

A FRESH START for parliamentary democracy

Hafiz elected Speaker, Kayser Deputy Speaker; inaugural sitting marked by opposition walkout against President Shahabuddin addressing the House

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The 13th parliament yesterday held its inaugural sitting amid a heated atmosphere, as opposition MPs staged a walkout in protest against President Mohammed Shahabuddin speaking in the House.

Formed through the February 12 general election, the country's first credible polls in more than 15 years,

served as minister for Liberation War affairs and state minister for land and forests, respectively.

On the first day, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman placed all 133 ordinances issued by the interim government during its 18-month rule from August 2024, and the House formed a 14-member special committee, comprising members from the treasury and opposition benches, to scrutinise the ordinances.

The situation remained heated for several minutes. When the Speaker invited the president to speak, Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam sought the floor. As the Speaker did not grant him the microphone, Nahid stood up and protested, shouting, "Killer in the parliament! No, no."

Opposition members then raised placards and chanted slogans, including "Killer Chuppu, Boycott Chuppu," despite the Speaker's



A damaged tanker carrying Iraqi fuel oil barely floats near Basra, Iraq, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"We pledge to place national interest above party interest. Above all, Bangladesh must come first – this should be our guiding principle."

Hafiz Uddin Ahmad
Speaker of the House



the House elected BNP leader and freedom fighter Hafiz Uddin Ahmad as Speaker and first-time MP Kayser Kamal as Deputy Speaker.

Before being elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker, Hafiz and Kayser

Around 3:50pm, immediately after Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad announced that President Mohammed Shahabuddin would address the House, opposition MPs began protesting.

repeated calls for calm.

Amid the uproar, Shahabuddin entered the chamber and was requested by the Speaker to take his seat.

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Oil tops \$100 as Iran strikes offset stockpiles release

UAE, KSA intercept drones; Kuwait airport hit

US 'not ready' yet to escort tankers: energy secretary

US says Iran war cost \$11.3b in first six days

Israel pounds Lebanon, threatens to 'take territory'

Iranian strikes roil energy markets

3 more tankers hit as IEA warns world faces largest-ever oil supply disruption

AGENCIES

Three tankers – two in Iraq and one in UAE waters – were struck yesterday, an apparent escalation in Iranian attacks that have disrupted Middle East energy supplies, despite President Donald Trump's claim that the Islamic republic was facing imminent defeat.

Oil prices soared yesterday, briefly trading above \$100, and stock markets extended losses as Iran's attempts to hit supplies in the Middle East offset the release of crude reserves by major economies.

Iran has launched a new wave of attacks against Gulf energy targets, as the International Energy Agency said the Mideast war "is creating the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market".

IEA member countries have agreed to unlock 400 million barrels of oil from their reserves – their largest release ever.

However, the move was unable to overcome fears about the choking of energy supplies, with the Strait of Hormuz – through which a fifth of global crude passes – effectively shut down.

Images, verified by Reuters as having been filmed from the shore of the port of Basra, showed two ships engulfed in massive orange fireballs that lit up the night sky.

Iraqi authorities said the vessels had been attacked overnight by Iranian boats laden with explosives. At least one crew member was killed.

Hours earlier, three other ships had been struck in the Gulf. Iran's Revolutionary Guards claimed responsibility for at least one of those attacks, on a Thai bulk carrier that was set ablaze, which the Guards said had disobeyed their orders.

Another container vessel reported being struck by an unknown projectile near the United Arab Emirates yesterday, a maritime security authority said.

Meanwhile, multiple explosions rocked Tehran and other cities yesterday as US-Israeli attacks continued.

The war, which was launched by the US and Israel and has so far killed around 2,000 people.

Undermining US and Israeli claims to have knocked out much of Iran's stock of long-range weapons, more drones were reported flying yesterday into Kuwait, Iraq, the UAE, Bahrain and Oman.

Iran has said it would not allow oil through the world's most important energy trade route – the Strait of Hormuz that runs along its coast – until US and Israeli attacks ceased, and it would not conduct any negotiations with Washington.

Iran's military has vowed to launch strikes against US and Israeli

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Khamenei vows continued strikes on US bases

Strait of Hormuz to remain closed, he says in his first address as supreme leader

AGENCIES

Iran will avenge the blood of its martyrs, keep the Strait of Hormuz closed, and attack US bases, new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said yesterday, his first remarks since succeeding his slain father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In the defiant address, Khamenei said all US bases should be immediately closed in the region. While Iran believes in friendship with neighbours, Khamenei said attacks on US bases in the region would continue.

The strait, which runs past Iran's coast and supplies a fifth of the world's oil,

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PM urges cooperation from across aisles

Calls for making JS effective, meaningful in his first address to the House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman sought the support and cooperation of people and the members of parliament, including those from the opposition, to transform Bangladesh into a self-reliant, prosperous, safe, and democratic country.

"Our political goal is to make every family self-reliant. Through making every family self-reliant, the BNP wants to establish a self-reliant, prosperous, secure, and democratic Bangladesh," he said while delivering his welcome speech at the onset of the maiden session of the 13th national parliament.

The 60-year-old stepped onto the parliamentary floor at 10:50am, his first as an MP, the leader of the House, and the PM, to a thunderous welcome from lawmakers. His wife, Zubaida Rahman, and daughter, Zaima Rahman, seated in the front row of the VVIP lounge, stood up to congratulate him.

Smiling, Tarique glanced around, acknowledged the greetings, and then took his seat.

The first session of Bangladesh's 13th Jatiya Sangsad began around 11:00am with a recitation from the Quran, while the Speaker's chair remained vacant.

Then, as the leader of the House, Tarique delivered the opening remarks.

"In this great national parliament, I also expect the support and cooperation of every elected member of parliament from all parties."

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House should focus on public welfare, not mudslinging

Opposition leader Shafiqur urges impartial role from Speaker



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman yesterday expressed hope that the House would function effectively and uphold democratic values.

Speaking in the inaugural session of the 13th parliament, he congratulated the newly elected Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad and Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal and said Bangladesh's parliament had been truly effective only for limited periods in the past, during which people had benefited.

"For most of the time, however, the House fell under the grip of

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Bangladesh in US trade crosshairs

Washington DC launches probe into excess-capacity, export incentives; exporters here unfazed

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The US has launched a fresh trade investigation into Bangladesh and more than a dozen other economies to examine whether their policies and production practices are contributing to global overcapacity that could harm American manufacturing.

The investigation was initiated on March 11 by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, a powerful trade enforcement tool used to challenge what Washington considers unfair foreign practices.

The exercise will determine whether the acts, policies and practices in China, the EU, India, Bangladesh, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Mexico and Japan are "unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict US commerce".

Evidence of structural excess capacity and production exists in Bangladesh, which has a goods trade surplus of \$6.15 billion with the US, the USTR said.

The bilateral surplus is led by exports in the textiles sector, with the government providing cash incentives for exports across 43 sectors, including domestic textiles and leather products.

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The wreckage of the microbus and the Bangladesh Navy bus after they collided head-on near Belai Bridge on the Khulna-Mongla highway around 4:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Wedding joy turns to mourning Bride, groom among 13 killed as microbus collides with bus in Bagerhat

STAR REPORT

The wedding rituals were over, the blessings offered, and laughter still lingered in the air.

Around noon yesterday, the bride and groom had tied the knot at the bride's home in Khulna's Koyra. Soon after, they set out for the groom's house in Bagerhat's Mongla, travelling in a microbus with relatives from both families, carrying with them dreams of a life together.

But the journey ended in tragedy near Belai Bridge on the Khulna-Mongla highway.

A bus of the Bangladesh Navy collided head-on with the microbus around 4:30pm, leaving at least 13 people dead, said KM Hasanuzzaman, sub-inspector of Katakhal Highway Police camp.

The crash occurred near Rampal, about 13 kilometres from the groom's home in Shelabunia village of Mongla. Officer-in-charge Zafar Ahmed of Katakhal Highway Police Station confirmed the incident, saying the microbus was badly mangled in the collision.

Nine bodies were taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital, said Dr Mehnaz Mosharaf, emergency medical

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Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and other members of the 13th parliament stand in silence during its maiden session yesterday as they unanimously adopt a condolence motion to honour former PM Khaleda Zia, July uprising victims and noted citizens at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Right top: President Mohammed Shahabuddin administers the oath to newly elected Speaker Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmad. Right bottom: Prof Muhammad Yunus, former chief adviser to the immediate past interim government, sits next to the family members of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.



PHOTO: PMO, PID

Nahid seeks justice for July victims

Says no fascist should be allowed to deliver speech in House

SATFF CORRESPONDENT



National Citizen Party Convener and Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam yesterday demanded justice for the victims of the July massacre, the killing of Sharif Osman Hadi, and cases of enforced disappearance, murder, looting, and corruption during the past fascist regime.

"July means a country free from hegemony and fascism -- a new settlement and a democratic, inclusive, non-discriminatory Bangladesh," he said in parliament during a condolence discussion for those killed and injured in the July mass uprising.

Nahid said lawmakers were able to sit in parliament because of the sacrifices made by those who died in the uprising and urged all political actors to honour their legacy.

"We are here because of the sacrifice of the martyrs. We must show them respect," he said.

He also urged that "no fascists or their accomplices" be allowed to "contaminate" parliament by delivering speeches. "We want a fascism-free, partisan-free parliament," he added ahead of the president's speech.

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A fresh start

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Treasury members stood up as the president entered, but the opposition continued protesting.

Within a minute, as the national anthem began playing, many opposition members remained seated. At that, Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir gestured to them to stand, after which the opposition members rose.

After the anthem ended, the Speaker again urged the president to deliver his speech. At that moment, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman shouted that the president had failed to act as the guardian of the state during the fascist rule.

Shahabuddin then began delivering his speech but paused briefly as opposition members chanted slogans such as "Beware, agents of fascism", "Beware, agents of dictatorship", and "Fascism and democracy cannot coexist", while holding placards with similar messages.

This was when Deputy Leader of the Opposition Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher announced the walkout.

It is customary for the president to address the maiden session of parliament, after which MPs participate in the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

Speaking to reporters after the walkout, Shafiqur said they had requested that "those who were allies of the fascist government" and had supported killings not be allowed to address the parliament.

"The president did not protest or take any action over the killings that occurred during his tenure, an act of grave irresponsibility toward citizens despite his role as guardian of the state."

Referring to the president's address to the nation on August 5, 2024 -- the day the Awami League government was ousted -- Shafiqur said, "The president had stated at the time that the then prime minister had resigned and that he had accepted the resignation. However, he later denied this in interviews with two media outlets and presented a different account."

This, according to the opposition leader, proved that the president had "lied to the nation".

He added that after the July uprising, the president personally signed an ordinance stating that the election would be held on February 12 and that those elected would take oath as both members of parliament and members of the reform council, with the same person administering both oaths on the same day.

Shafiqur alleged that while the opposition had taken both oaths, the ruling party had not. "The president failed to convene a session of the reform council within 30 days of the gazette publication, and this was his

responsibility."

According to the July National Charter (Constitution Reform) Implementation Order, 2025, the first session of the Constitution Reform Council shall be summoned, in the same manner as the first session of the parliament, within 30 calendar days of the declaration of the election results.

However, while convening the parliament on February 23, the president did not mention anything about convening a session of the reform council.

The parliamentary proceedings yesterday began with the Speaker's chair vacant for a brief period -- a rare instance in Bangladesh.

The Leader of the House and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, in his introductory speech, nominated five-time BNP lawmaker Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain to preside over the inaugural session to elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

LGRD Minister Mirza Fakhrul seconded the proposal.

About the context for nominating Mosharraf, Tarique said, "We had to nominate someone to preside over the session due to special circumstances, as the outgoing speaker and deputy speaker were either untraceable, in hiding, or in prison."

He said that traditionally the outgoing Speaker or Deputy Speaker presides over the inaugural sitting following a general poll.

However, this time, former speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury resigned, and outgoing deputy speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku is currently in prison facing a criminal charge.

The prime minister also said that after independence, senior constituent assembly member Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish presided over the inaugural proceedings on the proposal of then prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, before the election of the then speaker and deputy speaker.

Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni proposed the name of Hafiz, lawmaker from Bhola-3, as the Speaker while ruling party whip Rakibul Islam, MP from Khulna-3, expressed support.

Meanwhile, another whip Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu proposed the name of Kayser Kamal, an MP from Netrokona-1, and another whip ABM Ashraf Uddin (Nizam) supported the move.

Both Speaker and Deputy Speaker were then elected unanimously through voice vote, and President Shahabuddin later administered their oaths.

After the session resumed around 12:45pm, the newly elected Speaker attempted to conduct the proceedings through the installed microphones, but sound distortion occurred due to a technical fault.

He adjourned the session for 20

minutes.

Later, in his introductory speech, Speaker Hafiz said that the parliament must become the heart of all political and administrative activities.

"We pledge to place national interest above party interest. Above all, Bangladesh must come first -- this should be our guiding principle."

He said democracy means governance by the majority. "Both the government and the opposition must unite in the national interest to fulfill the people's aspirations.

"I humbly express this hope before you. I will remain committed to ensuring that the opposition can play an effective role in this House."

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman then placed the 133 ordinances issued by the interim government.

The ordinances were originally enacted under article 93(1) of the constitution, which allows the president to issue laws in emergency situations when parliament is not in session.

According to constitutional rules, any ordinance must be placed before the House in the first sitting of a new parliament, and these must be passed within 30 days from the start of a session, or they lose legal validity.

After placing the bills, Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni proposed a 14-member special committee, headed by Barishal-3 lawmaker Zainul Abedin, that will scrutinise these ordinances.

The House also adopted a condolence motion expressing deep sorrow over the deaths of several national and international figures.

During the motion, discussions on the contributions of Bangladesh's three-time prime minister and BNP leader Khaleda Zia and the martyrs of the July uprising also took place.

Also yesterday, five other committees were formed.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin announced the formation of the Business Advisory Committee and the Parliamentary Committee.

Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni proposed the names for three other committees: the Special Committee, the Committee on Privileges, and the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions. These proposals were subsequently passed by voice vote.

The session was adjourned until March 15.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday redistributed the portfolios under the Rules of Business, 1996, with the Cabinet Division issuing a gazette notification.

Ahmed Azam Khan was given the charge of the Liberation War affairs ministry, while State Minister Mir Mohammad Helal Uddin was assigned responsibility for the land ministry alongside the Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs ministry.

Khamenei vows

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should remain shut to put pressure on the enemy, he added.

On February 28, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several of his family members were assassinated on the first day of United States and Israeli strikes.

In a televised address, Khamenei called for national unity.

The resistance in Yemen "will also do the job," the supreme leader said, adding that armed groups in Iraq also "want to help" the Islamic revolution. Khamenei thanked the country's military, who he said had stopped Iran from being dominated or divided as it came under attack.

"I would like to thank the brave fighters who are doing a great job at a time when our country is under pressure and under attack," he said, and pledged that Iran would continue fighting.

Bangladesh in US trade

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, Bangladesh's cement industry has significant excess capacity amid the industry's worst downturn in years, the USTR said.

In 2024, Bangladesh's national consumption of cement dropped to 38 million tonnes, which is less than 40 percent of total capacity, and it declined further the following year, the USTR added.

"It is not a comforting sight to see the country's name in the list for investigation," said Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

But, the subject matters that will be investigated -- such as production capacity, intellectual property rights and incentives -- are unlikely to affect Bangladesh to any great extent.

For instance, Bangladesh's production is based on receiving work orders from international buyers, so excessive production is not possible.

Moreover, Bangladesh has already amended the labour law last year as per the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and ratified three important ILO Conventions, making it the only country in South Asia to ratify all 10 fundamental ILO conventions.

The government has also already started phasing out incentives on export receipts as part of the preparations for smooth graduation from the least-developed country (LDC) bracket in November this year.

Regarding intellectual property rights, Bangladesh does not produce counterfeit goods to injure the market of other countries, so the investigation might not be a problem.

"We are prepared to face the investigation," he said, adding that such investigations were conducted earlier as well.

But, Bangladesh will have to maintain regular dialogue with the US so that the investigation process is not misunderstood or Bangladesh is not wrongly presented to the US in any way, he added.

Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said his ministry received a letter from the USTR in this regard. "We will take necessary action as per the outcomes of the investigation," he added.

It is not possible to conduct a concrete investigation and such investigations are rarely objective, said Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, also chairman of the Research and Policy Integration for Development.

For instance, Bangladeshi garment exporters send goods to the US upon receiving work orders from American retailers, brands and vendors, so excessive production is not possible, he added.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, welcomed the investigation.

"We do not have any objection to conducting the investigation. We also want the business to be conducted in a transparent way," he added.

Russia jails 15 for life over 2024 concert hall attack

AFP, Moscow

A Russian court yesterday handed life sentences to four gunmen from Tajikistan, and 11 others it said were their accomplices, for the 2024 Crocus concert hall attack that left 150 people dead.

The March 2024 shooting spree was claimed by Islamic State (IS) and was the deadliest jihadist attack in Russia in more than two decades.

Relatives of some of the victims stood in the grand Moscow military court as the verdict was read out.

Shamsidin Fariduni, Dalerdzhon Mirzoyev, Makhmadsobir Fayzov and Saidakrami Rachabolzoda -- all Tajik citizens who went on a shooting

spree in the building before setting it on fire -- looked down as the judge sentenced them to life.

Eleven other men -- some Russian citizens -- were also jailed for life for acting as accomplices and of having terrorist links.

Four more men -- including a father and his sons -- were handed sentences of between 19 and 22 years over their links with the attackers.

The gunmen entered the concert hall shortly before a show by Soviet-era rock band Picnic. They went on a shooting spree before setting fire to the building, trapping many victims. The attack wounded more than 600 people. Six children were among those killed.

PM urges cooperation

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He said he believes that political parties' opinions and programmes may differ.

"But there can be no disagreement among us when it comes to establishing an independent, sovereign, secure, and self-reliant Bangladesh free from subservience and fascism. There is no conflict on that."

Instead of making it the centre of national activities, he said, the "ousted fascist Awami League government had rendered the parliament ineffective".

"We want to transform this great national parliament into the central forum for reasoned discussion, debate and the resolution of national problems."

As the PM, he said he represents the country in the parliament and not just his party.

"Regardless of party, opinion, religion or ethnicity, I represent the people of the country. My politics is the politics of protecting the interests of the country and its people."

The politics of the BNP is focused on improving people's living standards and building a self-reliant Bangladesh, he said.

He recalled with gratitude those who lost their children, near and dear ones, those injured in the movement for democracy and human rights, as well as those who lost everything due to torture, political harassment and false cases during the fascism.

House should focus

FROM PAGE 1

fascism and functioned largely as a dummy parliament," said Shafiqur, also Ameer of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

He said many who had previously served as guardians of the House had failed to uphold their responsibilities to parliament, democracy, and the rights of citizens.

Referring to the newly elected Speaker, Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, he noted that although the Speaker had been elected to parliament from a political party, he had already announced his resignation from a standing committee position of the ruling BNP.

"We believe that from now on there will be no distinction between the ruling party and the opposition in your eyes. We hope to receive justice from you," he said, adding that MPs should have the opportunity to speak on issues related to public welfare.

He also urged the Speaker to ensure that the House does not become a platform for personal attacks, noting that previous parliaments had often spent significant time on character assassination rather than discussing issues of public interest.

The opposition leader expressed confidence that the Speaker, whom he described as a valiant freedom fighter, would lead the parliament effectively and assured him of the opposition's cooperation.

Shafiqur described the current parliament not as an ordinary one, but as "a special parliament built upon the blood of '24'". "This parliament has been formed through the sacrifices of those who were oppressed over the past fifteen and a half years and those who gave their lives in the July revolution."

He expressed gratitude to Almighty Allah and thanked the people of his constituency.

He added, "I pay deep respect to the martyrs of '47, '52, '71, '75, and '90."

"Especially to those who were imprisoned in the Ayna Ghar, previously used as torture cells and secret prisons for people who were victims of enforced disappearance over the past fifteen and a half years, those who became disabled through torture, and those who gave their lives in July '24, making it possible for us to speak in this parliament."

Recalling the main slogan of the July uprising -- "We Want Justice" -- he said, "Among the three important organs of the state, parliament is the most significant. When the parliament functions properly, the other two organs -- the executive and judiciary -- will also function properly."

"Through you [the parliament], political, economic, and cultural irregularities and corruption will be eradicated from society -- this is the expectation of 180 million people."

Iranian strikes roil energy markets

FROM PAGE 1

economic interests in the region, including banks, while an Iranian news agency listed tech giants as possible "future targets".

Citibank announced yesterday it would temporarily shut its branches in the UAE, a day after Iran said it considered banks and economic sites to be legitimate targets and warned Middle East residents to stay 1,000 metres from them. HSBC has shut branches in Qatar.

No senior Iranian official has floated the idea of negotiations except Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who on Wednesday, outlined three conditions to end the war: recognition of Tehran's legitimate rights, payment of reparations and firm international guarantees against future aggression. However, the demands are in themselves unattainable, said analysts.

Trump, whose Republican Party is trying to hold on to Congress in an election later this year, has repeatedly tried to calm energy markets this week by saying the war will soon be over and the surge in oil prices will be short-lived.

But he has not fully explained how the war will end, or presented a plan to reopen the blockaded strait. US and Israeli officials say the aim is to destroy Iran's missile and nuclear programmes, but Trump has also demanded Iran's "unconditional surrender" and the

power to determine its leaders.

"You never like to say too early you won. We won," Trump told a campaign-style rally in Hebron, Kentucky, on Wednesday. "In the first hour, it was over."

The United States had "virtually destroyed Iran", he said. But he added, "We don't want to leave early, do we? We got to finish the job."

He said Iran's navy and air force had been destroyed, that it was close to running out of missiles and that US forces could knock out the electricity supply "within one hour" -- leaving the country with a reconstruction that could take a generation.

But the US leader indicated that he would rather show restraint than take actions that would make it "almost impossible for them to rebuild their country."

But three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that US intelligence indicated that Iran's leadership was still largely intact and not at risk of collapse any time soon.

Israel's military also signalled the campaign was far from finished, and that it still had "a broad bank of targets."

Pentagon officials have meanwhile briefed US lawmakers that the cost of the war exceeded \$11.3 billion in its first six days, The New York Times reported, citing people familiar with the classified

briefing.

Iran has made clear over the past two days that its strategy now is to impose a prolonged economic shock on the world to force Trump to back off.

The spokesperson for Iran's military command said on Wednesday that the world should prepare for oil prices of \$200 a barrel because of instability caused by the US. That would be well above the highest oil price in the history of \$147.27 in July 2008, weeks before the start of the global financial crisis.

Tony Sycamore, analyst at IG, said the attacks on the ships in Iraq looked like "a direct and forceful Iranian response" to the reserves release.

Meanwhile, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright yesterday said the country's military is currently "not ready" to escort tankers through the strait because all its assets are focused on striking Iran.

Trump has repeatedly sought to calm the markets by offering US Navy escorts for oil tankers and reinsurance facilities for shipping companies -- but no escorts have so far taken place.

"It'll happen relatively soon, but it can't happen now. We're simply not ready," Wright told CNBC.

He added that it was "quite likely" such escorts would be taking place by the end of the month.

Chinese vice foreign minister to pay visit April 2-3

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong will be visiting Bangladesh on April 2-3 2026 for the 14th Bangladesh-China Diplomatic Consultations.

This would be the first high-level visit by any Chinese official after the BNP government assumed office following the election on February 12, 18 months after the July uprising in 2024.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen briefed about the visit when he paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kobir was present during



Sun Weidong

on April

2-3 2026 for the 14th Bangladesh-China Diplomatic Consultations.

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Workers pack plastic and metal bangles at a small factory in the Lalbagh area of Old Dhaka. Production rises ahead of festivals like Eid, with the bangles supplied to wholesalers across the country. Depending on the design and quality, each stack sells for around Tk 30 to Tk 100. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DAY ONE OF 13TH PARLIAMENT

A walkout, a speech, and a few wry smiles

BAHARAM KHAN

The first day of the 13th National Parliament was marked by several notable moments, but what stood out most were the recurring subtle "wry" smiles.

The expressions appeared across the chamber, from President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to senior leaders on both sides of the House.

There had been talks that MPs from the Jamaat-led opposition would walk out during President Shahabuddin's address.

As soon as the president took his seat beside the speaker, opposition MPs stood up from their seats and began protesting. The protest quickly escalated into an uproar.

The commotion paused briefly for the national anthem but resumed immediately after it ended.

From Gallery-1, reserved for journalists, Shahabuddin's expression was clearly visible. Beneath his neatly groomed moustache appeared a faint smirk.

It seemed as though he had entered the chamber fully prepared for the unfolding drama.

Whether it was merely a smile or something tinged with irony is difficult to say. Yet the expression was striking, particularly as one of the protesters against his speech had previously taken the oath of office from Shahabuddin to join the interim government's advisory council.

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'I fell ill seeing blood on his body'

Father recalls finding son among bullet-hit bodies at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A retired madrasa teacher broke down in tears before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday as he recounted finding his 35-year-old son among rows of bullet-riddled bodies on a hospital floor after taking part in the July uprising.

Md Al Amin Patowary, 65, testified in a crimes against humanity case against former law minister Anisul Huq and former prime minister's adviser Salman F Rahman. He said he rushed to a hospital in Mirpur after hearing that his son had been shot on August 5, 2024.

"When I arrived, I saw my son and 15 to 20 others lying dead on the floor," he said, struggling to continue. "They had all been shot. Seeing the blood on their bodies, I fell ill."

He alleged that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, alongside Obaidul Quader, Anisul Huq, and Salman F Rahman, were responsible, claiming that they held meetings and imposed a curfew to violently suppress the movement.

"For that reason, I hold them responsible for my son's death," he said, calling for justice and expressing hope that such incidents never happen again.

Meanwhile, 18-year-old student Abu Juhumul Islam testified that he was shot in the chest during protests in Mirpur on July 20.

After receiving initial treatment at a clinic in Kazipara, he was referred to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

He said he waited nearly 20 minutes there without receiving treatment before being transferred to the National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital for surgery.

Alleging that police and Chhatra League members later entered the hospital carrying sticks and bamboo, verbally abused patients, photographed them, and filed cases against them, the victim called for justice.



Police roll out Eid safety guidelines

DMP urges officials to stay vigilant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police yesterday issued a comprehensive set of safety guidelines for travellers and transport operators to ensure smooth journeys during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays.

The move comes as millions prepare to leave the capital, prompting the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to step up security measures against mugging and robbery in an emptying city.

In a press release, the police headquarters urged travellers to plan their trips in advance and remain mindful of personal safety. Passengers were advised not to pressure drivers to speed and were warned against travelling on the roofs of buses, trucks, or goods-laden vehicles.

"Accepting food or drinks from strangers during the journey is strictly discouraged," the statement said, referring to the risk of drugging gangs, commonly known as the "malam party".

Bus drivers were requested to avoid risky overtaking and refrain from driving when fatigued or ill. Transport operators were also instructed to carry valid licences and avoid overloading vehicles.

On waterways, passengers of launches, steamers, and speedboats were advised not to board vessels beyond their capacity or travel on roofs. Police also warned against travelling during adverse weather and urged speedboat passengers to wear life jackets.

Launch owners were instructed to ensure their vessels are operated by qualified masters and to suspend operations during bad weather. Vessels should also carry functional fire pumps

and buoys with ropes measuring 100 to 150 feet to help identify accident-hit vessels.

Train passengers were similarly cautioned against travelling on roofs, buffers, or engines. Police also warned of possible stone-throwing incidents and urged passengers to safeguard their belongings.

In case of emergencies, the public can contact the Police Headquarters control

KEY ADVICE

Don't pressure drivers to speed

Avoid travelling on vehicle roofs

No reckless driving or risky overtaking

Carry valid licence, ensure vehicle fitness

Avoid overloading vehicles

Wear life jackets on speedboats

Don't charge or pay extra fares

room at 01320001300 or 01320001299. Other emergency contacts include the Highway Police (01320182598), Railway Police (01320177598), and Naval Police (01320169598).

Meanwhile, Acting DMP Commissioner Md Sarwar instructed police members to remain alert to ensure safe and smooth travel during the Eid holidays.

Speaking at the monthly crime review meeting for February 2026 at the DMP headquarters yesterday, he said most people would leave Dhaka during

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Considering Bangladesh's call for fuel'

Says Indian external affairs ministry

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India is considering requests from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives for supplies of diesel and refined petroleum products amid the ongoing war in the Middle East, which has disrupted the oil supply globally.

"We have received a request from the government of Bangladesh for the supply of diesel, which is being examined," Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Indian external affairs ministry, told a media briefing yesterday, reports Indian newspaper The Hindu Businessline.

While diesel exports to Bangladesh have largely continued since 2017, India's refining capacity, its own requirements and diesel availability will be factored in while taking decisions, he said.

On Wednesday, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, minister for power, energy, and mineral resources, told reporters that Dhaka has written to New Delhi seeking additional fuel from India.

He added that fuel oil is imported from India through a pipeline and that, in the current emergency

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Azam Khan new Liberation War affairs minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice-Chairman Ahmed Azam Khan, also a lawmaker from the Tangail-8 constituency, was sworn in as a member of the cabinet yesterday.

He has been given charge of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka.

The brief swearing-in ceremony was attended by senior government officials and political leaders.



Release Shahriar Kabir immediately

Global civil society orgs appeal to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

European and global civil society organisations have issued an urgent appeal to the prime minister of Bangladesh, calling for the immediate release of 75-year-old journalist, writer, freedom fighter, and human rights activist Shahriar Kabir.

The organisations also requested that his immediate release and access to proper medical care be ensured, as reports indicate that his health has severely deteriorated while in custody.

In a joint statement, a coalition of international organisations – including the South Asia Democratic Forum in Belgium, European Bangladesh Forum (EU and United Kingdom), Working Group Bangladesh in Germany, Earth Civilisation Network, and Freedom and Justice Alliance – said that Kabir's health condition has reached a critical stage.

The joint appeal was led by Paulo Casaca, executive director of the South Asia Democratic

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Raise tobacco taxes to protect public health

Urge experts at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Given that the country's existing tobacco tax structure is inadequate to discourage tobacco use, anti-tobacco campaigners and economists have recommended increasing taxes to reduce the affordability of tobacco products and protect public health.

They suggested merging the low and medium tiers and setting the maximum retail price at Tk 100 to prevent smokers from switching between closely priced low and medium-tier products.

The recommendations came at an orientation workshop on tobacco product pricing and taxation for the upcoming FY 2026-27 national budget held at the office of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) in Dhaka.

The workshop aimed to brief journalists and tobacco control advocates on the rationale and methodology behind a proposed reform of tobacco taxation.

The proposal was jointly developed by Economics for Health, World Health Organization, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Vital Strategies, and the Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Khalilur set for Türkiye trip today

His first bilateral visit since taking office

PORIMOL PALMA

In his first bilateral visit since taking office, Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman will travel to Türkiye today as the two countries see growing cooperation in trade and defence.



Apart from bilateral issues, the March 13-14 visit will also focus on Khalilur Rahman's campaign for the presidency of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as well as trade, investment and the war in the Middle East, foreign ministry officials said yesterday.

Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir and Foreign Ministry Secretary M Fardadul Islam will also be part of the delegation.

Khalilur will lead the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

HATHAZARI IN CHATTOGRAM

Historic WWII airbase lies in ruins

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Hathazari Airfield, a World War II-era airbase in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila and a site of historic importance, has been lying in a state of decay due to decades of neglect.

Located in the Adarshapara area of the upazila, the airbase is now all but forgotten. A lone building stands abandoned beside a road inside a small orchard, its roof and walls crumbling as bushes take over the structure.

Nearby, the airbase's observation tower, now surrounded by numerous houses, is filled with garbage, while large sections of its walls are badly damaged.

Both structures sit amid farmland, reflecting how the area around the old airbase has gradually changed over the decades.

The airbase was established in 1944 as a strategic military installation towards the end of World War II and played a supporting role in the Allied



Burma Campaign (1942-1945), a brutal conflict in Southeast Asia in which Commonwealth, Chinese and American forces fought Imperial Japan.

Built near the Chattogram-Nazirhat rail route, the airfield was used as a supply point and

staging base for the United States Air Forces' 10th Air Force from May to September in the year 1945.

It also served as a radio relay station operated by the 128th Army Communications Squadron. In addition, several

Royal Air Force squadrons were based there at different times between December 1944 and May 1945, according to sources.

After the war ended, the airfield was closed and gradually fell out of use.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Khalilur set for Türkiye visit today

FROM PAGE 3
Bangladesh delegation at the meeting, while Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan will head the other side.

"A key objective of the foreign minister's visit is to seek its support for the UNGA election," a diplomatic source said.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has nominated Khalilur Rahman for president of the 81st session of the UNGA for 2026-2027 after Palestine withdrew its candidature.

Bangladesh will compete with Cyprus in the election, scheduled to be held on June 2 at the UN headquarters in New York.

After assuming office, Khalilur made his first

foreign trip to Saudi Arabia in late February, where he attended an emergency meeting of the OIC in Jeddah on the Palestine issue.

He also attended the Commonwealth ministerial meeting in London recently. He sought support from OIC and Commonwealth members for the UNGA election.

BILATERAL ISSUES
According to diplomatic sources in Ankara and Dhaka, relations between Bangladesh and Türkiye have strengthened in recent years, particularly in trade, defence and humanitarian cooperation.

Bilateral trade has risen from around \$1 billion to about \$1.3 billion, with both countries aiming to

increase it to \$3 billion.

Bangladesh has also increased defence purchases from Türkiye, while Turkish firms have shown interest in investing in Bangladesh's defence industry.

Türkiye is also a key partner in humanitarian assistance for the Rohingya and supports several hospitals in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

The ongoing Middle East conflict and its global implications – particularly for countries in Asia that rely heavily on fuel imports from Gulf states and migrant remittances – may also be discussed during the meeting between the two foreign ministers, a ministry official told The Daily Star.

A walkout, a speech, and a few wry

FROM PAGE 3
Moreover, the 133 ordinances – along with the orders related to the July Charter and the referendum that the opposition alliance is demanding be implemented – all bear Shahabuddin's signature.

As nearly 80 MPs from the opposition alliance continued shouting in protest, the atmosphere in the chamber grew tense. When the chief whip requested the president to begin his address, Shahabuddin calmly started his address amid the noise, maintaining a composed demeanour that suggested

he had expected nothing less.

The shouting persisted for some time. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman appeared slightly concerned and was seen glancing towards LGED Minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed seated to his right.

From the gallery their conversation could not be heard, but the home minister appeared relaxed.

As soon as the opposition MPs staged their walkout, more than 200 MPs from the BNP-led coalition thumped their desks in support of the president's speech.

At that moment, a restrained smile briefly crossed the prime minister's face.

The smiles, however, did not end there.

Each time Shahabuddin referred to the past 17 years as "fascism" in his speech, Tarique was seen exchanging remarks with Mirza Fakhrul, Salahuddin, and Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury.

From the gallery, the words remained inaudible. Yet the expressions were unmistakable.

The quiet, wry smiles seemed to tell their own story.

Raise tobacco taxes

FROM PAGE 3
Presenting the proposal, Prof Shafiq Nahin Shimul, director of the institute, said tobacco use prevalence in the country is the highest in South Asia at 35.3 percent, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2017.

He said the existing multi-tiered tax system is complex and makes cigarettes more affordable and accessible, especially for youths and low-income users.

The proposal recommends merging the low and medium tiers and setting the maximum retail price at Tk 100 – currently Tk 60 and Tk 80 respectively – while increasing tax by Tk 10 for the high tier and Tk 15 for the premium tier.

Contrary to concerns, raising tobacco taxes would not reduce government revenue, he said. Instead, the reform could generate about Tk 44,000 crore in additional tax revenue

compared to the previous fiscal year.

It is also projected to encourage nearly five lakh adults to quit smoking and prevent more than 3.72 lakh youths from initiating tobacco use, reducing overall prevalence by 0.5 percent, he also said.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of PPRC, said tobacco control is fundamentally a democratic policy exercise.

"It is not about banning individuals or punishing smokers but about using such policy instruments – like taxation, sales regulation, and advertising restrictions – to advance public welfare," he said.

He described the issue as a contest between narrow commercial interests and the broader public good, stressing that society must stand with the latter.

Several journalists and anti-tobacco campaigners also spoke at the programme.

Police roll out Eid safety guidelines

FROM PAGE 3
Eid and urged officers to stay vigilant so crimes such as robbery and mugging do not occur.

He said additional police forces will be deployed to ensure safe and orderly travel and urged officers to perform their duties with honesty to enhance the force's image.

He also urged bus owners to not hike fares during the Eid journey.

Additional Police Commissioner (Crime and Operations) S N Md Nazrul Islam stressed the need for visible improvements in law and order.

He directed officials to maintain special supervision at major terminals, including Gabtoli Bus Terminal, Mohakhali Bus Terminal, Sayedabad Bus Terminal, Kamalapur Railway Station, and Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

Nazrul also ordered increased patrolling across the city's beat areas and regular monitoring of CCTV cameras at shopping malls. "A zero-tolerance policy will be followed in maintaining law and order," he said.

Meanwhile, the DMP has suspended the movement

of some vehicles, including trucks, covered vans and lorries, on highways from March 17 to March 23.

However, vehicles carrying essential goods – such as perishable food items, garments, medicine, fertiliser and fuel – will remain exempt from the directive.

The DMP also issued instructions for transport owners and workers to operate buses from designated terminals, avoid charging extra fares, refrain from reckless driving, and ensure drivers have valid licences and vehicles have proper fitness certificates.

Release Shahriar Kabir

FROM PAGE 3
Forum; Chris Blackburn of the European Bangladesh Forum; Klaus Strempe; Tariq Gunersei; and Prof ABM Nasir.

They urged the government to act swiftly to protect Kabir's life and uphold international human rights standards.

A wheelchair user who suffers from several chronic illnesses, Shahriar Kabir has experienced a rapid health decline since his arrest, the statement said, adding that his weight has dropped significantly, and he now finds it difficult to stand.

Despite repeated requests, he has

reportedly not received the necessary medication and appropriate treatment, the statement read.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security stated on January 5, 2026, that Kabir's detention represents a serious violation of Bangladesh's international legal obligations.

Earlier, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared in its Opinion No. 40/2025 that Kabir's detention was arbitrary, unlawful, and punitive. The group called for his immediate release, compensation, and an independent investigation.

These recommendations were not implemented by the previous government, the statement said.

The coalition called on the Government of Bangladesh to take three urgent actions: immediately release Shahriar Kabir and all elderly or vulnerable prisoners, ensure urgent and proper medical care for detainees, and ensure that all prisons in the country follow international human rights and humanitarian standards. "His [Shahriar Kabir] protection and release would reaffirm Bangladesh's commitment to the spirit of 1971 and the rule of law," the organisations said.

Three incidents of rape reported

FROM PAGE 10
Police Station, said Barhatta Police Station OC Nazmul Hasan.

According to the police, the rape took place about two months back. He later threatened the victim not to disclose the incident to anyone.

Days later, the child fell ill and was initially treated locally. However, as her condition worsened, she was taken to Dhaka.

OC Nazmul Hasan said that a rape case has been registered based on the complaint. The victim has been sent to the hospital for a medical examination, and her statement will be recorded in court. Efforts

are underway to arrest the accused.

In Noakhali, a 30-year-old woman was reportedly gang-raped on Tuesday night after being lured there under the false promise of marriage.

On Wednesday night, the victim filed a case, naming three individuals, said Hatia Police Station OC Md Kabir Hossain.

Police and locals said the victim met the main accused while looking for a groom through an acquaintance.

On Tuesday evening, the individual took her to a watermelon field at Kalapara. There, he and two others gang-raped her.

The victim has identified two of the accused: Shamir Uddin and Faisal. She was unable to identify the third individual.

OC Md Kabir Hossain said the woman filed a written complaint against Shamir Uddin, Faisal, and one unidentified person on Wednesday night.

Considering

FROM PAGE 3
situation, Dhaka is seeking to increase supply through it. The decision on how much the supply can be increased will be made by India.

"If the war in the Middle East is prolonged, it may disrupt the import of fuel oil. Therefore, to ensure

imports as per demand, the government is seeking new sources outside existing agreements," Tuku told reporters after a meeting with Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma on Wednesday.

Following the US-Israeli attacks on Iran, shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has been severely disrupted amid Iranian threats, attacks on vessels, and reports of mines in the waterway. This has effectively choked one of the world's most vital energy corridors.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is also in touch with his Iranian counterpart, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, and has been discussing matters related to the safety of shipping and India's energy security, Jaiswal added.

Historic WWII airbase

FROM PAGE 3
"I have seen this airbase since I was a child. It now lies in a dilapidated state. It's shocking that a place with such history has been left to rot," said Hafez Mohammed Shaikue, a local.

Nurul Haque, 60, who has been living in a semi-pucca house beside the observation tower for the past 25 years, said, "We have heard since childhood that aeroplanes used to land here during the war. The then administration had rented the land from locals for the airfield but did not purchase it. So after the war ended, everyone reclaimed their own land."

Contacted, Mohammad Abdullah Al Mumin, UNO of Hathazari, said, "We have learned that this is a World War II site, but no action has been taken by the upazila administration so far."

He, however, said the administration plans to visit the site soon,

and, if it is found worth preserving, the relevant government departments will be informed to take the necessary steps.

Bangla Academy fellow and history researcher Md Shamsul Haque said the airbase is a rare reminder of Chattogram's role during World War II, but neglect is slowly erasing that history.

"Preserving the site is of utmost importance to keep the memory of our wartime heritage alive," he said.

Dr Nahid Sultana, regional director of the Department of Archaeology in Chattogram, said they were unaware of the presence of the airbase.

"We have already identified and drafted a list of archaeological sites in Hathazari. During our next visit, we will inspect this airbase and, if it meets the criteria, we will take necessary steps for its preservation," she told The Daily Star.

Request for Quotation for Consultancy Services for Retail and SME Transformation

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A Technical Request for Quotation (RFQ) is hereby issued for this purpose. A pre-bid meeting for discussion and clarification shall be held on **16 March 2026**. The RFQ, along with details of the pre-bid meeting and the bidding process, can be found on the bank's website: <https://www.bracbank.com/en/page/e-tender>

Interested eligible bidders are requested to submit their technical offers as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) outlined in the bidding process.

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নবীনগর-খামরাই বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইন চালুর সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার, পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি (পাওয়ার গ্রিড) এবং কেএফডব্লিউ, জার্মানি-এর যৌথ অর্থায়নে বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়ের বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগের অধীন পাওয়ার গ্রিড কর্তৃক "গ্রীড ভিত্তিক বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহে দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প" শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের আওতায় নবীনগর-খামরাই ১৩২ কেভি ডাবল সার্কিট সঞ্চালন লাইন (প্রায় ১৫.৯৮৫ কি.মি.) নির্মিত হয়েছে। সঞ্চালন লাইনটি ঢাকা জেলার সাভার উপজেলার পাঁচ ঘুঘুদিয়া ও ঘুঘুদিয়া মৌজা ও তৎসংলগ্ন এলাকা এবং খামরাই উপজেলার পূর্ব বাড়িগাঁও, সাছনা, সীতি, পল্লি, বারিলা, পশ্চিম গোপালপুর, রঘুনাথপুর, ভাদালিয়া, জয়তেজুলিয়া, বাজাসন, নামার, বর্তাবিল ও শ্রীরামপুর মৌজা ও তৎসংলগ্ন এলাকার উপর দিয়ে গমন করেছে। নবনির্মিত লাইনটি আগামী ১৪ মার্চ ২০২৬ তারিখ, শনিবার, সকাল ১১.০০ টায় ১৩২ কেভি অর্থাৎ ১,৩২,০০০ (এক লক্ষ ত্রিশ হাজার) ভোল্টেজে চালু করা হবে।

সঞ্চালন লাইনটি চালুর সময় হতে ১৩২ কেভি হাই ভোল্টেজের বিদ্যুৎ দিয়ে চালু থাকবে বিধায় সম্মানিত এলাকাবাসীকে উক্ত সঞ্চালন লাইনের টাওয়ারে আরোহণ, টাওয়ারে গরু, ছাগল ইত্যাদি গবাদি পশু রাখা, টাওয়ারে রশি বেঁধে কাপড় শুকানো প্রভৃতি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজ হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। এছাড়া ১৩২ কেভি নবনির্মিত সঞ্চালন লাইনটির সকল স্থাপনা হতে লাইন বা টাওয়ার হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্বে (লাইনের উভয় পাশে ১৪ মিটার) থাকার জন্য সম্মানিত এলাকাবাসীকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পর কেউ সঞ্চালন লাইনের সংস্পর্শে এসে দুর্ঘটনার শিকার হলে তার জন্য "পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি" কোনোভাবেই দায়ী থাকবে না।

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Professor Dr. Mosaddik Hossain Kamal
Director
ICT Cell
University of Dhaka
GD-582

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the office of the Registrar, are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 3 (Three) permanent posts of Lecturer in the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Dhaka. In the pay scales of Tk. 22,000-53,060/- (National Pay scale-2015).

Qualifications: Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 both in Bachelor and Master degrees in Nutrition and Food Science with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 in both SSC & HSC examinations. Requirements for either the SSC or HSC examinations may be relaxed for the candidates who have obtained the first position/the highest CGPA in both Bachelor and Master degrees. Candidates having a Ph.D. in the relevant field and research publication(s) in a quality journal may get preference. Articles published in predatory journals will not be accepted. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the Dhaka University Website).

Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials and mark-sheets/grade sheets and proof of experience along with a Pay Order/Bank Draft of the value Tk. 750/- (Seven hundred fifty) only payable to the Registrar, should reach Director, Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Dhaka on or before 16.04.2026. Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

GD-576

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
Plot -F-4B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Memo No: 57.03.0000.051.07.956.25-877 Date: 12 March, 2026

e-Tender Notice No: 11/2025-26

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Package Description	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing/Opening Date and Time
1244324	CP-GD-40	Supply and Operation of Desktop Computers	05-Apr-2026 17:00	06-Apr-2026 15:00
1244349	CP-GD-43	Supply, Installation & Operation of Smart Boards	06-Apr-2026 17:00	07-Apr-2026 15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders 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 mandatory.

The fees for the e-Tender Document Price have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to 5:00 PM of one day before the Closing Date.

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

Mir Zahir Hasan
12.03.2026
Project Director (Additional Secretary)
ASSET Project
Telephone: 880-02-41024953
E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd

GD-586

INTERNATIONAL

IRANIAN MINES

Nightmare at sea for the West

AFP, Paris

Tehran is seeking to choke the vital Strait of Hormuz to oil traffic following US and Israeli strikes against Iran, with fears it could be using sea mines to do so. Any Iranian mining of the key shipping lane, as its forces did in the 1980s, would be a nightmare for Western demining teams. Here's an explainer:

WHAT ARE SEA MINES?

"Mines are the weapon of the poor," a former senior officer with the French navy and specialist on the subject told AFP on condition of anonymity. Yet "they pose a fundamental threat to maritime trade and to the freedom of action of naval forces," he said.

HOW MANY DOES IRAN HAVE?

Elie Tenenbaum, a researcher at the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI), said Iran was estimated to have some 5,000-6,000 naval mines, including "drifting mines that are extremely difficult to intercept".

Contact mines can drift around on the surface with the current or can be moored to an anchor on the sea floor. They explode when they come into contact with a ship's hull.

The Iranians also had influence mines adapted to the Gulf's shallow waters, which are sown on the seabed and explode when a large ship is detected overhead, he said. The Iranians could also use speedboats to attach limpet mines to the hulls of ships, which would be set to explode at a certain time, he added.

The Iranians can rapidly deploy all these mines "in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz using high-speed small boats equipped as minelayers", the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) said in a 2019 report.

HAVE THEY BEEN USED BEFORE?

Tehran used deployed sea mines during its conflict with Iraq in the 1980s during the so-called "tanker war", forcing the United States to escort commercial ships.

During the Gulf war in 1991, Iraqi forces deployed 1,300 mines, badly damaging two US navy ships, including the USS Princeton, which it cost about \$100 million to bring back on line, according to US researcher Scott Truver, who has taught at the Naval War College.

WHAT OF DEMINING?

Western nations have the means to demine the Strait of Hormuz should it be necessary, but such an operation would be long and complicated.

"Strategically placed sea mines could become the Achilles heel of US naval operations," the Center for Maritime Strategy said last year, warning Iran but also China and Russia had acquired the cheap munition.



Trump's missteps may fuel Putin's power

Analysts warn as Russian negotiator meets Trump envoys in Florida amid US-Israeli war on Iran

CNN ONLINE

If Vladimir Putin's quarter-century of expansionist rule has taught the West anything, it's that the Russian president shouldn't be taken at his word.

That hasn't stopped top US officials from perpetually buying the Russian strongman's lines. President Donald Trump's biggest misconception is that Putin wants peace in Ukraine, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Now, Trump's team risks falling victim to its own credulity again. Just as Moscow is helping to target drones threatening US troops in the Iran war, according to a CNN report, the administration may ease more of the sanctions that power Putin's Ukraine killing machine. The hope would be to lessen Trump's political jam over oil prices.

It would be an extraordinary twist if Putin emerged as the first winner of the deepening Middle East crisis because Trump rocked global energy markets by launching his own war.

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL IN FLORIDA

In the latest US-Russia melodrama of the Trump era, a top Russian official huddled with Trump's team in Florida on Wednesday. Special envoy Kirill Dmitriev met special envoy Steve Witkoff; the president's son-in-law Jared Kushner; and White House senior adviser Josh Groenbaum. "The teams discussed a variety of topics and agreed to stay in touch," Witkoff said in a readout that touched on none of the suddenly burning US-Russia issues.

But before the meeting, Witkoff downplayed reports that the Russians were providing Iran with intelligence about the movements of US troops, ships and aircraft.

But the plot thickened Wednesday when CNN's Nick Paton Walsh exclusively reported that Russia was helping Iran with drone tactics learned in Ukraine to hit US and Gulf targets. This is the most overt and concerning such cooperation yet between the anti-US axis allies, a Western intelligence official said.

PUTIN'S STRATEGIC GAME

An unexpected oil bonanza is only

Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in January.

PUTIN'S BALANCING ACT

Still, Putin has a fine line to walk. His core interest is winning the war in Ukraine. Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall told CNN's Kaitlan Collins on Wednesday that the global energy situation amid the Iran war was "very delicate." He added: "I think the lifting (of) the oil



one of the ways Putin can benefit from the war in Iran. The United States and its European allies may divert resources and arms away from supporting Kyiv's war effort. And while Trump's team met Putin's envoy, European allies are still reeling from the president's fury over their reluctance to join the assault on Iran. This is all grist for Putin's long-term strategy of fracturing cohesion among Nato states.

These benefits may partly offset blows to Russian foreign policy if the Iranian regime is weakened or eventually topples. Russia lost another ally this year with the US special forces raid that toppled

sanctions on India, buying Russian oil, I think that's doing something good for America right now."

But he went on: "Of course, I have no use for Russia either ... I think just as quickly as we took those sanctions away, we can put them back on." That may take a while. Stunning imagery on Wednesday of two tankers burning raises the possibility of a deepening crisis. Unless Trump manages to extricate US soon, he may share something else with Putin: having started a war that miscalculated an adversary's capacity to fight back and that drags on longer than he expected.



IRAN GIRLS' SCHOOL

Democrats want answers on strikes

REUTERS, Washington

Nearly every US Senate Democrat signed a letter sent to US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday requesting a "swift investigation" of airstrikes on a girls' school in Iran that killed scores of children and any other potential US military actions causing civilian harm.

Reuters reported on March 5 that US military investigators believe it is likely that US forces were responsible for the strike on the school on February 28, as US and Israeli forces launched attacks on Iran.

Iran govt not at risk of collapse

REUTERS, New York

US intelligence indicates that Iran's leadership is still largely intact and is not at risk of collapse any time soon after nearly two weeks of relentless US and Israeli bombardment, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

A "multitude" of intelligence reports provide "consistent analysis that the regime is not in danger" of collapse and "retains control of the Iranian public," said one of the sources, all of whom were granted anonymity to discuss the findings.

The latest report was completed within the last few days, the source said. With political pressure building over soaring oil costs, President Donald Trump has suggested he will end the military operation "soon." But finding an acceptable end to the war could be difficult if Iran's hardline leaders remain firmly entrenched.

JS mourns Khaleda Zia, July martyrs

FROM PAGE 12

Taher to speak on the matter.

Taher, taking the floor, said the condolence motion had been prepared in a "one-sided manner" and that greater caution was needed in future to make parliament "neutral and vibrant". He then mentioned Nizami, Sayedee, Mojaheed, Abdus Sobhan, Sheikh Ansar Ali, Riasat Ali, Abdul Khalek Mondol, Hafeza Asma Khatun, Rokeya Ansar, Sultana Razia, Rasheda Khatun, AKM Yusuf, Nazir Ahmed, Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Quader Molla, and Mir Quasem Ali for inclusion.

The Speaker then said several more names would be added to the motion: Saleha Khanam, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Kamal Ibne Yusuf and Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu.

Chief Whip Nurul Islam then came up with more names, including Gautam Chakraborty, MA Matin, Mujibur Rahman Manju, Anwarul Hossain Khan and former air-vice marshal AK Khandker.

He then requested that the parliament secretariat be informed of names of others, including former MPs or distinguished individuals, who have been left out.

Opposition chief whip Nahid Islam later proposed inclusion of Sharif Osman Bin Hadi, Abrar Fahad and Felani Khatun.

The Speaker then said the names would be included.

The Speaker proposed including

those killed in the 2013 Shapla Chattar crackdown and the 2009 Palkhona massacre.

The motion paid tribute to victims of the Milestone School tragedy, and a number of distinguished personalities from home and abroad.

About Khaleda, the motion noted that Bangladesh lost its "three-time former prime minister and two-time former leader of the opposition in parliament, the second female prime minister in the Muslim world and an uncompromising leader of democracy, and former chairperson of the BNP" on December 30, 2025.

The motion, after highlighting Khaleda's contributions to the nation and its politics, described her as "a memorable, beloved, exemplary and most popular politician of Bangladesh".

The condolence motion remembered those killed between 2007 and August 2024 in the struggles for democracy, rule of law, justice, and human rights. It stated that many had fallen victim to enforced disappearance, crimes against humanity, killings in the name of crossfire, torture, and mass arrests.

The motion also paid tribute to those killed during the July uprising, including Abu Sayed and Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Muddho.

It remembered former BNP lawmaker Ilias Ali, who became a victim of enforced disappearance.

Taking part in the discussion on Khaleda, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that in her 43-year-long political career, Khaleda never compromised on democracy and independence.

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said the happiest person would have been Khaleda had she been present in parliament.

Jamaat leader ATM Azharul Islam said, "Those of us who were in prison cannot deny July. During my time in Jamaat's leadership, I joined many movements and struggles with Khaleda Zia. She was always uncompromising for the country and steadfast on every issue."

Other participants in the discussion included Andaleev Rahman Partho and State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Anindya Islam.

On the July fighters, Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam said, "The July uprising is more than an uprising. It represents the aspiration for a new Bangladesh."

BNP MP Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Water Resources Minister Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie also spoke.

The motion was adopted and one minute of silence was observed in memory of the deceased, followed by prayers led by Religious Affairs Minister Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain (Kaykobad).

Wedding joy turns to mourning

FROM PAGE 1

officer of the hospital.

Seven bodies were brought by a Navy ambulance. Three injured persons were also brought in another ambulance; two of them later died while one remains in critical condition, she told The Daily Star.

The nine names were recorded in the KMCH register as Putul, 30; Oishe, 30; Alif, 12; Md Nayeem Sheikh, 28; one-year-old Fahim; one-and-a-half-year-old Iram; Asadur Rahman Sabbir, 27; Mitu, 20; and Anwara Begum, 48.

At KMCH last evening, Mazharul Islam Sohan identified himself as a cousin of Sabbir.

He said the wedding of Sabbir and Mitu had taken place around noon at Mitu's home in Noksha village of Koyra.

"After the ceremony, the bride and

groom along with family members were heading to the groom's house in Shelabunia village of Mongla," he said.

"But the accident happened near Rampal. Thirteen people, including the bride and groom, died."

Rampal Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Sukanta Kumar Paul said four other bodies were kept at the upazila health complex.

The identities of all victims could not be confirmed until the filing of this report around 9:30pm last night.

Three of the four bodies brought to Rampal Upazila Health Complex have been identified, while the full identity of one victim is still unknown, said Dr Rajesh, medical officer of the health complex.

The identified victims include Abdur

Razzak, 70, and Arfa, 10, both from Shelabunia village in Mongla, and Rashida, 70, from Naksha Boyra area of Khulna.

Regarding the fourth victim, Dr Rajesh said only the name "Lamia" could be known so far, and her detailed identity has yet to be confirmed.

Khorshed Alam, a Mongla Municipal BNP Senior Joint Convener, said Razzak was Sabbir's father and president of ward-8 BNP.

"The wedding of Razzak's youngest son Sabbir was held today. They were returning home when the accident happened. Thirteen people, including family members and the microbus driver, were killed," he said.

[Our correspondents in Khulna and Bagerhat contributed to the report]

Nahid seeks justice

FROM PAGE 2

Paying tribute to those who "stood before bullets with courage", Nahid expressed gratitude to people who were killed, injured, or permanently disabled during the movement, calling them "heroes whose sacrifice shaped the country's democratic future."

He said the uprising was not led by any single group but emerged from people across different sections of society.

"The participation of activists from different political organisations, including Shibir, Islamist and leftist

student groups, helped turn the protests into a nationwide uprising," he said.

During his speech, Nahid also mentioned the story of Anas, a tenth-grade student who wrote a letter to his mother before joining the protests. In it, Anas said that if even a child or a disabled person could join the struggle for justice, he too could not remain at home.

Referring to Bangladesh's history of political struggle, Nahid said the events of 2024 were part of a broader tradition of democratic movements.

"From the independence movement

of 1947 to the Liberation War of 1971 and subsequent democratic struggles, Bangladesh has repeatedly witnessed sacrifices in the pursuit of justice and freedom," he said.

He also recalled earlier movements, including the quota reform protests and the road safety movement.

Citing the national referendum, he said the results clearly demonstrated public support for democratic reforms. "In a democracy, the people's verdict is sovereign and must be respected," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Loco)
Bangladesh Railway, Kamalapur, Dhaka

e-Tender Notice No. 54.01.0000.205.04.032.25-26 Date: 10.03.2026

e-Tender is invited in National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works, details are given below:

S.L.No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1.	1241044	54.01.0000.205.04.027.25-26	25-Mar-2026 12:00	25-Mar-2026 14:00
2.	1243105	54.01.0000.205.04.012.25-26	25-Mar-2026 12:00	25-Mar-2026 14:00

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 banks branches up to one hour before tender last selling time.

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

এস (২৬) (২১৩)

Md. Sajib Al Hassan
Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Loco)
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka

GD-580

নিয়োগ শাখা

নম্বর: ৩০.৩৪.০০০০.০৭৩.৩৫.০০০.২৬-১৩৮ তারিখ: ১০-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি.

লিখিত পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইন্স লিমিটেড এর সিকিউরিটি গার্ড (ক্যাজুয়াল), পেট্রিম্যান (ক্যাজুয়াল), ডিসওয়াসার (ক্যাজুয়াল) এবং স্টোর হেল্পার (ক্যাজুয়াল) (শুধু পুরুষ) পদে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের মধ্য হতে উচ্চতা ও বিএমআই টেস্টে উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা আগামী ১৪-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি. শনিবার বেলা ০২.০০ টায় আদর্শ উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়, মিরপুর-১০, কাফরুল, ঢাকা এবং কুমিল্লা হাই স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ, ফিল্ডফোর্ড, ঢাকা কেন্দ্রে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে:

ক্রম	পদের নাম	রোল নম্বর	কেন্দ্রের নাম	পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও সময়
০১	সিকিউরিটি গার্ড (ক্যাজুয়াল)	২২০০০০০৪--২২০০৮৩১৫ ২২০০৮৩১৬--২২০০৯৯৭৪	আদর্শ উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়, মিরপুর-১০, কাফরুল, ঢাকা	১৪-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি. শনিবার বেলা ০২.০০ টা
০২	পেট্রিম্যান (ক্যাজুয়াল)	১১০০০০১২--১১০১২৪৭৬	কুমিল্লা হাই স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ ফিল্ডফোর্ড, ঢাকা	
০৩	ডিসওয়াসার (ক্যাজুয়াল)	১২০০০০০১-- ১২০০০১৮৭		
০৪	স্টোর হেল্পার (ক্যাজুয়াল) (শুধু পুরুষ)	১৭০০০০০৯-- ১৭০০০৭৮৭		

উল্লিখিত পদে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীগণ <https://bba1.teletalk.com.bd/bba19/admitcard/> লিংকে সরাসরি ক্লিক করে প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড করতে পারবেন। ডাউনলোডকৃত প্রবেশপত্রের রসিদ প্রিন্টসহ বর্ণিত প্রার্থীগণকে ১৪-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি. শনিবার বেলা ০১.৩০ টায় মধ্যে পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

উল্লেখ্য, মোবাইল ফোন, ক্যালকুলেটর, ঘড়ি অথবা যে কোনো ধরনের ইলেকট্রনিক ডিভাইসসহ পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ সম্পূর্ণরূপে নিষিদ্ধ। কোনোভাবেই এর ব্যত্যয় ঘটানো যাবে না।

বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্য: ১৪-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি. শনিবার পরীক্ষা শুরু হওয়ার (বেলা ০২.০০ টায়) পর কোনো প্রার্থীকে পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ করতে দেয়া হবে না।

যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের নির্দেশক্রমে-
মোঃ শফিকুল ইসলাম
ব্যবস্থাপক প্রশাসন

বিমান
বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইন্স
আকাশে শান্তি বিাত

GD-577

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Parliament revives after a long pause

MPs must serve people's interests, not their parties'

After a long wait, the nation watched as the first session of the 13th parliament commenced with a full house—a defining moment marking the country's return to democratic practice. It took a blood-soaked uprising and the sacrifice of thousands to oust the previous authoritarian regime and pave the way for this democratic revival through a free, fair, and participatory election held on February 12. As a result, expectations from this parliament are naturally high.

Notably, the first session was conducted relatively efficiently. With the outgoing speaker and deputy speaker positions from the 12th parliament vacant, BNP lawmaker Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain stepped in to preside over the inaugural session. Veteran BNP leader and freedom fighter Hafiz Uddin Ahmad was elected the speaker, and Kayser Kamal, MP and BNP's law affairs secretary, was elected the deputy speaker.

There was a political consensus earlier that the deputy speaker should be from the opposition, and the BNP had also mentioned this in their manifesto. Although they offered the position to Jamaat-e-Islami, the latter declined. Jamaat's stance in this regard was that they could not accept the position unless a final decision on the implementation of the July National Charter was made. Nevertheless, it would have set a good precedent if Jamaat had accepted the BNP's offer.

Going forward, irrespective of their party affiliation, the neutrality of the speaker and the deputy speaker must be maintained in all matters. We hope Speaker Hafiz will not follow in the footsteps of many of his predecessors by denying opposition and independent MPs the opportunity to properly express their views and grievances in the House.

Another important task undertaken during the first session was the presentation of the 133 ordinances enacted during the tenure of the immediate past interim government. We expect MPs to scrutinise each ordinance thoroughly before deciding their fate in coming parliamentary sittings. One positive development has been the formation of five committees, at least two of which include MPs from both benches. However, all five committees—just like the 13th parliament itself—have hardly any female members. Perhaps not surprisingly, the first session was also marked by opposition sloganeering and a symbolic walkout in protest during the president's address.

Parliamentary democracy returned to Bangladesh after a long wait yesterday. Therefore, our expectations from both ruling and opposition MPs—voted to the House by the people of Bangladesh—are that they recognise they represent the public, not merely their party or alliance. They must serve the people's interests with utmost sincerity and ensure that the parliament functions through intelligent debates and discussions. While the ruling party, despite its two-thirds majority, should not turn the parliament into a party office, the opposition should also resort to strategies like walkouts and boycotts only as a last measure. The country cannot afford yet another failed parliament.

Help stranded umrah pilgrims return home

Govt, agencies must act to ease their suffering

It is deeply concerning that several thousand Bangladeshis who travelled to Saudi Arabia to perform umrah have been stranded following widespread flight disruptions triggered by the war in the Middle East. After multiple countries in the region closed their airspace from February 28, many flights connecting Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh were cancelled, leaving pilgrims unable to return as scheduled. For many pilgrims, what was supposed to be a brief spiritual visit has instead become a prolonged, financially burdensome experience.

The majority of pilgrims had opted for umrah packages of 15 to 20 days. But as their planned travel arrangements collapsed due to the suspension of flights, their stay in Saudi Arabia has extended far beyond the package period. As a result, many now face mounting expenses for accommodation and meals. Pilgrims have alleged that travel agencies are refusing to bear these additional costs as the original package period has expired. At the same time, some agencies are demanding an additional Tk 30,000 to Tk 35,000 for replacement tickets, while hotel accommodation and meals are costing stranded passengers Tk 4,000 to Tk 5,000 per day.

For many pilgrims, arranging such large sums at short notice is extremely difficult. Faced with rising costs, many have turned to the Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia for help. Many Bangladeshi migrants have faced similar hardship as most flights through Middle Eastern airports remain suspended. The war and the resulting airspace closures are beyond the control of travel agencies or the pilgrims themselves, so the financial burden should not fall entirely on those stranded far from home.

In this situation, coordinated action is urgently needed. We urge the government to work closely with airlines and travel agencies to arrange additional flights so that stranded Bangladeshis can return home quickly. Airlines operating direct routes between the two countries should also be asked to keep ticket prices within a reasonable range. At the same time, travel agencies must demonstrate greater responsibility towards their clients by assisting with accommodation, negotiating lower airfares, or sharing the financial burden where possible. The Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia should step forward to support the stranded pilgrims, while the government should consider providing financial assistance to the stranded migrant workers in Saudi Arabia from the welfare fund created for them. Citizens undertaking a religious pilgrimage should not be left to face such hardship on their own. We also call upon the US-Israeli authorities to work towards de-escalating the war so that normal economic activities and business can be restored in the region.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

British MPs vote to reject no-deal Brexit

On this day in 2019, British MPs voted to reject a no-deal Brexit, defeating Theresa May's government 321 votes to 278.

The challenges before the prime minister

They are far more complex than we think



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.



MAHFUZ ANAM

The new dispensation—new election, new parliament, new leadership at the helm of the country, and new possibility of accountable governance—can truly be called a product of public will. Tarique Rahman's emergence as the new leader is also part of that change, which was impossible to imagine before the fall of Sheikh Hasina but appeared inevitable after. In fact, when we participated in the February 12 election, the prospect of his becoming the next prime minister seemed like a foregone conclusion. Such was the transformative nature of the change of fortune.

During his campaign as well as following his massive electoral victory, Tarique has given the impression of being a sober, reflective, and clear-thinking leader. He can be credited to have made a good start. Those have led to questions on which the prime minister must seriously introspect.

Normally, for anyone, first-time premiership can be quite challenging. It becomes far more so in case of a country like ours. Of course, we love Bangladesh with all our heart, but our mind never fails to warn us about the tremendous complexity of administering our beloved country. To start with, taking care of such a huge population—close to 18 crore—that lives within such a limited terrain—over 147,000 sq-km—and faces relentless natural calamities makes successful governance extremely difficult. Our industrial growth, though impressive compared to many other countries, suffers from a shortage of capital, lack of skilled workers, supply shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and vital management flaws, not to mention a short supply of energy. Added to that is the political instability that seems to be our fate. In fact, this new government has inherited over 15 years of corruption followed by 18 months of not so effective governance.

Whatever normal challenges the new prime minister would have encountered have now multiplied severalfold with the international order being sent on a wild spin by the whimsical and indecipherable decisions of the US president who appears to be serving the interest of Israel more than that of the US.

High unemployment, weak investment, the need for job creation, curbing inflation, export diversification, and stabilising the banking sector are among the most urgent economic challenges the BNP government faces. On the political side, rebuilding democratic institutions and allowing diversity of views and dissent will take time, but the early signs of that must appear from the very start. One of the most challenging

tasks that Tarique Rahman is likely to face is handling parliament with an opposition which, if I am not mistaken, will be robust under Jamaat-e-Islami's leadership. The question is: does the ruling party have enough experienced parliamentarians who know how to manoeuvre through the challenges that are likely to come?

We are looking forward to the workings of the new parliament, which had its inaugural session yesterday. We hope to finally have a parliament that truly represents the electorate, and not just the party that our MPs are nominated from. After the restoration of the parliamentary system in 1991, we had continuous elections—the last three being highly manipulated—and parliaments had to go through a lot of troubles and tribulations. But what

One of the most challenging tasks that Tarique Rahman is likely to face is handling parliament with an opposition which, if I am not mistaken, will be robust under Jamaat-e-Islami's leadership. The question is: does the ruling party have enough experienced parliamentarians who know how to manoeuvre through the challenges that are likely to come?

we really did not have was a proper opposition. Despite the shrinking of space by ruling parties, they were responsible for wasting too much time boycotting the sessions, and hardly utilised parliament for debating issues of public concern and/or revealing corruption or misuse of public money by the government.

We hope that we will not have a repeat of the culture of "opposition for opposition's sake," meaning never examining the government's plan or proposal in terms of its true worth, as if the role of the opposition is nothing but to oppose anything that the government proposes. This leads to a wastage of time and resources and gives birth to a quarrelling culture, as opposed to a debating culture, which often leads to bitterness and abusive verbiage.

However, in delivering good governance, the biggest problem—one that will be most difficult to solve—will come from the prime minister's own party. There will be two groups of BNP who will embarrass the government.

The grassroots activists, unless firmly stopped from the very beginning, will try to take official procedures in their own hands, misinterpret them, distort them, and turn village- or upazila-level projects and regular government programmes into money-making machines.

The other group, consisting of the senior and mid-level ones, the

High unemployment, weak investment, the need for job creation, curbing inflation, export diversification, and stabilising the banking sector are among the most urgent economic challenges the BNP government faces. On the political side, rebuilding democratic institutions and allowing diversity of views and dissent will take time, but the early signs of that must appear from the very start.

party members who have suffered physically, financially and politically during the Awami League's oppressive rule, will plead for favours in the guise of "compensations." They will present the case of genuine oppression and "demand" favours from the party leader, putting him in severe moral dilemma. They will collectively and individually make the case, "We have suffered so much for nearly two decades, our freedom had vanished, our finances depleted and peace of mind evaporated. Now we need and deserve some special favours." They will probably not say it but imply that "you are where you are because we endured what we endured." Tragically, our past experiences prove that this is how the rot begins. First it will be minor favours, then it will be small business deals, and then a larger picture will emerge jeopardising the prospect of good governance.

Along with the party "claimants" will come the professionals who may have not joined the party but helped it silently and covertly. They will want their jobs, positions, privileges, and accumulated financial benefits back—in some cases with retroactive promotions. Such demands could create disarray within the administration and mark the first signs of the politicisation of the bureaucracy.

All the above "demands" will present a big moral dilemma for the prime minister. He will feel guilty if he does not respond, but he will damage his reputation and effectiveness if he does.

Our past teaches us that this is how corruption begins in a new administration. Slowly but surely, the party loyalists and their business backers become the conduit for most, if not all, government contracts. They not only monopolise them but also delay their implementation, resulting

in cost escalation that damages financial discipline and control.

If there is one vital lesson to learn from Sheikh Hasina's regime, it is to control the party apparatus from the very start. Think of the Awami League, the Chhatra League, the Jubo League, and all the other "Leagues"—Sramik, Krishak, Olama, Swetchhasebak, etc.—and think of how they corrupted and destroyed its credibility and made controversial the very regime that they were supporters of. If the prime minister just examines the cronyism that has long persisted in three sectors—banking, power, and telecom—he will have a most clear and compelling picture of how one's own party members drag their government down.

I know many of my long-term friends in the BNP will take umbrage at what I am saying and discard them all. Just one pointer: Awami League leaders did the same. Need I elaborate more?

Controlling corruption will be the prime minister's toughest fight, and it will have to be mostly against his own supporters, coupled with the corrupt and self-serving businessmen who will use the party apparatus to promote their own interest, harming that of the country. In the process, they will corrode the premier's credibility and make his government unpopular.

As we stated in the beginning, the latest election, the new parliament, and the new government are all a product of public will, which is applicable not only for the new leader but for us all. We now have dreams of a future that will be corruption-free, nepotism-free, partisanship-free, and free of fear and oppression. Tarique Rahman has options that no previous party leader had. He is new, fresh, untried, and comes from a long period of forced exile that has given him a chance to study and introspect about his country, from a place that has a long tradition of democracy, tolerance, and free speech. This is rare in our political history; it gives him an opportunity to give the nation a fresh start.

For that to happen, he will need to do many things, but the very first one will have to be to restrain his party, his supporters, people who extended favour to him, and even those who stood by him at his most perilous moments. This is most tough, but if it is not done, then we will slide down the very same lane of corruption and cronyism that caused the fall of Sheikh Hasina and her party. Tarique Rahman will have to put his party under discipline and accountability. And he has to do it now. As the saying goes, "Strike the iron while it is hot." He is at the height of his popularity, acceptability, and power. He must make all tough decisions now.

Here again, history must be his guide, which proves that toughest decisions must come at the earliest moments of any government that is at its peak of popularity. With time, the popularity will inevitably erode. Then tough actions will become less and less possible.

Banning groundwater irrigation in the Barind Tract is not the answer



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MOHAMMAD SHAMSUDDUHA

In the 1970s, Bangladesh faced recurring food shortages driven by floods, droughts, and monsoonal uncertainty. Today, it feeds nearly 18 crore people. Rice output rose from about one crore tonnes in 1971 to 3.7 crore tonnes in 2020. This transformation was powered largely by groundwater. The country withdraws around 32 cubic kilometres of groundwater annually on average, roughly equivalent to draining nearly five Kaptai Lake reservoirs.

The Green Revolution of the 1980s and 1990s introduced high-yield crop varieties, fertilisers and, crucially, groundwater-fed irrigation. Nearly 80 percent of dry season Boro rice depends on groundwater. Without it, near self-sufficiency in food grains would not have been possible.

Nowhere is this shift more striking than in the Barind Tract of northwest Bangladesh. Once drought-prone and famine-affected, it became one of the country's rice bowls through intensive irrigation. I refer to this as the "Barind Paradox": groundwater transformed a dry landscape into an agricultural powerhouse, yet overuse now threatens the sustainability of that success.

Groundwater abstraction has increased dramatically over the years. In the High Barind Tract and adjoining areas, the geological conditions limit additional recharge. In some areas, dry season groundwater levels now fall below the lifting limit of traditional hand-operated wells (around seven to eight metres), making access to drinking water increasingly difficult. In several unions, seasonal shortages have become persistent, and in a few places, perennial.

These realities demand serious policy attention. However, the gazette notification by the interim government, designating 4,911 villages across 25 upazilas in three districts (Rajshahi, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj) of the Barind Tract region as water-stressed for 10 years, introduced sweeping restrictions that may create new risks while attempting to solve existing ones.

The notification states, "The construction of new tubewells and extraction of groundwater for any purpose other than drinking water



Once drought-prone and famine-affected, the Barind Tract in northwest Bangladesh became one of the country's rice bowls through intensive irrigation.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

will be prohibited, and the abstraction of groundwater through existing tubewells for any purpose other than drinking water supply will be prohibited." The notification also states that compliance with regulations is mandatory and that any violation will be considered a punishable offence under the Bangladesh Water Act, 2013.

This is a profound shift. The notified area covers roughly 5,000 square kilometres of irrigated land, where an estimated 100,000 shallow and deep tubewells operate officially during the Rabi season, according to the 2018-19 Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) Minor Irrigation Report. Around 14 lakh farmers depend directly on groundwater irrigation in these 25 upazilas. An outright ban across such a vast area could destabilise one of the pillars of the country's food security.

Three concerns arise due to this ban. First is the immediate economic and social impact. Farmers, agricultural labourers, agri-input suppliers and local businesses form an interconnected rural economy built around irrigated agriculture. A sudden ban risks disrupting livelihoods at scale, particularly in a region where alternative water sources and income opportunities are acutely limited.

The second is enforceability. Policing

communities and local institutions.

The policy appears to draw heavily on a 2025 report commissioned by the Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO) and conducted by the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM), which assessed groundwater storage, recharge and safe yield in the Barind Tract region. While the comprehensive and technically robust study identifies areas of water stress and calls for improved water

towards a new dynamic equilibrium over time rather than revert to their pre-development state.

Groundwater depletion should not be ignored. In parts of the High Barind Tract, water stress is severe and targeted restrictions are justified. However, a blanket ban risks being disproportionate. If the same criteria were applied, Dhaka would also qualify as a highly water-stressed area. Yet, the strategy there has been a gradual transition and diversification, not prohibition, recognising the economic and political realities of managing a capital city. If Dhaka is managed through transition rather than bans, why should the Barind Tract be treated differently?

A more balanced and staggered approach in the Barind Tract would impose strict pumping bans on the most critically stressed unions, starting with those classified as very high water-stressed (47 unions fall into this category). Installation of new irrigation wells should not be permitted in high water-stressed zones (40 unions), and abstraction should be gradually reduced by 50 percent over the next five years. Irrigation, with close monitoring of groundwater levels, should be allowed in moderate to very low-stress areas (128 unions). Deficits could be addressed by redistributing irrigation demand, promoting the conjunctive use of surface and groundwater where feasible, improving canals, and enhancing rainwater storage in pond-based systems.

Crop diversification must also be accelerated. Farmers are already gradually shifting from water-intensive rice to other, less water-demanding crops. High-value crops such as mango and dragon fruit—as well as alternative livelihoods like livestock, dairy, poultry, and small-scale enterprises—deserve policy support. But transitions take time. Abrupt prohibitions can undermine adaptive change rather than facilitate it.

Surface water use should be expanded where reliable, though its availability remains highly seasonal, and climate variability adds uncertainty. Strengthening local institutions such as BMDA, DAE services and NGOs will be essential to restoring trust and implementing context-specific solutions.

Groundwater has been central to Bangladesh's agricultural transformation, lifting millions out of hunger. Yet, overuse in some areas now demands careful stewardship. The answer is not indiscriminate bans, but smarter zoning, groundwater and abstraction monitoring, and targeted regulation. The country does not need to choose between food security and environmental sustainability; both require science-based, proportionate and integrated water resources management.

groundwater abstraction would be extremely challenging. Blanket bans often lead to unintended consequences, including informal or illegal pumping. Early indications suggest irrigation has not ceased in most areas, highlighting the difficulty of enforcing the ban. Regulation without realistic enforcement mechanisms can erode respect for policy, rather than strengthening it.

The third concern is about governance and trust. For decades, institutions such as the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), and NGOs like BRAC have worked closely with farming communities to expand irrigation, improve productivity, and reduce poverty. A top-down prohibition risks weakening that long-standing trust. Effective water management depends not only on regulation but also on cooperation between

management, it did not recommend a blanket ban on irrigation. Some of its assumptions merit careful reconsideration in translating scientific findings into policy.

Groundwater recharge was estimated using a single-year (2017) water balance model, with 75 percent treated as the "safe yield" for each union. Yet, recharge in northwest Bangladesh is dynamic. Over the past three to four decades, intensive irrigation pumping has induced additional recharge—the "Bengal Water Machine" recognised in the WARPO report. Using a one-year estimate to set long-term abstraction limits risks oversimplifying this evolving hydrogeological system. It also assumes groundwater levels must return to pre-irrigation conditions to achieve "safe yield," overlooking structural shifts in both water use and recharge since the 1990s. Under sustained irrigation, aquifers tend to adjust

No, justice for animals and humans is not mutually exclusive



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JANNATUL NAYM PICAL

In the past few days, courts in Bangladesh have handed down two notable verdicts in cases of animal cruelty. In one case, a Dhaka court sentenced three men to two and a half years' imprisonment each for killing 20 dogs in Jatrabari. Case documents reveal that the trio killed the dogs in the Lichu Bagan area of Dhalpur in Jatrabari using iron rods, pliers, and lethal injections on January 23, 2021. In another case, the court sentenced a man to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 10,000 after CCTV footage showed him kicking his neighbour's pet cat in Mohammadpur in February 2025.

These cases are significant not only because they show that the justice system can act to punish cruelty to animals, but also because they highlight the way society views justice and its limitations—particularly the tendency to treat different forms of justice as competing priorities rather than complementary obligations.

So, you have a scenario where the courts have applied the law, heard evidence, and delivered sentences reflecting the seriousness of the crimes, signalling that animal welfare laws in Bangladesh are being enforced. Yet, in the comment sections under several news posts on social media, particularly on Facebook, many readers have been seen responding not with appreciation for the rulings but with criticism, ridicule, and disbelief.

A common theme in these comments ran along the lines of: "In Bangladesh, people are murdered and raped and often go unpunished, but someone gets jailed for killing an animal." Simply put, many tend to think it is unfair to punish someone for killing a dog or a cat when so many serious human crimes remain unresolved. This reflects a common but flawed way of thinking: the belief that problems in one area of justice mean we can ignore others. This is an example of the

fallacy of relative privation, which argues that one problem is more important than another and therefore, the second should be ignored or overlooked.

While frustration over delayed or absent justice in cases of murder, sexual assault, or corruption is understandable, it cannot be used as a reason to dismiss cruelty to animals. Justice is not a zero-sum game; the failure to punish human-centred crimes does not mean animal abuse should go unpunished. Each crime exists on its own, and each deserves proper response. Allowing animal cruelty to continue simply because other crimes remain unresolved weakens both the rule of law and our moral standards.

There is also a social and psychological dimension to animal cruelty that makes enforcing the law important. Studies in criminology and psychology show that people who harm animals are more likely to commit other violent or antisocial acts later in life. Childhood cruelty to animals is one of the behaviours identified in the Macdonald triad, alongside fire-setting and chronic bedwetting, and has been linked to a higher likelihood of developing violent tendencies in adulthood.

The behaviour of zoosadism—deriving pleasure from harming animals—has also been associated with violence and other criminal acts. Many cases worldwide show that individuals involved in animal abuse

are often connected to other crimes, such as weapons possession, drug offences, or violence against humans. Punishing animal cruelty is therefore not only about justice for the immediate victims; it can also help prevent wider harm, reinforcing the preventive role of law enforcement.

The recent cases further underline the need for a change in societal attitudes. Many people still see animals as expendable or less important than humans, which partly explains the backlash on social media. Promoting awareness about animal welfare through schools, media campaigns, and community programmes can help cultivate empathy from an early age. Media coverage that illustrates the legal consequences of abuse, along with stories that highlight the emotional lives of animals, can also play a powerful role in shaping public attitudes. By fostering a culture of compassion alongside legal enforcement, Bangladesh can strengthen both social and legal protections for animals.

Across the world, many countries treat animal cruelty as a serious crime, with protections embedded in their legal systems. In the United Kingdom, for example, animal abusers can be sentenced to up to five years in prison, and the number of prosecutions has steadily increased. In Brazil, high-profile cases such as the Sansão dog case—in which a dog's legs were severed—led lawmakers to

increase penalties for cruelty and strengthen protections for animals. In the United States, federal and state laws address animal abuse, with serious offences carrying multi-year prison terms. Even in countries where animal welfare laws are newer, courts increasingly treat animal abuse as a serious offence rather than a minor matter. These examples show that societies recognise the value of animal welfare and view its enforcement as part of a broader moral and legal responsibility, rather than as a distraction from human-centred justice.

The ethical argument for punishing cruelty to animals is simple. Enforcing laws against animal abuse does not diminish the need to punish crimes against humans. Justice for one group does not take away justice from another. Rather, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

So, the recent court rulings in Dhaka, though modest in scope, mark a step towards demonstrating that cruelty is unacceptable and punishable, no matter who the victim is. They send a clear message: the justice system recognises the value of life beyond human beings and will enforce laws to protect the vulnerable. By rejecting the idea that the lack of justice for humans allows animal abuse to go unpunished, society can uphold a consistent and principled approach to law and morality.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR
OPINION PIECES TO
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Perfect 10 for PRIYONTEE URBEE

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

Priyontee Urbee is clear about what she wants from her career: credibility. Not hype, not headlines — but work that speaks for itself. As her OTT presence steadily grows, the actor says her focus is on strong scripts, complex characters and consistency.

"I always wanted to be an actress," she says when asked if she would have done anything differently. "No matter what I participated in, I always thought about becoming an actress. Nothing would have stopped me or made me choose differently."

Urbee opens up about her academic struggles while speaking to The Daily Star. She recalls being labelled the "less intelligent one" in her family after a disappointing HSC result and being compared to her higher-achieving siblings.

That pressure pushed her towards extreme discipline. "I used to study 20 hours a day for my DU admission test. It was frantic," she says.

Studying International Relations at the University of Dhaka helped her regain confidence. "It gave me a voice to counter when someone makes a wrong political statement," she

explains. Exposure to cultural diversity on campus, she adds, broadened her outlook—something she believes benefits her as an actor.

Urbee worked in *NeelChokro* last year and says she enjoyed the experience. Still, she remains selective about film offers.

"I don't necessarily like love stories with a typical hero and heroine," she says. "I like stories that have depth and are a bit unique."

If a script offers that complexity, she says she would be open to more film projects.

Urbee is also drawn to morally layered roles. In *Apolap*, she played an actress with a dark secret — a role that challenged the idea of the "pure" heroine.

"I don't like it when an actress is portrayed as morally perfect. A person is grey, not black and white," she says, adding that she would like to play a negative lead if the character is well-written.

When asked about a role that stayed with her after filming ended, she pointed to her debut project, *Kothay Palabe Bolo Rupban*. Cast at the last minute after initially assisting with rehearsals, she found herself deeply

immersed in the role of a mother to an eight-day-old child.

"After shooting, I felt empty," she says. "I started to feel sad about missing a child that wasn't even mine."

The experience, she adds, made her realise how emotionally consuming acting can be.

This Eid, Urbee expects to appear in eight to 10 OTT projects, including a seven-episode drama series.

She declined to share further details but emphasised that each role differs from the other.

Her career goal remains straightforward. "I'm not aiming to be something great," she says. "But I want to build a body of work where someone can say that if Urbee is in this project, then it is worth watching."

For now, she is focused on consistency, variety and strong scripts — letting the work speak for itself.



PHOTOS: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED



'Prince' teaser out, Shakib Khan in gangster avatar

The teaser of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr film *Prince*, starring Shakib Khan, has been unveiled, offering audiences a first glimpse of the actor in a gangster avatar. Directed by Abu Hayat Mahmud, the trailer hints at a gritty underworld narrative, with Shakib Khan returning to his signature long-lock look and confronting enemies in intense action sequences.

The makers have described the teaser as a 'Pre-blast', suggesting more explosive moments ahead. *Prince* has been primarily shot in Sri Lanka and Kolkata, giving the production an international backdrop.

The film features an ensemble cast including Tasnia Farin, Jyotirmoyee Kundu, Loknath Dey, Paeen Sarkar and Mrityunjoy Bhattacharya. It is scheduled for release this Eid-ul-Fitr.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'UNLEARNING THE BOOK'

Books unravel and reform as art in *Unlearning the Book*, a group exhibition exploring textile-based book forms. Contemporary artists reimagine the page through fabric, stitching, and sculptural experimentation, turning reading into a tactile encounter. The result is a quiet yet radical meditation on material, memory, and the evolving language of books.



DATE: MONDAY-SATURDAY
MARCH 10-20, 2026
TIME: 11 AM - 8 PM
(OPENING: 5 PM, MARCH 10)
VENUE: ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE DHAKA

SABINA YASMIN re-records 'Ei Mon Tomake Dilam'



Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin has re-recorded the iconic song *Ei Mon Tomake Dilam* for the upcoming film *Domm*, 44 years after she first sang it for the 1982 film *Manoshi*.

The timeless track, with lyrics by Gazi Mazharul Anwar and music by Anwar Pervez, remains a favorite among Bangladeshi music lovers. The new version features additional lyrics by Tonmoy Pervez and music arranged by Arafat

Mohsin Nidhi.

The song was recorded on March 11 at a studio in Dhaka. In the new version, Sabina Yasmin is joined by singer Momin Biswas. Speaking about the session, she said she loved the fresh composition and enjoyed working with younger artistes.

Domm, produced by SVF Alpha-i Entertainment and Chorki, will release during Eid-ul-Fitr.

NEWS

One woman's fight for the children

FROM PAGE 12
In Korail, many schools operate under project-based funding. When those projects end, the schools often shut down.

Farzana recalls one BRAC school that closed abruptly in the middle of an academic year. Many students had already enrolled, but admissions elsewhere had closed.

"There was nowhere for them to go," she says.

Through the library, she and other committee members tried to support the displaced students.

But the broader pattern remained unchanged: once projects end, many children are left without structured learning opportunities. Some drift into child labour — cleaning jobs, domestic work, or other informal employment.

"Up to SSC, parents somehow try," Farzana explains. "But once a child passes SSC, many families feel their children have been educated enough. Even if a child wants to continue studying, he or she is expected to work and support the family financially instead."

For girls, the dropout rate is even higher. Financial hardship and early marriage often end their education long before they can complete it.

Beyond economic barriers, there are quieter humiliations that push students away from school.

"When students cannot pay fees on time, some are made to stand in class as punishment," Farzana says. "That embarrassment drives many of them away."

Alongside conventional education, Farzana believes awareness about "good touch" and "bad touch" must begin early — both at home and in schools.

"When I first introduced the topic in class, many parents objected. Some even scolded their children for talking about sexual harassment."

The children themselves were initially uncomfortable discussing the issue.

"But slowly they began sharing what was happening in their own schools and surroundings."

Among the many students she has taught, one story remains particularly close to her heart.

Sumaiya Islam was in second grade when Farzana taught her at Surabhi School.

"She was very attached to me," Farzana recalls.

When Farzana later moved to another school, Sumaiya followed her there. Even after her parents relocated

to Savar, the girl refused to change schools and travelled to Korail every day so she could continue studying with Farzana.

"This year she will sit for her SSC exam," Farzana says with a quiet smile. "She is one of the most remarkable chapters of my life."

But not every story ends with hope. Around 2012, Farzana learned that another student, Tamannah, was being raped by her father. After the girl's mother died, she had nowhere safe to turn.

Tamannah was eventually married off, but when her husband learned of the abuse, the marriage collapsed. She was later forced into sex work.

"It still causes me deep pain," Farzana says softly. "I wanted all my girl students to have a good life."

Experiences like this pushed her work beyond teaching. She began accompanying families to police stations and courtyards, helping them seek justice and protection.

In another case in 2018, two sisters aged four and six were raped by a 60-year-old man. After learning of the incident, Farzana and others filed a case, despite pressure to withdraw it.

They refused. The case is still ongoing. Recently, the accused side reportedly tried to settle the matter by offering Tk 3 lakh. The victims' family eventually left the area after facing harassment.

"We have evidence against the accused," Farzana says. "And we will continue fighting."

Another former student, Lima, was sent to work as a domestic helper. One night around 100am, Farzana received a call for help — the girl's employers had been physically abusing her.

Farzana and her husband went to the police station, but she alleges the authorities initially did not take the complaint seriously. Her persistence eventually led to a raid on the employer's house and the girl's rescue.

Incidents like these gradually strengthened Farzana's standing in Korail.

Today, she is often invited to help mediate local disputes — something she says would have been unimaginable for a woman in the community years ago.

Still, the journey has not been easy. In 2018, Farzana helped organise a torch procession as part of the anti-rapement movement.

"Afterwards, Banani Police Station warned us not to hold further programmes and recorded our names and addresses," she says. "Political leaders also pressured us to stop."

"Continuing this fight is not easy," she adds. "But stopping has never crossed my mind."

For Farzana, success is not measured by awards or recognition. Calling for legal reforms, equal treatment under the law, and genuine political commitment to women's rights, she says justice must become faster and more certain.

"I will be at peace when legal complexities no longer delay justice," she says. "Even with evidence, rapists often go unpunished. That must change."

She adds, "We celebrate Women's Day like a festival. But it is meant to protest injustice. Women still do not enjoy full freedom."

For Farzana, the real measure of success lies closer to home. "The day I see hundreds more people in Korail standing up against injustice," she says, "I will consider myself successful."

Curb corruption

FROM PAGE 12
He said the guiding principle of the foreign policy in a "fascism-free Bangladesh" is "Bangladesh before all".

The Annual Development Programme for 2025-26 prioritises sustaining economic growth, reducing unemployment, creating jobs, alleviating poverty, advancing agriculture and industry, developing human resources, and improving quality of life.

Shahabuddin also highlighted the financial burden caused by "unprecedented corruption" in the energy sector under the "previous fascist government."

Public confidence in institutions, particularly the Election Commission, had fallen to near zero during the "fascist regime," but has begun to improve since the 13th National Election.

The government, he said, will ensure national institutions function in accordance with the law.

He remembered those subjected to enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and repression during "one and a half decades of the fascist regime".

Law enforcement agencies, he said, had been used as partisan forces under the ousted regime, but the present government is committed to making them professional and efficient.

Jamaat made inroads into AL, BNP bastions

FROM PAGE 12
candidate Mahbubur Rahman Belal got 54.78 percent of the votes cast in the latest polls. In the constituency, the party got only 4.62 and 5.21 percent votes in 1991 and 1996, respectively. They did not field candidates in the next two elections.

Again, in Patuakhali 2, Jamaat polled a mere 2.03 percent in 1991 and 1.70 percent in 1996. In this constituency, the party did not nominate candidates in the next two polls. However, in the 2026 general election, its nominee Shafiqul Islam secured this seat with a vote share of 52.23 percent.

A similar turnaround occurred in Dhaka-12. Jamaat secured only negligible shares of the vote there in 1991 and 1996 (3.62 percent and 2.80 percent, respectively). Yet, the constituency was won by Jamaat candidate Md Saiful Islam with a vote share of 42.74 percent.

The average winning margin for Jamaat candidates in the nine seats was approximately 22,439 votes. The highest margin was 92,566 in Rangpur-3, and the lowest was 2,920 in Dhaka-4.

BREAKTHROUGH
A Daily Star analysis shows that Jamaat captured 14 seats in BNP bastions and 12 in AL bastions in this year's polls.

Strongholds are defined as constituencies where either party won at least three seats in the four elections held between 1991 and 2008. By this measure, the AL had 78 strongholds and the BNP 85.

In the February 12 polls, Jamaat won Joypurhat-1 and Khulna-2, both of which the BNP had secured in all four previous elections.

Jamaat also claimed 12 constituencies where the BNP had won three of the four elections. These include Chapainawabganj-1 and 2, Dhaka-12, Jhenaidah 2, 3, and 4, Kushitia 2 and 3, Chattogram-15, Meherpur-2, Rajshahi-1, and Chuadanga-1.

In these BNP strongholds, Jamaat's average victory margin was about 28,375 votes. The largest winning margin came in Chuadanga-1 with 57,848 votes, while the smallest was in Rajshahi-1 with just 1,884 votes.

Some of these wins were aided by divisions within the BNP. In Dhaka-12, for instance, BNP's alliance partner, the Biplobi Workers' Party, fielded a candidate, while a BNP rebel also contested. Combined, the BNP-backed and rebel votes would have surpassed Jamaat's winning tally. Similar situations unfolded in Jhenaidah 4 and Dhaka-12, where rebel candidates from

BNP benefited Jamaat.

Jamaat also made notable gains in the AL strongholds, winning 12 such seats. In these constituencies, Jamaat's average victory margin was approximately 27,311 votes. The largest margin came in Jashore-5 with 47,831 votes, while the smallest was in Bagerhat-1 with 3,204 votes.

Three of the seats — Bagerhat-1, Narail 2, and Faridpur-1 — had been won by the AL in all four elections between 1991 and 2008.

The remaining nine had been secured by the AL in three of those four contests. These include Gazipur-4, Jashore-1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, Pabna-4, Patuakhali 2, and Sherpur-1.

DEBUT IN 55 SEATS
Among the 68 seats won by Jamaat in the 2026 general election, nearly 81 percent (55 constituencies) were ones the party had not won in any of the four elections held between 1991 and 2008.

Jamaat secured victory in the remaining 13 seats at least once during the same period. In the seats, which had a history of Jamaat's success, the average winning margin was 47,988 votes, almost 80 percent higher than that of the newly secured seats.

The average margin was boosted by landslide victories in seats such as Sattkhira-2 (150,666 votes margin), Gaibandha-1 (102,729 votes margin), Sattkhira 3 (78,854 votes margin).

By contrast, in the 55 constituencies that Jamaat won for the first time this year, the average winning margin was 26,952 votes.

Dhaka University Development Studies Prof Asif Shahan, also a political analyst, said, "One possible explanation behind Jamaat's improved electoral performance is the return of 'shy voters' to their original party preference. In previous elections, a segment of voters who ideologically preferred Jamaat may have voted strategically for the BNP to defeat the AL."

"As the political context changed, such strategic voters may have reverted to supporting Jamaat directly."

He said that another factor may relate to perceptions of BNP's involvement in criminal activities or extortion, which could have also influenced some voters to vote for Jamaat as an alternative.

Prof Asif added that candidate-level dynamics may also have mattered. "In several constituencies, rebel candidates associated with the BNP appear to have split the vote."

JAMAAT STAYS STEADY
Jamaat also won 21 constituencies in which the party finished second in 2008. Of these, striking reversals occurred

in Rangpur-1 and 2, where the party overturned its 2008 defeat margins of 140,719 and 129,685 votes, respectively, to secure its first victories in the seats.

The party had been historically most successful in Sattkhira-2, where it won in 1991, 1996, and 2001. The party's largest victory by number of votes this year came in this seat (150,066 votes).

Six other seats won this year had also been secured by Jamaat twice in the four elections held between 1991 and 2008: Sattkhira-3, Bagerhat-4, Pabna-1, and Khulna-6 (1991 and 2001), and Nilphamari-3 and Pirojpur-1 (1996 and 2001).

Jamaat also reclaimed constituencies such as Sattkhira-1, Jashore-6, Chuadanga-2, and Chapainawabganj-3, which it had not won since the 1991 election.

Contacted, Maulana Abdul Halim, Jamaat assistant secretary general, said, "Despite severe oppression faced by the party since 2009, the organisation's leaders and activists remained steadfast in their ideological stance, which has had an impact on voters. Even in highly adverse circumstances, we tried to stand by the people."

SC clears govt

FROM PAGE 12
executive high-handedness, arbitrariness, and malafide exercise of power" by the respondents, referring to the government.

On January 29, Justice Md Rezaul Haque, a chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed "no order" on the petition.

Earlier in the day, the HC rejected a writ petition filed by the organisation challenging the legality of the government's move to award the contract to DP World for container handling.

Lawyers Ahsanul Karim, Syed Mamun Mahbub, and Md Anwar Hossen appeared for Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibid Forum, while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state.

The ousted Awami League government initiated the move to appoint the DP World for the operation of the port's most modern, well equipped, and functional container terminal.

After the fall of the AL regime on August 5, 2024, the interim government continued with the move and progressed much aiming to sign a concession agreement with the DP World to operate NCT by December last year. The initiative slowed down following a pending writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the dead procedure by the interim government.



Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Director
Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport
Kurmitola, Dhaka
www.caab.gov.bd

Memo No: 30.31.0000.173.3258133/1309

Dated : 11/03/2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Package information is available in tender notice under e-GP system portal.

This is 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. Detailed of the Goods listed below:

No.	Name of Goods	Package No.	Tender ID	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
01.	Supply of Pallet for Semi Automation of Export and import cargo handling facility for HSA	30.31.0000.000.211.32.0121.18.269 dt 10.3.26	1244992	30-Mar-2026 at 16:00Hrs	31-Mar-2026 at 12:00Hrs

Further information and guidelines is available in the e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

স্মারক নং-৩০.৩১.০০০০.০০১.০৬.০০১.২৬/১৪৪
তারিখ: ১১/০৩/২০২৬ খ্রি.

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GD-579



Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT)
Office of the SPM, PIN-13083
Department of Pharmacy
Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali-3814



e-Tender Notice

Memo No. HEAT/13083/2026/14

Date: 08.03.2026

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

Tender ID / Package No.	Tender publication date & time	Name of works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time
Tender ID: 1231947 Package No: NSTU/HEAT/13083/OTM/G1	05 March 2026, 16:00	Procurement of Instruments for the Cancer Research Lab, Department of Pharmacy, Noakhali Science and Technology University	24 March 2026, 15:00	24 March 2026, 17:00

This is an online tender; only e-Tenders will be accepted via the National e-GP Portal; no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit an e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited in any registered bank's branch. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from the e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Dr. Mohammad Safiqul Islam
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GD-584



বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
গাজীপুর-১৭০১

কৃষি সমৃদ্ধি

স্মারক নং-১১.১১.০০০০.০০০.০০৫.১১.০০০৪.২৫.১৪৪৭

তারিখ: ১১-০৩-২০২৬খ্রি.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউটের অধীনস্থ স্থায়ী রাজস্বখাতভুক্ত এবং অস্থায়ীভাবে রাজস্বখাতে সৃজনকৃত নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম, বেতনকেল ও শ্রেণি (জাতীয় বেতনকেল, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদ সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১.	প্রশাসনিক ১৬০০০-৩৮-৬৪০/- (শ্রেণি-১০)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে প্রোগ্রামার বিজ্ঞান বিষয়ে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; বা (খ) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রিসহ প্রোগ্রামার বিজ্ঞান বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা।
২.	উপ-সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (বিদ্যুৎ) ১৬০০০-৩৮-৬৪০/- (শ্রেণি-১০)	১ (এক)	কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে বিদ্যুৎ কৌশল বিষয়ে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি।
৩.	এক্সিটমেন্ট ১৬০০০-৩৮-৬৪০/- (শ্রেণি-১০)	১ (এক)	কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে পুরঃ কৌশল বিষয়ে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি।
৪.	ফোরম্যান ১৬০০০-৩৮-৬৪০/- (শ্রেণি-১০)	১ (এক)	কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে যন্ত্রকৌশল বিষয়ে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি।
৫.	বৈজ্ঞানিক সহকারী ১২৫০০-৩০২৩০/- (শ্রেণি-১১)	৫ (পঞ্চাশ)	কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে কৃষি বিষয়ে অনূন দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও (চার) বৎসর মেয়াদি ডিপ্লোমা।
৬.	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর ১১০০০-২৬২৫০/- (শ্রেণি-১০)	৩ (তিন)	সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের কম্পিউটার পার্সোনেল নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ অনুযায়ী। (ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; এবং (খ) সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের কম্পিউটার পার্সোনেল নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ এর তফসিল-২ এ উল্লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
৭.	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক ৯০০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	৮ (আট)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং, ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি হইবে নিম্নরূপ, যথা:- (অ) বাংলা-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ শব্দ; (আ) ইংরেজি-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ।
৮.	অফিস সহকারী-কাম-হিসাব রক্ষক ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	৫ (পাঁচ)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে বাণিজ্য বিভাগে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং, ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি হইবে নিম্নরূপ, যথা:- (অ) বাংলা-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ শব্দ; (আ) ইংরেজি-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ।
৯.	অফিস সহকারী ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং, ডাটা এন্ট্রি ও টাইপিং, ইত্যাদির সর্বনিম্ন গতি হইবে নিম্নরূপ, যথা:- (অ) বাংলা-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ শব্দ; (আ) ইংরেজি-প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ।
১০.	স্টোর কিপার-কাম-অফিস সহকারী ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	৪ (চার)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) মাইক্রোসফট অফিসসহ কম্পিউটার চালানার দক্ষতা।
১১.	ভান্ডার রক্ষক ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	৪ (চার)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) মাইক্রোসফট অফিসসহ কম্পিউটার চালানার দক্ষতা।
১২.	পরিসংখ্যান সহকারী ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১ (এক) (অস্থায়ী রাজস্বখাতে সৃজনকৃত)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে গণিত বা পরিসংখ্যান বিষয়সহ অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) মাইক্রোসফট অফিসসহ কম্পিউটার চালানার দক্ষতা।
১৩.	ইলেকট্রিশিয়ান ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে অনূন ৬ (ছয়) মাস মেয়াদি ট্রেড কোর্স বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
১৪.	বুলডোজার ড্রাইভার ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ ভারী ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স থাকিতে হইবে; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
১৫.	গার্ডিচালক ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১৭ (সতের)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ হালকা ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স থাকিতে হইবে; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
১৬.	ট্রাক্টর ড্রাইভার ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	২ (দুই)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ হালকা ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স থাকিতে হইবে; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
১৭.	টিলার ড্রাইভার ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	৭ (সাত)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ হালকা ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স থাকিতে হইবে; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
১৮.	পায়ের টিলার ড্রাইভার ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (শ্রেণি-১৬)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণসহ হালকা ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স থাকিতে হইবে; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ৩ (তিন) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
১৯.	উ: পাম্প অপারেটর ২০০০-২২৮০০/- (শ্রেণি-১৭)	২ (দুই)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট ডোকুমেন্টাল বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে সংশ্লিষ্ট ক্ষেত্রে অনূন ৬ (ছয়) মাস মেয়াদি ট্রেড কোর্স বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
২০.	পেইন্টার ৮৮০০-২১০১০/- (শ্রেণি-১৮)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট ডোকুমেন্টাল বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২১.	ম্যান ৮৮০০-২১০১০/- (শ্রেণি-১৮)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ২ (দুই) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২২.	প্রচার ৮৮০০-২১০১০/- (শ্রেণি-১৮)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ট্রেড কোর্সে বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।

২৩.	ল্যাবরেটরি এটেনডেন্ট ৮৮০০-২১০১০/- (শ্রেণি-১৮)	১৭ (সতের)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অনূন ২ (দুই) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২৪.	প্রিন্সিপাল ৮৫০০-২০৫৭০/- (শ্রেণি-১৯)	২ (দুই)	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে বিজ্ঞান অনূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
২৫.	লাইব্রেরি এটেনডেন্ট ৮৫০০-২০৫৭০/- (শ্রেণি-১৯)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ২ (দুই) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২৬.	বুম এটেনডেন্ট ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (শ্রেণি-২০)	১ (এক)	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
২৭.	হ্যামারম্যান ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (শ্রেণি-২০)	১ (এক)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২৮.	ট্রাক্টর মেক ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (শ্রেণি-২০)	২ (দুই)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
২৯.	অফিস সহায়ক ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (শ্রেণি-২০)	০১ (একত্রিশ)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
৩০.	নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী ৮২৫০-২০০১০/- (শ্রেণি-২০)	১৭ (সতের)	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ১ (এক) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা।

বি: দ্র: নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে।

- বর্ণিত পদসমূহের ক্ষেত্রে আবেদনকারীদের বয়স ১০-২০-২০২৫ তারিখে সর্বনিম্ন ১৮ এবং সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর হতে হবে। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে এফিডেভিট প্রদানযোগ্য নয়।
- চারিত্রিক প্রার্থীদেরকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরা <https://bari.gov.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশিত সময়সীমার মধ্যে অনলাইনে পূরণকৃত Application ফরমের একসেট, লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র এবং (ক) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, কোটা সংক্রান্ত ও অন্যান্য সন্দেহজনক/প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি; (খ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সন্দেহপত্র; (গ) সম্প্রতি তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ২ (দুই) কপি রশ্মি ছবি; (ঘ) নিজ এলাকার ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর/পৌরসভার মেয়র কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জাতীয়তা ও স্থায়ী নিবাস সন্দেহপত্র জমা দিতে হবে; (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (NID) অথবা জন্ম সনদ এর সত্যায়িত কপি; (চ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শহিদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রাজ্জীর সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে প্রমাণক হিসেবে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সন্দেহপত্র। (ছ) ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠী কোটায় আবেদনকারীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সন্দেহপত্র। (জ) শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের কোটায় আবেদনকারীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সন্দেহপত্র।
- উল্লেখ্য যে, সকল সন্দেহপত্রের ফটোকপি, ছবি ও অন্যান্য কাগজপত্র (যদি থাকে) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে। সত্যায়নে সত্যায়নকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, পদবিসহ সীল ও স্বাক্ষর থাকতে হবে।
- লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরা <https://bari.gov.bd> ওয়েব সাইটে প্রকাশিত সময়সীমার মধ্যে ৩নং ক্রমিক বর্ণিত কাগজপত্র জমাদানে ব্যর্থ হলে তাদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল মূল সন্দেহপত্র পেশ করতে হবে।
- পদের সংখ্যা নির্ধারণ (হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধিকরণ) এবং নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় তথ্য <https://bari.gov.bd> ওয়েব সাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।
- অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী ও শর্তাবলি**
- পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ইচ্ছুক <https://bari.gov.bd> এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ :
i. Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ১৫-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি, সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা।
ii. Online-এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ২৬-০৩-২০২৬ খ্রি, বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকা।
উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীরা Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে Teletalk মোবাইলে এসএমএস এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
- Online আবেদনপত্র প্রার্থী তাঁর রশ্মি ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৩০০) Pixel ও স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৮০) Pixel স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 100KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60KB হতে হবে।
- Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন। পূর্ণ-পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।
- প্রার্থী Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের একটি রশ্মি ছবি প্রিন্ট করে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে হবে।
- SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান:** Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি এবং Signature upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's Copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's Copy প্রার্থী প্রিন্ট অথবা download করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি User ID নম্বর দেয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিয়োগ পত্রটিতে যে কোন Teletalk pre-paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২(দুই) টি SMS করে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ক্রমিক-১ হতে ক্রমিক-৪ নং পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ২৩/- (তেইশ) টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ২২৩/- (দুইশত তেইশ) টাকা, ক্রমিক-৫ নং পদের জন্য ১৫০/- (একশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ১৮/- (আঠার) টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ১৬৮/- (ছোঁচাত্তর) টাকা, ক্রমিক-৬ নং হতে ক্রমিক-১৮ নং পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ১২/- (বারো) টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ১১২/- (একশত বারো) টাকা এবং ক্রমিক-১৯ নং হতে ক্রমিক-৩০ নং পদের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ৬/- (ছয়) টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ৫৬/- (ছোঁচাত্তর) টাকা, এছাড়াও ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠী, শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের অনগ্রসর প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সকল পদের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা ও Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ০৬/- (ছয়) টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ৫৬/- (ছোঁচাত্তর) টাকা অতিরিক্ত ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য "Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবে না।"
প্রথম: SMS: BARI<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: BARI ABCDEF
Reply: Applicant's Name, Tk.....will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To pay fee Type BARI<space>Yes<space>PIN and send to 16222.
- দ্বিতীয়: SMS: BARI<space>YES<space>PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: BARI YES 12345678
Reply: Congratulations Applicant's Name, payment completed successfully for BARI Application for xxxxxxxx user ID is (ABCDEF) and password (XXXXXX)
- প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি <https://bari.gov.bd> এবং <https://bari.gov.bd> এর ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধু যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দেয়ার যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS Read করা এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।
- SMS এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সফলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক Print (রশ্মি) করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই প্রবেশপত্রটি এবং Applicant's copy লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময়ে এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।
- শুধু টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল কোন থেকে প্রার্থীরা নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পত্রটি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID, Serial এবং PIN পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।
i. User ID জানা থাকলে BARI<space>Help<space>User<space>User ID & Send to 16222.
Example: BARI HELP User ABCDEF
ii. PIN Number জানা থাকলে BARI<space>Help<space>PIN No & Send to 16222.
Example: BARI HELP PIN 12345678
- ডিজারেশন:** প্রার্থীকে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের ডিজারেশন অংশে এই মর্মে ঘোষণা দিতে হবে যে, প্রার্থী কর্তৃক আবেদনপত্রের প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং সত্য। প্রদত্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন অযোগ্যতা ধরা পড়লে বা কোন প্রস্তাৱনা বা দুর্নীতির আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসুদৃশ্য অবলম্বন করলে, পরীক্ষার পূর্বে বা পরে অথবা নিয়োগের পরে যে কোন পর্যায়ে প্রার্থীতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা যাবে।

GD-575

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
উপ-পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)
মহাপরিচালকের পক্ষে
বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট

ACC sues 11, including five cops, over Tk 3.94cr graft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed a case against 11 individuals, including five police officers, over allegations of embezzling over Tk 3.94 crore by creating fake ration cards at the police ration store in Jhalakathi Police Lines.

ACC Assistant Director Md Zakir Hossain filed the case yesterday under The Penal Code and The Prevention of Corruption Act.

The accused are ASI Md Alauddin; police inspectors Arif Mahmud, Md Al Mamun, Md Rezaul Karim and Kazi Raziul Zaman; constables Md Atikur Rahman, Md Saiful Islam and Mehedi Hasan; office assistant Md Toufiq Elahi; ration store weigher Md Zahir Uddin; and sales assistant Syed Jasim Uddin.

According to the case statement, the accused allegedly created 252 fake ration cards through fraud and forgery between 2013 and December 2021.

Using these fraudulent cards, they withdrew ration supplies and embezzled a total of Tk 3,94,40,885 from government funds.



Sunflower cultivation has increased in the Barind region of Rajshahi compared to previous years. Farmers say good yields of sunflower oil fetch favourable prices and encourage further production. The photo was taken in the Rajabari area of Godagari yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

GOUTHIA MOSQUE IN BARISHAL

A gleaming beacon of architecture and faith

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, back from Barishal

Along the Barishal-Banaripara road, a gleaming white structure rises into view, immediately drawing the attention of travellers passing by.

The striking landmark is Baitul Aman Jame Mosque, popularly known as the "Gouthia Mosque", which captivates visitors from all walks of life.

enhances its artistic appeal. A separate mosque adjacent to the main building offers a dedicated prayer space for women.

The single-storey complex provides 13 rows inside, accommodating around 1,200 worshippers, with three additional rows on the verandah.

Beyond the prayer hall, the vast campus includes an Eidgah ground capable of hosting more than 20,000 people in a

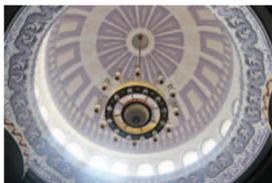
two from Jeddah, and one from Ajmer Sharif. It also contains a handwritten amulet attributed to Abdul Qadir Jilani (R), two coins from his shrine and water from the Zamzam well.

While the mosque is impressive in daylight, it becomes even more enchanting after sunset. Soft light illuminates the entire complex, and two fountains at the front create a serene nighttime spectacle.

Barishal, said he brings his family whenever he can.

Saifuzzaman Apu, visiting with friends, noted that the mosque has given the entire area a distinctive identity.

Md Lutfor Rahman, caretaker of the mosque, said more than 1,000 people attend the Friday prayers, while visitors from all districts arrive throughout the week. Another caretaker, Mozammel Hawlader, added that



The mosque, spanning 14 acres in Changuria village of Gouthia union under Barishal's Wazirpur upazila, represents a modern take on classical Islamic architecture.

Its most imposing feature is a 193-foot minaret that dominates the skyline. The structure also includes 20 domes, including a grand central dome that channels natural light into the prayer hall.

Intricate Arabic calligraphy, etched with painstaking detail on both interior and exterior walls,

congregation, an orphanage, parking facilities, a lake, and a large pond. At the entrance, a wide ghat by the water serves as a peaceful gathering space where visitors can sit to rest while gazing at the mosque's grandeur and the surrounding landscape.

To the left of the entrance stands a unique pillar preserving the legacy of the former mosque.

The pillar was built using soil from 20 sacred sites – eight from Makkah, nine from Madinah,

Nearly two decades after its construction, Gouthia Mosque has grown into a major attraction, drawing visitors from across the country. Fridays, Saturdays and public holidays see the largest crowds.

For Jashim Uddin, a first-time visitor from Jhalakathi, the mosque's sight was "deeply moving" and its architecture "extraordinary".

Santu Hawlader, who arrived with his wife and child from

people of other faiths also come to admire the architecture.

Security personnel and staff remain on duty round the clock to ensure a safe and welcoming environment.

Constructed entirely at the personal expense of local resident and philanthropist Sarder Sharfuddin Ahmed Shantu, the mosque today stands as both a spiritual sanctuary and one of Bangladesh's most admired cultural and architectural landmarks.

Three incidents of rape reported in 3 districts

STAR REPORT

Three rape incidents have been reported across three districts over the last few days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Bagerhat, police arrested one Ferdous Hawlader, 30, in Kachua upazila yesterday for his alleged involvement in the gang rape of a pregnant woman.

The 19-year-old victim filed a written complaint with the Kachua Police Station naming Ferdous and two others.

According to the complaint, the incident took place around 9:30pm on March 10.

Medical officials confirmed that the victim was brought to the local hospital with signs of trauma. Dr Moni Sankar Paik, resident medical officer at the hospital, told reporters, "After finding evidence of physical assault, we provided her with primary care."

She was later moved to a Bagerhat hospital under police escort for advanced medical examinations.

Kachua Police Station Officer in Charge Md Shafiqul Islam said, "We are trying to arrest the remaining suspects."

In Netrokona, a case was filed in Barhatta upazila yesterday under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act against a 17-year-old boy for allegedly raping a seven-year-old child.

The victim's father filed the case with Barhatta

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

KARNAPHULI AT CHANDRAGHONA

Local residents renew demand for bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Residents along the Rangamati-Rajasthali-Bandarban route have long demanded a bridge over the Karnaphuli River near Chandraghona, as they currently depend on the Kaptai Chandraghona ferry ghat for crossing.

Thousands of people and vehicles use the route daily. Although two ferries are supposed to operate at the ghat, locals say only one is often available, forcing passengers to wait long periods.

The situation becomes particularly difficult for emergency patients trying to reach hospitals.

Due to these problems, locals have repeatedly demanded a concrete bridge to ensure smooth communication. Over the years, political leaders have promised to build one, but little progress has been made.

During the 13th National Parliament Election, BNP candidate Dipen Dewan pledged to construct the Chandraghona

Bridge. After winning the election, he was appointed minister of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry, raising hopes among residents.

Md Akter Hossain of Kaptai's Lichubagan area said a five-minute crossing sometimes takes 20 to 25 minutes, and at times even an hour due to ferry delays.

Arun Joy Tanchangya of Rajasthali said many emergency patients struggle to reach hospitals on time.

CNG driver Md Yusuf said ferry travel becomes risky during the monsoon when strong currents raise water levels at the dock.

Officials said the Roads and Highways Department began examining the feasibility of building a bridge in 2022 and proposed a 550-metre structure across the river.

Sabuj Chakma, executive engineer of Rangamati RHD, said a Project Selection Committee meeting on March 9 decided to move forward with the project and send it to the Planning Commission after necessary revisions.



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কেন্দ্রীয় ভর্তি অফিস, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
(কক্ষ # ২১৪, প্রশাসনিক ভবন)
ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
ফ্যাক্স (৮৮০)-২-৫৫১৬৭৮১০
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ফোন: ০২-৫৫১৬৭৭২৪

e-GP Tender Notice

তারিখ: ১২/০৩/২০২৬

DU/CAO/OTM/eGP/2025/002

e-GP Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	1178448	DU/CAO/OTM/eGP/2025/002	Supply of three (03) multi-functional color laser printers and cartridges for Central Admission Office, University of Dhaka	06-Apr-2026 11:29	06-Apr-2026 15:29

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 branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guidance are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Dr. Md. Shariful Islam
 Convenor
 Online Admission Committee
 University of Dhaka

GD-583

Couple killed in motorcycle-pickup collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A man and his wife were killed when the motorcycle they were riding collided with a pickup van on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj's Shibalay upazila yesterday.

Deceased Monayem Khan, 40, and his wife Josna Akter were residents of Chalabon area of Dhaka's Dakkhinkhan.

According to police, a pickup van heading towards Dhaka from Paturia collided head-on with a motorcycle heading towards Paturia leaving the bike rider and his wife seriously injured.

Upon receiving information, police rushed to the spot and rescued them. Monayem died on the way to the hospital, while Josna was admitted to Manikganj 250-bed General Hospital, where she died while undergoing treatment.

Police recovered the two damaged vehicles. Although the incident disrupted traffic on the highway for some time, the situation was normalised later.

Harun Or Rashid, officer-in-charge of Borongail Highway Police Station, said necessary legal action is underway over the accident.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি বিভাগ
বাংলাদেশ কম্পিউটার কাউন্সিল

'উদ্ভাবন ও উদ্যোক্তা উন্নয়ন একাডেমী প্রতিষ্ঠাকরণ' (আইডিয়া) প্রকল্প
আইসিটি টাওয়ার, (লেভেল ১৪), প্লটঃ ই-১৪/এক্স, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭
ওয়েবসাইটঃ www.idea.gov.bd

নম্বরঃ ৫৬.০১.০০০০.০২৪.০৬.৩০৬.২৪-১০২৪
তারিখঃ ১২ মার্চ, ২০২৬

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়ঃ আইডিয়া প্রকল্পের আওতায় আইসিটি নির্ভর এসএমই উদ্যোক্তাগণের উন্নয়ন ও সম্প্রসারণে ৫০ হাজার টাকা অনুদান প্রাপ্তির জন্য আবেদন আহ্বান।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি বিভাগের আওতাধীন বাংলাদেশ কম্পিউটার কাউন্সিলের অধীনে পরিচালিত 'উদ্ভাবন ও উদ্যোক্তা উন্নয়ন একাডেমী প্রতিষ্ঠাকরণ (আইডিয়া) প্রকল্প' থেকে আইসিটি নির্ভর এসএমই উদ্যোক্তাগণের উন্নয়ন ও সম্প্রসারণে ৫০ হাজার টাকা অনুদান প্রদান করা হচ্ছে। আগ্রহী উদ্যোক্তাদের অনলাইনে আবেদন জমা দেওয়ার জন্য আহ্বান জানানো হলো।

(১) আবেদনের পদ্ধতিঃ
আগ্রহী এসএমই উদ্যোক্তাগণ অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে পারবেন। বিস্তারিত তথ্য প্রাপ্তি এবং অনুদানের জন্য আবেদন করতে আইডিয়া প্রকল্পের অফিসিয়াল ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://apply.idea.gov.bd/sme>) ভিজিট করতে হবে;

(২) আবেদনকৃত উদ্যোক্তাদের পণ্য/সেবা এবং ব্যবসা পরিকল্পনা পর্যালোচনা করে তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি বিভাগ কর্তৃক এ লক্ষ্যে গঠিত সিলেকশন কমিটির মাধ্যমে অনুদান প্রাপ্যতা চূড়ান্ত করা হবে;

(৩) ইতোপূর্বে আইডিয়া প্রকল্পের আওতায় এসএমই অনুদানপ্রাপ্ত উদ্যোক্তাগণ পুনরায় অনুদানপ্রাপ্তির জন্য যোগ্য মর্মে বিবেচিত হবেন না;

(৪) কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন সময় এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল, পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন, পরিবর্তন এবং আবেদন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা রাখে।

মুর্তুজা জলকার নাসীন নোমান
 প্রকল্প পরিচালক (যুগ্মসচিব)
 আইডিয়া প্রকল্প

ক্রিডি-৫৭৪

Pace plan in focus as TIGERS EYE SERIES WIN

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look to go 2-0 up when they meet Pakistan in the second ODI of the three-match series today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur in a contest that will test their pace formula.

Home advantage was the buzzword in the Bangladesh camp ahead of this series. With qualification to the next year's ICC ODI World Cup still on the line, skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz too had emphasised before the series that while they needed more matches on true wickets, ensuring direct qualification will remain in focus.

Eventually, rather than depending on a typical low and slow Mirpur turner, the hosts prepared a sporting wicket and banked on their pacers to do the trick – a gutsy call considering Pakistan also has plenty of quality pacers.

Bangladesh were rewarded for their courage in the first ODI on Wednesday, as they won it by a comprehensive eight-wicket margin. A win today will not only seal the series for the Tigers but also help them climb up to ninth position from 10th in the ICC ODI rankings.

The first ODI was virtually decided by a



fiery spell from Bangladesh's speedster Nahid Rana. Pakistan, relatively inexperienced with four debutant batters in the XI, were derailed by Rana's raw pace, in particular his short stuff, mixed with deliveries that moved around on an uncharacteristic Mirpur wicket that provided pace and bounce.

However, before Rana joined the attack in the 10th over to begin a seven-over spell

which yielded five wickets and effectively decided the fate of the match, all had looked pretty well for Pakistan.

Bangladesh's opening bowling pair of Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman could not get any early breakthroughs. Especially Mustafizur, Bangladesh's death over specialist, lacked that extra zip with the new ball.

To solve this problem in the second

ODI, the management has the option of bringing in left-arm pacer Shoriful Islam in place of leg-spinner Rishad Hossain, who bowled just two overs in the last game. But it remains to be seen if the Tigers would tinker with the winning combination.

The host batters did not get tested altogether after Pakistan had been bowled out for their lowest-ever score against Bangladesh in the first ODI, 114. Opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim helped himself to a brisk 67 off 42 balls against a Pakistan attack that looked toothless.

The poor showing of the Pakistan pace attack, led by skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi, has improved Haris Rauf's chances of making it into the XI today.

Playing and winning on a sporting surface, like the one in the first ODI where pacers get rewarded for bending their backs and batters could play expansive shots, is the perfect scenario for Bangladesh, who are set to play majority of their upcoming home ODIs at Mirpur, confirmed BCB sources.

However, if Pakistan, who would be better prepared for the surface this time around, put up a better show with the bat and ball today, this formula would be put to the test.

Hamza to join team in Vietnam

SPORTS REPORTER

Fit-again Hamza Choudhury is set to join the Bangladesh team in Vietnam for a FIFA friendly later this month.

The Leicester City midfielder had raised fitness concerns after sustaining a knee injury and leaving the pitch on crutches during a Championship match against Charlton Athletic on January 31, casting doubt over his availability for Bangladesh's final AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against hosts Singapore on March 31.

However, after a six-match lay-off in February, the 28-year-old England-born midfielder returned with brief appearances against Ipswich Town on March 7 and Bristol City on March 11, putting him back in contention for the March 26 friendly against Vietnam and the Singapore tie.

"Hamza is now fully fit," Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) media committee chairman Amirul Islam Babul said after a national teams committee meeting presided over by BFF president Tabith Awal yesterday.

He further informed that Spanish coach Javier Cabrera will announce a 30-member preliminary squad soon. The national camp begins in Dhaka on March 16 before a 23-member final squad flies to Vietnam on March 21. With Singapore already through to the finals from Group C, the match has become a dead rubber for Bangladesh, who sit third with five points from five matches. The Singapore clash will also mark the end of Cabrera's four-year contract with the BFF.



90 DAYS TO GO

Magic 90

A total of 23 goals were scored in the 90th minute and the following added time during matches at the 2018 World Cup in Russia. It remains the record for the highest number of stoppage-time goals in a single edition of the tournament. A total of 169 goals were scored in that World Cup, meaning nearly 15 percent of the goals came in the closing moments of matches.

**** Visit The Daily Star's website to also read: 'One mistake, six bullets and the lament of a stunned nation'**

Players frustrated as WBPL shifted to July

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

The decision to postpone the inaugural Women's Bangladesh Premier League (WBPL) from April to July has disappointed players, casting doubt on Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) commitment to women's cricket.

BCB announced on Wednesday that the three-team WBPL T20 will now be held from July 10-21 across Bogura, Chattogram and Dhaka, instead of the original April 4-14 schedule. The board said the change was made in view of the global context and after consultations with potential franchise owners and stakeholders, allowing more time for squad formation, international player recruitment and operational planning. However, according to Women's FTP, only Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Zimbabwe have no engagement during new scheduled timeframe.

The sudden shift – coming days

before the players' draft scheduled for March 14 – has frustrated players and officials. The postponement follows news that the Women's Dhaka Premier Division and First Division Leagues will not take place due to clubs' protests over the board's legitimacy. Insiders also cite a lack of interest from credible franchise owners and instability within the board after the February 12 national polls.

The national team will feel the impact most, as the tournament could have offered valuable preparation for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England and Wales in June-July. While the team will play a home series against Sri Lanka and a tri-nation series in Scotland in the build-up to the mega event, other players will have to wait till July to play a domestic fixture, hampering their financial stability. The Tigresses are currently training at BKSP, playing intra-squad matches.

"Everyone is talking about how we had a good chance to play before the World Cup," opener Dilara Akter told

The Daily Star on Thursday.

"We don't get to play T20 matches that often. It will definitely have some impact. Playing matches is important. We could have had a good opportunity here, but it didn't happen."

A member of the national team's coaching staff also expressed frustration, saying the team had missed a valuable opportunity to give the players adequate preparation before the global event.

Former captain Rumana Ahmed criticised the board for a lack of planning. "Such a league was necessary. It would have been excellent preparation for the World Cup and provided a competitive environment. The Dhaka Premier League was postponed to accommodate this tournament," she said.

Rumana also highlighted the absence of a consistent domestic calendar. "Before the last ODI World Cup, the girls couldn't play proper preparation matches. Even the First Division and Premier League have no fixed schedule. Women's cricket remains in a state of uncertainty," she said, questioning how the World Cup squad will be selected without proper domestic fixtures.



SHORT CORNER

Last SA, Windies players leave India after flight delays

The final batch of players from South Africa and the West Indies have left India after being stranded for more than a week following the T20 World Cup on Thursday. International air travel was thrown into chaos because of the war in the Middle East.

North Korea vow no more protests in Women's Asian Cup

North Korea pledged Thursday there will be no more sideline protests during their Women's Asian Cup quarterfinal with Australia after causing a stir against China. They face a partisan full house at Perth Rectangular Stadium on Friday against the hosts.

Bodo/Glimt continue dream UCL debut

Bodo/Glimt continued their dream debut Champions League campaign by swatting aside Sporting Lisbon 3-0 on Wednesday to take a big step towards the quarterfinals. The Norwegians racked up a remarkable fifth consecutive win in the competition in the last-16 first leg at Aspmyra Stadium.

** Read full

stories on The Daily Star's website

Iran uncertainty poses dilemma for FIFA

AGENCIES

Iran's declaration that it cannot take part in the 2026 FIFA World Cup has created uncertainty around the tournament and forced world football's governing body to consider how it would respond if a qualified team withdraw.

Iran's sports minister Ahmad Donyamali said on Wednesday that the country cannot participate in the World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19.

His comments come after the United States and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran nearly two weeks ago that killed the country's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and triggered a region-wide conflict in the Gulf.

Iran were pitted in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand in last December's draw, with all three of their group matches scheduled to take place in the United States – two in Los Angeles and one in Seattle.

Iran was also the only qualified nation absent from a FIFA planning summit for World Cup participants held last week in Atlanta.

FIFA yet to respond

Despite the minister's comments, Iran has not formally withdrawn from the tournament, and FIFA has yet to comment on the situation.

Only hours before Donyamali's statement, FIFA president Gianni Infantino had cited an assurance from US President Donald Trump that Iran would be "welcome to compete in the tournament in the United States." However, Trump on Thursday also stated that he believed it was not appropriate that Iran be there "for their own life and safety."

If Iran were to confirm its withdrawal, FIFA

would have to determine how to deal with a sudden vacancy in the 48-team competition.

Replacement and sanction possibilities
Under FIFA's World Cup regulations, the governing body has broad authority if a team withdraws from the finals.

Article Six allows FIFA to impose financial penalties on the federation concerned, while also giving it the discretion to invite any nation it chooses to fill the vacant spot – or even proceed without a replacement.

James Kitching, FIFA's former director of football regulatory, told Reuters that "they have full discretion to do whatever they want in the case of a team withdrawing."



Iran secured qualification for the tournament by topping Group A in the third round of Asian qualifiers, meaning a replacement from Asia could appear the most logical option.

Iraq, who are scheduled to take part in an intercontinental playoff in Mexico this month, and the UAE have both been mentioned as potential candidates.

However, the ongoing conflict has disrupted travel in the Middle East, complicating Iraq's preparations for their playoff match against either Bolivia or Suriname.

Kitching suggested FIFA may wait until the remaining playoffs are completed before making any decision.

Rare precedents in World Cup history

Although rare, there are a few historical precedents of teams withdrawing from World Cup.

In 1950, India, Scotland and Turkey all withdrew from the tournament in Brazil, largely due to travel costs, logistical difficulties and domestic decisions. FIFA attempted to find replacements but eventually proceeded with only 13 teams.

Uruguay, the defending champions in 1934, boycotted the tournament in Italy after several European teams had refused to travel to South America for the inaugural World Cup in 1930.

In 1966, all African nations boycotted the World Cup in England to protest against the limited qualification places allocated to their continent. The protest later led FIFA to grant Africa a guaranteed World Cup spot from the 1970 tournament.

With Iran yet to formally withdraw, FIFA now faces a situation rarely encountered in the modern era – one that could require a quick decision as the countdown to the 2026 World Cup continues.



VALVERDE HATTRICK STUNS CITY

Against all the odds -- including injury setbacks and sketchy form -- Real Madrid stunned Manchester City 3-0 in the first leg of the Champions League last 16, thanks to a maiden career hattrick from skipper Federico Valverde on Wednesday night. Not only City, it has also been a difficult round for English clubs in the Champions League, as Chelsea were thrashed 5-2 by defending champions PSG away from home, and Arsenal held to a 1-1 draw at Bayer Leverkusen. In the previous matchday, Tottenham were thrashed by Atletico Madrid while Liverpool were stunned by Galatasaray.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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JS mourns Khaleda Zia, July martyrs

Those known for roles against liberation also included in condolence motion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first sitting of the 13th parliament yesterday adopted a condolence motion expressing profound grief over the deaths of several national and international figures, including three-time prime minister Khaleda Zia and the martyrs of the July uprising.

The House also paid tribute to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Pope Francis, and former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh.

The names of seven individuals, known for their roles against the Liberation War, were later added to the condolence motion.

They are Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Abdul Quader Molla, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, Mir Quasem Ali, and Delawar Hossain Sayedee, and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury. BNP and Jamaat leaders had raised questions about the trial processes of the seven then.

Nizami and Sayedee were lawmakers, while Nizami and Mojaheed were cabinet members.

After the condolence motion was placed, Chief Whip Nurul Islam requested the inclusion of Nizami, Mojaheed, Sayedee, and Jhenidah-2 lawmaker Mashiur Rahman.

Opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman then took the floor and said some names had been left out. He requested opposition deputy leader Syed Abdullah Mohammad

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THE GENTLE GARDENER ... Ready to feast on ripening figs, an Indian flying fox hangs beneath the canopy in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila. Native to the Indian subcontinent, the species ranges across Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. With a wingspan reaching up to 1.5 metres, this giant fruit bat is among the largest bats on Earth. Indian flying foxes are primarily frugivorous, feeding on ripe fruits such as mangoes, guava, and figs, while also sipping nectar and occasionally eating flowers or leaves. Despite their intimidating size, these gentle "sky gardeners" quietly help regenerate hundreds of plant species across the region through pollination and seed dispersal. Listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, they remain vital ecological allies.

PHOTO: RASHED KHANZ

SC clears govt to lease out NCT to DP World

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday affirmed a High Court verdict that upheld the government's move to lease out the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to UAE-based DP World.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC, led by Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, dismissed a leave-to-appeal petition filed in February by Bangladesh Jubo Arthanitibid Forum, challenging the HC judgement.

There is no legal bar for the government to lease out the NCT to the DP World following the apex court order, Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque told The Daily Star.

Details of the order will be known once the full text of the verdict is released.

In the petition, the organisation sought an order to maintain the status quo in the process of awarding the contract for container handling at the terminal of Chattogram port.

It argued that executing the terminal contract shortly before the election would amount to "manifest

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One woman's fight for the children of Korail slum

TANGILA TASNIM

On most evenings in Korail slum, as the narrow lanes grew quiet and day labourers returned home, a small room would fill with nearly 30 children.

There, Farzana Akter gathered students who could not attend school regularly and taught them free of charge.

"I just wanted to make sure they did not have to stop learning," says Farzana, 33, now a coordinator at the Mamata-moyee Korail Project under the Palliative Care Society of Bangladesh.

Her connection to Korail is deeply personal. She moved there around 1994-95, when the area was far less crowded, and spent most of her childhood and adolescence in the settlement. After completing her schooling, she later graduated from Government Titumir College.

Farzana began tutoring children in the slum around 2009. Over time, she became involved in several development initiatives, teaching at Surabhi School and other non-formal institutions, including BRAC-run programmes.

When a UNDP project began operating in Korail, she joined as a senior secretary - her first formal step into NGO work.

Then in 2016, through Shaheed Rumi Smriti Library, her activism and advocacy for the children she taught took a more determined direction.

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Jamaat made inroads into AL, BNP bastions

ABDULLAH HEL BUBUN

The February 12 election marked a turning point in Bangladesh's politics: for the first time in its history, Jamaat-e-Islami achieved its strongest electoral performance, even winning constituencies that had long been dominated by the BNP and the Awami League.

Historically, Jamaat's parliamentary presence was modest. Across four widely regarded free and fair elections - 1991, June 1996, 2001, and 2008 - the party secured victory in only 40 seats.

This year, Jamaat bagged 68 seats, surpassing the combined tally of those four polls.

An analysis of The Daily Star shows that nearly 39 percent of Jamaat's victories, or 26 seats in total, came from the BNP and AL strongholds. Of the seats, 14 were in BNP bastions and 12 in AL bastions.

Jamaat also triumphed in nine constituencies where the party failed to cross 9 percent of the votes in any of the four widely accepted elections. Of the 68 seats won this year, 55 were in constituencies the party had never won in the previous polls.

Jamaat, which had been a minor player in parliament, this time rose to the role of main opposition, an outcome shaped not only by the AL's disqualification from the polls, but also by voter sympathy for the party's years of repression under the AL rule and its calculated political tactics, analysts noted.

Dhaka University Political Science Prof Sabbir Ahmed said the role of Jamaat in the July mass uprising as well as its planned organisational activities also played a role in the party getting

support from urban areas.

According to Sabbir, Jamaat's rise was the result of long-term preparation and a shift in its ideological positioning. "Jamaat moved away from rigid conservatism towards a more moderate stance, which increased their acceptability. Their nomination strategy was calculated, even including minority candidates, though they failed to nominate women. Jamaat's urban influence has grown, and in

➔ 55 of the seats (81%) Jamaat won were constituencies it never won since 1991

➔ It won the remaining 13 seats with much higher average margins

➔ The party won Satkhira-2 with the biggest margin: 150,666

some constituencies, they benefited from the BNP's rebel candidates."

TURNAROUNDS

The nine seats - where Jamaat emerged victorious in this year's election even after getting less than 9 percent of the votes in the previous polls - are Patuakhali-2, Dhaka-5, Kurigram-3, Dhaka-12, Gazipur-4, Dhaka-4, Rangpur-3, Bagerhat-1, and Pabna-3.

For instance, in Rangpur-3, Jamaat

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Curb corruption, push reforms Says president at opening session of 13th JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday stressed that firm control of corruption and improved law and order are essential to successfully implement the government's reform agenda and strengthen democratic governance.

Delivering the inaugural address on the first day of the new parliament, he said the 2024 uprising aimed to overthrow "fascism" and establish a discrimination-free, democratic society based on justice and equity, where governments remain accountable through direct votes.

In rebuilding state institutions after that political change, the "post-fascism government" formed 11 reform commissions to recommend changes in critical sectors.

Later, in its electoral manifesto before the national polls, the current ruling party BNP emphasised democracy, accountability, and good governance under the slogan "We Will Work, and Will Build the Country Together, Bangladesh Before All."

Shahabuddin noted that success of this vision depends on overcoming the challenges in curbing corruption and ensuring law and order, while sustainable development requires political and economic empowerment of people. The government also faces major challenges in poverty alleviation.

"The path ahead may be difficult, yet with genuine political will, no obstacle is insurmountable," he said.

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Pace plan in focus as Tigers eye series win

P11

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING
البنكية الاسلامي
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 13

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:57	12:30	4:30	6:08	7:30
JAMAAT 5:07	1:15	4:45	6:18	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
23	13		6:08
24	14	4:53	6:09
25	15	4:52	6:09



The Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar's Aminbazar looks almost deserted due to light traffic. The fuel crisis at the pumps has reduced the number of vehicles on the roads. The photo was taken around 11:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Artificial cornea developed from fish scales

REUTERS, Madrid



Researchers at Spain's University of Granada have developed an artificial cornea made from the scales of several fish species commonly found in markets, which could become a lower-cost alternative to donor transplants for severe eye diseases.

The cornea - the eye's transparent front layer - is difficult to repair when badly damaged because it has no blood vessels and limited regenerative capacity. Severe corneal disease is often treated with donor transplants, which can be constrained by organ availability and waiting lists.

Scientists from the university's Tissue Engineering Group and the ibs.GRANADA biomedical research institute said in a press release they had created corneal implants with fish scales that were highly biocompatible, transparent and resistant.

"Due to its origin, this product is very accessible, easy to obtain and inexpensive, and could help boost the local fishing industry," said Ingrid Garzon, professor of histology at the southern Spanish university, who co-authored the research.

While testing suggested they could be useful for corneal repair and regeneration, the technology remains far from possible clinical use in humans pending human trials.