



“An entire generation of Afghan women is being sacrificed.”
Unesco chief Audrey Azoulay urges pressure on Taliban over girls’ education ban

The Daily Star

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SECOND EDITION

DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 16, 2025



REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 203

BHADRA 1, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SAFAR 21, 1447 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00



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SHAHJALAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

TERMINAL-3 operations face further delay

RASHIDUL HASAN

The launch of Dhaka airport’s third terminal faces a further delay, as the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is still negotiating an operation and maintenance agreement – a prerequisite for starting services – with a Japanese consortium.

In April, CAAB deferred the opening of the iconic terminal to the end of this year, which was originally scheduled for October 2024.

Officials involved in the project say that CAAB is likely to miss the revised deadline even though the terminal’s construction is almost complete. It will take one to two months to finalise the agreement and another five to six months for the consortium to recruit and train personnel.

Seeking anonymity, a senior CAAB official said the regulatory body and the Japanese consortium have yet to settle the

revenue-sharing terms for the terminal.

Contacted, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq said, “The terms and conditions regarding the agreement with the Japanese consortium are yet to be finalised.”

When asked about a possible date for starting the terminal’s operation, he said, “We will be able to say the exact date of launching once the deal is signed.”

The CAAB boss further said it would take around six months for test run of equipment and other preparations after the construction company hands over the terminal to CAAB.

Asked, Air Commodore Abu Sayeed Mehboob Khan, member (operations and planning) of CAAB, could not provide a time frame for signing the agreement.

He, however, said at least a month would be needed to strike the deal.

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AT A GLANCE

Original deadline Oct 2024; revised deadline end of this year

Negotiation with a Japanese consortium for operation and maintenance still ongoing

It will take one to two months to finalise deal with Japanese consortium

5-6 months will be needed for consortium to recruit, train personnel

6,000 personnel needed to operate terminal round-the-clock

Soft launch of Tk 21,300cr project held on Oct 7, 2023



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

LDC GRADUATION

Govt prepares for transition amid calls for delay

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government is pressing ahead with Bangladesh’s planned graduation from the UN’s Least Developed Countries category in November 2026 despite private sector pleas for a six-year delay over fears of losing vital trade benefits.

The interim government is taking preparations to set the stage for the historic economic shift as scheduled, said Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, special assistant to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

“The LDC graduation is a sovereign decision of the country,” he told The Daily Star over the phone, adding that officials have already started consulting with stakeholders in key sectors such as garments, pharmaceuticals, leather and leather goods, and visiting factories to identify challenges.

“Let’s take the preparations,” the special assistant said.

A careful implementation plan must show how extra time would strengthen preparation [for LDC graduation].

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque
Economist and chairman of RAPID

He, however, did not clarify whether the government is considering the option to seek a deferment from the UN, as urged by businesses.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said, “My ministry will act according to the government’s final decision on the matter.”

Business leaders, at a roundtable organised by The Daily Star on Tuesday, cited a confluence of pressures, including a nearly 40 percent currency devaluation, higher tariffs in the US, elevated interest rates, and a difficult investment climate, as reasons they are unprepared for the graduation.

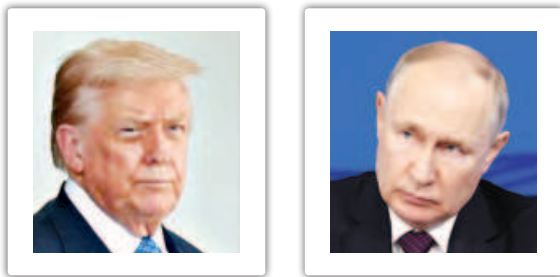
Their primary concern is the loss of preferential trade benefits, particularly duty-free, quota-free access to the European Union.

They warn this could reduce annual exports by up to 14 percent, or about \$7 billion, severely impacting the ready-made garments and footwear sectors, which

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Trump, Putin in Alaska to end Ukraine war

Kyiv counting on US president as Zelensky not invited



AFP, Moscow

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin flew to Alaska yesterday for a high-risk summit that promises a stern test of the US president’s promise to end the bloody war in Ukraine.

Both leaders voiced hopes of a productive meeting. However, while Trump warned that he could judge it a failure after just a few minutes if Putin did not budge, the Kremlin stated that the two would speak for at least six or seven hours.

For the Russian president, the summit marks his first foray onto Western soil since he ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, triggering a relentless conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people.

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Police struggle to regain their ‘lost morale’

New leadership, policy measures fail to restore effectiveness

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

One year after the fall of the Awami League government, the police force is still reeling – its morale shattered, its chain of command in tatters.

These phrases were widely used in the early weeks of the new administration formed on August 8 last year. And for a time, they rang true.

The force faced intense public backlash for its role in the violent crackdown, including indiscriminate firing and excessive use of force against protesters. Its members were gripped by a crippling fear, fuelled by arrests of officers accused of killings during the July mass uprising.

Upon assuming office, the interim administration took a raft of measures to restore the force’s morale. It brought in new leadership, raised risk allowances, and rolled out a wave of promotions.

But these steps have done little

to improve the situation. In fact, “lost morale” has become a catch-all explanation for everything from rising crime rates to sluggish emergency responses. Fear of reprisal, the absence of seasoned officers, and a loss of public trust have left many officers hesitant

to intervene. This vacuum in enforcement is now being blamed for a string of violent incidents.

Even the police chief, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Baharul Alam, recently admitted that the force is still underperforming.

Speaking to The Daily Star, several police officers said they are reluctant to engage in violent situations, fearing that they won’t get any support if they come under harm.

They noted that people have increasingly disregarded instructions from police since August last year.

Some officers voiced frustration that no visible steps have yet been taken to

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4 of a family found dead in Rajshahi home

Note cites debt, hunger

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of four members of a family in Bamunshikar village of Rajshahi’s Paba upazila.

In a room, a man was found hanging from a ceiling fan while his son lay dead on the bed. In the adjacent room, his wife and younger daughter were found dead. A two-page note was recovered beside the bodies.

The deceased were Minarul Islam, 35, a farmer, his wife Monira Begum, 28, their son Mahin, 13, and two-year-old daughter, Mithila.

Sayed Ali, chairman of Parila Union Parishad, told The Daily Star that Minarul had been mentally distressed. “He used to gamble. However, due to gambling, he had fallen into debt with some locals.”

His father, Rustom Ali, said his son had some debt in the area, but it was not much. “I sold my land to pay it off. I don’t know if he had taken any new loans without my knowledge.”

Following the incident, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Abu Sufian visited the spot around 11:00am.

He said initial evidence suggested that Minarul suffocated his wife and children

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Rising waters of the Padma have flooded homes on river islands tucked away deep within its course. As residents pack their belongings onto a boat and head for higher ground, they pass a jujube tree on the verge of submersion -- a marker evident of how high the waters have risen. The photo was taken yesterday in Char Majhardia under Paba upazila of Rajshahi.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Damaged Teesta dyke threatens 1,000 families

River water levels fall in Rangpur, rise in Faridpur

STAR REPORT

A portion of the Second Teesta Road Bridge embankment in Rangpur’s Gangachara upazila has collapsed, threatening over 1,000 families in three nearby villages with the loss of homes and farmland to river erosion.

The 60 metre protection dyke in Mohipur village gave way after being struck by strong hill runoff currents, said Rabiul Islam, executive engineer of Rangpur’s Water Development Board (WDB).

“We are preparing to drop sand-filled geo-bags to stop the erosion,” he said. “Full scale repairs will begin once the water level drops.”

Ponir Uddin, a local farmer, said without urgent repairs, the entire bridge could collapse, causing permanent waterlogging in the village. If the bridge breaks down, road connectivity between Rangpur and Lalmonirhat will be severed.

Local resident Mansur Uddin alleged that the dyke had been damaged during the past two floods but was never repaired. “With monsoon water rising this year, concrete blocks are sinking one after another, forming deep holes that

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