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First session of 13th JS to continue till April 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first session of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad will continue until April 30.

The decision was taken at the first meeting of the Business Advisory Committee held in the cabinet room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday with Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad in the chair.

Leader of the House and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman also attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed the allocation of time and the duration of the first session (first session of 2026) of the 13th parliament to complete its business. It was decided that 50 hours would be allocated for discussion on the president's address.

The meeting finalised that the parliament would sit every day at 3:00pm except on government holidays.

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Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurates the monthly honorarium scheme for imams, muezzins, khatibs and other religious leaders at an event at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

EKUSHEY BOOK FAIR 2026 Book sales worse than pandemic year Says Prokashok Oikya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prokashok Oikya, an organisation of publishers, yesterday said the overall book sales at this year's Amar Ekushey Book Fair dropped by around 70% compared to last year.

Book sales at the 2025 fair had already dropped by around 60% compared to 2024. The downward trend continued this year, making the situation even worse.

Nearly 90% of the publishers who participated in this year's book fair failed to recover even the initial cost of constructing their stalls, according to them.

The group also said about 30% of the participating publishers sold books worth less than Tk 5,000 during the fair.

They noted that the business situation at this year's fair was worse than during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021.

These figures were presented at a press conference held at the Kabi Shamsur Rahman Hall of Bangla Academy.

At the event, the written statement, on behalf of Prokashok Oikya, was read out by Mahrukh Muhiuddin, publisher of University Press Limited (UPL).

According to the statement, the overall book sales at

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Financial strain mounts on Dhaka city corporations

Revenue slump, rising costs squeeze budgets

DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka's two main civic service providers -- Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) -- are facing mounting financial pressure.

Slow revenue growth compared with rising expenditure, rapid payments of large development bills, controversial project approvals, and questions over administrative decisions have raised concerns

If we proceed with the numerous work orders issued indiscriminately by the previous administration, the city corporation will collapse. That cannot be allowed under any circumstances.

ABDUS SALAM, DSCC administrator

about their financial management.

Officials say the growing strain on funds has slowed development work, delayed contractor payments, and made it difficult to maintain regular civic services.

In DSCC's case, the situation has reportedly reached a stage where the corporation had to borrow money to pay salaries and bonuses.

Local government experts say the crisis stems from an imbalance between income and expenditure, unplanned project approvals, and a lack of transparency in spending.

Without quick structural reforms, they warn, the corporations may face a deeper crisis in providing urban services.

DSCC: LOANS TAKEN TO PAY SALARIES

DSCC officials confirmed that employees' salaries and bonuses were



paid last month through borrowed funds, and it remains uncertain whether next month's wages can be paid from regular revenue.

Administrator Abdus Salam has already sought government assistance.

"The pressure on the corporation's funds has increased due to lower-than-expected revenue

collection and the rapid payment of large development bills," he said.

Revenue collection has declined significantly following political instability in 2024. Monthly collections, once between Tk 70 crore and Tk 100 crore, crossed Tk 100 crore in only two months during this period. In February 2026, an election month, revenue dropped sharply to Tk 42 crore.

DSCC's revenue peaked at Tk 1,061 crore in FY 2023-24 but fell

If the situation becomes difficult at any point, we will consider the next steps. If a serious problem arises, we may seek government assistance. However, we hope that such a situation will not arise.

SHAFIQUK ISLAM KHAN, DNCC administrator

to Tk 792 crore in FY 2024-25. Expenditures, however, continued to rise.

In the first eight months of FY 2025-26, DSCC earned Tk 625 crore, while operational expenses stood at Tk 418 crore and development spending reached Tk 520 crore -- far exceeding income.

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Dhaka, Ankara sign MoU on diplomatic training

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Türkiye yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen institutional cooperation in diplomatic training and capacity building, reaffirming their commitment to enhancing bilateral relations.

The MoU was signed between the Diplomacy Academy of Türkiye and the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy during a bilateral meeting in Ankara, according to a foreign ministry statement.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan led the meeting. Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir was also present.

Both sides discussed the full spectrum of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Khalilur highlighted the importance of increasing Turkish investment in Bangladesh and emphasised the potential for expanding exports of skilled Bangladeshi workers to Türkiye.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

'I faced injustice and oppression' Says journo Anis Alamgir after being released on bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Journalist Anis Alamgir yesterday claimed that he was treated unjustly and subjected to oppression during his arrest and detention, shortly after being released on bail from jail.

Alamgir was released from Kashimpur Central Jail-2 in Gazipur at 2:35pm following verification of his bail documents that reached the prison on Friday night, said Senior Jail Superintendent Al Mamun.

After his release, he left for Dhaka without speaking to journalists waiting at the prison gate.

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Five more city administrators appointed

All of them BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed BNP leaders as administrators to five more city corporations.

The Local Government Division under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives issued a gazette notification on the appointments yesterday.

According to the notifications, Bilkis Akhter Jahan Shirin has been appointed administrator of Barishal City Corporation, Mahfuzur Rahman of Rajshahi City Corporation, Rukunuzzaman Rokon of Mymensingh City Corporation, Mahfuz Un Nabi Chowdhury of Rangpur City Corporation, and Md Yusuf Molla of Cumilla City Corporation.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Weak reading culture holding back book industry

Speakers also cite limited distribution, poor library systems at Star Itihias Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's book industry is facing challenges such as weak reading habits, limited distribution, and poor library systems, while many quality books fail to reach readers due to inadequate promotion and Dhaka-centric marketing, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They urged stronger libraries, better distribution networks, and greater government support to connect readers with good books.

The remarks were made at the 15th session of The Daily Star Itihias Adda, titled "When will the shortage of good books end?", held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Publishing expert Badiuddin Nazir said the country's book industry is struggling due to weak reading habits, poor library infrastructure, and a limited book



Speakers at the 15th session of The Daily Star Itihias Adda held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

market. "There was never a golden age of book sales in Bangladesh. Even today, most books sell only 100 to 300 copies," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Standard Islami Bank PLC.

SEARCHING FOR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Standard Islami Bank PLC., a prominent Shari'ah-based private commercial bank in Bangladesh, is committed to conducting its operations in strict adherence to the principles of Islamic Shari'ah. The Bank has earned a distinguished reputation for excellence in Islamic banking services, technological advancement and sustainable ethical growth.

In pursuit of continued excellence and value-based leadership, the Bank is inviting applications from competent, dynamic and visionary professionals for the position of Managing Director.

The position requires an accomplished leader with proven strategic insight and in-depth knowledge of Islamic banking, regulatory compliance, risk management and corporate governance. The candidate must demonstrate a successful track record in driving sustainable growth, ensuring Shari'ah compliance and upholding the highest standards of integrity, transparency and accountability.

Eligibility criteria for the position shall be in accordance with BRPD Circular No. 05 dated 27 February 2024 and BRPD Circular No. 27 dated 26 November 2025 issued by Bangladesh Bank.

Application Procedure:

Interested candidates are requested to send their detailed CV along with a recent passport-size photograph by 31 March 2026 to career@standardbankbd.com or send a hard copy to Human Resources Division, Standard Islami Bank PLC., Head Office, 3rd Floor, 122-124 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.