



A NEW DAWN

Heralding the break of a new dawn, a gigantic rooster figure leads the Baishakhi Shobhajatra as it steadily advances inside the Dhaka University campus yesterday with the slogan "Noboborsher Oikyatan: Gonotontre Punorutthan" -- a call from the procession for the revival of democratic values and practices.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



BNP will implement July charter

Says Tarique, rolls out Farmers' Card

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said the BNP would definitely implement the July charter and warned that any attempt to obstruct the government's public welfare programmes would be resisted with the people's support.

"We must stay alert; we must be cautious [about] the ghosts of autocracy, upon whom a shadow is being slowly cast again... who are once more trying to create anarchy in the country," the BNP chairman said at a public meeting held at the Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University campus in Tangail yesterday afternoon.

"The people of Bangladesh have given BNP the responsibility to run the country. The day BNP signed the July charter, others also signed it. We have seen that those who are now in the opposition were initially confused about whether they should sign or not. And there is another party with them. They did not sign at that time. We saw them go and suddenly sign it quickly after the election.

"BNP signed first. Those who shouted loudly for the July charter after the election, we can ask them, 'If you cared so much, why did you not sign first?'" he said.

Tarique said, "I have said before, and I am making it clear again. BNP has signed the July charter, and it will implement it. There will be no change in this. But those who try to obstruct BNP's canal digging,



Family Card, Farmers' Card, programmes to create professional players, and other public programmes, the BNP will resist them with the people."

He said, "We may disagree on some issues, that is not a problem. But those disagreements must be solved through discussion. You will make your point and I will give my logic. If your logic is correct, I will accept it."

The BNP chairman said, "We carry this country in our hearts. We have no other address besides this country. Since this Bangladesh is our identity and our last shelter, we must build this country ourselves."

Before making these remarks at the campus, Tarique inaugurated the Farmers' Card pre-pilot programme at Tangail's Shaheed Maruf Stadium, where several thousand farmers and party leaders and supporters gathered.

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A dangerous turn in banking reform

A new law allows the architects of Bangladesh's banking crisis to buy their way back in

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Reform, in Bangladesh, has a short shelf life. Not long after the interim government began cleaning up the country's rotten banking sector, the BNP administration walked back much of the work. A new law now lets the former owners of five scandal-plagued Shariah banks buy their way back in. The price? A mere 7.5 percent upfront of whatever the state pumped in to keep the institutions alive.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The government and Bangladesh Bank together injected Tk 35,000 crore into what became "Sommito Islami Bank", a state-run vehicle created to absorb the wreckage of First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, and Exim Bank. Under the Bank Resolution Act 2026, former owners can reclaim the lot for Tk 2,625 crore -- with the rest repayable over two years at a gentle 10 percent simple interest. It is, as one economist drily noted, a reward rather than a reckoning. The amount is also meagre compared to what these very owners allegedly siphoned out through years of rule-bending.

The five banks were not victims of misfortune. They were victims of their owners. Four were dominated by S Alam Group, whose chairman, Mohammed Saiful Alam, stands accused of using depositors' money as a personal treasury. The fifth, Exim Bank, was long the field of

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Baishakh celebrations regain fervour

DOWEL BISWAS

As dawn broke over Ramna Batamul yesterday, Chhayanaut's chorus of 200 performers lifted "Jago alok-logone" into the morning air, opening the celebration of Pehela Baishakh 1433.

The morning programme unfolded in deliberate rhythm -- with Tagore's devotional "E ki sugandha-hilloh bohilo" giving way to Nazrul's sharper invocation, "Arunkanti ke go yogi bhikhari", then

speaking, and assembling should never demand courage.

From Ramna, thousands then streamed toward Shahbagh. Streets closed to traffic became temporary markets of toys, windmills, and folk instruments. Families wandered slowly as children stopped at will.

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In closing remarks, Chhayanaut President Sarwar Ali pointed to a climate where cultural expression remains vulnerable, recalling recent pressures on cultural spaces and the lingering memory of the 2001 Ramna Batamul bombing. His message was clear: in a society, singing, speaking, and assembling should never demand courage.

Lalon's strain of endurance, "Boro shonkote poriya doyal", and finally Dwijendralal's luminous "Aji gao mahageet."

Chhayanaut's repertoire moved between resistance, remembrance, and renewal, rehearsing cultural memory as much as celebration.

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democratic values and practices.

A rooster figure led the procession, heralding the break of a new dawn, while a tiger, a lion, and a fox followed alongside a black elephant with red wings and a white dove of peace, visualising tension and balance.

Farmers carried tools of labour and indigenous groups joined in traditional dress. Children marked their faces with the numerals of the new year and spun paper pinwheels that caught brief winds. Under rain trees, groups of women in red and white saris formed rotating patterns, their movement tightening into a rhythm.

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US-Iran talks may resume in 2 days

Says Trump as progress reported on nuke issue in backchannel talks; IMF cuts global growth outlook

Ships exit Gulf from Iran despite blockade

Lebanon, Israel start direct talks in US

Oil retreats below \$100 per barrel

AGENCIES

Talks to end the Iran war could resume in Pakistan over the next two days, US President Donald Trump said yesterday, after the collapse of weekend negotiations prompted Washington to impose a blockade on Iranian ports.

Gulf, Pakistani and Iranian officials also said negotiating teams from the US and Iran could return to Pakistan later this week, though one senior Iranian source said no date had been set.

"You should stay there, really, because something could be happening over the next two days, and we're more inclined to go there," Trump was quoted as saying in an interview with the New York Post.

While the US blockade drew angry rhetoric from Tehran, signs that diplomatic engagement might continue helped calm oil markets, pushing benchmark prices below \$100 yesterday.

The highest-level talks between the two adversaries

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Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the Al-Hosh area near the coastal Lebanese city of Tyre yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Eastern Refinery running on fumes

No crude oil arrived since Feb; shutdown likely in a week

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

With usable crude stocks nearly exhausted amid import disruptions due to US-Israel war on Iran, the Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL) has been kept running by drawing from "deadstock", residual crude settled at the bottom of storage tanks that can only be used in limited quantities in emergencies.

Production at the refinery, the lone state-owned oil refinery, has dropped sharply, raising concerns of a possible shutdown within a week unless fresh supplies arrive.

Bangladesh needs to import around 1,20,000 tonnes of crude oil monthly. Due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, no crude oil shipments arrived in February and March.

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