



## Rab, SB, CID get new chiefs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has made a major reshuffle in the top ranks of Bangladesh Police, bringing changes to the leadership of key units including the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Special Branch (SB), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and Armed Police Battalion (APBN).

The move comes as part of a continuing re-organisation of the administration after the BNP-led government assumed office last month.

The changes were announced in an order issued by the home ministry yesterday.



Ahsan Habib Nurul Amin Mosleh Ahmed

According to the order, Deputy Inspector General of Chattogram Range Ahsan Habib Palash has been appointed Rab director general, Additional Inspector General at Police Headquarters Sardar Nurul Amin SB chief, and Additional Inspector General at PQ Mosleh Uddin Ahmed CID chief.

Current CID chief Additional Inspector General Md Sibgat Ullah has been transferred to PQ.

Hasib Aziz, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) commissioner and additional inspector general, has been made APBN chief. He was replaced by DIG Hasan M Shawkat Ali of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Deputy Inspector General Moniruzzaman of the

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A toddler, cradled in his father's arms, beams as his mother adjusts his newly purchased tupi (prayer cap) while shopping at the bustling Baitul Mukarram market in the capital yesterday. Alongside clothing, stalls selling attar and prayer caps are also seeing big crowds, with shoppers making their final purchases ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

## Bangabandhu's 106th birth anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 106th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



On this day in 1920, the architect of the nation's independence was born in Tungipara under the then Gopalganj subdivision.

Through his astute leadership, Mujib mobilised the Bangalee nation to rise against exploitation and repression by the Pakistani rulers. This movement culminated in the creation of an independent Bangladesh after a nine-month long bloody war in 1971.

Mujib's political journey began as a humble activist during his student years. After completing his studies at Islamia College in Calcutta in 1947, he enrolled in law at Dhaka University. However, his involvement in politics ultimately led to his expulsion from the university in 1948. That same year, he was imprisoned twice.

By 1954, he had evolved into an

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## No lottery in school admission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to withdraw the lottery system used in school admissions and introduce a system based on admission tests, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said yesterday.

"Lottery cannot exist in any education system. We have withdrawn the lottery system," he said at a press conference at the education ministry, adding that the decision was taken after discussions with stakeholders.

Noting that the ministry reviewed the issue over the past one month, he said, "Lottery does not allow proper evaluation of merit."

The minister said the government does not intend to introduce a highly competitive admission test for young children.

"We will not introduce any examination that is inappropriate for the students of class one. The process will be simple," Milon said.

He said the new system would initially involve a basic test. If the number of applicants exceeds the available seats, additional

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## FIRST MONTH IN OFFICE

# BNP begins delivering on key campaign pledges

Draws flak over some appointments, police excesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A month into office, the BNP government has begun implementing its electoral pledges, with efforts underway to energise the administration, reinforce law and order, stabilise the economy, and rebuild public confidence in governance.

After two decades out of power, the party secured an absolute majority in the February 12 polls, winning 209 seats in parliament, and forming the government on February 17.

Though national elections are constitutionally held every five years, the 13th general election was called just 26 months after the January 2024 polls, following the ouster of the Awami League government in August that year.

Among the commitments being implemented, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday inaugurated a nationwide programme to excavate and re-excavate rivers, canals, and other water bodies in Dinajpur. The initiative aims to improve irrigation, boost agricultural production, and strengthen water management.

In line with the BNP's election manifesto, the government plans

to excavate and re-excavate about 20,000 kilometres of rivers, canals, reservoirs, and other water bodies over the next five years.

The first phase has been launched simultaneously in 54 districts.

will be settled through budget allocations, with Tk 1,568 crore earmarked in the revised budget for the current fiscal year.

One of the most talked about pledges of the BNP's campaign was the introduction of the Family

**"What seems most significant after the formation of the government is the prime minister's focus on certain initiatives that can be described as a good start."**

Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, political analyst



The programme echoes the legacy of late president Ziaur Rahman, who introduced a similar initiative to boost the rural economy and agricultural output. The current effort is widely seen as a continuation of that vision.

At its first formal cabinet meeting on February 26, the government approved a proposal to waive agricultural loans of up to Tk 10,000, including interest. Liabilities arising from the waiver

Card. On March 10, Tarique launched the pilot programme in his Dhaka constituency.

Under the scheme, over the next five years, about 4 crore selected households will receive Tk 2,500 directly through the government-to-person digital payment system, deposited into women's mobile financial service or bank accounts.

At the launch, the prime

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## Strengthen human rights

9 global rights bodies urge PM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Nine international rights bodies have urged Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to prioritise sweeping reforms to strengthen human rights protections in Bangladesh, warning that the new government faces a critical moment to shape the country's democratic future.

In a joint letter dated March 12 and published yesterday, they congratulated Rahman on his recent election victory and said his administration has a "time of opportunity to write a new chapter" in the country's history.

The letter was signed by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Committee to Protect Journalists, ARTICLE 19, CIVICUS, the International Federation for Human Rights, Fortify Rights, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights and the Tech Global Institute.

The organisations acknowledged pledges by the new administration and steps taken by the interim

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## Govt appoints VCs at 7 univs, new UGC chief

All of them have ties to BNP-affiliated bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed new vice-chancellors to seven universities, including Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, and Jagannath University, and named a new chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

**"Involvement in politics does not disqualify a [vice chancellor] candidate. Is it a crime if a person is involved in politics?"**

Ehsanul Hoque Milon, education minister

Education Minister Ehsanul Hoque Milon announced the decisions at a press conference at the ministry yesterday.

All the new appointees have past or current links with BNP-aligned teachers' organisations, including Sada Dal, Zia Parishad and Jatiyatabadi Shikshak Forum, while some hold positions in BNP bodies.

Mamun Ahmed, pro-vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, has been appointed chairman of the UGC.

Prof Mamun, a teacher of the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department at DU, was associated with Sada Dal and contested the 2022 DU Senate election from its panel.

He is also a member of the advisory council to the BNP chairperson and previously served as president of the Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sanskritik Sangstha, a BNP-

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## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM US panel urges sanctions on RSS, RAW Also flags concern over Bangladesh situation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A US federal government commission has recommended that the US impose targeted sanctions on the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for the worsening of religious freedom in India.

In its annual report unveiled earlier this month, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also called for linking Washington's future security assistance and bilateral trade to improvements in New Delhi's record on the issue.

It cited RAW and RSS for their "responsibility and tolerance of severe violations of religious freedom" and urged "freezing of individuals' or entities' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States".

India has rejected the "motivated and biased characterisation" of the country.

"We have taken note of the latest USCIRF report. We categorically reject its motivated and biased characterisation of India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said yesterday, reports PTI.

The report said that in 2025, religious freedom

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A man dozes off while waiting for fuel at a city filling station that had run dry yesterday. With his vehicle (visible in the background), he joined the queue around 5:00am, but by the time he reached the pump three hours later, supplies had already run out. By 2:00pm, fuel had yet to arrive. The plight was not his own but for many who were in the queue that stretched from the Asad Gate pump to the July Revolution Memorial Museum.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bangladesh's cement producers reject US 'overcapacity' claims

B1

HASANAH ISLAMIC BANKING  
البنكية الاسلامي  
Prime Bank

PRAYER TIMING  
MARCH 17

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:53	12:45	4:30	6:10	7:45
JAMAAT 5:03	1:15	4:45	6:20	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
27	17		6:10
28	18	4:49	6:10
29	19	4:48	6:11