

## Tarique stresses fair election to uphold democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said a free and fair election is essential to ensuring the continuity of democracy in the country.



"Democracy is not just about holding elections -- it means guaranteeing freedom and fundamental rights of the country's people," Tarique said in a message marking the "Shaheed Jihad Day".

Nazir Uddin Ahmed Jihad, a Chhatra Dal activist from Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj, was shot dead in Dhaka on October 10, 1990, during the movement against the autocratic rule of HM Ershad.

In his message, the BNP acting chairman urged the nation to uphold the spirit of Jihad's sacrifice to resist any potential domestic and foreign conspiracies.

"We must carry Jihad's ideals in our hearts -- to defeat internal and external plots, safeguard the country's freedom and sovereignty, and restore true democracy," Tarique said.



Motorcycles and rickshaws illegally cross this divider onto the opposite side of the road -- over a zebra crossing, no less. Despite a U-turn being available just 10 metres away, they make this illegal manoeuvre to save less than two minutes, while creating traffic congestion for other vehicles. The photo was taken in the Tejgaon area of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## We must reach 30% renewable energy by 2030

Says Rizwana

BSS, Dhaka

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday stressed the need to achieve the target of generating 30 percent of Bangladesh's energy from renewable sources by 2030.



"We have to achieve the target of having 30 percent renewable energy by 2030," she said at the inaugural ceremony of the Team Europe Initiative-Climate and Energy, held at a city hotel.

The adviser said the government has taken various initiatives to make the installation of solar panels mandatory in government offices, while also reviewing the potential of solar and wind power to meet the target.

She called on the global community to extend greater support to Bangladesh in tackling natural disasters and advancing the country's energy transition.

"We have started the process, but we need technology transfer from European countries and affordable finance," she said.

## Raise immunisation coverage to 95%

Experts urge govt; Typhoid vaccination starts Oct 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With immunisation coverage hovering between 80 and 84 percent for over a decade, health experts yesterday urged the government to address manpower shortages and revise the urban immunisation plan to reach the 95 percent target.

They made the call as the country prepares to launch the Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) campaign on October 12, aiming to immunise 4.9 crore children aged between nine months and 15 years to reduce deaths from the disease.

Health authorities have urged all eligible children to be registered and vaccinated, stressing that the vaccine is safe, effective, and free of cost.

Online registration for the vaccine began on August 1, and around 1.68 crore children had been registered using their birth certificates as of Wednesday. Many others without birth certificates were registered manually. Registration will remain open throughout the campaign.

The campaign will be conducted in all educational institutions during the first 10 working days between October 12 and 31, followed by the next eight working days at both temporary and permanent vaccination centres until November 13.

At a press conference organised by Unicef Bangladesh and the Shastho Shurokkha Foundation, in association with the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), at Jatiya Press Club, experts called for urgent measures to raise immunisation coverage.

Prof Nizam Uddin Ahmed, executive director of Shastho Shurokkha Foundation, said the EPI has helped reduce under-five mortality by 81.5 percent, preventing around 94,000 child deaths annually.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Coverage stuck between 80-84pc for over decade

Campaign to vaccinate 4.9cr children (9 months-15yrs)

1.68cr registered online so far

Campaign to run in schools till Oct 31, then at vaccine centres till Nov 13

## HRSS REPORT ON FIRST 9 MONTHS OF THIS YEAR

# 237 lives lost to mob attacks, political violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The human rights situation in Bangladesh remained "alarming" during the first nine months of this year, with at least 107 people killed in political violence and 130 others in mob beatings, according to Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

"After the fall of autocrat Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, the interim government -- led by Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus -- assumed power. However, the human rights and law-and-order situation in the country has not improved as expected," the report said.

In its January-September Human Rights Observation Report, HRSS said Bangladesh continues to witness incidents of political violence, mob attacks, and violence against women and children, though enforced disappearances and so-called crossfire killings did not occur during the period.

The report cited the murder of trader Sohag, 39, near the gate of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital, and the rape of an eight-year-old girl in Magura by her sister's father-in-law.

According to HRSS, at least 107 people were killed and 5,579 injured in 692 incidents of political violence across the country in nine months.

Most of the clashes were linked to internal feuds within the BNP and its affiliated organisations.

Violence mainly occurred over establishing dominance, political vengeance, rallies, disputes over committee formation, extortion, and occupation of various establishments, it said.

Of those killed, 71 were from BNP, 23 from Awami League, three from Jamaat-e-Islami, one from Students Against Discrimination, and six from the UPDF. The political identities of three others, including one woman, could not be confirmed.

Meanwhile, at least 340 journalists were victims of murder, torture, or harassment in 236 incidents during the nine months.

Among them, two journalists were killed, 209 injured, 36

In this period, 663 rape incidents were recorded. Of the victims, 393 were children, the report said.

At least 152 women and girls were gang-raped, 19 rape victims were killed, and nine took their own lives.

Besides, 61 inmates -- including seven AL leaders and activists -- died in prisons during this period.

The report said 28 people died in incidents involving law enforcement agencies, including 10 in custody, eight in clashes or shootings, and four due to torture. Seven others died while fleeing police operations.

HRSS recorded 22 incidents of attacks on religious minorities, which left five injured and resulted in the vandalism of five temples, 37 idols, and 38 homes. It also noted over 50 attacks on religious shrines and mazars, including one in Rajbari where the body of a self-proclaimed pir was exhumed and set on fire.

The report said 23 Bangladeshi nationals were killed, 34 injured, and 56 detained by India's Border Security Force during 61 border incidents. HRSS alleged that 3,264 people were pushed back from India between January and September.

During the same period, 176 incidents of violence against workers were reported, resulting in 74 deaths and 828 injuries.

HRSS said to establish the rule of law and improve democracy and human rights, it is essential to strengthen dialogue among political parties, civil society, journalists, and citizens. "If these issues are not properly addressed, the rights situation will continue to deteriorate," the report warned.



- 1,511 women, girls faced violence
- 340 journo victims of murder, torture
- 22 attacks on religious minorities
- 74 workers killed, 828 hurt in 176 incidents

humiliated, and 54 threatened. Eleven were arrested, and 103 others were accused in 29 cases, it added.

The report mentioned the killings of journalists Asaduzzaman Tuhin in Gazipur and Wahed-uz-Zaman Bulu in Khulna.

HRSS documented 239 incidents of mob violence that left at least 130 people dead and 212 injured.

Between January and September, 1,511 women and girls faced violence.

## Burglars in burqas loot 500-bhori gold from Mouchak mall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 500 bhoris of gold ornaments were reportedly looted in a daring burglary at a jewellery shop inside Fortune Shopping Mall in Dhaka's Mouchak area early yesterday.

The incident took place around 3:00am at Shampa Jewellers, located on the first floor of the mall.

CCTV footage shows two members of a gang, wearing burqas, entering the market, cutting through the shutter lock, and looting the gold ornaments, shop owner Achintyo Kumar Biswas told The Daily Star.

The burglars had covered their faces to avoid identification.

He said the shop had around 400 bhoris of gold ornaments on display and another 100 bhoris kept as mortgaged gold, along with around Tk 40,000 in cash.

"The burglars took everything, including the cash," he said.

"I closed my shop around 9:00pm as usual and went home. Early in the morning, the market's

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security guard called me, saying there was a problem at my shop. When I rushed there, I saw everything was gone," said Achintyo.

The shop owner alleged that someone inside the shopping mall might have been involved in the theft.

"The security guards of the market are definitely involved. Such looting is not possible without inside help," he said.

"I have nothing left of what I earned in the last 20 years. I don't know how I will survive and maintain my family. I want the law enforcers to recover my gold," he said in a choked voice.

Talking to reporters, Tamjid Khan, organising secretary of the shop owners' association of the market, claimed that there was no lack of security measures and that security guards were on duty at the market.

"It is an accident that happened for the first time," he said, adding that they would review CCTV footage to determine what the guards were doing at the time.

Mazharul Islam, assistant commissioner of Ramna Zone, said, "The owner alleged that around 500 bhoris of gold were stolen from the shop, and we are investigating it."

Filing of a case is underway and no one was arrested so far, said Sub-inspector Nasima Akter, duty officer of Ramna Police Station.



On a bright and sunny day, two children of tea workers in Sylhet play with clay toys, twigs, and plastic containers amid the lush green tea leaves, finding joy in small things. The photo was taken in Malnicharra Tea Garden yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## DU moves up 200 places in Times Higher Education rankings 2026

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University has advanced 200 places in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026, to secure a position in the 801-1,000 band, according to a press release issued by the university's Public Relations Office.

Last year, DU was placed in the 1,001-1,200 band.

The UK-based Times Higher Education, one of the world's most influential higher education publications, released the latest rankings on Wednesday.

According to the DU media release, the university's research environment score improved from 10.3 to 13.3, while its research quality score rose from 67.2 to 76.5. The industry engagement score also jumped from 21.4 to 33.2.

DU scored 17.7 points in teaching and 45 points in international outlook.

The university credited these improvements to the work of a 16-member committee formed to advance global rankings.



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