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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

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**HASANA 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.