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Tarique joins Jamaat iftar programme

Urges working together

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday urged political parties to work to change the fate of the people, saying citizens are now looking to them with high expectations and aspirations.

Speaking as the chief guest at an iftar hosted by the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital, the BNP chairperson called for a collective pledge.

"Let us take an oath at this iftar mahfil that our work in the days ahead will be for changing the destiny of the people of this country. Let us pray to the Almighty Allah to grant us the ability to work to improve the lives of the people of this country."

Referring to the recent national election, Tarique said the vote marked the beginning of a new democratic journey.

For more than a decade, people had laid down their lives and endured

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Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman attends an iftar event hosted by the Jamaat-e-Islami at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital yesterday. Jamaat Ameer and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman presided over the programme.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

Govt keeps NTMC for another year

MAHMUDUL HASAN and ZYMA ISLAM

The home ministry has decided to allow the National Telecommunications Monitoring Centre (NTMC) to continue operating for another year, even though the previous interim administration had moved to abolish the much-criticised surveillance agency.

In a letter conveying the decision to NTMC's director general, the ministry said the permission was granted until necessary rules are formulated to fulfill the objectives of the provisions of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Control (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

The letter, signed by Deputy Secretary KM Yasir Arafat, is dated February 20.

The fate of the NTMC has been under debate since a draft of the ordinance had proposed abolishing "any previously existing interception agency or telecommunications monitoring centre or platform".

On November 22, former home adviser Jahangir Alam chaired a meeting to discuss whether the NTMC should be scrapped. Among those present were former planning adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, former special assistant to the chief adviser Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, and senior officers from the police, Rab, BGB, Ansar and other agencies.

According to a report published by The Daily Star at the time, Taiyeb argued against retaining the NTMC. Senior law enforcement officials, however, pushed for keeping the NTMC or establishing a similar body. Jahangir also leaned towards continuation, while Wahiduddin called for further review.

The final ordinance was approved on December 25,

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ATTACKS ON Star, PROTHOM ALO Home minister orders probe report within two months Vows exemplary punishment

"With the attacks, a message went to the world that fanatic forces were in a strong position in Bangladesh and could attack any media outlet at will. Our image was tarnished, and we were ashamed."

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The unprecedented attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star have tarnished Bangladesh's reputation globally, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after visiting "Alo" (Light), an exhibition portraying Prothom Alo's endeavour to rise from the ruins, at the newspaper's charred building yesterday afternoon, he also said he has directed police to submit charge sheets over the attacks on the newspaper offices within two months following a fair investigation.

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Information Minister Zahir Uddin Swapan, prime minister's advisers Zahed Ur Rahman and Mahdi Amin,

and National Citizen Party leader Sarjis Alam also visited the exhibition, in the presence of Transcom Group Chief Executive Officer Simeen Rahman and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman. Afterwards, Salahuddin Ahmed and Khalilur Rahman visited the torched office of The Daily Star on the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. The premises were vandalised and set on fire, trapping 28 journalists and staffers inside at the time.

On the night of December 18, 2025, coordinated mobs attacked and set fire to the offices of two of Bangladesh's leading newspapers and the cultural institution Chhayanaut in Dhaka.

The following evening, the central office of Udichi Shilpigosthi, another

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7 held over rape, abduction and murder of teen Local BNP leader expelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Seven people have so far been arrested in connection with the abduction, rape and killing of a teenage girl in Narsingdi's Madhabdi upazila of Narsingdi.

The prime accused, Nur Mohammad, 28, locally known as Nura, was arrested from Gazipur, and Hazrat Ali, 40, from Mymensingh on Friday night. The rest were arrested on throughout Thursday and Friday, said police.

All the arrestees were sent to jail through the courts. Police sought a 10-day remand for each of the accused, said Narsingdi Superintendent of Police Md Abdullah-Al Faruk.

"The hearing on the remand petitions will be held tomorrow [today]," he told reporters at press conference press conference at his office yesterday.

Four of the arrestees were directly involved in the rape, he said, adding that the other three allegedly tried to hush up the incident through a local arbitration, he said.

Additional SP Anwar Hossain Shamim said Nur was planning to flee from Bangladesh the country illegally to avoid arrest.

On Thursday morning, police recovered the body of the 15-year-old, Amena Akter, from a cropland in the upazila. There was a scarf wrapped around the neck.

The victim's mother, Fahima

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CPD 'stunned, bewildered' by clauses in US trade deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The reciprocal trade agreement between the US and Bangladesh is "highly discriminatory" and must be revoked, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

"We are stunned and bewildered -- I do not know how a government could enter into such an agreement," said CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem at a media briefing on the social and economic policies of the new government for the first 180 days and beyond.

Several clauses of the agreement will completely restrict Bangladesh's independence and autonomy in terms of trade and investment with other countries.

For instance, Bangladesh needs to take measures against companies owned by third countries if it results in lower US exports to Bangladesh or a reduction in US exports to third-country markets.

Bangladesh needs to comply with the US's border measures through complementary restrictive measures, which means that if the US bans the entry of goods from a certain company or country, Bangladesh will also have to follow suit.

"If there is one area where the interim government deserves criticism, it is this agreement."

In terms of Bangladesh's



"If there is one area where the interim government deserves criticism, it is this agreement."

CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem

economic decision-making, this agreement represents a major deviation. However, if it wishes, the new government can still withdraw from the agreement.

There is a clause stating that within 60 days of signing, a government may opt to exit the agreement. Moreover, the

notification of the agreement has not yet been exchanged.

The government should engage in discussions with the United States Trade Representative and withdraw from this agreement, and instead pursue a trade agreement that safeguards the interests of both countries.

At the same time, any such agreement should be concluded within the framework of the World Trade Organisation.

The deal will severely jeopardise Bangladesh's smooth graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category as well, Moazzem said, adding that the economic partnership agreement signed with Japan is also a gross deviation from the smooth transition strategies.

If the government follows the conditions of the agreements, it will impact the smooth transition strategy in terms of signing FTA/EPA, trade and investment from the most suitable sources, limiting trade negotiations, restricted FDI and technology transfer from the most suitable sources.

So, the government should immediately take measures to withdraw from such agreements since no notification has yet been exchanged.

The government should also revisit the agreements with Japan, he added.

Pak, Afghan forces clash as diplomatic efforts intensify

REUTERS, Kabul

Fighting between Pakistan and Afghanistan's Taliban military entered its third day yesterday as foreign governments expressed increasing concern and called for urgent talks.

- Pakistan strikes military installations in Kabul and Kandahar
- Diplomatic efforts intensify with calls for urgent talks
- Heavy losses reported on both sides

Pakistan's strikes on Friday hit Taliban military installations and posts, some of them in Kabul and Kandahar, in one of the deepest Pakistani incursions into its western neighbour in years, officials said.

Islamabad accuses the Taliban of harbouring Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants, who it says are waging an insurgency inside Pakistan, a charge the Taliban denies.

Pakistan said it was responding to cross-border assaults, while Kabul complained of a breach of its sovereignty, saying it remained open to dialogue but warning that any wider conflict would have serious consequences.

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Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed speaks to journalists after visiting the special exhibition held at the burnt Prothom Alo building yesterday. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Prime Minister's Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman, Transcom Group Chief Executive Officer Simeen Rahman, and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, among others.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PROTHOM ALO

Private investment hits 11-year low

B1

HASANAH ISLAMI BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 1

	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5:08	12:45	4:30	6:03	7:30
JAMAAT	5:18	1:15	4:45	6:13	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
11	1		6:03
12	2	5:04	6:03
13	3	5:03	6:04