



President to convene first session of 13th JS on Mar 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th Jatiya Sangsad will go into its maiden session on March 12.

The sitting will begin at 11:00am on the day, according to a press release issued by the parliament secretariat yesterday.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin has convened the parliament session by exercising the power vested upon him under article 72(1) of the constitution.

Earlier on February 21, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed had mentioned that the government wanted the parliament session to begin on March 12.

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman has already been elected as the Leader of the House in the 13th Jatiya Sangsad, while Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman has been elected as the Leader of the Opposition.

According to the constitution, the president must convene the first

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Workers put the finishing touches to stalls for the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. This year's Boi Mela will begin on February 26 and continue until March 15. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

13 secretaries removed in major admin shake-up

BAHARAM KHAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A major shake-up has taken place in the top tier of the public administration.

Yesterday, thirteen secretaries, including the secretary to the Prime Minister's Office, were removed from their posts. As of 10:45pm, when this report was filed, no official notifications regarding the new appointments to the vacant posts were released.

Eight of them were appointed on a contractual basis by the interim government.

The secretaries whose contracts were cancelled are SM Akmal Hossain, Mokhles-ur-Rahman, and Kaiyum Ara Begum, who were members of the Planning Commission as senior secretary; Saidur Rahman of the Health Services Division, Shish Haider Chowdhury of the Information and Communication Technology Division, Siddique Zobiair, director general of the National Academy for Planning and Development; Mohammad Yusuf, chairman of the Land Appeal Board; and Mumtaz Ahmed, secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Besides, the contract of Sharifa Khan, the alternate executive director of the World Bank, was cancelled. Her appointment was made during the Awami League tenure.

Meanwhile, three other secretaries, who were promoted during the interim government, have been attached to the public administration ministry.

The ministry officials said the cancellation of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Gas blast during sehri leaves family shattered

One dead, eight seriously burnt in Ctg's Halishahar



ARUN BIKASH DEY and FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

The dining table of a second-floor flat in Halima Manjil was still set with dishes and leftovers from sehri when a sudden explosion tore through the apartment in Halishahar, Chattogram, early yesterday.

Md Suman, who had returned from Portugal just two weeks back, was sitting with his brothers Shakhawat and Shipon at the table waiting for Fajr prayers when the blast, reportedly caused by a gas leak, occurred around 4:30am.

Halima Manjil is located at House 18, Road 1, Block H of the Halishahar Residential Area.

Nine members of the family were home at the time, and all were injured in the fiery explosion, with burn injuries ranging from 25 to 100 percent.

Among them, Suman's wife, Pakhi, 35; Shakhawat, 50; and his wife, Nur Jahan Begum Rani, 40, suffered full-body burns, said doctors.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Iran vows 'ferocious response'

Report says Tehran ready for nuclear concessions amid Trump's 'limited strikes' threat

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday said that a US attack of any scale would spur the Islamic republic to respond "ferociously", after President Donald Trump said he was considering limited strikes against the country.

The United States has built up forces in the Middle East to pile pressure on Iran to make a deal at negotiations due to restart on Thursday, with Trump weighing a limited strike if no agreement is

its inherent right of self-defence ferociously, so that's what we would do," ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said at a briefing in Tehran attended by an AFP journalist.

The two countries concluded a second round of indirect talks in Switzerland on Tuesday under Omani mediation.

Further talks, confirmed by Iran and Oman but not by the United States, are scheduled for Thursday.

The European Union, which has been sidelined in mediation

"It is true that Iran is at its weakest point that they have been. We should be really using this time to find a diplomatic solution."

Iran's clerical authorities have faced recent steep challenges, including a wave of mass protests that peaked in January, last year's 12-day war with Israel, and the weakening of Iran's regional proxies.

Iran has, however, insisted only discussions on the country's nuclear programme are on the table



India tells citizens to leave Iran

Next round of talks expected on Thursday

Report say Tehran may open up its lucrative oil, gas sectors to US

reached.

Yesterday, Iran's foreign ministry reiterated that any strike, even a limited one, "would be regarded as an act of aggression. Period".

"And any state would react to an act of aggression as part of

on Iran, called for a diplomatic solution ahead of the talks.

"We don't need another war in this region. We already have a lot," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said ahead of a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

at mediated talks. The West believes the programme is aimed at making a bomb, which Tehran denies.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is leading the negotiations for Iran, while the United States is

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Four hacked to death in Narail

At least 7 houses torched; 6 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Four people, including a father and his son, were hacked to death in a pre-dawn attack in Borkula village under Shingasholpur Union of Narail Sadar upazila yesterday.



The deceased were identified as Khalil Sheikh, 70; his son Tahajjat Sheikh, 41; Ferdous Hossain, 40; and Osikur Fakir, 36.

According to police, the killings occurred around 5:00am and stemmed from a long-standing rivalry and disputes over local dominance between two factions.

Narail Superintendent of Police Mohammad Al Mamun Shikder said at least seven to eight houses were set on fire during the violence. At least six people were also injured.

Police and local sources said a long-standing rivalry between supporters of former Shingasholpur Union chairman Khayruzzaman Khayer Molla and a group led by Khalil Sheikh had led to repeated clashes in the area. About a decade ago, following one such clash, some people from Tarapur village, including Khalil Sheikh, moved to neighbouring Borkula village.

However, the rivalry reportedly continued despite the relocation.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Labour ministry adopts 180-day action plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has adopted a 22-point action plan to be implemented within 180 days, in line with the BNP government's election manifesto.

The plan was finalised yesterday at a workshop held in the ministry at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

At the event, Labour and Employment Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury directed officials to submit weekly progress reports on the implementation of the manifesto and ensure close monitoring.

As part of the plan, the ministry set March 31, 2026, as the deadline to turn the Bangladesh Labour Ordinance, 2025, into law and to complete the recruitment of 122 recommended inspectors for the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE).

Labour rules under the existing labour law, laws to prevent child and forced labour, and the formation of a National Social Dialogue Forum are scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2026.

The ministry also set July 15, 2026, as the deadline to introduce digital trade union registration. It plans to launch employment exchanges at the district and upazila levels and update the national employment survey by July 30. Ensuring the implementation of minimum wages in hotels and restaurants has been set for completion by June 30.

Other measures include forming anti-harassment committees in all RMG factories, declaring minimum wages in the tannery and iron foundry sectors, and providing financial assistance to workers through welfare funds.



Shimron Hetmyer starred with a blistering 85 off 34 balls as West Indies piled up 254-6 – the second-highest total in T20 World Cup history – and sealed a 107-run win over Zimbabwe in a Super Eight clash in Mumbai yesterday. Gudakesh Motie claimed 4-28 and Akeal Hosein took 3-28 as Zimbabwe were bundled out for 147 in 17.4 overs.

PHOTO: AFP

Human rights are under assault globally: UN chief

P7

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الإسلامية
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 24

	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-11	12-45	4-30	6-00	7-30
JAMAAT	5-21	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
6	24	6:00	6:00
7	25	5:08	6:01
8	26	5:07	6:01