



## Govt likely to appoint 61 zilla parishad admins

BAHARAM KHAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The government is considering the appointment of administrators to the zilla parishads of 61 districts to oversee the activities of the local government bodies until elected representatives assume office.

Officials familiar with the discussions said the proposed move is part of a broader effort to stabilise local government institutions and strengthen administrative stability.

The matter came up when officials of the local government and rural development (LGRD) ministry held a high-level meeting yesterday.

After appointing administrators to six city corporations, including Dhaka north and south, the BNP-led government has now turned its attention to zilla parishads, although LGRD ministry officials said talks on appointing administrators to the parishads remain at a very preliminary stage.

Sources said the issue of local  
SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



In preparation for Eid sales, workers hang semai (vermicelli) for drying at a factory on Rajakhali street in Chaktai, Chattogram, yesterday. Semai, a traditional dish for celebrating Eid, is priced at Tk 1,200-Tk 1,500 per 35kg basket at local wholesale markets.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## DU students protest assault on fellow

Demand removal of DMP DC Masud; 4 cops withdrawn



DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University students yesterday staged a protest in front of Shahbagh Police Station, demanding justice for the police assault on a DU student during an anti-narcotic drive at Suhrawardy Udyan.

They demonstrated from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. Later, a delegation of protesters held a meeting with a top police official.

During the drive on Monday night, Nayem Uddin, a student of DU's anthropology department, also the convener of Biplabi Chhatra Jubo Andolon's Dhaka Metropolitan unit, and two journalists were assaulted by police.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

## 'We thought she was dead'

Migrant returnee Rizia Begum's family recounts ordeal at BRAC handover programme

MD ABBAS

For 13 days, three children waited anxiously to see their mother again, after first enduring the disbelief that she was even alive.

Earlier, their wait was of a different kind – spent beside a silent phone that never rang.

Rizia Begum had left Bangladesh for Saudi Arabia in 2019 through a local broker and a Dhaka-based recruiting agency. Like thousands of women every year, she went to work as a domestic helper,



Rizia Begum's family holds her as they cry together after she was finally handed over to them at the BRAC centre yesterday.

PHOTO: BRAC

hoping to secure a better future for her children.

But the abuse began almost as soon as she reached the Middle Eastern country.

"From the beginning, she faced physical torture from her employer... We informed the broker and the agency many times. Nothing changed," her

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## New US tariffs come in at lower 10% rate

REUTERS

The United States imposed a new tariff yesterday of 10 percent on all goods not covered by exemptions, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said, the rate first announced by President Donald Trump on Friday rather than the 15 percent he promised a day later.

Reacting to the US Supreme Court ruling that threw out tariffs it deemed were illegally justified on grounds of an emergency, Trump initially announced a new temporary global tariff of 10 percent. He said on Saturday he would increase it to 15 percent.

But in a notice described as intended to "provide guidance regarding the February 20, 2026 Presidential Proclamation," CBP said that, aside from products covered by exemptions, imports would "be subject to an additional ad valorem rate of 10%."

The move added to confusion surrounding US trade policy, with no explanation offered in the notice for why the lower rate had been used. The Financial Times quoted a White House official as saying the increase up to 15 percent would come later. Reuters could not immediately confirm this.

"Remember that Trump is delivering the State of the Union address tonight, so it's possible we might get a better sense of the next steps on tariffs," Deutsche Bank said in a note.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

## Top US general warns of Iran strike risks

Trump rejects media claims; White House insists diplomacy is first option

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump on Monday evening denied reports that the top US military officer had flagged the risks of a major operation against Iran, saying Washington would "easily" beat Tehran in any war.

US media reported that General Dan Caine, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, had warned of various risks associated with strikes against Iran

so, he will be leading the pack."

The Washington Post said Caine had expressed concern at the White House and Pentagon that munition shortages and a lack of allied support could increase danger to US personnel.

And the Wall Street Journal said both the top general and other Pentagon officials have warned of risks such as US and allied casualties as well as the danger of US air defences being depleted if its forces strike Iran, reports AFP.

- Pentagon officials warn of casualties, air defence risks
- Iran's Revolutionary Guards hold drills on southern coast
- Students must respect 'red lines' after protests: Iran

including a long-term entanglement.

But Trump said on his Truth Social network that it was "100 percent incorrect" that Caine was "against us going to war with Iran."

"General Caine, like all of us, would like not to see War but, if a decision is made on going against Iran at a Military level, it is his opinion that it will be something easily won," Trump wrote.

"He has not spoken of not doing Iran, or even the fake limited strikes that I have been reading about, he only knows one thing, how to WIN and, if he is told to do

The Axios news outlet meanwhile said Caine had warned of the United States "becoming entangled in a prolonged conflict."

Trump's roving negotiator Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner had also been urging the president to hold off attacks and give diplomacy a chance, Axios said.

The US president however accused the media outlets of writing "incorrectly, and purposefully so."

Trump's first option with Tehran is always diplomacy but he is willing

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

## Tokyo urges defence pact continuity, Dhaka cautious

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan yesterday urged Bangladesh's new government to honour the defence agreement it signed with the previous interim administration.

The matter was raised during a courtesy call by Japanese Ambassador Saida Shinichi on Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman at the ministry.

Talks covered the pact on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, signed on February 3, as well as the recruitment of skilled Bangladeshi workers to Japan, broader bilateral ties, Indo-Pacific developments, and ongoing strategic cooperation projects, including the Matarbari development initiative.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir, who attended the meeting, later told journalists the government would review the agreement carefully before making a final decision.

"We will examine it and decide accordingly. If it aligns with our interests, it may continue. If not, it will be reconsidered," he said. "We need to see what the interim government has left for us before making any determination."

Ambassador Saida said he had conveyed Japan's expectation that implementation of the agreement would proceed smoothly. He also reiterated Tokyo's interest in supporting the recruitment of skilled workers from Bangladesh.

## HALISHAHAR BLAST Death toll now 3 as expat dies

4 of a family burned in Cumilla explosion



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death toll from the gas line explosion in a flat in Chattogram's Halishahar rose to three as an expatriate, who had returned home to celebrate Eid, succumbed to his injuries at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka yesterday.

Samir Ahmed Sumon, 40, died around 12:00pm while undergoing treatment at the institute's high dependency unit. He had suffered 40 percent burns and severe airway injuries, said Shawon Bin Rahman, residential surgeon at

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Skipper Harry Brook embraces Will Jacks after smashing his maiden T20I century, helping England become the first team to book a semifinal spot in the T20 World Cup following a thrilling two-wicket win over Pakistan in their Super Eight fixture in Pallekele yesterday. Brook's 51-ball 100 saw England chase down the 165-run target with five balls to spare. Pakistan, meanwhile, will now have to hope for other results to go their way and also beat Sri Lanka in their final Super Eight game to qualify for the semifinals.

PHOTO: AFP

Fruit imports face curbs despite dollar relief

B1

HASANAH ISLAMI BANKING  
البنكية الاسلامي  
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING  
FEBRUARY 25

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-11	12-45	4-30	6-01	7-30
JAMAAT 5-21	1-15	4-45	6-11	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
7	25		6:01
8	26	5:07	6:01
9	27	5:06	6:02