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This is the law of the country. I don't make laws -- parliament does. The law clearly outlines what the police can do. I have not issued any special order; I only reminded my officers of what the law already says.

SHEIKH MOHAMMAD SAJJAT ALI
DMP chief on instructing police to open fire if anyone attempts arson.

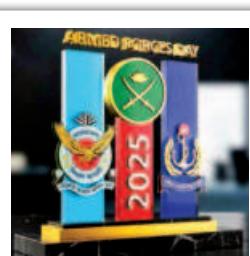
Armed Forces Day today

UNB, Dhaka

Armed Forces Day will be observed across the country today.

On this day in 1971, the Bangladesh Armed Forces comprising the army, navy and air force came into being and launched an all-out attack on the Pakistani occupation forces.

Since independence, the day has been observed every year as Armed Forces Day.



The programmes will begin with special prayers at mosques in all cantonments, naval outposts and establishments and air force outposts.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will place wreaths at Shikha Anirban at Dhaka Cantonment in the morning to pay homage to the members of the Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives in the Liberation War.

The chiefs of the three services will also place wreaths there.

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A man cycles to work early in the morning, the golden sunrays offering the only relief from the harsh winter air. As dawn breaks and the first light filters through the fog, the landscape is enveloped in a warm glow. Dewdrops sparkle on the grass and the trees bask in the morning sun. The photo was taken from the Bill Pabla area on the Khulna City Bypass Road recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Bhutan PM arrives Saturday for 3-day state visit

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will roll out the red carpet on Saturday to welcome Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, who arrives on a three-day state visit aimed at strengthening bilateral relations through enhanced connectivity, trade and investment.

He is scheduled to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the morning, a senior official told UNB.

During the visit, he will attend several engagements, including talks with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The visit comes at the invitation of the chief adviser.

According to the Bhutanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prime

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Trafficking victims to get more protection in court

Law ministry introduces new 'Bench Book' with guidance for judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With human trafficking in Bangladesh marked by deep vulnerabilities and organised networks, a new Bench Book has been launched to help ensure consistent adjudication and protect victims' rights during proceedings.

The law ministry introduced the book yesterday in collaboration with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration. The publication is supported by the European Union and the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

Prepared under the guidance of an Advisory Expert Committee of the Law and Justice Division, the Bench Book is intended as a comprehensive reference for judges handling trafficking cases.

The document states that most trafficking victims in Bangladesh remain unidentified, slowing investigations and weakening the criminal justice response. It links this to widespread poverty, gender inequality, social norms and increased risks for climate-affected communities and migrant workers.

Fear, stigma, coercion and the lack of safe mechanisms including sexual exploitation, labour trafficking, forced marriage and organ removal. Emphasising trauma-informed, victim-centred adjudication, the document notes that trauma can affect memory and lead to fragmented or inconsistent testimonies. Such



Prepared under the guidance of the Law and Justice Division, the Bench Book is intended as a comprehensive reference for judges handling trafficking cases.

inconsistencies are common and should not be treated as signs of unreliability. Without proper understanding, victims risk secondary victimisation within the justice system.

To address this, the Bench Book details courtroom protection measures allowed under national law, including in-camera hearings, separate waiting areas, screens and pre-recorded or video testimony.

Speaking at the launch event at a city hotel, Michal Krejza, head of cooperation at the EU Delegation to Bangladesh, said, "The Bench Book will help deliver fair, consistent and victim-centred judicial decisions across Bangladesh, strengthening the rule of law."

Sujin Kong, deputy country director of KOICA Bangladesh, said the publication would help ensure survivors receive proper dignity and protection.

Speaking as chief guest, Liaquat Ali Molla, secretary of the Law and Justice Division, said the Bench Book aims to build the capacity of judges and ensure trauma-informed proceedings aligned with national laws and international standards.

IOM's Officer-in-Charge Catherine Northing and UNODC representative Jee Aei Lee also spoke.

Ordinance on referendum in a few days
Says law adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul yesterday said work is under way on an ordinance to provide a legal basis for the referendum, although the dates for the election and referendum, which are to be held on the same day, have not yet been set.

An ordinance must be enacted before a referendum can be held, and it will be ready within three to four working days, he said at a press briefing after a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The government has decided to hold a referendum on the day of the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election to seek public opinion on constitutional reform proposals in the July charter.

Meanwhile, the government is preparing measures to bring back ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, both sentenced to death for crimes against humanity and currently in India.

Bangladesh plans to send a letter to the Indian government requesting their extradition. The government is considering approaching the International Criminal Court.

Asif Nazrul said since the accused have been convicted and sentenced to death, India has an additional responsibility under the extradition agreement to return them.

NATIONAL ELECTION
PHQ seeks list of officials with 'clean image' for OC posts

TOUSIF KAIUM

The Police Headquarters has instructed all units to submit the names of inspectors who may be appointed as officers-in-charge across the country ahead of the national election expected in February 2026.

The directive, issued early this month, stresses the need to deploy competent, impartial and professionally credible police station chiefs to ensure a fair and peaceful election.

PHQ has not yet clarified how the final list will be prepared.

The order comes as scrutiny of inspectors' political backgrounds and their roles in the past three national elections is already under way.



There are 530 police stations under eight ranges, 110 under eight metropolitan police units, and 24 railway police stations. OCs play a key role in maintaining law and order during elections.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the November 16 directive issued by the Personnel Management-2 wing, addressed to the chiefs of CID and SB, and the DMP commissioner.

"We are now collecting a list of competent inspectors from the field... After receiving the list, specific criteria will be determined, and a final list will then be prepared for appointments as OC," said AKM Awlad Hossain, additional inspector general (admin) at PHQ.

Sources said priority will be given to inspectors not involved in any controversy during the July uprising or the elections of 2014, 2018 and 2024. Those with clean service records, strong investigative backgrounds, experience in public

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Electric line repair work by DPDC has taken over part of the English Road, leaving little space for vehicles to pass. At the same time, impounded vehicles sit on the footpath, preventing pedestrians from moving freely. The photo was taken in Bangshal yesterday.

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