



Justice essential to consolidate democracy: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said his government has taken steps to ensure access to justice for all, especially the financially disadvantaged.

He stressed that there is no alternative to establishing the rule of justice to consolidate the country's renewed democratic journey.

"After more than a decade and a half of fascist rule, the people of Bangladesh have begun to walk once again on the path of democracy. To strengthen this democratic journey, there is no alternative to establishing the rule of justice in the country. This justice is applicable to everyone," he said.



SSC examinees at Comilla Ishwar Pathsala High School centre sit either with their feet raised on benches or just submerged as rainwater floods the exam hall yesterday afternoon. The invigilator is also perched on her chair, while dirty drainwater floats through the rooms after an hour and a half of heavy rain left much of Cumilla city waterlogged. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fear of 'frozen conflict' grows in Middle East

Reports say Trump unlikely to accept Iran's new terms as oil jumps above \$110

AGENCIES

Efforts to end the Middle East war appeared at a standstill yesterday, with the US considering Tehran's latest offer to unblock the Strait of Hormuz, and Iran saying Washington could no longer dictate terms.

Iran has blockaded the waterway -- a vital conduit for oil and gas shipments -- since the start of the US-Israeli offensive two months ago, sending shockwaves through the global economy.

The impasse yesterday drove oil prices above \$110 per barrel.

CNN reported that US President Donald Trump was unlikely to accept Iran's proposal to restore traffic in the strait, as Qatar warned of the possibility of a "frozen conflict" if a definitive resolution is not found.

"We do not want to see a return to hostilities in the SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

UAE pulls out of OPEC oil cartels

AFP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates will withdraw from the OPEC and OPEC+ oil cartels to focus on "national interests", it announced on Tuesday, causing fresh shockwaves as energy prices soar over the Middle East war.

The UAE, one of the world's top oil producers, which has previously chafed at OPEC production quotas, will pull out on Friday, a statement carried by the official WAM news agency said.

The UAE has been an OPEC member through the emirate of Abu Dhabi since 1967, four years before the former British protectorate became a country.

The last OPEC member to withdraw from the cartel was Angola in 2024.

"This decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy profile," the UAE statement said.

"During our time in the organisation, we made significant contributions and even greater sacrifices for the benefit of all," it added.

"However, the time has come to focus our efforts on what our national interest dictates."

The decision, in the midst of the biggest oil shock SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

BJP eyes saffron surge in Mamata's bastion

3.21cr head to final phase of West Bengal polls

STAR REPORT

The second and final phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections will be held today in 142 constituencies, setting up a decisive contest between the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Spread across five districts -- North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Howrah, and Kolkata -- these seats are traditionally TMC strongholds.

For TMC, it must retain its dominance here to secure a fourth consecutive term.

The BJP will have to breach TMC's fort in southern West Bengal and secure a major share in order to capture the throne.

In the last assembly polls in 2021,

TMC won 123 of these 142 seats, BJP secured 18, and the Indian Secular Front (ISF) took one.

In the first phase this time, on April 23, voting was held in 152 of 294 constituencies across 16 districts, recording 93 percent turnout, one remain TMC bastions.

In 2021, BJP had won 59 of those seats, while TMC secured 92.

Today, 3.21 crore voters will decide the fate of 1,448 candidates, including Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee,

In the last assembly polls in 2021, TMC won 123 of these 142 seats, BJP secured 18, and the Indian Secular Front (ISF) took one.

of the highest figures in the state's recent election history.

Local media say those districts are largely considered BJP strongholds, though Murshidabad and Malda, dominated by religious minorities,

opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari, and half a dozen cabinet members.

People of West Bengal, an eastern Indian state that shares a 2,216.7 km land border with Bangladesh, SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

'No militancy in country'

Says home minister; PM's Adviser Zahed says it still exists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No militant activities exist in Bangladesh now, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday, dismissing concerns about such groups.

Speaking to reporters at the Coast Guard headquarters after a programme marking its 31st founding anniversary, he said, "I do not recognise that term [militancy]."

Without using the word "militancy", the minister said the term had been used during the "fascist rule" for political gains. "In the current context, there is nothing like that."

He, however, added that extremist elements exist in every country. "There are always some extremist groups, radical forces or fundamentalist political groups around the world."

Responding to a query about possible militant links within the armed forces, Salahuddin said Bangladesh, like other countries, has its own intelligence mechanisms within disciplined forces, particularly in the defence services.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Dhaka Power Distribution Company is installing underground power lines in the capital's Bijoy Nagar area, but the work is progressing slowly, leading to increased traffic congestion and growing public suffering. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

কেয়ারগিভিং প্রশিক্ষণ নিলে দেশ বিদেশে কর্ম মেলে

একটাই লক্ষ্য, হতে হবে দক্ষ কর্মে হব যুক্ত

বিনামূল্যে কেয়ারগিভিং প্রশিক্ষণ

সরকার দেশের শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ ও কর্মসংস্থানের বাইরে থাকা যুবজনগোষ্ঠীকে সংক্ষিপ্ত প্রশিক্ষণের মাধ্যমে দক্ষ জনশক্তিতে রূপান্তর এবং মর্যাদাপূর্ণ কর্মজীবনে প্রবেশে সহায়তার লক্ষ্যে ASSET প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে সম্পূর্ণ বিনা খরচে কর্মমুখী প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করছে। এর অংশ হিসেবে স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগের অধীন জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট)-এর আওতাধীন বিভিন্ন আঞ্চলিক জনসংখ্যা প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (RPTI) এবং আঞ্চলিক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র (RTC)-এর মাধ্যমে NSDA অনুমোদিত কেয়ারগিভিং বিষয়ে সংক্ষিপ্ত প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।

মুন্দিহামমুহ:

- সম্পূর্ণ সরকারি খরচে ৩ মাস বা ৩৬০ ঘন্টা মেয়াদি প্রশিক্ষণ।
- ১৮-৪৫ বছর বয়সি যে কেউ এ প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
- কম্পিউট হওয়া সাপেক্ষে সাধারণ প্রশিক্ষণার্থীদের প্রত্যেককে মাসে ১,৫০০ টাকা এবং নারী, প্রতিবন্ধী ও ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠীর প্রশিক্ষণার্থীদেরকে ২,০০০ টাকা প্রশিক্ষণ ভাতা দেওয়া হয়।
- যাতায়াত ভাতা হিসেবে কম্পিউট হওয়া সাপেক্ষে প্রত্যেককে দৈনিক সর্বোচ্চ ১০০ টাকা করে মাসিক সর্বোচ্চ ২,৫০০ টাকা প্রদান করা হয়।
- নারী, অনগ্রসর ও প্রতিবন্ধীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হয়।
- প্রশিক্ষণ শেষে NSDA-এর মাধ্যমে দক্ষতা যাচাইপূর্বক সরকারি সার্টিফিকেট প্রদান করা হয়।

২ মে ক্লাস শুরু ভর্তি চলাছে

প্রশিক্ষণ প্রতিষ্ঠানমুহ:

(ক) আঞ্চলিক জনসংখ্যা প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট - RPTI (১৩টি): বরিশাল, বগুড়া, কুমিল্লা, দিনাজপুর, ফরিদপুর, গাজীপুর, খুলনা, কুষ্টিয়া, মানিকগঞ্জ, রাজশাহী, রাঙ্গামাটি, সিলেট এবং টাঙ্গাইল।

(খ) আঞ্চলিক প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র - RTC (২০টি): আগৈলঝাড়া, বরিশাল; বেড়া, পাবনা; বেতাগী, বরগুনা; ভাঙ্গা, ফরিদপুর; চারঘাট, রাজশাহী; ধামরাই, ঢাকা; গাংনী, মেহেরপুর; ঝাটাইল, টাঙ্গাইল; ঈশ্বরগঞ্জ, ময়মনসিংহ; জামালগঞ্জ, সুনামগঞ্জ; কাগুই, রাঙ্গামাটি; মেলাদহ, জামালপুর; মিঠাপুকুর, রংপুর; মনিরামপুর, যশোর; গাবুরা, নোয়াখালী; পাবতীপুর, দিনাজপুর; শাহরাস্তি, চাঁদপুর; শেরপুর, বগুড়া; সীতাকুন্ড, চট্টগ্রাম এবং তালা, সাতক্ষীরা।

বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য ভিজিট করুন:
www.niport.gov.bd; www.asset-dte.gov.bd; www.AProMISapp

অ্যাসেসলায়েটিং এন্ড স্ট্রেনদেনিং স্কিলস ফর ইকোনমিক ট্রান্সফরমেশন (ASSET) প্রকল্প
কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর
কারিগরি ও মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়

ASSET Project THE WORLD BANK

Credible, well managed election

Says EU polls observers' final report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union Election Observation Mission yesterday termed Bangladesh's 2026 parliamentary elections "credible and competently managed", but made 19 recommendations to strengthen transparency, credibility, and integrity of future polls.

Presenting the mission's final report at a city hotel, Chief Observer Ivars Ijabs said the February 12 polls marked "a pivotal step" towards restoring democratic governance and the rule of law.

"For the first time since 2008, elections were genuinely competitive, with fundamental freedoms broadly respected," he said.

The mission, however, said sporadic localised political violence and "persistent fear of mob attacks", often triggered by manipulated online narratives, harmed the democratic process. It said limited political space for women undermined their equal participation.

Of the 19, six were priority recommendations.

They call for revising the legal framework for parliamentary elections, ensuring transparent vote tabulation at upazila and district levels, and amending the Representation of the People Order to ensure strict SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

UK froze £250m in assets linked to Bangladeshis

Says envoy Sarah Cooke

UNB, Dhaka

British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke yesterday said the UK, since June 2025, has frozen over £250 million in assets linked to Bangladeshis individuals.

This action underlines the UK's determination to uphold the rule of law and the integrity of the international financial system, she said while responding to a question during DCAB Talk.

"We are very committed to working SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

