"Such carnage, within hours of agreeing to a ceasefire with Iran, defies belief. It places enormous pressure on a fragile peace... desperately needed by civilians."
UN rights chief **Volker Turk** on Israeli strikes across Lebanon

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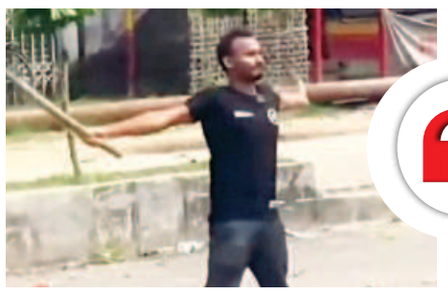
2 sentenced to hang, 3 get life in Abu Sayed killing

ICT-2 sentences 25 others to varying terms



> **My heart has not found peace yet, and my soul has not been soothed.**
>
> **MONOWARA BEGUM**
> Abu Sayed's mother

SHARIFUL ISLAM *and*
SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

When Abu Sayed stood with his arms outstretched, he thought the humans standing before him would not shoot him, not realising they were "no longer human", a tribunal observed yesterday while sentencing two to death, three to life imprisonment, and 25 others to varying jail terms.

As the three-member International Crimes Tribunal-2 took its seats in a packed courtroom at 12:10pm, Chairman Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury said Abu Sayed was the first martyr of the 2024 July uprising.

The two other judges, Md Manjurul Basit and Nur Mohammad Shahriar Kabir, read portions of the over-500-page judgment before the chairman pronounced the sentences.

Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya

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Firefighters attempt to extinguish a fire following an Israeli strike at the Corniche al-Mazraa neighbourhood of Beirut yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Judiciary, NHRC reforms rolled back

JS repeals ordinances amid opposition uproar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid strong opposition, the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday repealed three Supreme Court ordinances and one on the National Human Rights Commission, delivering a major blow to judicial independence and the rights watchdog.

The ordinances related to the judiciary were the Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, 2025, the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025 and its 2026 amendment, all enacted during the interim government to buffer the courts from the influence of the state's executive organs.

The National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025, which had given the body expansive autonomy, was repealed, while the 2009 NHRC Act was reinstated.

The opposition bench walked out of the Jatiya Sangsad around 5:55pm after the bills were passed, in response to what they called "anti-people bills".

"Regrettably, despite our logical objections, several anti-people bills have been passed today. We do not want to take responsibility for them," said Leader of the Opposition and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman tabled the Supreme Court Judges Appointment (Repeal) Bill; Supreme Court Secretariat (Repeal) Bill; and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Strikes on Lebanon test shaky truce

Future of US-Iran talks uncertain as world condemns violence; Hormuz remains closed

Countries, UN, EU say truce should include Lebanon

Iran president says strikes render talks 'meaningless'

Netanyahu seeks Lebanon talks, rules out truce

Netanyahu trial resumes if truce holds

AGENCIES

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday ordered his ministers to begin direct talks with Lebanon, but ruled out a ceasefire with Hezbollah amid mounting concern that ongoing Israeli strikes could unravel the fragile US-Iran truce."

His move came as international concern over the strikes that killed at least 303 people on Wednesday. Hezbollah said it was engaged in close-quarters combat against Israeli forces on the ground in the south Lebanon town of Bint Jbeil.

Trump announced a ceasefire in the six-week-old Iran conflict late on Tuesday, just hours before a deadline after which he threatened to destroy Iran's entire civilisation.

In Pakistan, authorities were preparing for the first round of US-Iran talks, locking down parts of the capital, Islamabad. However, the fighting in Lebanon put enough doubt on the participation of the Iranian side. It's Speaker Mohammad

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Next year's budget may cross Tk 900,000cr

Biggest jump in outlay in recent years to meet electoral pledges

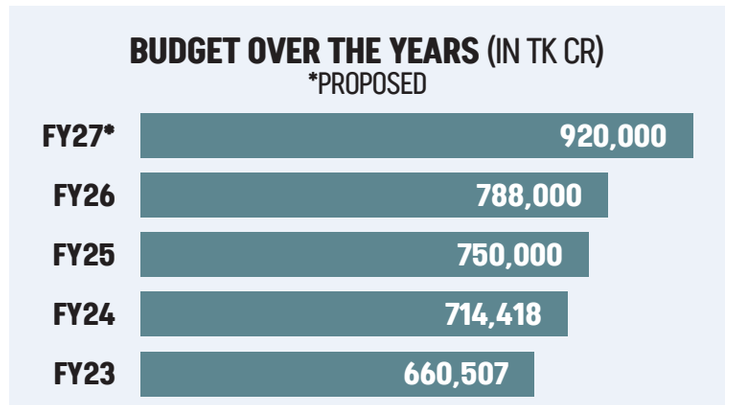
REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **WASIM BIN HABIB**

The budget for 2026-27 fiscal year is likely to exceed the Tk 900,000 crore mark, as the government moves to fulfil its electoral pledges, partially implement recommendations to raise salaries of its employees, and shield the economy from the fallout of the ongoing Middle East conflict.

The preliminary framework for the budget is expected to be finalised at a high-level meeting chaired by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury today.

The original budget for the ongoing 2025-26 fiscal year was Tk 790,000 crore, which was later revised down to Tk 788,000 crore with sharp cuts in development spending but higher allocations for subsidies and non-development expenditure.

The new administration is preparing a significant expansion, with preliminary proposals reaching Tk 920,000 crore, marking one of the largest budget increases in recent history.



"This budget carries special weight as it is this government's first. It will signal the administration's priorities and lay the financial groundwork for delivering on its five-year commitments," said a senior finance ministry official, requesting anonymity.

The planned expansion is largely driven by increased expenditure commitments, particularly in public sector salaries, subsidies and social protection, alongside the need to cushion external shocks from the US-Israel war on Iran.

The interim government had prepared a revised budget for this fiscal year and a draft proposal for the next, but the BNP government is introducing significant changes to both, finance ministry officials said.

Despite the ambitious expansion, revenue collection is unlikely to meet its target.

The revised budget had set revenue target at Tk 588,000 crore, including Tk 503,000 crore from the National Board of Revenue -- projections that officials acknowledge will fall short. The revenue collection target for the next fiscal year may be raised to Tk 650,000 crore.

Although the deficit target had been set at 3.3 percent of GDP in the revised budget, weak revenue performance and rising expenditure are likely to push it beyond 4 percent, putting further strain on fiscal management in the coming year.

The deficit for the next fiscal year is expected to be set at around 5 percent of GDP.

The interim government had set a GDP growth target of 5 percent and an inflation target of 7 percent in the revised budget. The new administration is likely to retain the growth target while revising inflation target upwards to 8 percent.

For the next fiscal year, the government is expected to set a higher GDP growth target of 6.5 percent and bring inflation down to 7 percent, banking on the assumption that the US-Israel war on Iran will not persist.

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A RIVER UNDER SIEGE

The Shoilmari River in Batiaghata upazila of Khulna lies choked with silt. Once 150 metres wide, it has now shrunk to a narrow channel. On its banks, encroachers are carving out fish enclosures to seize the land. Without urgent action, locals fear, the entire river will be lost to encroachment. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN