

Govt moving ahead to implement promises made to people: PM

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman today said the new government, having received a strong mandate from the people, is moving ahead with a clear action plan to fulfill its commitments over the next five years.

“Our priorities are to protect national interests, maintain policy continuity, ensure economic stability and carry out institutional reforms. We are now moving directly from commitments to implementation,” he said.

The prime minister was addressing the inaugural session of the three-day international conference ‘Bay of Bengal Conversation (BOBC) 2026’, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel here this morning.

This year’s BOBC is being held under the theme “Fragments, Frontiers and Futures: Navigating Power, Technology and Trust in a World Rewritten”.

Around 200 speakers, more than 300 delegates and over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries are taking part in the conference, which is being held from October 3 to 5.

Former Serbian President Boris Tadic, former Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed and former Malian Prime Minister Moussa Mara, among others, are participating in the conference along with former and incumbent state officials, diplomats, policymakers, researchers, business leaders, technologists and experts from different countries.

The prime minister said the government has taken initiatives to make Bangladesh an attractive investment destination and

transform the country into a strong hub for production and investment.

“We want to create extensive employment opportunities in production, services, exports and all other sectors,” he said.

Emphasising the need for policy certainty for investors, the prime minister said continuity in long-term policies would provide them with the necessary assurance.

He said the government’s social protection programmes had been designed to give priority to the most disadvantaged people.

Under the Family Card initiative, financial assistance will reach the hands of mothers in every family, beginning with the poorest and most marginalised communities, he said.

The Farmers Card will connect farmers with government incentives, agricultural services and markets, while the Health Card will ensure access to healthcare for all, he said, adding that ultimately the Universal Card would bring integrated government services under one umbrella.

Mentioning the government’s pledge to take healthcare to people’s doorsteps, the prime minister said the government is working to recruit 100,000 health workers, around 80 percent of whom will be women.

They will provide primary healthcare, health advice and necessary referral services at the grassroots level, he said, adding that the government is also giving special attention to maternal and child health.

On education reform, the prime minister said education should not be limited to obtaining certificates but should prepare students for real life. “We are working to ensure a joyful learning environment,” he said.

He said culture, sports, values and ethics would have an important place in the curriculum to help build children’s

character. Students would be given the opportunity to learn a third language, while technical and vocational education would be expanded alongside general education.

The government has taken initiatives to provide free uniforms, schoolbags, midday meals and stipends from the first grade, while expanding free education for girls up to the graduate level, he said.

Describing the country's large young population as one of the key drivers of national progress, the prime minister said skills development and suitable employment opportunities were essential to harnessing the demographic advantage.

"The government is focusing on improving language skills, creating employment opportunities, technological transformation and wider use of artificial intelligence. We are supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and start-ups. We want our young people to compete on the global stage and transform brain drain into brain circulation," he said

Describing agriculture as a mainstay of the economy, Tarique Rahman said access to technology, irrigation, agricultural finance and markets are being made easier.

He said support would be provided to fisheries, livestock and rural entrepreneurs, while agricultural processing and agro-product export industries needed to be developed as a complement to food security.

"A strong rural economy can build a strong Bangladesh," the prime minister said.

Highlighting the importance of water security, he said the government has planned to excavate 20,000 kilometres of canals and waterways over the next five years.

The Padma Barrage project is being advanced and a master plan for the Teesta is being prepared for water conservation and

management, he said, adding that these initiatives would support agriculture while strengthening climate resilience.

On environmental protection, Tarique Rahman said 250 million trees would be planted over the next five years.

He said Bangladesh is also expanding solar power use, promoting waste recycling and taking a leading role in establishing environment-friendly green factories.

“Of the world’s top 100 LEED-certified factories, 53 are now in Bangladesh,” he said.

The prime minister said developing clean and environment-friendly cities could reduce waste, strengthen climate resilience and further dynamise the national economy.

Stressing institutional reforms, he said strong state institutions were essential for development. “We are strengthening institutional transparency and accountability. Human rights, democratic values and freedom of expression must be protected,” he said.

Emphasising equal application of the rule of law to every citizen, the prime minister said an institutional culture would be developed in which state institutions would genuinely remain dedicated to serving the people of Bangladesh.

On the Rohingya crisis, he said Bangladesh was still hosting around 1.2 million Rohingya refugees. “Our main objective is to ensure their swift, voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation to Myanmar,” he said.

Calling for continued political support and international financing from the global community, he said the root causes of the crisis must also be addressed. “The crisis originated in Myanmar and its solution must also be found in Myanmar,” he said.

Referring to the Bay of Bengal as one of the major pillars of

Bangladesh's future economic potential, Tarique Rahman said the Bay had been shaping Bangladesh's destiny for generations.

Given Bangladesh's geographic and strategic location, he said, the country had opportunities to become more deeply connected with the world through seaports, waterways and the coastal economy.

There is immense potential in shipping, fisheries, tourism, energy and regional supply chains, he said.

The prime minister said deeper bilateral and multilateral engagement was needed to transform the region's shared geography into shared prosperity.

"Cooperation can be further expanded in trade, energy, education, technology, climate and maritime sectors. New markets can be opened and more opportunities can be created for young people. We can build stronger cooperative relations based on equality, fairness and justice," he said.

Stating that Bangladesh believes in dialogue, partnership and mutual respect, Tarique Rahman said the country would continue to work positively with all its regional and global partners while safeguarding national interests and sovereignty. "Because peace and harmony are the foundations of shared prosperity and development," he said.

The prime minister called for transforming the Bay of Bengal region into an area where every state could prosper together, benefit equally and extend meaningful cooperation to its citizens.

"Bangladesh is fully prepared to play its rightful role in this regard," he said.

The five thematic pillars of this year's B0BC are geopolitics, security and strategic competition, artificial intelligence, cyberspace and information power, trade, connectivity and

strategic growth, and climate, resilience and human security.