

## 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 will 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 Humairun Kobir was present during

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



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

## Police issue safety guidelines for Eid holidays

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 a smooth journey 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.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## 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 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 BCL members later entered the hospital carrying sticks and bamboo, verbally abused patients, photographed them, and filed cases against them, the victim called for justice.

## 13TH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

# Postal ballots swing in Jamaat's favour

Party leaders credit strong, organised expatriate outreach for success

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR and KEERO ADHNAN AHMED

Though the BNP won the February 12 national polls decisively, the main opposition Jamaat-e-Islami performed stronger in postal ballots.

Across polling centres nationwide, the BNP secured 49.97 percent of the vote, winning 209 seats.

According to Election Commission data, the party received 31.55 percent of postal ballots – votes cast by expatriate Bangladeshis, government officials on election duty, members of Ansar and VDP, and individuals in custody – registered through a dedicated app.

By contrast, Jamaat, which secured 31.76 percent of the vote and won 68 seats in regular polling stations, captured 47.81 percent of postal ballots.

The National Citizen Party (NCP), led by student and youth leaders of the July uprising, also received a higher share of postal votes than in regular polling.

The party won six seats and secured 3.05 percent of the vote in regular polling stations, compared with 5.17 percent in postal ballots.

A total of 15,20,093 expatriate Bangladeshis, government officials on election duty, members of Ansar and VDP, and individuals in custody, registered through the dedicated app.

Turnout in postal ballot stations was 70 percent – 10 percentage points higher than the overall turnout of 60 percent.

**WHERE POSTAL VOTES SHIFTED THE GAME**

In at least two constituencies, Jamaat or

its allies secured victory largely due to postal votes.

In Madaripur-1, Khelafat Majlish candidate Sayeed Uddin Ahmad Hanzala won by a narrow margin of 385 votes, defeating BNP candidate Nadira Akhter.

Hanzala secured 1,398 postal votes while Nadira received 233, giving Hanzala



### AT A GLANCE

- Jamaat secures 47.81% of postal ballots, BNP gets 31.55%
- Jamaat leads postal voting in 208 constituencies
- 15.2 lakh voters registered for postal ballots
- 70% turnout in postal voting, higher than overall 60% turnout
- Postal ballots helped decide at least two constituencies

a lead of 1,165 votes in postal ballots.

Similarly, in Sirajganj-4, Jamaat candidate Rafiqul Islam Khan won by just 594 votes. He secured 2,197 postal votes, while BNP candidate Akbar Alim received 820.

Although Jamaat won 68 seats overall, the party bagged the highest number of

postal votes in 208 constituencies. The BNP, which won 209 seats, led in postal ballots in 41 constituencies.

In terms of individual vote counts, Shahjahan Chowdhury from Chattogram-15 secured the highest overall, receiving 9,549 out of 10,946 votes.

Meanwhile, the largest share of postal votes in a single constituency was secured by NCP leader Hasnat Abdullah, whose name appeared on the ballot as Md Abul Hasnat from Cumilla-4. He received 6,056 out of 6,360 postal votes in his constituency.

Among BNP candidates, Abdul Awal Mintoo from Feni-3 secured the highest number of postal votes within the party, receiving 3,196 out of 10,875. However, he lost in postal ballots to his Jamaat rival Mohammad Fakhruddin, who secured 7,339 votes.

An election expert and member of the Electoral Reform Commission said many expatriate voters had been involved in the July movement and continue to support it.

"They might have been drawn to Jamaat's plans, election manifesto and campaigning. Most of them are young and live outside the country, especially migrant workers," he said.

He added that Jamaat had conducted an organised campaign targeting postal ballots. "That strategy has paid off."

Jamaat leaders say the party's long-term organisational activities among expatriates played a key role in its performance.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## BNP's Azam Khan joins cabinet

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.



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. Further details of his portfolio were yet to be announced, and no gazette notification on his assigned ministry was issued till the filing of this report.

## 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 4

## NCP leaders join protest outside JS Raise 3-point demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of the National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday joined families of those killed and injured in the July mass uprising in a sit-in protest in front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to realise their three demands.

The demands are implementation of reforms as per the referendum, removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin, and trials in the July atrocity cases.

The protesters were seen holding placards highlighting their demands on Manik Mia Avenue around 11:00am.

Among those present were Ainun Nahar, mother of Naima Sultana, who was killed in the July uprising; NCP Spokesperson Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyian; joint conveners Monira Sharmin and Sarwar

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## 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 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 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