistic activities continue without interruption and that artists can work freely and independently.



## Mosharraf Karim, Aisha Khan team up for two Eid dramas

Acclaimed actor Mosharraf Karim has resumed filming after returning from Umrah in Saudi Arabia, joining director Sagar Jahan for two Eid television dramas.

Karim returned on February 11 after spending 10 days in Saudi Arabia with his wife, Robena Reza Jui. He began shooting on February 15 for *Soda Shotto Bolibo* and *Adu Bhai*, both slated for Eid broadcast.

*Soda Shotto Bolibo*, written by Ashraf Chanchal, pairs Karim with Aisha Khan and will air on NTV. The drama centres on an honest man navigating a simple love story. *Adu Bhai*, penned by Arko Mostafa, also stars Aisha Khan and promises a comedic tone.

Mosharraf Karim and Sagar Jahan have previously collaborated on popular series, including *Sikandar Box* and *Average Aslam*.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?



## 'Sangkalan'

A powerful archival exhibition revisits the 1952 Language Movement through seven decades of vernacular print culture. Newspapers, pamphlets and literary supplements sit alongside contemporary artistic responses, tracing how ink and paper shaped resistance, memory and identity. *Sangkalan* reframes print not as relic, but as living testimony.

Date: Friday–Saturday | February 20–28  
Time: 3:00pm–9:00pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

# NEWS

## A legacy reclaimed

FROM PAGE 1

vigorous campaign, ultimately leading his party to a landslide victory in the 13th national election, held 18 months after an unprecedented student-led uprising that ousted the Awami League government.

However, Tarique's ascent to power was anything but easy, shaped by the trauma of his father's assassination, and then his long years in exile, all the while facing persistent accusations of corruption and nepotism from his political detractors.

His father, late president Ziaur Rahman, who founded the BNP in 1978, was assassinated in a military coup in 1981 when Tarique was a teenager.

Since then, Khaleda led the party, which went on to form government in 1991, 1996, and 2001 under her leadership.

Having spent his childhood and adolescence in Dhaka, Tarique became a member of Bogura's Gabtali upazila BNP in 1988 at the age of 22. However, he got involved in politics before he formally joined the party and had even taken to the streets with his mother during the 1990 anti-Ershad movement.

In 1994, Tarique married Zubaida Rahman, the daughter of the former Bangladesh Navy chief and a two-time minister in subsequent governments, late Rear Admiral Mahub Ali Khan. They have a daughter — Barrister Zaima Zarnaz Rahman.

Tarique was made the first joint secretary of the party in June 2002, around a year after the BNP returned to power in 2001 with Khaleda as the prime minister.

Three years later, he convened a countrywide grassroots forum that covered every upazila. He visited all the upazilas, addressed grassroots leaders and activists, and had one-on-one conversations with locals.

It was during this period that Tarique was embroiled in controversy. He was accused of running "Hawa

Bhaban", dubbed an alternative power centre during the BNP-led coalition rule. He was also blamed for using his power to gain personal advantage.

Tarique consistently refuted all the allegations against him.

He was arrested on corruption charges during the military-backed caretaker government rule in 2007 and was reportedly tortured in custody for 18 months.

Archival news reports from that year said he suffered fractures in the spine and fell sick during multiple court appearances. He was finally granted bail on medical grounds on August 28, 2008, and was released



from jail on September 3 that year.

A week later, he left for London with his wife and daughter for medical treatment while facing multiple criminal cases at home.

On December 8, 2009, the BNP national council elected Tarique as senior vice chairman, ignoring the party charter that stipulates election to the posts. He was re-elected to the position at the sixth national council in 2016.

Earlier, on January 7, 2015, the High Court banned publishing, broadcasting, or reproducing speeches and statements by Tarique in all print, electronic, and social media as long as he remained absconding in London.

That year, tragedy struck again when his younger brother Arafat Rahman Koko passed away.

While in exile, he continued to shape the BNP's strategy and policies and served as the party's acting chairman after his mother was sentenced to prison in 2018.

Since then, he has led the party virtually from London, attending meetings and overseeing key organisational decisions.

According to his associates, Tarique gradually grew more measured, as years in exile left their mark on him — shaping his vision of greater tolerance in Bangladeshi politics.

He was convicted in absentia in five cases and faced a flurry of lawsuits, but all charges and rulings against him were dropped after the ouster of the AL government — clearing the legal barrier to his return.

Tarique returned home on December 25 last year to an ecstatic welcome. Addressing a massive crowd, he said, "... I have a plan for the people of my country, for my country," indicating his readiness to lead.

And thus began the party's campaign.

To strengthen the party's position, he attended numerous programmes across the country, addressing 64 public rallies, seeking votes for the "Sheaf of Paddy", the BNP's electoral symbol.

He made dozens of area-specific pledges, assuring people of job creation, welfare, healthcare, and the development of infrastructure and agriculture. His party also pledged to establish an accountable and "just state", directly answerable to people.

Tarique, nicknamed "Pindu", was born on November 20, 1967. After completing his initial studies at Dhaka's BAF Shaheen College, he was enrolled in the international relations department of Dhaka University in the 1980s.

In his election affidavit, his educational qualification was mentioned as "higher secondary."

## Economy, rule of law, governance to be the focus

FROM PAGE 1

Replying to a query about the commodity market ahead of Ramadan, he said, "We have just taken responsibility. I do not think there will be any trouble. There will be no more syndicates in Bangladesh."

Noting that poverty is rising, he said local and foreign investments are in decline, while employment opportunities are shrinking. Moreover, private sector growth remains weak.

"To move forward, we have to go for large-scale deregulation."

Khosru said the government aims to boost domestic and foreign investments, generate employment, and develop skilled manpower.

"Whether people work here or abroad, their living standards should improve."

Md Asaduzzaman, who is set to take charge of the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, said his ministry's top priorities will be to establish the rule of law and uphold human rights and justice.

"As for the challenges in carrying out my responsibilities, I believe the biggest one will be to meet the nation's huge expectations. People have high hopes, and living up to those expectations is a formidable task," he told The Daily Star.

Major (ret) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, who was sworn in as a minister, expressed hope that the cabinet would fulfil people's expectations.

## Shafiqur leader of opposition

FROM PAGE 1

members of parliament. At 12:27pm, they took oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council.

The ceremonies were held at the oath room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, where Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin administered the oaths separately.

Around 1:00pm, the elected candidates of the NCP also took oath.

Following the oath-taking, members of the II-party alliance held a meeting at the parliament complex.

Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair, Jamaat assistant secretary general and chief of the central publicity and media

Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, who took oath as a minister, said, "We will work to steer the country to a better position. Difficulties lie ahead, but we will overcome them no matter what..."

Speaking to reporters, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee, who was sworn in as a minister, said collective efforts would be essential to meet people's expectations.

"Differences in views may arise, but all must remain united for the sake of the country," he said, expressing hope that mutual cooperation would help build a prosperous Bangladesh.

Shama Obaid, who is tipped to assume the role of state minister for foreign affairs, said Bangladesh would maintain relations with all countries while safeguarding its interests.

"Under Tarique Rahman's leadership, we will prioritise our national interests and the rights of our people," she said.

Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, who took oath as a state minister, said he would discharge his responsibilities with honesty and dedication.

Zonayed Saki, who was sworn in as a state minister, said the new parliament must overcome challenges in various areas.

"Being part of a government does not mean we will agree on everything... There will be differences among us, but we will remain united," said Saki, who was elected a lawmaker from Brahmanbaria-6 with BNP's backing.

department, said the decision was taken at the meeting.

Shafiqur was elected from the Dhaka-15 constituency, defeating his BNP rival Md Shafiqul Islam Khan by 21,614 votes. He secured 85,131 votes in total.

In Cumilla-11 (Chouddagram), Taher won the election with the party's scales symbol, securing 133,308 votes and defeating Kamrul Huda, joint general secretary of BNP's Cumilla South district unit.

In Dhaka-11, Nahid was elected with 93,872 votes with the Shapla Koli symbol. His closest rival, BNP candidate MA Quayum, secured 91,833 votes.

## Trump's new envoy arrives in S Africa with relations frayed

AFP, Johannesburg

A conservative media critic picked by President Donald Trump to be US ambassador to South Africa has arrived to take up his post, the US embassy said yesterday, with bilateral relations fractured over a range of issues.

Washington and Pretoria are at odds over a series of international and domestic policies, from South Africa's genocide case against Israel to Trump's disputed claims that white Afrikaners are being persecuted.

Brent Bozell, 70, needs to present his credentials to President Cyril Ramaphosa before officially taking up his post.

"I'm confirming that he's in (the) country," a US embassy official told AFP.

Trump chose the right-wing Bozell for the job in March, soon after expelling South Africa's ambassador on accusations that he was critical of Washington. Pretoria has yet to announce a successor.

Trump said at the time that Bozell "brings fearless tenacity, extraordinary experience, and vast knowledge to a nation that desperately needs it".

Bozell is founder of the Media Research Center, a non-profit that says it works to "expose and counter the leftist bias of the national news media".

A strong defender of Israel, he said at his Senate confirmation hearing in October that he would push Pretoria to end its genocide case.

South Africa's government filed the case with the International Court of Justice in 2023, alleging that Israel's war on Gaza — which followed the attack by militants from Palestinian group Hamas — breached the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. Israel has denied that accusation.

Bozell also told the Senators: "I will communicate our objections to South Africa's geostrategic drift from non-alignment toward our competitors, including Russia, China and Iran."

## New JS must meet within next 30 days

FROM PAGE 1

the first sitting of parliament, an official of the parliament secretariat said.

Immediately after the House goes into its maiden sitting, the Speaker and deputy Speaker will be elected and sworn in by the president. After that, the session is likely to be adjourned for 15 to 20 minutes for their oath-taking.

The new Speaker will then preside over the House session.

The Business Advisory Committee of the new parliament will also be formed at the first sitting, with the new Speaker as its head.

The committee will decide the tenure of the inaugural session and other business of parliament.

The main task of the treasury bench at the first sitting will be to place those ordinances before the House which the government wants to turn into law.

The interim government promulgated or amended a total of 130 ordinances during its 18 months in office.

The president will also address the first sitting of the session in line with the Constitution, according to sources at the parliament secretariat.

The cabinet will approve the speech, and MPs will discuss the president's address.



**On the Bangladesh  
Nationalist Party's decisive majority in the  
13<sup>th</sup> National Parliamentary election**

**Heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of the  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
and BNP Chair Mr. Tarique Rahman**



**TAS**  
group



**bakkah**  
HOLDINGS LTD.

Head Office : 18 Erectors House(11th Floor), Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani C/A, Dhaka-1213  
TELEPHONE +880222275 447 - 9, 880222275 447 - 9, MOBILE : +8801984555666, 8801984555888  
E-MAIL : info@tasgroupbd.com, career@tasgroupbd.com, business@tasgroupbd.com

[www.tasgroupbd.com](http://www.tasgroupbd.com)

[www.bakkahholdings.com](http://www.bakkahholdings.com)



## 6 follow fathers' steps into the cabinet

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Six members of the new council of ministers have mirrored their fathers' legacy as the BNP and its allies assume power after winning the February 12 national election. One of them has been appointed a full minister, the remaining five state ministers. All are first-time lawmakers.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

## New govt to seek 3-year LDC deferment

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The new government formed by BNP will seek to defer Bangladesh's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category to developing-nation status by at least three years, Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktedir said yesterday.

"We will initiate the process tomorrow [Wednesday] to defer the LDC graduation by at least three years," Muktedir told The

Daily Star over the phone after taking oath as a minister. He added that the deferment aligns with his party's policy position.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) will lead the process, while the commerce ministry will formally initiate the procedure, he said.

The country's business community, which believes Bangladesh is not yet ready to face the challenges of graduation,

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## Prices of essentials rise ahead of Ramadan

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Within a week, prices of essentials, especially iftar and sehri items such as onions, all types of chicken, meat and local fish, rose sharply ahead of Ramadan.

On average, the increase ranged from 10 to 30 percent. During visits to Karwan Bazar, Mohammadpur Krishi Market, Mohammadpur Geneva Camp Kitchen Market, Farmgate, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Ibrahim Kitchen Market yesterday, The Daily Star found that prices varied

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## Khalilur being minister will raise questions Nahid says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener and member of the parliament Nahid Islam yesterday alleged that the inclusion of Khalilur Rahman in the cabinet has brought allegations of "election engineering, result manipulation and

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

সামাজিক উন্নয়নের পথিকৃৎ  
ও  
ঘাসফুল প্রতিষ্ঠাতা শামসুন্নাহার রহমান পরাণ  
এর ১১তম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকীতে বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা



শামসুন্নাহার রহমান পরাণ  
১ জুন ১৯৪০ - ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০১৫

ঘাসফুল পরিবার  
www.ghashful-bd.org

## ATTACK ON Star, PROTHOM ALO Probe stalled in both cases No new arrests since Dec 26

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The drive against those accused of vandalism, attacks and arson at the country's two leading newspapers -- The Daily Star and Prothom Alo -- seems to have stalled, with no arrests made since December 26.

After the twin attacks on the night of December 18 -- two months ago -- two cases were filed, one by Prothom Alo and one by The Daily Star, on December 22. Soon afterwards, 37 people were arrested, according to court documents.

Fifty-three days since the last arrests, the investigation has made little progress.

Eleven were arrested in the case filed over the attack on The Daily Star office and 26 over the attack on the Prothom Alo office.

All arrests had been made before the Detective

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
জনাব তারেক রহমান ও মন্ত্রিপরিষদের সন্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দ এবং  
জাতীয় সংসদের নবনির্বাচিত সন্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দ-কে  
বেসিক ব্যাংক পিএলসি, পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা।

BASIC বেসিক ব্যাংক পিএলসি  
সহজ পথে সাফল্যের সাথে  
শতভাগ রাষ্ট্র মালিকানাধীন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক

যমুনা ব্যাংক

যমুনা ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র পক্ষ থেকে  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
জনাব তারেক রহমানকে  
প্রাণঢালা শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।



HEARTIEST  
CONGRATULATIONS  
to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of  
the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
TARIQUE RAHMAN

We celebrate your appointment and look forward to a new era of national prosperity. Under your seasoned leadership, we are confident Bangladesh will reach unprecedented heights of success.

Bangladesh Association of Banks



## 'Plan to make sports disciplines mandatory at school level'

SPORTS REPORTER

After being sworn in as the State Minister for Youth and Sports on Tuesday, former national football team captain Aminul Haque appeared before the media at his residence in Mirpur to outline the immediate and long-term sports plans of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-led government.

Aminul, regarded as one of the safest pairs of hands in Bangladesh football, assumed office under the technocrat quota after weeks of speculation, although he narrowly lost in the Dhaka-16 constituency in the national elections held on February 12.

Hailing from Bhola and raised in Mirpur, Aminul began his top-flight career with Mohammedan Sporting



Club, initially serving as third choice goalkeeper behind the experienced Saeed Hasan Kanan. He made his international debut in 1998 in a friendly against Qatar and represented Bangladesh until 2011, rarely losing his place.

The 45-year-old revealed his government's plan to create a healthy environment in sports, maintain good relations with India, make sports mandatory from Grade 4 across the country, establish a sports industry, solve burning issues regarding cricket and

cricketers, as well as corruption in sports and financial constraints of national sports bodies. Following are excerpts from the press briefing:

**On sports environment:** A distance among organisers, players and journalists has been created in past and we want to close that gaps to create a good relation among all sports stakeholders.

**On sporting relations with India:** Spoke to the Indian Deputy Commissioner in the parliament area soon after being sworn in and expressed

desire to have a friendly relation with India and other neighbouring countries through diplomatic ways. Want to solve the problem with ICC as per ICC rules and regulations.

**On overall sports plan:** The government has a big plan to make five sports disciplines, including football and cricket, mandatory from Grade 4 at school level and appoint three sports teachers each for five disciplines and one sports officer in all 495 upazilas in the next one year and bring them under payroll.

**On BCB, Shakib Al Hasan and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza:** BCB polls have been questionable. Shakib and Mashrafe are legendary cricketers and their cases should be dealt at the government level through discussion.

**On corruption in sports:** I maintain zero tolerance in corruption in sports and never allow corruption in sports.

**On future of athletes:** We will create jobs for athletes after their retirement, so that the athletes don't have to think about their future during their playing career. We want to give utmost priority to athletes in order to make the financially solvent.

**On politics and sports:** It has been a long practice in sports, so it is not possible to depoliticise the sports overnight but I want to keep politics outside the purview of sports.

**BCB polls have been questionable. Shakib and Mashrafe are legendary cricketers and their cases should be dealt at the government level through discussion.**

## Black Caps spoil Samra's dream

AGENCIES

New Zealand produced a clinical chase to crush Canada by eight wickets in Chennai on Tuesday, sealing their Super Eight berth in the T20 World Cup and denying teenage sensation Yuvraj Samra a victory after a moment he had manifested for a while.

Chasing 174, New Zealand were never in trouble, reaching 176-2 with almost five overs to spare as Glenn Phillips finished unbeaten on 76 and Rachin Ravindra made 59 not out. Phillips said the pair stuck to their processes, taking it "one ball at a time."

Earlier, Samra had lit up the tournament with a breathtaking 110 off 65 balls – becoming the youngest centurion in T20 World Cup history. The 19-year-old anchored Canada's innings after captain Dilpreet Bajwa chose to bat first, sharing a 116-run opening stand in 14 overs.

Bajwa fell for 36, caught by Phillips off Kyle Jamieson, but Samra powered on, reaching his hundred from 58 balls with six sixes and 11 fours – the highest individual score of the tournament so far.

"I manifested this moment ever since we qualified," said Samra, who was named after Indian great Yuvraj Singh. "Every single day, I dreamed about scoring a hundred on this stage," he added.

Yet New Zealand's composed response ensured his dream innings ended in defeat. The win also eliminated Afghanistan, as New Zealand joined South Africa as Group D qualifiers.

Phillips praised Samra's knock as "fabulous", saying the teenager had "a long future ahead."



## Historic Super Eight FOR ZIMBABWE

Australia, Ireland crash out

The match was washed out, but even without on-field action at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday, there was plenty to rejoice for Zimbabwe fans and the Sikandar Raza-led side in the pavilion. Zimbabwe reached the Super Eight of the T20 World Cup for the first time after their Group B fixture against Ireland was abandoned due to rain. The result also confirmed the elimination of Australia and Ireland, as Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe progressed from the group. Zimbabwe have five points from three matches, while Australia have only two and will be unable to catch the African side even if they win their final group game against Oman on Friday. This is only the second time Australia, champions of the 2021 edition, have exited at the group stage of the tournament, having previously been eliminated at the same stage in 2009. Meanwhile, Ireland have completed all four of their group matches, while Zimbabwe will face Sri Lanka in a dead rubber tomorrow.

PHOTO: AFP

## Former captains rally for Imran

AFP, Islamabad

More than a dozen former international cricket captains, including India's Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev, rallied Tuesday for jailed Pakistan ex premier Imran Khan, appealing the Islamabad government to give him "adequate" medical treatment.

The statement, signed by 14 captains and seen by AFP, demands the proper care of Khan, a former World Cup-winning captain who, according to his lawyer, has lost most of the vision in his right eye.

Khan has been in jail since 2023 and was sentenced late last year along with his wife to 17 years on corruption charges they both deny.

His lawyer visited Khan in jail last week and later submitted a report to Pakistan's chief justice and the Supreme Court detailing his concerns and requesting treatment for his client.

The statement signed by the former cricket skipper "respectfully" urges Pakistan "to ensure that Imran Khan receives immediate, adequate and ongoing medical attention from qualified specialists of his choosing".

The campaign is led by former Australian captain and contemporary of Khan, Greg Chappell.

Other signatories are Michael Atherton, Michael Brearley, Nasser Hussain and David Gower (England), Allan Border, Ian Chappell, Belinda Clark, Steve Waugh and Kim Hughes (Australia), Clive Lloyd (West Indies) and John Wright (New Zealand).



## Do or die for Pakistan

STAR SPORTS DESK

Pakistan have their backs against the wall in Group A of the ICC T20 World Cup, with the 2009 champions facing a must-win clash against Namibia in Colombo today to keep their Super Eight hopes alive.

A 61-run thrashing at the hands of India on Sunday has left Pakistan in a precarious position. Title favourites India have already sealed their berth from Group A, while the second qualification spot is now a straight shootout on net run rate between Pakistan and the USA.

Both Pakistan and the USA have four points but the Americans hold a significant edge. Pakistan's net run-rate stands at -0.403, while the USA are comfortably placed at 0.788.

The equation for Pakistan is simple. Beat the winless Namibia and qualify. A defeat would eliminate Pakistan and potentially open a slim window for the Netherlands, who would need a massive win over co-hosts India in Ahmedabad on Wednesday to sneak through.

The spotlight will once again fall on Pakistan's fragile batting unit, including stalwart Babar Azam and skipper Salman Agha, which crumbled under pressure against India at the same ground.

Babar, in particular, has come under intense scrutiny after managing just five off seven balls in the high-voltage clash.

Their bowling also failed to fire. Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi endured an off day, claiming just one wicket while conceding over 31 runs in his two overs.

Pakistan were heavily criticised for opting to field first against India and then folding meekly for 114 in 18 overs while chasing a daunting 176-run target. Now, there is no room for error.

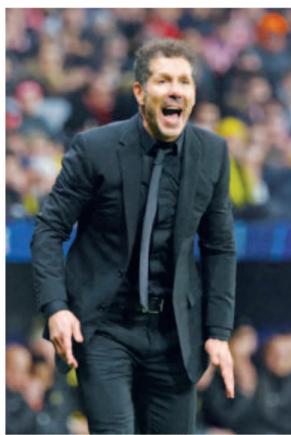
## Unpredictable Atletico brace for Brugge test

AGENCIES

Atletico Madrid's campaign has been unpredictable. They beat – nay thrashed – big teams at times, but again got smacked by sides fighting for survival, and that inconsistency sets the backdrop for Wednesday's Champions League playoff first leg against Club Brugge at the Jan Breydel Stadium.

Atletico Madrid arrive in Belgium after a mixed week, having demolished Barcelona 4-0 in the Copa del Rey semifinal first leg before slumping to a 3-0 LaLiga defeat against Rayo Vallecano. Earlier this season, Diego Simeone's men also edged Real Madrid 5-2 in LaLiga, yet they now sit fourth domestically, 15 points adrift of the leaders – a stark reflection of a campaign defined by swings in form.

Both sides are chasing a place in the Champions League round of 16 after missing automatic qualification. Brugge finished 19th in the league phase with 10 points from eight matches, recording three wins, one draw and four defeats. Atletico placed 14th with 13 points, courtesy of four wins, one draw and three losses.



Ivan Leko's side head into the tie encouraged by domestic momentum, winning four of their last five matches in all competitions. Their Champions League home form has also been respectable, returning two wins, one draw and one defeat, including a commanding 3-0 victory over Marseille in their most recent European outing.

However, Brugge's continental numbers underline their volatility: 15 goals scored and 17 conceded, leaving them with a negative goal difference.

Atletico's European story is similarly uneven. They fell 2-1 at home to Bodo/Glimt in their final league-phase match and have conceded in each of their last eight Champions League games, digesting 15 goals overall so far. Another outing without a clean sheet would mark their longest such run in the competition. While they have found the net 17 times in Europe, defensive solidity has clearly deserted them.

Their away record offers Brugge encouragement – just one win, one draw and two defeats on the road – a vulnerability the Belgian side will hope to exploit.

History suggests little separates the teams. Across eight previous European meetings, both clubs have claimed three wins apiece, with two draws, including a goalless stalemate in their most recent encounter.

With Atletico favourites yet defensively fragile, and Brugge buoyed by home form, Wednesday's opener promises a finely balanced start to a compelling playoff tie.



## Barca slip, Real benefit

The LaLiga title race intensified as Barcelona dropped crucial points, allowing Real Madrid to climb to the summit – by just two points – with 14 games remaining. Spanish champions Barcelona suffered a damaging 2-1 defeat to Girona on Monday, days after Los Blancos overtook the Catalans by beating Real Sociedad on Saturday. Hansi Flick's side had a chance to reclaim top spot but fell short in a gripping derby clash. Teenage star Lamine Yamal missed a penalty, though Barca briefly seized control when defender Pau Cubarsi struck just before the hour mark. However, goals from Thomas Lemar and Fran Beltran powered an impressive comeback for 12th-placed Girona.

PHOTO: AFP



## 6 follow fathers' steps into the cabinet

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Six members of the new council of ministers have mirrored their fathers' legacy as the BNP and its allies assume power after winning the February 12 national election.

One of them has been appointed a full minister, the remaining five state ministers. All are first-time lawmakers.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

## New govt to seek 3-year LDC deferment

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The new government formed by BNP will seek to defer Bangladesh's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category to developing-nation status by at least three years, Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktedir said yesterday.

"We will initiate the process tomorrow [Wednesday] to defer the LDC graduation by at least three years," Muktedir told The

Daily Star over the phone after taking oath as a minister. He added that the deferment aligns with his party's policy position.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) will lead the process, while the commerce ministry will formally initiate the procedure, he said.

The country's business community, which believes Bangladesh is not yet ready to face the challenges of graduation,

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## Prices of essentials rise ahead of Ramadan

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Within a week, prices of essentials, especially iftar and sehri items such as onions, all types of chicken, meat and local fish, rose sharply ahead of Ramadan.

On average, the increase ranged from 10 to 30 percent.

During visits to Karwan Bazar, Mohammadpur Krishi Market, Mohammadpur Geneva Camp Kitchen Market, Farmgate, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Ibrahim Kitchen Market yesterday, The Daily Star found that prices varied

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## Khalilur being minister will raise questions Nahid says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener and member of the parliament Nahid Islam yesterday alleged that the inclusion of Khalilur Rahman in the cabinet has brought allegations of "election engineering, result manipulation and

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

সামাজিক উন্নয়নের পথিকৃৎ  
ও  
ঘাসফুল প্রতিষ্ঠাতা শামসুন্নাহার রহমান পরাণ  
এর ১১তম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকীতে বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা



শামসুন্নাহার রহমান পরাণ  
১ জুন ১৯৪০ - ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০১৫

ঘাসফুল পরিবার  
www.ghashful-bd.org

## ATTACK ON Star, PROTHOM ALO

### Probe stalled in both cases

No new arrests since Dec 26

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The drive against those accused of vandalism, attacks and arson at the country's two leading newspapers -- The Daily Star and Prothom Alo -- seems to have stalled, with no arrests made since December 26.

After the twin attacks on the night of December 18 -- two months ago -- two cases were filed, one by Prothom Alo and one by The Daily

Star, on December 22. Soon afterwards, 37 people were arrested, according to court documents. Fifty-three days since the last arrests, the investigation has made little progress.

Eleven were arrested in the case filed over the attack on The Daily Star office and 26 over the attack on the Prothom Alo office.

All arrests had been made before the Detective

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
জনাব তারেক রহমান ও মন্ত্রিপরিষদের সন্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দ এবং  
জাতীয় সংসদের নবনির্বাচিত সন্মানিত সদস্যবৃন্দ-কে  
বেসিক ব্যাংক পিএলসি, পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা।

BASIC বেসিক ব্যাংক পিএলসি  
সহজ পথে সাফল্যের সাথে  
শতভাগ রাষ্ট্র মালিকানাধীন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক

যমুনা ব্যাংক

যমুনা ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র পক্ষ থেকে  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী  
জনাব তারেক রহমানকে  
প্রাণঢালা শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।



HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS  
to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of  
the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
TARIQUE RAHMAN

We celebrate your appointment and look forward to a new era of national prosperity. Under your seasoned leadership, we are confident Bangladesh will reach unprecedented heights of success.

Bangladesh Association of Banks





**UNICO HOSPITALS**  
Care, as unique as you

**NEW TIMES  
NEW BANGLADESH**

HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE NEWLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT

TOGETHER, LET'S BUILD A HEALTHIER FUTURE  
FOR ALL, WITH CARE AND COMPASSION

**A NEW BEGINNING  
NEW POSSIBILITIES**

Following the 13th National Parliamentary Election, recognition to  
Tarique Rahman, the first Prime Minister of a new, autocracy-free Bangladesh.

**HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS**



**Tarique Rahman**

we believe that with his guidance, Bangladesh will be able to move further toward  
prosperity, the rights of the people will be protected, and the rule of law will be  
strengthened under your leadership.

**NABIL  
GROUP**

23 Green Road, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh.  
www.unicohospitals.com

096 77 66 77 66



**UCB**

*Congratulations!*  
Honourable Prime Minister  
**TARIQUE RAHMAN**

A new chapter begins for the nation under your leadership.  
Together for a stronger Bangladesh.

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
To the Newly Elected Prime Minister  
of Bangladesh

Heartfelt congratulations to **Tarique Rahman** on being elected as the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.  
May Bangladesh move forward under his visionary leadership.



**DHAKABANK  
PLC.**

www.dhakabank.com.bd