

Scrap 'anti-state' US trade deal

Prof Anu Muhammad urges govt at rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday expressed strong concern over parliament's silence on the controversial trade agreement with the United States, demanding its immediate cancellation to protect the country's economic security.

Speaking at a rally organised by the Democratic Rights Committee at Shahbagh in the capital, he said, "An elected government has come to power for the first time since 2014, but it is unfortunate that not a single lawmaker has uttered a word against this anti-state deal so far."

The eminent economist alleged that the interim government signed the agreement in a "hurry" and with "over-enthusiasm" on February 9, just three days before the 13th national election.

Calling the move "beyond the jurisdiction" of the Prof Muhammad Yunus-led government, he said the debt and insecurity resulting from the deal would burden future generations.

He also described the agreement as a "colonial bond" that would allow the US to influence Bangladesh's trade and military-strategic interests. He claimed it would force

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Hawkers occupy much of this road in the capital's Gulistan area, just 10 days after Dhaka Metropolitan Police cleared encroachments and fined street vendors. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Ensure security at shrines

Urge speakers at human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should ensure security at shrines and khanqahs across the country through monitoring and effective presence from law enforcement agencies, demanded leaders of a youth forum yesterday.

Mainia Youth Forum also demanded that those responsible for recent attacks on mazars, as well as individuals who incited violence through hate speech, be identified and brought to justice.

The demands came at a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club.

"Human rights violations have continued across the country for years without any effective remedy," said Syed Mashuk E Moinuddin, president of the forum.

"We hoped that after the new government assumed office, law and order along with people's civil liberties would be restored, but to no avail," he said.

He alleged that homes were still being attacked, property looted, and religious institutions targeted over ideological differences.

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Footpaths reoccupied despite citywide DMP crackdown

Hawkers back within days; experts urge rehabilitation for lasting solution

HELEMUL ALAM, MUNTAKIM SAAD and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Just 10 days after a massive drive by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to reclaim encroached footpaths and roads, many areas across the capital have again been occupied by hawkers.

At least 44 people were arrested, and around Tk 10 lakh was realised in fines during the drive from April 1 to April 5. The operation covered areas under DMP's Lalbagh, Wari, Ramna, Mirpur, Motijheel, Tejgaon, Gulshan and Uttara traffic divisions.

Additional Commissioner (Traffic) Anisur Rahman told The Daily Star on the final day of the drive that follow-up operations would

continue to prevent reoccupation. "We will keep monitoring so that encroachers cannot return," he said.

However, visits to Gulistan, Mirpur, Tejgaon and Mohammadpur found that hawkers have already resumed operations, reoccupying footpaths and roads.

Both sides of the road and adjacent footpaths in Gulistan, from Gulistan Hall to Golapshah Majhar Road, have once again fallen under the control of hawkers. Many hawkers have set up makeshift stalls using cloth and plastic so they can quickly move during drives, while others operate more permanently.

"We are running our businesses at risk, as there is no alternative. We pay Tk 100 as toll to linemen,

though business has become uncertain," said a hawker, requesting anonymity.

Similar scenes were observed in other areas.

In the first week of April, police cleared hawkers from key locations in Mohammadpur, including Town Hall, BRTC bus stand, Allah Karim Market and Basila Road, evicting around 500 shops. Although many returned within days, police carried out additional drives.

During a visit on Thursday, vendors were again seen occupying the left lane from Mohammadpur Bus Stand to Basila Tin Rasta, with goods spilling onto footpaths and restricting pedestrian movement.

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Energy-focused urban development amid global changes crucial

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said integrated urban development and transport planning aligned with sustainable energy systems is crucial in the context of the evolving global situation.

They stressed the need for energy impact assessments to measure and reduce energy consumption across sectors.

The discussion, titled "Urbanisation and Development Thinking in Bangladesh in the Context of the Energy Crisis and Changing Global Situation", was organised by the Institute for Planning and Development (IPD) at the Bishwo Shahitto Kendro's conference room in Dhaka.

IPD Executive Director Prof Adil Muhammed Khan identified energy-efficient lighting and effective public transportation as

key ways to reduce demand.

He called for strengthening rail-and-water-based transport services, warning that overdependence on roads and fossil fuels is unsustainable in the long term.

He also recommended planned expansion of electric vehicles, highlighted the need for energy demand mapping and realistic

rationing during power shortages, and underscored expanding public-private partnerships (PPP), microfinance, and community-based initiatives, alongside raising awareness through

education, research, and alternative energy use.

Dr Ariful Islam, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners and also IPD director, said rural energy shortages are accelerating migration to cities, hindering decentralisation and sustainable development.

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SHAHBAGH MOB ATTACK 370 citizens slam police inaction

DU CORRESPONDENT

Condemning the April 10 mob attack in Shahbagh, 370 citizens have accused law enforcement agencies of failing to act.

They also expressed deep concern over "police indifference, lack of cooperation with victims, and reluctance to register a case, even though the assault took place near a police station."

During the attack, several individuals were beaten up and sexually assaulted.

In a statement issued yesterday, the signatories -- including civil society members and rights activists -- said the failure to act against perpetrators already identified through videos circulating on social media raises questions about the state's ability to fulfil its responsibilities.

They stressed that every citizen, irrespective of gender identity, is entitled to equal constitutional rights, security, and dignity and that ensuring these rights is a state obligation.

On April 10, a crowd rallying under the banner of "Azadi Andolon"

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'No chaos over nominations, accept party decisions'

Tarique tells reserved seat aspirants; interviews begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has instructed party leaders seeking nomination to the women's reserved seats in parliament to accept the party's final decision.

He also directed all aspirants not to create any chaotic situation over the nominations, warning that such actions could harm the image of both the BNP and the government.

The issue was discussed during the BNP's interviews with aspirants at the chairman's Gulshan office yesterday afternoon, where members of the party's standing committee were present.



During the interviews, aspirants were asked about their political background, organisational work, and ability to represent women in parliament.

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Senior BNP leaders said the party is trying to strike a balance by giving importance to both long serving, dedicated women leaders and younger faces who may bring new energy and ideas to politics.

About two hours before the interviews, aspirants, along with their supporters, gathered in front of the office. They discussed their chances, shared updates about the selection process, lobbied informally with party insiders, and tried to assess who might secure nomination.

On the first day, aspirants from Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, Rangpur, and Faridpur divisions were interviewed. More than 400 aspirants took part.

A member of the Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal from Ranisankail upazila in Thakurgaon said Tarique Rahman and Mirza Fakhru'l Islam Alamgir conducted the interviews. There was no fixed time for each aspirant, she added.

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Marma community members splash water during the Sangrai festival at Rangamati's Chinghla Mong Chowdhury Mari Stadium yesterday, symbolically washing away past sorrows and welcoming the new year. The daylong Biju event draws indigenous participants from across the country.

PHOTO: RIKORS CHAKMA

Change of Date

25th

The Daily Star Prime Bank

O&A
LEVEL
AWARDS

Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow

New date:
Saturday, 25 July 2026

~~Previous Date: 18 April 2026~~

Due to an unforeseen technical issue at the venue, the event has been rescheduled to 25 July 2026.

We regret any inconvenience caused.