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## ‘Can new BB chief act independently?’

TIB questions his ability to control inflation, ensure discipline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern about whether newly appointed Bangladesh Bank Governor Mostaqur Rahman can discharge his duties independently and be free from conflicts of interest.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, “The newly appointed governor’s experience in the banking sector is primarily related to being a borrower, later a loan defaulter, and subsequently benefiting from loan rescheduling under special consideration.

“In addition, he has played significant roles as part of influential business lobbies, including the readymade garment sector, the real estate sector, and the Dhaka Chamber.”

TIB questioned how impartial the governor could be in ensuring inflation control, financial stability, and good governance in the banking sector, given that nearly 60 percent of MPs and 62 percent of cabinet members are business professionals, with about 50 percent of MPs being borrowers.

Iftekharuzzaman said that appointing a businessman with such a background risks turning the central bank into a tool of vested interests, similar to practices during the “authoritarian kleptocratic regime.”

“The government must also consider how prudent it was to entrust the central bank’s leadership to a member

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, accompanied by his wife and daughter, visits a stall at the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

## Politicised edn not a sign of civilised society

Tarique at Ekushey Padak award ceremony; inaugurates Boi Mela

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said the current government will work to establish a liberal democratic state system grounded in moral standards and dignity, so the country can advance in education, literature, the arts, science and technology.

“I believe that politicising education, research, arts and literature is never a sign of a civilised society,” he said while addressing this year’s Ekushey Padak award distribution ceremony at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

Although politicians are criticised with the responsibility of running the state, he said as a political worker he believes learned and distinguished individuals play a guiding role.

“In this journey, guidance from the country’s distinguished individuals is highly expected.

“The greater the number of SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Tarique picks Khalilur for UNGA race

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will compete with Cyprus for the presidency of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the 2026-2027 term after Palestine withdrew its candidature, according to a diplomatic source.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has nominated Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman for the position, the diplomatic source told UNB yesterday.

Bangladesh had floated its candidature ahead of Palestine.

The election of the president of the UNGA for the 81st session will be held on June 2 in the General Assembly Hall, UN Headquarters, in line with Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure.

In accordance with the established regional rotation, the president of the UNGA session will be elected from the Asia Pacific Group.

Annalena Baerbock, president of the 80th

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

# New govt at foreign policy crossroads

PORIMOL PALMA

The new government has stepped into office at a time when the foreign policy landscape is being shaped by economic uncertainties and competition between global powers.

The coming months will test its ability to balance the US-China rivalry, recalibrate relations with India, handle LDC graduation, and address the protracted Rohingya crisis – challenges that analysts say are closely tied to Bangladesh’s internal political dynamics.

“Each of these issues intersects with domestic politics, making foreign policy management even more delicate,” said M Humayun Kabir, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute and former ambassador to the US.

Immediately after taking charge as the foreign minister, Khalilur Rahman said Bangladesh would maintain a bold foreign policy and good relations with all countries, ensuring that its national interests are fully protected.

While he spelled out a brave approach, the times ahead are likely to be fraught with complexity.

### NAVIGATING US-CHINA RIVALRIES

While the Biden administration focused on human rights and democracy in dealing with

### CHALLENGES AHEAD

- Navigating the US-China rivalry
- Normalising relations with India
- Completing preparations for LDC graduation
- Addressing the protracted Rohingya crisis
- Strengthening inter-ministerial coordination

say Washington’s approach to Bangladesh is increasingly shaped by its competition with China – a dynamic that poses a major test for the new government.

Parvez Karim Abbasi, assistant professor of economics at East West University, said the US has formally designated China as its primary strategic competitor in the National Security Strategy.

Due to this US policy, Bangladesh finds itself in a strategically sensitive position.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## GULSHAN FLAT CASE Issue Interpol red notice for Tulip

Dhaka court orders authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the relevant authorities to have a red notice issued through Interpol for the arrest of British MP Tulip Siddiq, niece of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in a case over alleged corruption in acquiring a flat.

Judge Md Sabbir Faiz of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge’s Court in Dhaka passed the order following an application filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Assistant Director AKM Motuza Ali Sagar, said court bench assistant Riaz Hossain.

On February 18, the court issued arrest warrants against Tulip, the MP for Hampstead and Highgate in London, and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha’s (Rajuk’s) former assistant legal

Another sensitive area is Bangladesh’s trade relations with the US. As per the Bangladesh-US trade deal signed on February 9, the US has reduced the tariff to 19 percent on exports from Bangladesh.

“The challenge will be to maintain constructive relations with both powers without being perceived as aligned with either.”

A policy of strategic balancing – engaging all sides based on national interests – will be essential, he noted.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

## Robot unveiled for Fukushima debris removal

AFP, Tokyo

A 22-metre robot arm will help remove a third sample of radioactive debris from inside Japan’s stricken Fukushima nuclear plant, its operator said yesterday, as it unveiled the snake-like device.

Dangerously high radiation levels make removing melted fuel and other debris from the plant hit by a huge tsunami in 2011 the most daunting challenge in the decades-long decommissioning project.



Around 880 tonnes of hazardous material remain inside the power station, the site of one of the world’s worst nuclear accidents after a tsunami was triggered by a 9.0-magnitude earthquake.

A four-minute video released on Wednesday by plant operator TEPCO showed a snake-like robot arm – measuring 22 metres and weighing about 4.6 tonnes – moving through small tunnel-like passages and inspecting complex structures within a confined space.

## US, Iran open to ‘new, creative ideas’ Says mediator Oman

AGENCIES

Oman said yesterday that Iran and the United States expressed openness to new solutions as indirect talks between the two foes began in Geneva.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said “negotiators demonstrated unprecedented openness to new and creative ideas and solutions”, according to a foreign ministry statement released after his meeting with US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Iran has pledged to show flexibility at the talks, with Tehran under pressure to agree to a deal or face US military strikes.

The third round of talks in Geneva, which began yesterday morning, were due to discuss Iran’s nuclear programme against the backdrop of a huge US military buildup in the Middle East ordered by President Donald Trump.

UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi has joined the new round of indirect talks, a source close to the talks told AFP.

An Iranian state TV reporter also said that Grossi had “joined the talks, effectively serving as a technical observer who can help advance the discussions more precisely and seriously”.

The Omani foreign minister said that both US and Iranian negotiators had adjourned for a break and would resume talks later that day. “We hope to make more progress,” he said.

Warfaze’s Ekushey Padak belongs to the fans

P10

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**PRAYER TIMING**  
FEBRUARY 27

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:09	12:30	4:30	6:02	7:30
JAMAAT 5:19	1:15	4:45	6:12	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

### SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	FEB	SEHRI	IFTAR
9	27		6:02
10	28	5:05	6:02
11	Mar 1	5:05	6:03



Zimbabwe’s Brian Bennett hit a valiant, unbeaten 97 off 59 balls but could not prevent a 72-run defeat as India piled up 256-7 and restricted Zimbabwe to 184-6 in their Super Eights Group 1 match of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup in Chennai yesterday. With the result, South Africa are through to the semifinals from the group with two wins in two matches, while Sunday’s tie between India and West Indies has turned into a virtual quarterfinal.

PHOTO: AFP