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## PM seeks support of all faiths for prosperous country

UNB, Dhaka



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday sought cooperation from people of all religions to build a happy, prosperous and better Bangladesh.

"Let us all work together, regardless of religion or background, to build a happy, prosperous and better Bangladesh. People of all religions and communities must come forward for the greater cause of the country," he said.

The prime minister made the call while exchanging Easter greetings with leaders of the Protestant Church at the Cabinet Room of the Prime Minister's Office in the Secretariat, according to his Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Rumon.

A 13-member delegation, led by Bishop Philip P Adhikari, president of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Bangladesh, met the prime minister around 11:45am and exchanged views with him on the occasion of Easter Sunday.

Addressing the gathering, Rumon said the prime minister wished success and prosperity for the Christian community.



Accumulated waste pollutes the water and mars the scenic beauty of Gulshan Lake in Dhaka. The photo was taken near the Tejgaon-Gulshan Link Road yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DMP FOOTPATH DRIVE 44 held, Tk 10 lakh fined in 5 days

Vendors demand rehabilitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 44 people were arrested, and around Tk 10 lakh was realised as fines during a five-day drive by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to reclaim encroached footpaths and roads in the capital.

The drive, which began on April 1 and ended yesterday, was carried out in different areas under the DMP's Lalbagh, Wari, Ramna, Mirpur, Motijheel, Tejgaon, Gulshan, and Uttara traffic divisions.

Additional Commissioner (Traffic) Anisur Rahman said follow-up operations will be conducted in the cleared areas to prevent reoccupation.

"We will continue monitoring so that encroachers cannot return. Our next steps will be announced through mass awareness campaigns," he said.

He also said the government is actively working on the issue of evicted vendors' rehabilitation. "Initially, vendors may be accommodated in eight designated locations through holiday and night markets," he added.

**My daughter is a college student, and my husband is ill and unable to earn. I support my family through this business, but the eviction drive destroyed my livelihood.**

SUMAIYA

A footpath vendor at Mirpur-10

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## NCP slams repeal of reform ordinances, warns of protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party (NCP) spokesperson Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain yesterday protested the government's move to repeal several key ordinances issued by the interim government and warned of a larger movement.

**Recall what happened in the past, learn from that experience, and show goodwill so we can build a better Bangladesh together.**

"We call on the government to come to its senses. Recall what happened in the past, learn from that experience, and show goodwill so we can build a better Bangladesh together. Otherwise, we will have no option but to launch another movement, which will be a loss for the country," he said at a press conference at the NCP central office in Banglamotor.

Asif alleged that ordinances strengthening the powers of the prime minister and the executive are being retained, while those ensuring public accountability are being repealed.

"This is a serious threat to democracy and a violation of the Constitution. If

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

## Wasa turns to groundwater despite unfinished projects

Tk 920cr 'emergency' plan draws criticism; experts warn of falling water table, long-term risks

DIPAN NANDY

Despite growing concerns over the fast-depleting groundwater table, Dhaka Wasa is set to seek Ecneec's approval for a Tk 920.85 crore "emergency" water supply project that will rely on groundwater extraction.

Titled "Emergency Water Supply in Dhaka City", the proposed project aims to add 57 crore litres of water per day by replacing deep tube wells, installing new ones, and regenerating existing wells, according to project documents.

The project is likely to be placed at an Executive Committee of the National



**Wasa's goal was to reduce groundwater dependence, but failure to complete ongoing projects while returning to large-scale extraction is unsustainable.**

PROF ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN  
Urban planner

Economic Council (Ecneec) meeting today. If approved, it would be implemented from January 2026 to June 2030

with government funding.

The move comes at a time when two of Dhaka Wasa's surface water projects, aimed at ensuring a sustainable water supply for the capital, remain incomplete.

It also triggered concern among experts, who say the initiative reflects a growing dependence on short-term fixes while structural solutions continue to face delays.

The projects -- Gandharbpur Water Treatment Plant (Phase 1) and Saidabad Water Treatment Plant (Phase 3) -- were designed to shift the city away from its heavy reliance on groundwater. Once

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## Govt renames Baishakh procession 'Baishakhi Shobhajatra'

STAR REPORT

Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury yesterday said the government has decided to rename the Bangla New Year procession as "Baishakhi Shobhajatra", forgoing the terms "Ananda Shobhajatra" and "Mangal Shobhajatra".

"We will not call it 'Ananda Shobhajatra' or 'Mangal Shobhajatra'. The procession will simply be referred to as 'Baishakhi Shobhajatra,'" he told reporters after a meeting at the Secretariat.

The minister said the government finalised the new name after discussions at multiple meetings to avoid division and end the ongoing debate over the traditional Pahela Baishakh procession's name.

"We do not want division

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## 'They killed my son, destroyed our dreams' Witness testifies at ICT-1 against Salman F Rahman, Anisul Huq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pall of grief engulfed the courtroom of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday as two bereaved family members recounted how their loved ones were gunned down in Mirpur-10 during the July uprising, testifying in a crimes against humanity case filed against former adviser Salman F Rahman and former law minister Anisul Huq.

Abdul Matin, father of Sheikh Shahriar Bin Matin, broke down to tears during cross-examination, holding up a laminated photograph of his son before the tribunal.

"Sir, this is my son's picture. They brutally killed my son and destroyed our family's dreams," he said. Fighting back tears, he described Shahriar as just 18 years old, a student sitting for his HSC examinations, whose education he had sustained through immense hardship.

When the defence sought to disclose his workplace, prosecutors intervened, warning that witnesses in similar cases had lost their jobs after being identified.

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