

# 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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## 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

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



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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**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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## 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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