DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, 2026



First, they removed people from the voters' list, and now they are not letting us raise our voice.

NEHA BORA, president of All India Students' Association

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



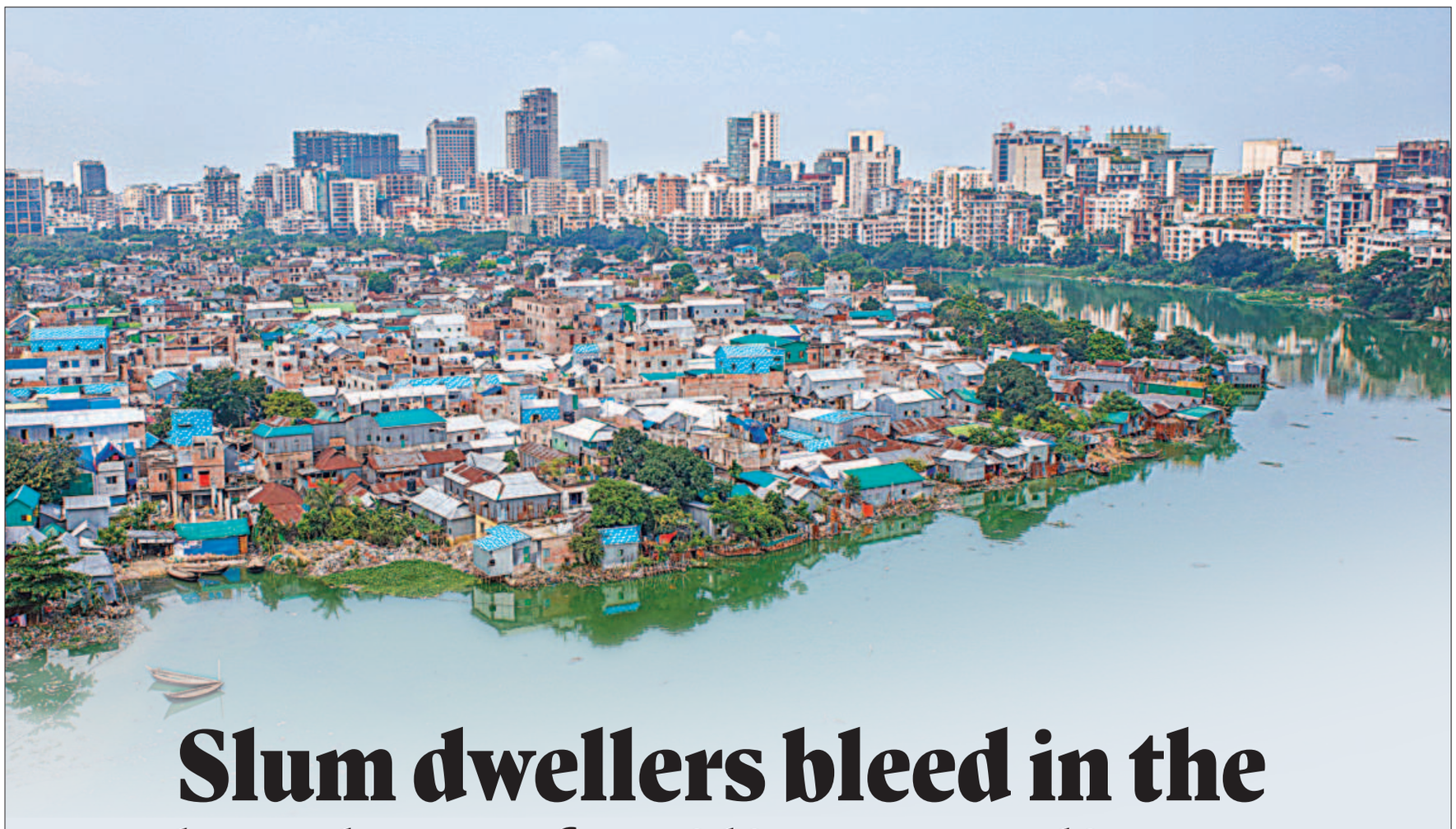
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Slum dwellers bleed in the clutches of utility syndicates

They pay much more than govt-fixed rates for power, gas, water

SHAMIMA RITA

Jannat Begum, a domestic worker living in Dhaka's Korail slum, pays Tk 600 a month to use a light and a fan in her single-room home. But according to government electricity tariffs, her estimated usage should cost less than Tk 450.

Hers is not an isolated case. In the absence of direct connections, thousands of low-income families in Dhaka's slums depend on unauthorised utility service providers who charge far more than the official rates for electricity, gas and water.

Slum residents allege that syndicates comprising local actors and politically influential people run these systems.

"Governments come and go, but our suffering never ends," Md Johny, a resident of Kalyanpur Pora Basti, told this correspondent.

Architect and urban planner Salma A Shafi said the government lacks a long-term plan for these settlements of low-income people whose numbers are growing.



A view shows the Korail slum in the capital's Mohakhali area, *top*. Illegal power lines dangling overhead that power homes across the settlement, *bottom*.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

"As the slum population increases, residents are forced to seek informal means to meet their basic needs at additional costs. Over time, these illegal arrangements become the norm, as there is little oversight by the authorities."

According to city corporation officials, Korail, the country's largest slum, has around 17,000 households. Bhashantek slum has about 5,000 households, while Kalyanpur Pora Basti is home to more than 3,000. Each household has five members on average. All three slums are in areas under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

Between May and July, this correspondent interviewed more than 50 residents of the three slums, people involved in unauthorised utility networks and officials from relevant agencies.

Seeking anonymity, a senior DESCO official said a single main electricity meter in a slum can serve up to 20 households, with power billed at residential tariff rates. Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) distributes power in the northern parts of Dhaka and Tongi town.

The existing rules, however, do not specify the process through which electricity connections should be provided to households or makeshift structures in slums. As many slum residents lack the documents required for individual connections, electricity is sometimes supplied through shared-meter arrangements involving NGOs or other authorised intermediaries, said the official.

But in many cases, syndicates gain control of these meters through which they illegally supply electricity to slum households, added the official.

Mizanur Rahman, a former member of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), said, "So-called ruling-party members make these arrangements in slums for commercial gain, while many residents depend on them because they provide an easier way to obtain electricity in the absence of legal individual connections."

AHM Shafiquzzaman, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh

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SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE VIDEO STORY

Transparency, rights key to nation's rise

PM stresses regional ties for shared prosperity at Bay of Bengal talks

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said the development of a nation required strong institutions, with transparency and accountability, human rights, democratic principles and freedom of expression protected.

"The rule of law must apply equally to every citizen," he said while inaugurating the fifth Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

There, the prime minister also called for deeper regional cooperation in trade, energy, technology, climate and maritime affairs to turn the Bay of Bengal into a region of shared prosperity.

"Let the Bay of Bengal become a region where nations grow together, embrace mutual and reciprocal benefits, and citizens expand meaningful cooperation."

Tarique said Bangladesh's strategic location, ports, waterways and coastal economy offered significant opportunities to connect the country with the wider world through shipping, fisheries, tourism, energy and regional supply chains.

"Regionally, our shared geography should become a shared prosperity," he said, stressing the need for deeper bilateral and multilateral engagement.

Bangladesh could expand cooperation with regional and global partners in trade, energy, education, technology, climate and maritime affairs, he said, adding that the country could open new markets and create more opportunities for young people.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

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'Big powers using tariffs for bullying'

Prof Rehman Sobhan advises Bangladesh to look to neighbours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The world's dominant economic powers, led by the United States, are dragging global trade back to the colonial era, using tariffs to "bully" weaker nations, eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan has said.

"We are witnessing a return to the colonial model of trade," he said, speaking at a session titled The New International Economic Disorder at Pan Pacific Sonargaon in the capital yesterday during the Bay of Bengal Conversation.

Countries are being "compelled to buy goods not on the marketplace ... but because they are being pressurised by tariff interventions", and "coerced" into investing in the markets of the economic powers, he said.

"To compel people to buy your goods suggests that you are no longer able to produce these competitively," Prof Sobhan said.

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IN FOCUS

Give details on errants, 'no more cover-ups'

BNP tells its grassroots

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP high command has instructed grassroots organisers to promptly inform the party's central office if any member in their area faces allegations of criminal activity, rather than conceal the matter or shield the person involved.

District-level leaders have also been asked to verify allegations locally, gather information on members involved in wrongdoing, and cooperate with law enforcement agencies if legal action is required.

"Sometimes grassroots leaders try to hide controversial issues involving influential party figures," said a senior BNP leader, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"In some cases, they also avoid taking action for various reasons. Even if they are unable to act locally, they must at least inform the central leadership," the leader added.

According to party sources, the move aims to identify problems early, before they turn into major controversies that give political opponents an opening to question the government and put pressure on both the party and the government.

District leaders themselves could face action if they knowingly hide allegations or politically protect an accused member, several central BNP leaders said.

The party does not want district committees merely to carry out central decisions, BNP leaders said. It also wants

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Workers without safety gear such as masks and protective clothing load fly ash brought from India by train onto trucks at Khulna's No 4 Ghat yesterday. The open-air operation sends fine dust into the air, polluting the surrounding environment and exposing workers to health risks, including respiratory problems.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Israeli strike kills 5 more in Gaza

AFP, *Gaza City*

Gaza's civil defence agency and a hospital yesterday said that an overnight Israeli airstrike on an apartment in Gaza City killed five Palestinians, including four women.

Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital told AFP it had "received at dawn five martyrs and a number of injured... following the Israeli airstrike on an apartment" in the Rimal neighbourhood.

It said the dead were two women and their daughters, as well as a young man.

Mahmoud Bassal, the spokesperson for the civil defence, told AFP that his team took "five bodies and several wounded" to the hospital after the strike.

He said two missiles directly hit the apartment, causing a fire to break out and damaging the building.

The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas's unprecedented 2023 attack against Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.



PHOTO: **TARIQUE RAHMAN'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman pose for a photo with US President Donald Trump at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel in New York on September 22. The US president had hosted a dinner at the hotel in honour of world leaders attending the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly. The photo was released yesterday.

Throat-slit body of 3-yr-old found in sack

Police detain his neighbour's son; locals set fire to suspect's home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Shariatpur*

The throat-slit body of a three-year-old boy, stuffed in a sack, was recovered from a ditch in Damudya upazila of Shariatpur this afternoon.

The deceased, Sowaif Hossain, son of Selim Sardar and Shimuli, went missing around 7:00am after leaving his home to play, said police.

Police detained Russel Shikdar, 45, son of neighbour Abu Alam Shikdar, for questioning after the victim's family named several neighbours as suspects, Shamsul Arefin, additional superintendent of police (Gosairhat Circle), told The Daily Star.

Following the body recovery, agitated locals set fire to Abu Alam's house.

Shamsul Arefin, additional superintendent of police (Gosairhat Circle), told The Daily Star that police recovered the body from a ditch in Paschim Adasan area of Sidhalkura union after locals spotted it around noon. The family had earlier filed a general diary (GD) after the child went missing.

Police said they are investigating others accused by the family.

According to the family, an altercation had taken place between Selim's family and Abu Alam on Friday evening over a "trivial matter".

The family alleged that the child might have been killed over the dispute. No member of the accused family could be reached for comments.

The body was sent to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

India had 'hardly any choice' but to receive Hasina

Trivedi says legal process concerning her return under way

STAR REPORT



Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi yesterday said India had "hardly any choice" but to allow the aircraft carrying Sheikh Hasina to land in the country in August 2024, while saying the legal process concerning her return to Bangladesh is underway.

"There is a process, and the process involves legality. And it is very structured. As far as that is concerned, the process is on. And the courts are involved. So nobody can give you a time frame," Trivedi said when asked about Hasina's repatriation.

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Saudi Arabia launches dozens of strikes on Yemen capital

Say Houthis; Aramco facility south of Saudi capital reportedly hit by drone

AFP, *Sanaa*

Yemen's Houthis accused Saudi Arabia of launching dozens of strikes on Sanaa yesterday, while an AFP journalist in Riyadh reported seeing flames and smoke coming from an oil facility on the outskirts of the Saudi capital.

Though Saudi officials and the Houthis have not yet commented on the refinery fire, the Iran-backed group has in recent weeks launched attacks on oil facilities in the kingdom as part of the war in Yemen, where Riyadh backs the internationally recognised government.

The foes have traded strikes since the Houthis seized all of Yemen's Red Sea coast and took control of the Bab al-Mandeb strait in a lightning offensive.

Houthi-affiliated channel Al-Masirah TV reported that "Saudi enemy aircraft" hit Sanaa with 26 strikes, after earlier reporting "Saudi aggression" against the Yemeni capital, without providing details on the targets or casualties.

Two correspondents in Sanaa reported hearing loud explosions and seeing warplanes firing missiles on the city.

Slum dwellers bleed in the clutches of utility syndicates

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(CAB), said, "Though the government has changed, the system continues to run as before. Slum dwellers use electricity, water and gas from government supply lines but have to pay these syndicates to get these services."

SYNDICATES' CONTROL ON KORAIL

According to DESCO's latest tariffs effective from June, residential electricity tariffs range from Tk 5.32 to Tk 17.35 per unit depending on consumption.

Mizanur estimated that a household using a 65-watt fan for 22 hours and a 40-watt light for eight hours a day consumes about 52.5 units of electricity per month.

Based on this calculation, Jannat's estimated monthly bill would be below Tk 450.

"My room's rent is Tk 5,000. I pay Tk 300-400 a month for water and Tk 500 for a gas connection to a single-burner stove," said Jannat, who received utility connections from a man named Md Jamal Badsha.

Several other slum residents showed this correspondent four main electricity meters and said one of those was registered in the name of Jamal who provides electricity to 179 households.

They further said that Jamal, who had close ties with local Awami League leaders in the past, continues to run his illegal utility business by making arrangements with a group of BNP loyalists.

When contacted, Jamal said 139 of his customers have sub-meters, while 40 are provided electricity through direct lines. He charges sub-meter users Tk 13 per unit and others Tk 250 per electrical device.

This correspondent obtained a copy of Jamal's electricity meter bill for June 2026, which shows he paid DESCO Tk 7.47 per unit.

According to residents, people linked to the AL controlled utility distribution in parts of Korail before the AL government's ouster on August 5, 2024. Following the political changeover, control shifted to individuals associated with the BNP.

They said Asma Begum, joint convener of BNP's Banani Thana Mahila Dal, oversees electricity distribution to around 200 families through bills issued in the name of her son, Md Qayyum Sarkar.

When contacted, Asma said DESCO had previously provided one meter for several families. Later, a main meter was obtained in her husband's name to provide sub-meters to beneficiary families.

"We cannot always get assistance from DESCO staff when needed... We have employed a few workers who fix problems and work throughout the month. There is a service charge for this. That's why customers are charged an additional amount," she said.

Residents of Kalyanpur Pora Basti said they used to get electricity supply through two main meters during the AL government's tenure. The number of meters rose to eight after the July uprising.

They said the syndicates that control the meters charge them between Tk 15 and Tk 18 per unit.

- Syndicates exploit electricity meters intended for slum residents
- Electricity in slums costs **Tk 15-18** a unit against govt tariffs of **Tk 5.32-17.35**
- Some Korail residents pay Tk 600 a month for electricity against estimated official cost of **Tk 450**
- Control of distribution networks in some slums shifted after the 2024 changeover
- Many pay **Tk 500-600** monthly for illegal single-burner gas connection
- Some families pay **Tk 300-400** a month for water supply
- Experts call for stronger regulation, formal utility access

"Following the uprising, the charge dropped to Tk 12 per unit. But it rose again," said 30-year-old Johny, who grew up in the slum.

Md Jewel Hossain Billal, who collects bills for one of the syndicates, said the increase resulted from higher government tariffs.

"We charge Tk 17 per unit. DESCO charges us Tk 9.75 excluding taxes. The rate went up after the new tariffs took effect in June," he said.

ILLEGAL GAS CONNECTIONS

Residents of Korail slum alleged that a group led by Jamal provides illegal gas connections, with the help of Md Shahabuddin, who claimed to be a BNP member from Ward 19 under Banani thana.

They pay Tk 500 to Tk 600 monthly for a single burner and Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 for a double burner.

When asked, Jamal said, "I give Shahabuddin all the money collected from gas bills. He controls the lines. He comes every month to collect the money."

He further said he provided gas connections to around 50 families in the slum.

Shahabuddin, however, denied controlling the gas lines.

"I'm merely a worker... I don't run this business," he said.

ILLEGAL WATER PIPELINES

According to Dhaka WASA, Korail slum has around 1,500 metered water connections set up with assistance from BRAC, Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) and other NGOs.

Residents said several local groups illegally tapped into authorised water connections, extended pipelines to households and charged them for the service.

Jamal said he supplied water to 40 families at Korail for Tk 300-400 each per month.

Kanchana Begum, a garment worker, said, "No matter how little water we use, we have to pay Tk 300 for our family of three."

WHAT OFFICIALS, EXPERTS SAY

Rashedur Rahman, managing director for operations at DESCO, said, "We are working to install meters in all households as per government instructions. The process will take time, but implementation has started."

Titas Gas Manager Shah Newaz Chowdhury said local syndicates repeatedly reconnect lines after Titas personnel remove the illegal connections.

He also acknowledged that some Titas officials may be involved in the illegal business and said the problem could not be solved by Titas alone.

Nayan Sarkar, Dhaka WASA field officer for Korail, acknowledged that some connection holders illegally distribute water in the slum, turning it into a profitable business.

"There should be no additional charges for taking water from a metered line," he said.

When contacted, Mohammad Mamun Ul Hasan, chief of Social and Slum Development at DNCC, said the city corporation currently has no plan to provide new utility connections to slum households.

He further said DNCC would follow any policy or legal framework if introduced by the government in this regard.

Experts, however, suggested bringing slums under a formal system and adopting a comprehensive policy for their management.

"Such steps will not only help increase government revenue but also ensure that slum residents receive safe and affordable services," said Salma.

This would benefit both residents and the state, she added.

Give details on errants

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them to closely monitor leaders and activists in their areas and take initial steps when problems arise.

Therefore, district leaders have been asked to stay particularly alert to allegations of misusing the party's name to influence others or for personal gain, land or institution grabbing, extortion, and taking the law into one's own hands.

They have so far received the instructions verbally.

Abdul Qayyum Chowdhury, Sylhet district unit BNP president, said, "We are more cautious than before. The reason is that the party chairman [Tarique Rahman] is giving instructions on these matters from time to time.

"Everyone is taking extra precautions. If anyone does anything improper, we are taking strict action."

District leaders themselves could face action if they knowingly hide allegations or politically protect an accused member, several central BNP leaders said.

The party could examine who provided protection, who failed to act after learning of an allegation, and who tried to keep the matter from the central leadership.

District-level leaders, who spoke to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, said factional conflicts remain common in many areas, with one group sometimes bringing allegations against another.

They therefore believe complaints should be checked before being sent to the central leadership.

Of the 68 incidents of political violence recorded by Human Rights Support Society in September, 35 were linked to internal conflicts within the BNP, according to the rights body's latest monthly report released yesterday.

WHY THE MOVE

The BNP's position became clearer after the attack, looting and vandalism at the Radda MCH-FP Centre in Mirpur-1, in which several local BNP and affiliated organisation leaders were named.

Afterwards, the BNP and its affiliates dissolved three major committees in Dhaka and expelled 14 leaders at different levels over indiscipline, anti-organisational activities and unethical conduct.

Reserved-seat MP Ferdousy Ahmed also resigned on the instruction of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

BNP leaders said the central leadership believes that ignoring grassroots allegations at the outset could cost the entire party later.

BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said those inside or outside the party who act against public interest and peace and order would not be spared.

Anyone misusing the party's identity would face strict punishment, he said.

"Unethical actions of a few politicians are causing heartache for millions of leaders and activists. It will not be tolerated," he said.

Over the past six months, the prime minister had sent a strong message to those who mistook his generosity for weakness and became involved in unethical activities, Imran said.

Those who undermined his commitment to public safety and welfare would not be forgiven, he added.

Imran also urged local BNP and affiliated organisation leaders and activists to remain united and work through discussion, saying the high command was monitoring the situation.

Under the party charter, a leader may first be warned or face a show-cause notice over a minor allegation. In more serious cases, the leader may be removed from a party position or expelled.

"But these rules haven't always been followed properly. That is why the central leadership has now reiterated the instruction and asked the local units to comply with it strictly," said a senior BNP leader.

'Big powers using tariffs for bullying'

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The US is also using tariffs for political ends, pressuring Brazil, Canada and China, and even India over its trade with Russia, he added.

The disorder, he argued, is the dominant powers' "perverse" response to Asia's rise.

With capital surpluses now accumulating in Asia, developing countries no longer need to rely on Western aid and investment, which once gave the West leverage over their policies.

China, he said, is now the world's largest source of official aid and loans, a role once held by the US and Western Europe.

Unlike colonialism, which created captive markets through conquest, Asia's rise has come "largely within the marketplace", he said.

Yet the old powers are fighting it through market intervention rather than competition.

Trying to revive US industry by protecting its market, as former president William McKinley did in the 1890s, is a "non-starter for the most advanced economy in the world", he said, adding that the World Trade Organization has been marginalised.

Still, Asia "is going to progressively emerge as the centre of the economic universe", he said. China, already ahead of the US in purchasing power terms, is set to overtake it as the dominant economic power.

> **"To compel people to buy your goods suggests that you are no longer able to produce these competitively."**
>
> **Prof Rehman Sobhan**

The disorder has already hit Bangladesh, he said, citing the economic fallout of the US-Israel's war on Iran in the Middle East. He blamed the war on Israel, calling it a "rogue nation".

Bangladesh's exports remain confined to a narrow range of markets, though its imports and capital come from Asia, he said, urging deeper integration into Asian value chains.

Neighbours China and India, which he expects to be the world's largest and third-largest economies in a decade or so, offer an opportunity Bangladesh has yet to fully exploit.

"We have certainly integrated our manufacturing process into the value chains of these countries. But we have not integrated Bangladesh's export opportunities into the opportunities opening up for us over there," he said.

Blaming weak policymaking, he said, "We are not very effective in terms of strategic planning for the future and even less effective in the way we set out to implement our strategic plans."

Bangladesh's real strategic value, he argued, lies not in the Bay of Bengal but "in our land areas". The Padma and Jamuna bridges allow the country to link Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia and eventually Europe, as once envisaged under the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) initiative that he helped found.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurated the fifth edition of the forum, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS).

The three-day event is hosting around 200 speakers, 300 delegates and over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries, according to CGS.

CONTROVERSIAL VOTERS ROLL REVISION

India detains protesters demanding CEC's resignation

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian police yesterday detained dozens of youth protesters in New Delhi during the second consecutive day of demonstrations demanding the chief election commissioner's resignation over alleged voter-roll irregularities.

The demonstrations have been backed by key opposition parties, including the popular Gen Z-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) online movement, who say voter-roll changes give an advantage to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

There was a heavy police presence around Jantar Mantar, a government-designated protest site in the heart of New Delhi, which remained sealed off behind police barricades.

Local media reports said over 100 protesters demanding Election Commission of India (ECI) chief Gyanesh Kumar's resignation were detained.

"Delhi Police must stop its crackdown on protesting students and activists," CJP chief Abhijeet Dipke said in a social media post yesterday.

Dipke's CJP has called for a "massive mobilisation of young Indians" in New Delhi on October 10. Other opposition parties and activists have also backed the protest call.

Opposition parties have announced plans for more protests, including a march to the Election Commission in New Delhi on Tuesday and "Save Democracy" rallies countrywide in the days following.

"Every attempt to suppress peaceful protesters will only bring more people to the streets and strengthen the march to Jantar Mantar," Dipke added. "Dissent is a democratic right. It cannot be crushed through intimidation or force".

Delhi police did not comment on the reported detentions.



Eight more die with measles-like symptoms

Death toll now 1,122

UNB, *Dhaka*

Eight more patients died with measles-like symptoms in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday, bringing the country's combined tally of confirmed and suspected measles-related deaths to 1,122 this year.

The DGHS has classified all eight latest fatalities as suspected measles deaths.

With these, the total number of suspected measles deaths has reached 1,020, while confirmed deaths from measles have remained the same at 102.

A total of 1,109 new suspected measles cases were reported during the 24-hour period, bringing the cumulative number of suspected cases nationwide to 1,95,197.

Meanwhile, 43 new confirmed measles cases were recorded, bringing the total number of laboratory-confirmed infections to 21,666.



A city corporation worker sprays pesticide into a drain using a fogger on Tajmahal Road in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday, as authorities step up efforts to curb dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

'No projects filling up Dhaka waterbodies'

PM orders Rajuk, says state minister for environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken steps to tackle growing environmental challenges like waterlogging, flooding and pollution, with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman instructing Rajuk not to approve projects involving the filling up of waterbodies in Dhaka, said State Minister for Environment Sheikh Faridul Islam yesterday.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a four-day photography exhibition on rivers and birds at the Bangladesh National Museum in Dhaka, organised by Dhoritri Rokhhay Amra (DHORA).

Faridul mentioned that the government has also banned single-use plastics and polythene in the Sundarbans.

"We are working to protect waterbodies, restore their natural flow, curb plastic pollution and safeguard rivers, birds and the environment for future generations," said Faridul.

The exhibition highlighted messages of nature and biodiversity conservation through river-themed photographs by photojournalist and photography educator Abir Abdullah and bird-themed photographs by photographer Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan.

Enam Al Haque, founder of the Bangladesh Bird Club and a noted ornithologist, said the exhibition offers not only the enjoyment of photographs but also an opportunity to remember the importance of conserving nature.

Political legacy of Jogendra Nath Mandal 'overlooked'

Speakers discuss his role in Dalit rights, equality at Star Itihas Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jogendra Nath Mandal's role in securing the political rights of Dalits and scheduled castes, and in forging alliances around the shared interests of lower-caste Hindus and Muslims, has not received its due place in history, writer and researcher Altaf Parvez said yesterday.

The contributions of people from the lower strata to the making of the state and society have long been overlooked, he said at the 31st edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Revisiting Jogendra Nath Mandal", at The Daily Star Centre.

"For all these years, we have followed a scorched-earth policy towards Jogendra Nath Mandal and the scheduled castes," Altaf said.

He said 37 scheduled caste Hindus and lower-class Muslims, Munira said. He also made his "Shudra" identity the basis of his political identity.

Quoting Mandal, she said, "One has to be born a Shudra. Only then can one attain this freedom of the Shudra. I am a free Shudra."

Mandal's search for his homeland after partition eventually became a journey into statelessness, Munira said.

"In a divided country, the exiled untouchable Jogen lost his homeland," she said, describing his life as "a protest against history and time".

Writer and researcher Haridas Thakur said Mandal was not merely a leader of the Namasudras, but of all people deprived of rights and those who lived by their labour.

The shared interests of lower-caste Hindu and Muslim peasants formed one of the foundations of Mandal's political alliance with Muslims, he said.

When Pakistan's central cabinet proposed in 1947 that Urdu be made the medium of primary education, Mandal, who served as the first minister of law and labour of Pakistan, opposed it and supported Bangla as the medium, he said.

He resigned from the cabinet in 1950 after becoming disillusioned with Pakistan's political realities, Haridas added.

He described attempts to blame Mandal for supporting the Muslim League and for partition as stemming from "ignorance of history".

"People like Jogen Mandal do not disappear; their ideas will certainly remain relevant," he said.

Journalist and researcher Shamsuddoza Sajen delivered the opening remarks, while The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz moderated the event.



Speakers at the 31st edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Revisiting Jogendra Nath Mandal", at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: **STAR**

representatives were in the National Assembly in 1954, whereas Bangladesh now has no representative from the community.

The scheduled castes supported the political aspirations of Bangalee Muslims from beginning to end, but this has not been adequately reflected in history, he said.

Altaf cited Mandal's role in facilitating Dr BR Ambedkar's entry into the constituent assembly as one of his major political achievements.

Altaf stressed the need to free society from political divisions, saying there was little meaning in remembering Mandal without a desire and preparation to build a new society.

Prof Munira Sultana said Mandal's political philosophy could not be understood by viewing him simply as a Dalit leader.

Mandal saw the possibility of political unity in the shared class realities of lower-

236 women, children faced violence in Sept

Says Human Rights Support Society report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 236 women and children were subjected to violence across the country in September, including 79 who were raped, according to a report by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

Of the rape victims, 47 were children and adolescent girls. Thirteen women and girls were victims of gang rape, while 49, including 25 children, were subjected to sexual abuse.

Five women and girls, including three children and adolescent girls, were killed after rape, while another woman died by suicide following rape.

Six women and girls were killed and four injured in dowry-related violence, while one died by suicide. Another 43 women were killed, 27 injured and 26 died by suicide after being subjected to domestic violence.

The HRSS prepared the report based on news published in 16 national media outlets and its own investigations. It disclosed the findings in a press release yesterday.

- Four killed, over 527 hurt in political violence
- Nine killed in mob violence
- 35 journalists attacked or harassed
- 21 prisoners died in jail

The report said at least four people were killed and more than 527 leaders and activists of different political parties and members of the public were injured in 68 incidents of political violence.

Of those killed, two were Awami League activists, one was a BNP activist and another was a Jamaat-e-Islami activist.

The number of incidents and casualties fell slightly from August, when seven people were killed and 536 injured in 70 incidents, the rights body said.

Of the 68 incidents in September, 35 involved internal conflicts within the BNP, leaving at least 340 people injured and one killed.

Seven clashes between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami activists left 61 injured, while six clashes between BNP and Awami League activists left one dead and 42 injured.

Two clashes between Jamaat and Awami League activists left one dead and three injured, while three clashes between BNP and the National Citizen Party left 16 injured.

HRSS also expressed concern over mob violence and mass beatings, saying at least nine people were killed and 32 injured in 35 incidents during the month.

At least 35 journalists faced attacks

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Two more held over Radda centre attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested two more people in connection with the attack, vandalism, looting and demolition of the Radda MCH-FP Centre in Mirpur-1.

The arrestees are Sajjad Hossain Mishu Molla, 36, vice-president of Jatiyatabadi Cyber Dal, and Md Rafiqul Islam Jinnah alias Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 27, senior joint general secretary of the Dhaka Metropolitan West unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

The Detective Branch arrested Sajjad during a drive in Aminbazar on Friday, said Mohammad Rakib Khan, deputy commissioner of DB's Mirpur division.

Meanwhile, police arrested Rafiqul from Mirpur on Friday night, said Shah Ali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Rajib yesterday.

He was reportedly expelled from the organisation earlier on Wednesday.

With the latest arrests, 18 people have so far been arrested in connection with the incident that took place on September 25.

'Remember 1991 before calling Jamaat covert'

Porwar responds to Tarique's remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar yesterday responded to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's description of Jamaat and Shibir as "covert", reminding the BNP of its political cooperation with Jamaat since 1991.

Speaking at a rally at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Porwar referred to the BNP's "efforts to secure Jamaat's support to form the government in 1991" and asked, "Didn't you remember then that they were 'clandestine'?"

He said BNP and Jamaat had also been together in street movements under the four-party, 18-party and 20-party alliances.

"Khaleda Zia announced the programmes, and Shibir and Jamaat joined the streets and made sacrifices," Porwar said.

Speaking at the rally protesting the arrest of former lawmaker Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, he demanded the withdrawal of the case against him, cancellation of his remand and his immediate release.

Porwar said Akhtaruzzaman had neither assaulted nor harassed anyone while protesting mismanagement at the airport.

Polash receives Mishuk Munier Memorial Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cinematographer Barkat Hossain Polash received the Mishuk Munier Memorial Award 2026 for his work in the film "Nakshi Kanthar Zamin" at a ceremony at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Jointly organised by the Lily-Munier Memorial Trust and the family of Mishuk Munier, the event brought together journalists, filmmakers, cinematographers and cultural personalities to commemorate the late cinematographer and broadcast journalist.

The programme began with an introductory speech by Tropa Mazumder, followed by a documentary on Munier's life, his journey in photography and his work with filmmaker Tareque Masud. Journalist Qurratul-Ain-Tahmina, filmmaker Aka Reza Ghalib and others shared memories of Munier.



Cinematographer Barkat Hossain Polash receives the Mishuk Munier Memorial Award 2026 from noted cultural personalities at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi yesterday. PHOTO: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

Asif Munier announced Polash as the recipient of the award. Bengal Foundation President Abul Khair handed him a crest and Tk 1,00,000.

Polash has worked as a cinematographer on films including "Bonolota Express", "Saba", "Priyo Maloti", "Nakshi Kanthar Zamin" and "Jalal's Story", as well as web series including "Taqdeer", "Karagar" and "Mohanagar".

Mishuk Munier died in a road accident in 2011 while returning from a location visit for "Kagojer Phul".

Sit-in at Ctg port over NCT lease on October 5

Bandar Rokkha Committee announces programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

The Chattogram Bandar Rokkha Committee yesterday demanded cancellation of the proposed 15-year concession agreement with an international operator to operate and maintain the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) and its overflow container yard.

At a press conference, Fazlul Kabir Mintu, member secretary of the committee, said they had learnt that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, at its October 1 meeting, gave in-principle approval to the draft agreement.

He said a comprehensive and transparent comparative assessment should be made public before the NCT, one of the country's major container terminals, is handed over under a long-term concession.

The committee announced a daylong sit-in in front of the main gate of Chattogram Port on October 5.

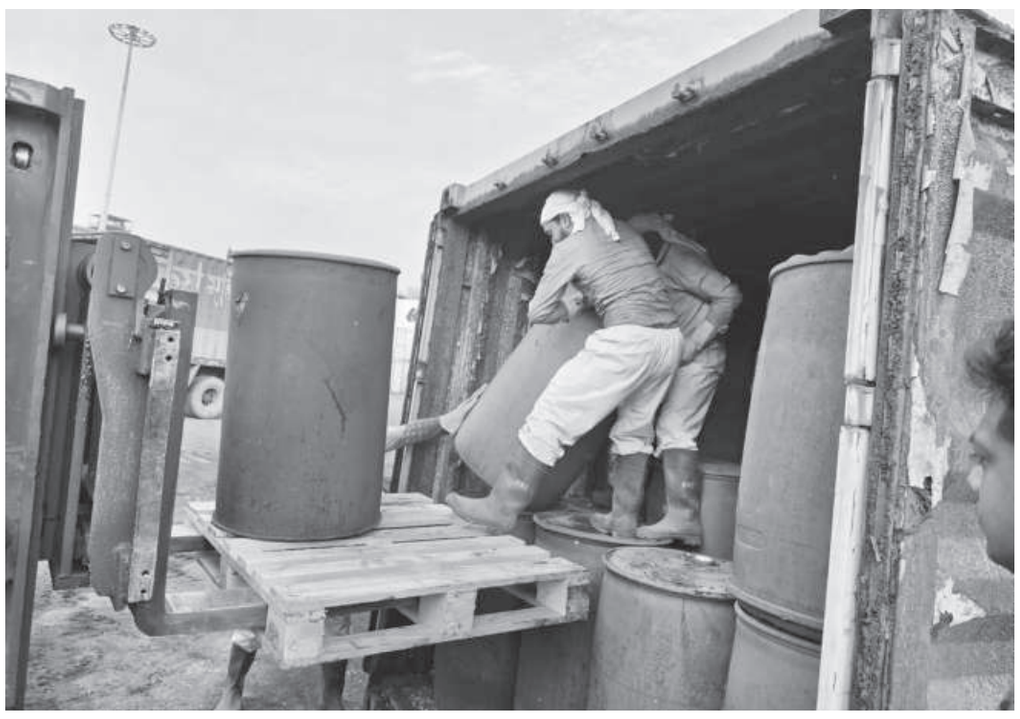


PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Workers load expired and hazardous chemicals onto a vehicle at Chattogram port yesterday as Chattogram Custom House begins disposing of 151 tonnes of chemicals that had remained in nine containers since 2003. The consignment, including sulphuric acid, nitric acid, methanol and thinner, is being sent to Wata Chemicals Ltd in Narayanganj for safe disposal.

IN BRIEF

2 children drown in Cumilla pond

UNB, *Cumilla*

Two children drowned in a pond in Brahmanpara upazila of Cumilla yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Hasibul, 8, son of Md Kawsar of Icha Muddir village in the Gopalnagar area, and Junaid, 11, son of Md Halim.

Junaid was originally from Ramnagar but had been living at his aunt's house in Gopalnagar.

Locals said the two children fell into a pond near a house around 12:30pm. They were rescued and taken to Brahmanpara Upazila Health Complex.

Dr Redwan Ahmed Himel, medical officer at the health complex, said the children had died before being brought to the hospital.

The bodies were later handed over to their families.

Student stabbed to death in Satkhira

UNB, *Satkhira*

A college student was stabbed to death in front of the Livestock Office intersection in Satkhira district town early yesterday. The deceased was Zakaria Khan, 19.

Shahidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said Zakaria was sitting at a tea stall with some people around midnight.

At one stage, some miscreants got into a heated argument with the tea-stall owner, triggering a scuffle. When Zakaria tried to protect the owner, the miscreants stabbed him.

He was taken to Satkhira Medical College and Hospital, where he died around 12:30am.

Police are trying to identify those involved in the incident, the OC said.

Historic Darul Adalat on verge of collapse

Bureaucratic tangle stalls conservation of Ctg's first court building

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Chattogram*

Perched atop a hill at Government Hazi Muhammad Mohsin College, the historic "Darul Adalat" -- Chattogram's first court building -- has remained abandoned for 24 years, with conservation efforts stalled amid bureaucratic inertia.

The colonial-era structure is now on the verge of collapse.

Despite The Daily Star publishing a number of reports since 2013 on the need to preserve the building, conservation efforts have remained stuck in a bureaucratic tangle involving multiple government agencies.

The college authorities declared the two-storey building risky in 2002 and suspended all activities there. Once home to the college library and the office of the Bangladesh National Cadet Corps, it has since remained abandoned.

Built on a 0.775-acre site with three-foot-wide walls of brick, lime and mortar, Darul Adalat features a fusion of Mughal and Western architectural styles. It has 16 rooms and two towers on the northeast and northwest corners, accessible by spiralling staircases.



The building was declared risky in 2002.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**



During a recent visit, the building's entrance was found sealed off, while wild vegetation covered parts of its facade, where plaster had decayed and domes were crumbling.

"It is a site of immense historical importance. Visitors often come to see it but have to return disappointed as it is sealed off. Its sorry state is heartbreaking," said Ali Akbar, a student of the college.

Local folklore suggests the structure was built by Portuguese pirates and had a secret tunnel connecting it to the Karnaphuli river. Historians, however, dismissed the claims.

In his book "Bandar Shahar Chattogram (Port City of Chattogram)", historian Abdul Haque Chowdhury wrote that British authorities constructed the building to establish their court shortly after taking over Chattogram in 1761. "The two domes on the building's towers were used by British watchmen to watch movement of ships in Karnaphuli river and in the sea," he wrote.

The building served as a court until the British rulers shifted it to Lalkuthi (Red Building) beside Laldighi in Chattogram around 1857, he added.

Officials from the Department of Archaeology (DoA) first visited the building in 2013 to recommend that it be declared a protected heritage site. Its official status, however, remains unchanged, with the conservation process dragging on for more than a decade now.

Prof Benu Ara Begum, principal of the college, said, "DoA officials have visited several times, but I don't know why its conservation remains elusive."

Dr Md Ataur Rahman, a former regional director of the DoA who visited the site in 2019, said, "Conservation of the site is vital because it was the first colonial-era court in Chattogram. I submitted my recommendation years ago; I do not know its fate after my transfer."

Contacted, Dr Nahid Sultana, DoA regional director for Chattogram and Sylhet, said she had forwarded a report to the department's director general. "As far as I know, the DG sent a letter to the Chattogram District Administration requesting the land schedule. Once received, a formal recommendation will be sent to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs," she said.

However, Chattogram Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate Zahidul Islam Miah said they had not received any such letter.

"I will look into the matter," he said.

CUET shutdown enters 12th day

Students reiterate demand for former VC's reinstatement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The academic and administrative deadlock at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) continued for the 12th consecutive day yesterday as students continued their "complete shutdown", demanding the reinstatement of Prof Dr Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem as vice-chancellor.

Agitating students have announced a fresh round of protests, following what they described as "misleading and propagandist remarks" by the newly appointed vice-chancellor on various media platforms.



FILE PHOTO

"The newly appointed VC has been spreading baseless propaganda against the students online. This has fuelled our agitation further," said Ahnaf Shahriar Arnab, a student of the mechanical engineering department.

"Our movement will continue until Prof Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem is reinstated and a proper resolution to the ongoing crisis at CUET is achieved," he said.

Students also plan a sit-in and have appealed to the highest policymaking levels of the government to intervene, resolve the impasse and restore a normal academic environment on campus under Prof Sayem's leadership.

They have warned that the newly appointed VC will not be allowed to enter the campus, reiterating that the strike and shutdown will continue until their demands are formally met.

The turmoil began following an administrative reshuffle on September 21, when the Ministry of Education issued a gazette notification removing Prof Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem, who had taken charge as CUET VC on July 27, just 56 days into his tenure.

Prof Sheikh Shariful Alam of the Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering department at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology was appointed in his place.

The move prompted student protests, leading to a campus-wide shutdown from September 22. Although the newly appointed VC joined office virtually, students have resisted his physical entry to the campus.

Meanwhile, CUET teachers, officials and employees have expressed solidarity with the student movement by joining work stoppages, leaving regular classes, examinations and administrative activities suspended.

No formal administrative or government settlement has been announced yet, leaving thousands of students facing uncertainty over their academic activities.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Disaster Management
Disaster Management Bhaban
92-93, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212
www.ddm.gov.bd

Memo No. 51.01.0000.000.016.07.0014.26.567 Date: 01.10.2026

e-Tender Notice

Tender is invited through the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the package mentioned below which is available in the tender notice on the e-GP System Portal. This is an online tender and only tenders submitted through the National e-GP Portal will be accepted. No offline or hard copies will be accepted. For details, please visit www.eprocure.gov.bd.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Packages No	Places of dry and other food supply	e-Gp Published Date and Time	Closing/ Opening Date and Time
01.	1337984	DDM-Relief-DF-2026-2027-Dhaka 1	CSD Relief Godown Tejgaon, Dhaka	04.10.2026 12.00 hours	26.10.2026 12.00 hours
02	1337985	DDM-Relief-DF-2026-2027-Dhaka 2	CSD Relief Godown Tejgaon, Dhaka		
03	1337986	DDM-Relief-DF-2026-2027-Chattogram	Regional Relief Godown, Chattogram		
04	1337987	DDM-Relief-DF-2026-2027-Khulna 1	Regional Relief Godown, Khulna		
05	1337988	DDM-Relief-DF-2026-2027-Khulna 2	Regional Relief Godown, Khulna		

01.10.2026

Md. Rasel Sabrin)
(Joint Secretary)
Director (Relief)
&
Procuring Entity
Phone: 02-222260386 E-mail: director.relief@gmail.com

GD-2398

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.

Ref: SOMCH/MSR Surgical/Furniture computers/e-GpTender/2026/1093 Date: 03/10/2026

e-GP Tender Notice (2026-27)

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd), For more details, please contract support desk contract numbers.
e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Director Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet for the Procurement of;

Tender/ Proposal Id	Name of Goods/ Package name	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Opening Date & Time
1342191	Procurement of Surgical (Suture) Items	18 Oct 2026 16.00	19 Oct 2026 12.30	19 Oct 2026 12.30
1342204	Procurement of Surgical (Nebulizer machine, Oxygen Mask & Others) Items.	18 Oct 2026 16.00	19 Oct 2026 12.30	19 Oct 2026 12.30
1343210	Procurement of MSR Furniture Items	18 Oct 2026 16.00	19 Oct 2026 12.30	19 Oct 2026 12.30
1343824	Procurement of computer consumable items	18 Oct 2026 16.00	19 Oct 2026 12.30	19 Oct 2026 12.30
1342129	Procurement of Computer accessories	18 Oct 2026 16.00	19 Oct 2026 12.30	19 Oct 2026 12.30

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for pursuer.
e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list accept .
e-Tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

01.10.2026

Director Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.
E-mail: magomch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

GD-2399

Can Bangladesh capitalise on the Bay of Bengal's strategic rise?

SUJIT KUMAR DATTA

The Bay of Bengal is emerging as a strategic hotspot in the Indo-Pacific and a focal point of great-power competition. It hosts vital sea lanes and natural resources while playing an increasingly important role in energy security, connectivity, maritime security and the wider regional economy.

Bangladesh sits on the Bay of Bengal and plays an important role in the physical and economic connections between South Asian and Southeast Asian countries. It has major ports in Chattogram and Mongla, as well as the emerging deep-sea port of Matarbari, which can actively support maritime trade and connectivity, as well as regional supply chains. These expanding port facilities and multimodal transport links could improve access to the hinterlands of Northeast India, open up new economic opportunities for Nepal and Bhutan, and strengthen Bangladesh's connectivity with Myanmar and Southeast Asia. The challenge is to turn this geographical advantage into sustainable economic gains without intensifying strategic competition or undermining the benefits of greater regional cooperation.

The Bay of Bengal's growing strategic significance has inevitably drawn the attention of major powers. For India, the Bay is central to its maritime security and its wider Indian Ocean strategy. New Delhi has strengthened coastal surveillance and naval capabilities while placing greater emphasis on maritime connectivity and regional cooperation. India's geography gives it an important role in shaping developments in the Bay, but the region is not India's domain alone. Any viable regional architecture must also accommodate the interests and concerns of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and other countries in the region.

China, meanwhile, has steadily expanded its presence around the Bay of Bengal through trade, infrastructure and connectivity projects, including those under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). For Beijing, greater maritime connectivity offers opportunities to diversify trade and energy routes while deepening economic ties with South Asia and the wider Indian Ocean region. China has therefore become an important part of the Bay's changing geopolitical landscape.

The United States increasingly views the Bay of Bengal within the broader framework of its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). Washington has interests in maintaining open sea lanes, freedom of navigation, maritime security and resilient supply chains. It has also expanded maritime partnerships and military exercises with countries across the region.

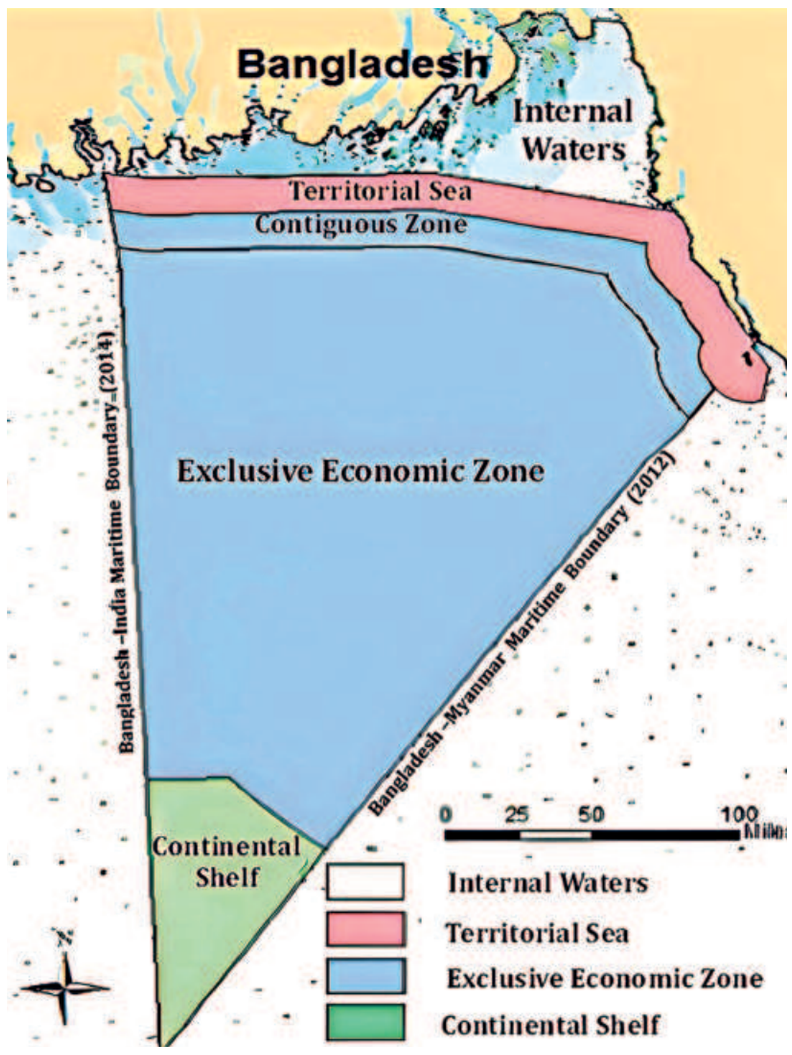
Amid intensifying great-power competition, the countries of the Bay of Bengal can strengthen their collective agency by building a more cohesive regional community based on economic cooperation, connectivity and joint action on shared challenges. Home to more than 1.7 billion people and economies worth an estimated US$7 trillion, the region has considerable potential for deeper economic integration. Greater cooperation could also strengthen links between South Asia and Southeast Asia, positioning the Bay of Bengal not as a dividing line between the two regions, but as a bridge connecting them.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) already provides an institutional platform for such cooperation. Established in 1997, it brings together Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. With members spanning South and Southeast Asia, BIMSTEC has considerable potential to bring the two regions closer together. Yet its performance has often fallen short of its strategic promise. To become more effective, it needs stronger institutional capacity, better mechanisms for implementing agreements and a greater emphasis on practical areas of cooperation.

There is also a broader question of whether BIMSTEC's current configuration adequately reflects the economic and strategic geography of the Bay of Bengal. Despite their considerable economic interests and close connections to the Bay's maritime routes and the wider Indo-Pacific, important regional states such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are not BIMSTEC members. Building a more comprehensive Bay of Bengal community through greater economic cooperation is therefore likely to be an incremental process. Such a community need not resemble the European Union. Instead, it could adopt a functional approach centred on shared and immediate interests.



A map of the Bay of Bengal, a strategically important maritime space connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific.



Maritime boundary of Bangladesh.

Whether the Bay of Bengal becomes a space of strategic competition or one of shared development will ultimately depend on the choices made by the countries of the region. On peace, connectivity, development and environmental protection, much will depend on their willingness to recognise that shared interests can outweigh differences.

For Bangladesh, the transformation of the Bay of Bengal presents an opportunity that should not be missed. Its geographical position gives it the potential to serve as an important link between the two regions. But geography alone cannot deliver that advantage. Bangladesh needs to invest in modern port infrastructure, efficient customs procedures, multimodal transport, marine research, fisheries management and maritime resilience. Improving maritime domain awareness and strengthening institutional coordination across the maritime sector will be equally important. At the same time, Bangladesh's foreign policy must carefully navigate relations with competing major powers.

Bangladesh's national interest is better served by building constructive and mutually beneficial relationships with a range of global and regional powers rather than becoming dependent on any single country. Preserving strategic autonomy will require Dhaka to navigate its relations with China and India, the United States and Japan, the European Union and other important partners. Each relationship offers different opportunities in trade, investment, infrastructure, technology, development cooperation, security, education and other areas. A diversified foreign policy would also give Bangladesh greater flexibility as regional and global dynamics continue to change.

Such an approach should not be mistaken for passivity. Strategic autonomy requires an active foreign and maritime policy that places national development priorities at its centre. Bangladesh can attract investment and develop connectivity with multiple partners in a transparent and economically sustainable manner while retaining the autonomy to make decisions based on its own national interests. The "Bangladesh First" principle should therefore guide how Dhaka engages with competing powers and evaluates opportunities in the Bay of Bengal.

The Bay's growing strategic importance consequently presents Bangladesh and the wider region with both an opportunity and a responsibility. As great-power rivalry intensifies, the Bay could increasingly become a theatre of strategic competition. But if regional states prioritise cooperation, it could instead emerge as a major driver of economic integration across the Indo-Pacific. A stronger community around the Bay could facilitate trade and maritime connectivity while promoting environmental protection, disaster preparedness and response, and the sustainable use of marine resources. BIMSTEC, IORA and other regional organisations can help advance this agenda, while deeper integration between South and Southeast Asia could help overcome some of the divisions that have historically limited regional cooperation.

Whether the Bay of Bengal becomes a space of strategic competition or one of shared development will ultimately depend on the choices made by the countries of the region. On peace, connectivity, development and environmental protection, much will depend on their willingness to recognise that shared interests can outweigh differences. A more cooperative Bay of Bengal would not only benefit the countries around it, but could also contribute to a more peaceful, connected and sustainable Indo-Pacific.

Dr Sujit Kumar Datta *is Professor in the Department of International Relations at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, and Director of the Hong Kong Research Center for Asian Studies-Bangladesh Center (RCASBC). He can be reached at datta.ir@cu.ac.bd.*

Who pays for Israel's nuclear dominance?

JAMAL KANJ

Since the start of the latest made-for-Israel war, Donald Trump and his surrogates have repeatedly promised Americans that it would be a matter of a few weeks before oil prices crashed below prewar levels. Instead, it was every promise that crashed. When those promises failed to materialise, the message shifted: the war is worth the price to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

But what if Iran did become a nuclear power? How would that pose a greater threat to the US than North Korea or Russia already do? Or is the real concern not a risk to America, but a challenge to the regional hegemony of a foreign nuclear power, Israel?

For more than thirty years, according to Israel's fiction, Iran has been on the verge of becoming a nuclear-armed state. That fictitious deadline has come and gone repeatedly, yet Benjamin Netanyahu has been recycling the same claim since 1992. The Israeli claims and deception persisted even though, unlike Israel, Iran's nuclear programme was subject to strict international monitoring.

Still, Trump, at Netanyahu's urging, walked away from an agreement that imposed some of the most stringent and verifiable restrictions ever placed on a country's nuclear programme. Now Americans are being asked to pay in blood and billions of dollars for abandoning a diplomatic agreement that had kept Iran's nuclear programme under unprecedented international scrutiny and helped contain the very threat now being used to justify the war.



US President Donald Trump gives a thumbs-up as he welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House in Washington, DC, on September 29, 2025. PHOTO: REUTERS

The hypocrisy is impossible to overlook. Iran has been subjected to relentless demands for transparency and inspections, while Israel's own nuclear arsenal, built in part with materials stolen from the US, remains shielded from international inspection. Yet somehow Iran's nuclear ambitions and know-how are the existential nuclear threat, not Israel's nuclear bombs.

The hypocrisy is impossible to overlook. Iran has been subjected to relentless demands for transparency and inspections, while Israel's own nuclear arsenal, built in part with materials stolen from the US, remains shielded from international inspection. Yet somehow Iran's nuclear ambitions and know-how are the existential nuclear threat, not Israel's nuclear bombs.

American consumers have long been the victims of a disinformation campaign, and now they are being forced to pay the price for a war sold to them on false pretences. The most recent misinformation is the claim that the Strait of Hormuz is open and oil is flowing. The president said it on Fox, and the outgoing White House press secretary told Fox & Friends that the US is essentially controlling the strait and that it remains open. These claims leave only two possibilities: either the statements are outright lies, or oil companies are gouging consumers.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations Centre reported that commercial traffic through the strait remains about 75 percent below pre-conflict levels. It also tallied dozens of projectile strikes on vessels in just the past two months. Three-quarters less traffic is not a sign of an open strait. Shipowners and insurers know this, traders know this, and so do consumers watching the climbing numbers at the petrol pump. The market has already made its judgement, and every American who fills a tank can see it. It is past time for Washington to stop misleading the public.

For the average consumer, the petrol pump is where the impact is felt. Regular gasoline was below $3 a gallon before the US was dragged into another one of the made-for-Israel wars. Families are paying more to get to work, truckers are paying more to move goods, and those costs show up in the price of groceries.

Meanwhile, American oil companies are pumping at record levels. Exxon and Chevron are producing record volumes from oilfields on American soil, thousands of miles from the Strait of Hormuz. Their production costs have not changed. What has changed is Israel's war surcharge that consumers are being forced to pay.

Chevron reported the largest quarterly net profit in its history, $12.1 billion. Exxon made $14.5 billion in the same quarter, about $160 million a day. Refining has become more lucrative. Gross refining margins more than doubled, soaring from a typical $20 crack spread to as much as $60.

Meanwhile, Trump dangles a pie-in-the-sky deal with Venezuela as a distraction from consumers' mounting anxiety, while his administration stands by as oil companies exploit an overseas crisis for record profits. These companies have no reason to lower prices when war has handed them a windfall. This is what a war of choice looks like on the ground: American consumers are forced to pay the price, while oil executives in Texas turn a crisis into a lucrative business opportunity.

American consumers deserve more than false promises. If the Strait is open, then oil prices should be coming down. If it is not, then stop treating consumers as an audience whose emotions must be managed rather than as citizens entitled to hear the truth. Since the war started, every week, like millions of Americans, I fill my petrol tank, and the Israeli war tax is higher than it was the week before.

No, Mr President, that is not "worth the price" of a war fabricated in Israel, a repeat of the made-for-Israel war in Iraq 23 years ago. This is not a war to end Iran's supposed nuclear threat. It is a war paid for with taxpayers' money and American blood to ensure that Israel remains the only nuclear-armed power in the Middle East.

Jamal Kanj *is a commentator on Arab affairs whose work appears regularly in national and international publications. He is the author of Children of Catastrophe: Journey from a Palestinian Refugee Camp to America and several other books.*

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Childcare key to our economic progress

Make it affordable, accessible, and adequate for working mothers

Bangladesh has seen a significant rise in women's employment in both the formal and informal sectors since independence. It is part of the country's development success story. Yet, in recent times, with the rise of nuclear families, many women have to drop out of the workforce because of the lack of daycare facilities for their young children. Unlike many other countries, Bangladesh has not developed a strong, affordable daycare system that can support working mothers. Needless to say, this is not only a step backwards for women's empowerment but also a major obstacle to the nation's economic progress.

Around 2.36 crore women are in the labour force, as per the 2024 Labour Force Survey, but there are currently only 64 government daycare centres, with the capacity to serve around 4,000 children. This glaring gap between the number of working women and the number of state-run daycare centres is exacerbated by the fact that private daycare remains unaffordable for the majority. Moreover, given the prevailing crisis, getting a place at a government daycare centre can take months. Some of these centres are located within institutions (such as the Secretariat complex) that are not accessible to the general public. There is also a lack of information about the other centres, and many parents simply do not know they exist.

The long waiting lists at daycare centres point to the high demand for affordable childcare facilities. At around 44 centres, low-income families can get childcare services for as little as Tk 100 per month, while middle-income families pay around Tk 500, with additional admission fees. But due to the limited number of seats and centres, most working mothers are forced to use expensive private daycare facilities.

The long waiting lists at daycare centres point to the high demand for affordable childcare facilities. At around 44 centres, low-income families can get childcare services for as little as Tk 100 per month, while middle-income families pay around Tk 500, with additional admission fees. But due to the limited number of seats and centres, most working mothers are forced to use expensive private daycare facilities. According to our report, private daycare can cost as much as Tk 6,000 to over Tk 9,000 per month for one child. The number of public daycare centres, therefore, must be increased substantially, especially in areas with high concentrations of working women. The proposed 150 new centres must be set up as soon as possible.

The government, moreover, should encourage private-sector employers to provide daycare facilities on their own premises. Such initiatives will help expand the number of facilities without placing the entire burden on the state. All daycare centres, however, must meet minimum standards for safety, hygiene, nutrition, staffing, and facilitating early childhood development, with regular monitoring and inspection by authorities. Childcare workers should receive proper training and decent wages. The government must also maintain a national database of daycare centres with all relevant information so that parents can easily find these services.

Affordable childcare is a crucial part of the infrastructure needed for a modern economy. The government must recognise this reality and commit to greater investment in childcare facilities to ensure that women do not have to drop out of the workforce.

Factories must stop polluting rivers

Govt should crack down on industries flouting ETP rules

As the political promises of planting 25 crore trees and digging 20,000 kilometres of canals and waterways are reiterated at review meetings and conferences, marginalised sections of our population continue to suffer multiple types of environmental pollution daily. As a report by this daily outlines, the canals in Gazipur's industrial areas remain pitch-black as industrial and household waste flow through the Tongi canal into Turag and Balu rivers. Not only is the water uninhabitable for aquatic life, but the land around these waterways is also not conducive to farming crops. Besides, chemicals evaporate, polluting the air, corroding tin roofs and, more concerningly, affecting the health of residents. Meanwhile, in Narsingdi, a similar story of waste plagues the Haridhoa River. Here, too, the river is encroached upon and is polluted by chemical waste from surrounding industries.

In both Gazipur and Narsingdi, industries pollute nearby water bodies despite having effluent treatment plants (ETP). While a number of factories, including Leeds-certified ones run their ETPs properly, many others do not. Consequently, it impacts public health. Tests of surface water along the Turag have found lead, cadmium, chromium, nickel, and iron above permissible levels by local and global standards. Some samples recorded pH levels as low as 2 to 4, indicating highly acidic water. In some locations, the concentration of dissolved heavy metals such as iron, lead, chromium, and nickel is alarmingly high. Near the Haridhoa, locals avoid getting into the water, while those who still bathe in it often develop skin problems. The Narsingdi Sadar Hospital reportedly receives 14 to 16 patients a day with diseases caused by the river pollution.

Most concerningly, there is a severe shortage of workforce to monitor these industries and their pollution. In Gazipur district, for instance, the Department of Environment (DoE) office responsible has five staff members, only three of whom are inspectors. Meanwhile, a Tk 6.5-crore project under the Narsingdi Water Development Board to excavate the Haridhoa has only reached 15 percent completion since it began last August.

We cannot allow life-giving rivers to be choked by reckless human-made corruption. Beyond individual-level plastic pollution, the government must treat industrial pollution as an emergency because it affects the daily lives of crores of people nationwide. Rivers must be revived and kept pollution-free to help life flourish as they have done for centuries.

Paperless by December? Ctg port must get the transition right



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury is former head of Kamalapur Inland Container Depot and Pangaon Inland Container Terminal, and an adjunct faculty member at Bangladesh Maritime University.

■ **AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY**

Chattogram port recently set an ambitious target to become "fully paperless" by December 2026. This is a direction we must welcome. For the country's principal maritime gateway, digitalisation is essential to reducing transaction times, improving transparency, and supporting a trading economy that can no longer afford unnecessary administrative friction.

On September 23, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) announced a package of initiatives to accelerate this transition. Container and consignee bills will be generated and collected entirely through the Terminal Operating System (TOS); online payments will be available round the clock; e-gate passes, and gate-in and gate-out operations will be fully online; and time-slot management, online cart tickets, e-gate challans, and vessel e-NOCs will be incorporated into the TOS. Special Delivery Assignments will be approved online through the TOS, while auction deliveries will be facilitated through the National Board of Revenue (NBR)/Customs API integration. As part of the package, the One-Stop Service Centre will also facilitate integration with inland container depots (ICDs).

Technologically, all this represents considerable progress. But an incident only a day earlier offered an equally important lesson about what digitalisation requires.

On September 22, a new payment arrangement requiring port users to make payments through Eastern Bank triggered protests from importers, exporters, and customs clearing and forwarding agents. Many businesses did not maintain accounts with the designated bank, and cargo clearance activities were reportedly disrupted for several hours before the port authority withdrew the arrangement. Port users also raised concerns about difficulties with parts of the TOS.

I mention this episode not as an argument against digitalisation. Rather, it shows why digital systems must be designed around the transactions users actually need to complete. A system may work technically and still create operational difficulties if the underlying business process has not been properly designed. Technology can otherwise replace one source of friction with another.

Chattogram port has already travelled some distance in terms of digitalisation. In February, it launched the platform "CPA Sky," intended to bring port, customs, and related export-import services onto an integrated platform. In July, CPA announced that import cargo-delivery documentation—from Delivery Order application to final gate-out—had been brought under the upgraded TOS, including integration with NBR's ASYCUDA World customs system.

So, the foundations for digitalisation and automation are increasingly in place. The more difficult phase now begins—adoption.

Installing software is different from changing the behaviour of the many people, platforms, and organisations using a port every day. Clearing and forwarding agents, shipping agents, importers, exporters, freight forwarders, truck operators, banks, customs officials, and port employees have developed working practices over decades. So when a digital procedure becomes mandatory, users need to know what happens if, for instance, a payment fails, or an approval does not appear, or one system does not recognise information entered into another. Such failures can hold up a container and trigger storage charges, detention, demurrage, missed production schedules, or missed export shipments.

The upcoming December target should, therefore, be viewed not just as a deadline for switching systems on, but as a transition-management deadline for the entire port community.

Training and awareness are part of the digital infrastructure itself. CPA could conduct hands-on sessions for different user groups, establish temporary digital transition desks, issue short Bangla and English video demonstrations, and strengthen help-desk support during the migration. Where feasible, the digital channel should become visibly quicker and easier than the manual one.

System reliability is equally important. Once paper disappears, the digital platform becomes critical infrastructure. Major services should have measurable standards for availability, response times, payment confirmation, and help desk resolution, together with a clear contingency protocol so that traders are not penalised when the system—not the trader—causes a delay.

There is another prerequisite: regulatory readiness. A paperless operation cannot be achieved simply by switching on digital modules if rules, manuals, forms, or standing instructions still assume physical documents, signatures, stamps, or registers. Bangladesh already provides broad legal recognition for electronic records, and the Customs Act allows customs functions to be carried out electronically under prescribed procedures. But CPA should review its regulations, manuals, standing orders, and forms together with the relevant customs requirements, transaction by transaction.

Such a review should distinguish three things—requirements that need formal legal or regulatory amendment, procedures that can be changed administratively, and paper practices that survive simply through institutional habit. Unless all three are addressed, digital systems may coexist with paper rather than replace it.

Success must also be measured from the user's side. Counting how many services are "online" does not show whether a port has truly become paperless. Better questions are: how many physical visits are still required? How many documents must still be printed? How often is information re-entered? How long does a digital transaction take? How frequently is manual intervention needed?

This leads to a broader distinction: a paperless port is not necessarily the same as paperless trade. CPA can digitise almost every procedure within the port boundary, while an importer may still move between customs, a bank, a shipping line, regulatory agencies, and other service providers. True paperless trade emerges only when authorised information can move electronically and securely among them.

Bangladesh's broader performance illustrates this challenge. The 2025 UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation records Bangladesh's paperless-trade implementation at 70.37 percent, but cross-border paperless trade at only 33.33 percent; the electronic single-window system was assessed as partially implemented.

The next frontier is, therefore, interoperability. CPA's TOS and CPA Sky should progressively be integrated with NBR's ASYCUDA World and the Bangladesh Single Window, as well as with banks, shipping lines, ICDs, off-docks, and other relevant regulatory systems. Information already supplied electronically to one authorised agency should, where the law and data governance arrangements permit, not have to be printed and submitted again elsewhere.

Chattogram port is closer to this objective than before, and the December deadline to go paperless can become an important milestone. But declaring a system digital and making a port genuinely paperless are different. A truly paperless port is one where there are no unnecessary procedures, information is entered once and reused securely, users rarely need to visit an office, and digital transactions are easier than the paper processes they replace. Technology can make that possible but legal and regulatory alignment, interoperability, user readiness, and well-designed processes will determine whether paper actually disappears from CPA.



'Declaring a system digital and making a port genuinely paperless are different.' PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

Growth must not come at the cost of lives



Jahid Nur is a PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow and research associate at Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Brac University.

■ **JAHID NUR**

Let me start with some sorry statistics on deaths in Bangladesh. On average, road crashes claim more than 30,000 lives every year. It is estimated that more than 2.5 lakh people die prematurely due to air pollution, contaminated water, poor sanitation and hygiene, and lead poisoning every year. As I am writing this, the death toll of children from measles in the latest outbreak has crossed 1100, and counting.

One of them is Tajim, who was a test-tube baby, born after 11 years of marriage. His mother, Farzana, has been trying to find solace through posting about her son on Facebook. Let me now remind you of Abul Kalam Azad, whose life was cut short by a metro rail bearing pad failure, or the tear-jerking letter from 8-year-old Zayma to her friend Hiya, who lost her life to dengue. These incidents touched the souls of thousands, something mere statistics cannot contain. In fact, countless stories remain hidden from public eyes behind each of the statistics mentioned above. Stories of aspiration, struggle, love, and desire to live.

Ask any ordinary Bangladeshi whether they feel secure in their lives, and it is highly unlikely their answer would be "yes". We live in a state of constant anxiety, knowing any one of our loved ones can turn into a statistic or a news headline. It seems that death is lurking in every corner, with its different faces, waiting to cut our lives short.

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum lists 10 central capabilities that every human being should enjoy regardless of their identities. Guess which one is at the top? Life, the capability to live a human life of normal length; not experience premature death, or die before reaching a life so reduced that it is not worth living. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right to life as a fundamental right in Article 3. Our constitution protects this fundamental right in Article 32.

Bangladesh has a remarkable history of reducing child mortality and ensuring widespread access to primary healthcare, which has raised the country's average life expectancy to around 75 years. Yet, a cursory reading of newspapers and the statistics I mentioned at the beginning illustrates that a considerable number of citizens die prematurely, with a significant number from preventable causes. Why are we not able to save these lives? As the protector of the right to live for all, can the state absolve itself of the duty of guarding every citizen's life?

A fundamental problem here is the mindset of not valuing every human life equally and normalising premature death by the state authorities and political bodies. Take the case of road crashes, for instance. Experts suggest that using the term "accident", rather than "crash", hints at a sense of "inevitability", masking the real reasons behind the death of thousands, including poor road design and maintenance, weak enforcement of laws under the pressure of politically influential transport owners and workers' unions, and an appalling system of payment per trip for the drivers that encourages deadly, cut-throat competition. Even after the horrific shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, the Chief Election Commissioner made an extremely insensitive remark that "one or two murders happen occasionally" during every election season. This culture of devaluing human lives while absolving authorities of their responsibilities reflects the fragile state of accountability of the governing bodies in our country.

This is not to say that we don't require economic development. But matters concerning human lives and wellbeing should be the driving force behind that development.

Another reason lies in the fetishisation of growth and economic development by the policy environment, rather than prioritising human lives and well-being. Using the example of road crashes again, it is evident that the focus is on implementing mega-projects, such as building bridges and roads that are strong, visible symbols of development with greater political currency. In contrast, ensuring road safety requires continuous effort, with improvements that are incremental, which does not help political parties much in showcasing their performance. Similarly, reducing air pollution, along with other environmental issues, remains at the bottom of the barrel in the policy circle. Jeopardising human lives is thus considered a necessary cost of economic growth, which, to borrow from Amartya Sen, is not an end in itself but only a means to human wellbeing.

This is not to say that we don't require economic development. But matters concerning human lives and wellbeing should be the driving force behind that development. The transport and communication sector has received the largest allocation in Bangladesh's Annual Development Programme (ADP) over the years, with rapid economic growth cited as a major goal. But this does not have a strong road safety component, a classic example of the deprioritisation of human lives and wellbeing.

We don't want a state that devalues human lives, where children die because of dilly-dallying with vaccine purchase and a broken healthcare system, where we experience premature death by merely breathing the air. The state authorities need to recognise that every human life is priceless. The state must become our true custodian. We also want policies centred around human lives and wellbeing. We want our capability to live. A life worth living as citizens.

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How long can farmers keep producing as costs keep rising?



Mostafa Shabuj
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■ MOSTAFA SHABUJ

High input costs, low market prices for agricultural produce, fertiliser shortages or distribution problems, fuel price hikesthere seems to be little relief for farmers in Bangladesh. The latest blow, the government's decision to hike fuel prices across the board by Tk 20—the second such increase in just five months—has hit small and marginal farmers particularly hard, leading many to wonder whether they should reduce production, stop farming, or seek alternative livelihoods.

Data on fuel consumption by the farming community explains the situation better. More than 12 lakh irrigation pumps and 3.8 lakh power tillers in Bangladesh run on diesel. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) estimates that roughly 12.55 lakh tonnes of diesel are consumed by farm machinery annually, and the agricultural sector alone accounts for over 15 percent of the country's annual fuel consumption.

Besides, most small farmers do not have electric irrigation pumps. They rely on diesel pumps. With the fuel price hike, not only has irrigating fields become costly for them, but so has transporting produce to the markets. This situation is forcing many growers to question the worth of the effort that goes into farming. But halting production or quitting farming remains impossible for most, as agriculture is the only livelihood known to the lakhs of farmers of this fertile delta. Most of them would rather continue working with full dedication, driven by the hope that market conditions will improve in upcoming seasons, than leave a profession inherited from their ancestors.

Bangladesh's potato growers exemplify this persistence: consecutive years of nationwide overproduction led to recurring financial losses for growers even after they paid for off-season cold storage. Farmers incurred losses in 9 out of the last 15 seasons, and although potato exports increased in the last fiscal year, local farm gate prices did not. And yet, farmers continue to grow potatoes, hoping for better days.

Meanwhile, in Naogaon this year, a key Aush paddy hub, farmers cultivated over 58,000 hectares of land, incurring a cost of Tk 14,000-15,000 per bigha and yielding 15-16 maunds per bigha. But plunging market prices of Tk 700-800 per maund resulted in losses of Tk 5,000-6,000 per bigha.

Recent natural disasters, including flash floods, extreme rainfall, and storms in several districts, further compounded farmers' struggles, yet government aid remained grossly insufficient. Although the BNP government distributed farmer cards to a limited number of farmers shortly after assuming power; waived debts up to Tk 10,000, including interest, for about 12 lakh small and marginal farmers; and provided cash assistance to affected farmers in the haor region, these measures fall far short of properly addressing the on-ground reality.

Under the farmer card programme, each farmer receives agricultural inputs worth a meagre Tk 2,500 per year, a trivial sum under current economic conditions. For a farmer who has lost Tk 2 lakh worth of potatoes or paddy in extreme rainfall, a modest cash transfer or a Tk 10,000 loan waiver offers negligible relief.

Over the past decade, my conversations with flood-affected and debt-burdened farmers across the northern region reveal a consistent sentiment among them: they do not seek government handouts or relief. What they demand instead is cost stability for key inputs such as diesel, gas, electricity, seeds, and fertiliser, alongside fair prices for their produce. They expect the government to ensure timely and uninterrupted supply of fertilisers and other inputs at reasonable prices. Unfortunately, the ground reality today remains starkly at odds with these basic expectations.

Moreover, decade-long persistent price disparities trap growers in generational, high-interest debt cycles with moneylenders and NGOs. Even if produce prices rise during harvests, escalating input costs guarantee growing, not diminishing, debt burdens. Yet, two decades ago, rural farming families were more self-reliant and could protect themselves from market forces as they saved seeds, used organic fertilisers, family labour, and draft animals at minimal expense.

Today, this landscape has drastically shifted. While commercial transport operators, retailers, and businesses easily pass rising costs onto consumers, farmers lack collective bargaining power, organised representation, or institutional avenues to adjust crop prices or negotiate with state agencies. Government paddy pricing primarily benefits commercial traders, while local syndicates dictate rates for other crops.

Moreover, marginal farmers lack independent resources unlike in the past: around 93 percent of seeds are now imported, while machinery, irrigation, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and transport are commercially controlled. Amid these challenges, a fuel price hike adds costs to every production phase without boosting returns. And farmers' dependency deepens.

This year has been particularly difficult for farmers. Input distribution challenges have disrupted farming operations in many districts across the country. Growers paid Tk 400 to Tk 500 above official rates per bag of fertiliser. In Kurigram, recent fertiliser shortages and distribution anomalies sparked farmer unrest, altercations, and warehouse break-ins. Following legal actions and arrests, including a case filed over allegedly assaulting an agriculture officer, many Bhurungamari farmers fled their homes in fear of arrest and could not return to their villages. While the frustrated farmers' actions cannot be legally justified, it does raise the question: how ethical is it to punish them for the government distribution channels' failure to supply fertilisers at official rates?

Because the state serves as the primary support system for the agricultural community, abruptly hiking fuel prices without addressing underlying vulnerabilities severely impact rural livelihoods. To mitigate these pressures, the government should review and reduce fuel rates. Authorities should assess whether it is possible to reduce the price of diesel for the agricultural community to prevent further increases in production costs. Diesel purchases can be tied to the farmer's card, which the government must distribute nationwide urgently. Besides, establishing a dedicated agricultural commission would help the government evaluate farming profitability, identify systemic failure points, and formulate debt-relief mechanisms. Additionally, given the growing threat of climate crises, introducing comprehensive crop insurance schemes and direct cash assistance is essential.

More than 17 crore people in this country rely on farmers who toil in the fields, come rain or shine, to feed the nation. Protecting their interests cannot be an afterthought. The impact of policy-level decisions on farmers and marginal producers must be evaluated with caution and compassion before implementation.



FILE PHOTO: **MOSTAFA SHABUJ**

With the latest fuel price hike, not only has irrigating fields become more costly for farmers, but so has transporting produce to markets.

Following legal actions and arrests, including a case filed over allegedly assaulting an agriculture officer, many Bhurungamari farmers fled their homes in fear of arrest and could not return to their villages. While the frustrated farmers' actions cannot be legally justified, it does raise the question: how ethical is it to punish them for the government distribution channels' failure to supply fertilisers at official rates?

Rare wildlife found in Inani puts our conservation efforts to the test

Nafew Sajed Joy
is a researcher and environmentalist. He can be reached at nafew.sajed@gmail.com.

■ NAFEW SAJED JOY

Cox's Bazar's 7,085-hectare Inani National Park is home to Asian elephants, western hoolock gibbons, and clouded leopards, three of Bangladesh's most threatened mammals. A study conducted by Bipul Krishna Das between 2022 and 2023, and published in August 2026, recorded 23 mammal species including three listed as "critically endangered" on Bangladesh's national Red List—the Asian elephant, western hoolock gibbon, and clouded leopard—as well as four species listed as "endangered" including the northern red muntjac, northern pig-tailed macaque, capped langur, and Bengal slow loris. That is reassuring news, but it is also a warning. Finding these animals inside a protected area tells us what Inani still has; it should also force us to ask whether Bangladesh has the capacity to protect what it has found. If we cannot properly secure wildlife even inside protected areas, we should think carefully about how much sensitive location information we make public before stronger safeguards are in place.

The study did more than list species. It found that shrubland, more than half the park, held the most mammals, and it proposes mapping gibbon and carnivore records so patrols can be aimed there. In a protector's hands, such records are a conservation tool; in the wrong hands, a guide for poachers. The paper doesn't seem to publish exact coordinates, and it says the data are available on request. Still, Bangladesh has no clear, public rule on what location details for sensitive species should be shared, with whom, and under what safeguards. Nothing shows that publicity has led to poaching at Inani, and this article doesn't claim it has.

Writing in Science in 2017, David Lindenmayer and Ben Scheele warned that revealing rare species' locations can invite poaching, advising coarse locations over precise coordinates where the risk is moderate, and telling the authorities beforehand. Sceptics point out that poachers often know these spots before researchers do, so watchfulness on the ground matters as much as confidentiality. Both can be true. But recent trafficking cases suggest caution makes sense in Bangladesh, where traffickers are already collecting rare animals and moving them through organised networks.

On March 23, 2025, three lemurs were stolen from Gazipur Safari Park with help from an outsourced worker, and investigators say two were smuggled into India. Without microchips or preserved DNA profiles, even proving their identity is now hard. In June, wildlife trafficker Hadis Rahman was arrested, and 42 animals were recovered from a Mirpur warehouse he had rented for a year and a half as a supposed pigeon farm, reportedly the country's largest wildlife haul. An earlier case against him ended in a fine of Tk 10,000, and the wildlife crime control unit's own inspector says it has no protection system of its own.

The risk to Inani's species is just as real. Forest Department figures show 114 elephants dead in Chattogram, the Hill Tracts, and Cox's Bazar over nine years, 33 of them shot or electrocuted, yet only 19 cases reached the forest courts. None of this proves that publicity invites poaching, or that Inani is being targeted. But it shows trafficking networks are organised and often ahead of enforcement, while our defences stay weak. The problem is not simply poaching either. Even conservation projects can put pressure on protected habitats: Forest Department officials are currently opposing a planned elephant rescue centre inside Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary because they fear its enclosure would obstruct wild elephants' movement and shrink their habitat.

Parliament passed the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2026 in April, replacing the 2012 Act. Section 10 bans keeping, selling, or moving wildlife without a licence, with up to a year in prison or a fine of up to Tk 1 lakh, or both. Section 41(1) punishes hunting a tiger or elephant listed in Schedule 1(a) with two to seven years in prison and Tk 1 to 10 lakh in fine, and the crime is cognisable and non-bailable. Section 19 bars hunting and unauthorised entry in national parks, and new factories or brick kilns within two kilometres of their boundaries. Section 24 lets the government declare core zones, buffer zones, and corridors.

Yet there are gaps. Under Section 46(2), the Section 10 offence is non-cognisable, bailable, and compoundable through a fine, which raises real doubts about deterring organised smugglers such as those behind Hadis Rahman's warehouse. The law also appears to contain no provision governing disclosure of location data for sensitive species. The problem, then, is less a missing law than whether the institutions enforcing it have the people, intelligence, and accountability to make it matter.

First, we need a clear disclosure policy. Exact locations of especially vulnerable species shouldn't be made public without a risk assessment and consultation with the relevant conservation authorities. And before any findings are broadcast, Inani needs stronger patrols, camera traps, and local surveillance, with core and buffer zones and elephant corridors formally declared. General findings and habitat needs can still be shared.

Second, a dedicated intelligence arm: a Wildlife Intelligence and Investigation Bureau under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with legal backing, a forensic laboratory, digital and financial investigation units, and protection for its staff, aimed not at couriers but at the kingpins and financiers behind them. Third, we need serious prosecution: specialised public prosecutors, open case tracking, microchips, and DNA profiles for every animal in safari parks and rescue centres, and vetting of outsourced staff.

India shows how a visible failure can force reform. After tigers vanished from Sariska, a 2006 amendment created the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, operational from 2007, gathering intelligence on organised wildlife crime. Nepal shows that success needs constant renewal. A coordination committee led by the forest minister and a crime control bureau with 16 district cells helped deliver its first zero-poaching year for rhinos in 2011, yet trap pits and electrocution have resurfaced in Chitwan, so surveillance can never lapse.

Kenya shows what a weak law costs. Before reform, only four percent of those convicted between 2008 and 2013 went to prison; the 2013 act then set a minimum fine of 20 million shillings or life imprisonment, or both, for killing threatened species, and a dedicated prosecution division and forensic laboratory followed, though wildlife prosecutors stayed too few.

Inani has given Bangladesh something worth celebrating. The answer is not to keep its wildlife secret, but to protect it before sensitive information spreads. The next test is simple: can we protect what we have found?



FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

To ensure a safe habitat for the wildlife, it is crucial to have legal, social, and practical safeguards in place.

‘Wanted to add something meaningful to my life’
Mithila on joining Columbia



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Rafiath Rashid Mithila has won audiences over through her work in Bangladeshi and Indian Bengali films, as well as with several acclaimed projects on OTT platforms. Her journey began with modelling, followed by television acting, but alongside her career in showbiz, she spent many years working with international development organisation BRAC.

Now, Mithila has embarked on a new chapter in her life — one that is not only significant for her personally but also a source of pride for Bangladesh. Her latest achievement has drawn warm wishes from fellow artistes and colleagues across the country’s showbiz community.

Mithila joined the Columbia University, Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research as an Associate Research Scientist. She is currently based in the United States, from where she spoke to The Daily Star about her new journey.

Speaking about her feelings after joining Columbia as a researcher, Mithila said, “I feel really good. It is a very respected profession. I will be doing something that I genuinely love, which makes it even more special.”

“Columbia University is one of the world’s top 10 universities. I also want to do well as a researcher. I want to gain new experiences and add something meaningful to my life,” she added.

Her new achievement has brought immense joy to her parents as well.

“They are really happy and proud. Whatever I have achieved today is because of them. Their contribution to my life has been the greatest. They have always encouraged and inspired me. I have been able to come this far because of their support,” Mithila said.

Reflecting on her first day at Columbia, she described it as a memorable experience, despite not having any formal work on the schedule.

“There was no actual work on the first day. Still, I made some beautiful memories and had some wonderful experiences. I felt a different kind of happiness. I also spoke to the professor I will be working with. That was about it,” she said.

Mithila also looked back fondly on her long association with BRAC.

“To be honest, everyone at BRAC gave me a very warm farewell. I worked there for many years. I developed a deep emotional connection with the organisation through all the work I did there. I travelled to many countries and gained so many experiences,” she said.

“I have worked in many countries, and I will never forget the love I received from the people there,” she added.

As she begins this new chapter, Mithila has one simple request for everyone who has supported her journey.

“Please keep me in your prayers and shower me with your love. I hope I can do something good,” she said.

Rap meets folk as musicians stand against child marriage

National Award-winning musician and composer Emon Chowdhury, rapper Aly Hasan, Maruf and folk singer Aleya Begum have joined forces for ***Koinya***, an experimental folk-fusion track and music video raising awareness against child marriage.

Produced by BBC Media Action as part of its Child, Not Bride campaign, the song combines Bengali folk melodies with hip-hop. The project aims to raise awareness about the devastating consequences of child marriage and encourage families to protect the dreams and futures of young girls.

Emon said music and visuals can communicate social messages emotionally, while praising Aly Hasan for turning local expressions into engaging rhymes.

The music video is available on Facebook and YouTube.



‘Jessore Road’ musical staged at Chhayanaut



Badhonhara Theatre School from Narsingdi staged its musical production ***Jessore Road*** at Chhayanaut auditorium in Dhaka on Friday, revisiting the suffering of Bengali refugees during the 1971 Liberation War.

Directed by Kamruzzaman Tapu, the production draws on American poet and activist Allen Ginsberg’s ***September on Jessore Road***, written after his visit to refugee camps along the Bangladesh-India border.

Around 60 performers, aged four to 70, took part in the presentation. It also featured a shadow performance of the poem, excerpts from the documentaries ***Stop Genocide, Birth of a Nation*** and ***Muktir Gaan***, and Moushumi Bhowmik’s ***Shoto Shoto Chokh***.

The production was first staged in 2012. Friday’s show marked its 71st staging at Chhayanaut.

EVENTS

‘The Song of Agony: ARISHADVARGA’

Alliance Française de Dhaka presents ***The Song of Agony: Arishadvarga***, a solo exhibition by Dr Abu Kalam Shamsuddin. The exhibition explores human nature through six inner enemies: lust, anger, greed, arrogance, addiction and jealousy. Through his paintings, Shamsuddin gives visual form to these emotions and invites viewers to reflect on how they shape our lives and relationships.

Date: Saturday–Tuesday | October 3–13, 2026
Time: 3:00pm–9:00pm
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka



NEWS

Leave now or face ‘mortal danger’

FROM PAGE 12

Kyiv has been increasingly under aerial bombardment in recent months, with the attacks and alerts disrupting daily life and sowing traffic chaos.

Long lines of stationary cars and buses clogged major roads on Friday as commuters sought alternate routes, with some forced to continue their journeys on foot.

Air raid sirens warning of approaching threats sound almost round the clock, urging the city’s estimated three million people to seek shelter.

Strikes across the country in recent days have also caused power outages in several regions in the east, north and centre, with grid operator Ukrenergo urging consumers to limit usage even as demand increases with colder weather.

Ukraine braces for another difficult winter. Last year, heating and power were cut for days on end as temperatures plunged to -20C.

The grinding war, which began with Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, has turned into Europe’s bloodiest conflict since World War II.

Ukraine has appeared to stabilise the front in recent months, but depleted air-defence stocks since the start of the US-Israeli war in Iran have left its cities exposed to Russian barrages.

The US-brokered peace efforts are effectively frozen as Moscow has shown no signs of dropping its maximalist conditions to end the war, including a demand that Ukraine cede territory in the east that Russia’s troops have not captured.

Workers’ skills, migration on separate tracks

FROM PAGE 12

“There is no connection between the technical training centres and the recruitment process,” Shakirul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Recruiters often source workers from remote areas, including people with little education or no skills, and the system gives workers little incentive to train before departure, he said.

A Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) study supports the concern.

It found that 73 percent of 919 outbound workers surveyed had received no training before going abroad.

Only 9.6 percent had been trained at government TTCs and 17.4 percent at non-TTC institutions.

The study examined the capacity of TTCs to prepare workers for overseas employment. It used quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys at 40 TTCs and of around 2,000 TTC graduates, interviews with TTC principals, instructors, private-sector trainers and NGOs, and focus-group discussions with graduates. The preliminary findings were presented in June 2025.

Shakirul said the problem is not only that too few workers are trained, but also that the training does not always match labour-market demand.

Some training modules have been in use for “50 or 60 years” despite rapid technological change, he said, arguing that TTCs need a demand-driven mechanism.

The CPD study found significant mismatches between the courses TTCs offer and the trades they identified as high-demand.

Of the 40 TTCs surveyed, 23 offered consumer electronics training, though only five identified it as high-demand.

By contrast, only two offered mobile servicing, while 11 identified it as high-demand. Similarly, nine offered food and beverage training, against 14 that saw it as high-demand.

The study said the mismatches reflect weak course planning and slow responses to labour-market demand.

Md Sakawat Ali, principal of the Dhaka Technical Teachers’ Training Institute (DTTTI), said the system also places greater emphasis on the number of workers sent abroad than on whether they are placed in skill-specific jobs.

“At present, we are mainly counting heads -- how many people we sent abroad. There is much less emphasis on how many were sent in a skill-based, job-oriented or trade-specific manner,” he told The Daily Star.

Some workers, particularly those heading for helper-level jobs, want to leave as quickly as possible rather than spend time acquiring skills, he said. Middlemen also have an incentive to send more workers because their earnings rise with the numbers they facilitate.

The TTCs also face serious capacity constraints.

Across the 40 surveyed, each centre had an average of 73 approved posts, of which 36 were vacant, including around 21 trainer posts. The study separately put the average number of trainers at 23 per centre.

On average, one trainer handled 423 trainees a year, rising to 1,356 at some centres.

“Our TTCs are well established in terms of infrastructure, but there is an acute manpower shortage. Because of that, the training does not reach the level it should,” said Sakawat.

There are also gaps in training materials and equipment.

Some 57.5 percent of the surveyed TTCs said their training materials were somewhat inadequate, and 52.5 percent lacked sufficient access to up-to-date equipment.

Although 60 percent said their machinery had been updated to industry standards, the study found that outdated technology and equipment were still in use.

Against this backdrop, the government plans to identify industries operating in different regions, determine the skills they require and tailor training accordingly, starting with a pilot programme in Chattogram.

Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury announced the initiative yesterday after visiting the Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre and the Women’s Technical Training Centre in Chattogram.

“If we cannot send skilled workers, there is no real benefit for the country in simply increasing the numbers and sending lakhs and lakhs of workers abroad,” he said.

He also called for greater public-private partnership, saying private institutions in many cases were performing better despite having less infrastructure and fewer facilities than government institutions.

“If they can do it, why can’t we?” he said.

4 teen gang leaders of Cumilla arrested

FROM PAGE 12

gang operations across the district in separate drives from Sunday evening to yesterday morning.

Later, 44 of them were handed over to their guardians after signing bonds, while one, who was accused in a previous violence case, was shown arrested, said the district’s Additional Superintendent of Police Pear Ahmed.

With this, a total of 681 people were detained in the last week for their alleged involvement with teen gangs. Of them, 48 were shown as arrested, while the others were released after signing bonds, according to police.

No one was picked up from their homes or while sitting in restaurants, police said. Rather, those detained were found wandering on roads or outside their homes after evening, “when they were supposed to be studying”.

Police say they are monitoring the activities of teen gang members allegedly involved in drug peddling, drug abuse, illegal motorcycle trading, extortion and other criminal activities.

The intensified operation against teen gangs came after growing concerns over a series of criminal activities by teen gangs, including the murder of 13-year-old Ishayat Shahriar Oprotim.

[Our correspondent from Noakhali also contributed to the report]

Spare parts, equipment shortages

FROM PAGE 12

module; the common motor start controller; and two different faults in motor controllers for the hydraulic spoilers, which help slow the aircraft.

Biman’s Boeing fleet issues are concentrated in complex systems, but wear-and-tear issues account for many of the service interruptions across Boeing’s global fleet.

For instance, the top driver of service interruptions for Biman’s 787s was the brake system control unit. Its breakdown rate was 14 times higher than the global fleet.

Brake-system failures do not even feature in the global fleet’s top 10.

The second-highest cause for Biman’s 787s was the spoilers, the panels on the upper surface of the wings that rise to increase drag and help the aircraft slow down.

There were two such occurrences in six months, and Boeing took corrective action in at least one case in August 2017.

The spoiler ranks ninth among the global fleet’s top 10 problems, but Biman’s rate of breakdown is about five times higher.

For the global 787 fleet, the top three causes are related to the general processing module, passenger seats and in-flight entertainment units.

For Biman’s 777s, the leading cause of service interruptions was the temperature control system, which fails six or seven times more often than it does in the global fleet, where it ranks eighth.

The second-highest cause was the cargo door, where Biman experiences about 14 times as many malfunctions as the global average.

Globally, the biggest concerns for 777s are the engine air supply and passenger seats, neither of which is a major problem for Biman.

The report notes a “lack of critical spares in stock at Dhaka base for 787 and 777”.

“Limited availability of parts leaves aircraft vulnerable and adds risk to dispatch situations,” it says.

The shortage has contributed to what Boeing described as a “high minimum equipment list (MEL) count”.

The MEL specifies which components are allowed to remain inoperative while an aircraft continues to fly, so a high count means an aircraft is operating with many inoperative components awaiting maintenance.

“MEL repair interval extensions are common and vastly over-utilised,” the report says, indicating that Biman frequently defers repairs.

It recommends an “urgent need to address MEL issues without waiting for the last minute”.

The report also identified shortages of maintenance tools at Biman’s main base and outstations, along with a shortage of skilled workers.

It recommended a proper succession plan to bridge the gap between the ageing workforce and new hires, career opportunities and incentives to retain talent, more training for mechanics working on newer aircraft models, and apprentice programmes.

Poor coordination was also contributing to delays, according to the report.

The departure ramp is 20 to 40 minutes from the hangar, and engineering staff must print manuals for last-minute technical problems because they do not have tablets with electronic manuals. There are no airside vans and only one high-lift platform in the hangar, the report said.

Biman also has no pool agreement or labour support at international bases, so “people must be dispatched from Dhaka base” to support aircraft on the ground. Visa procedures and travel time can cause further delays, it added.

That was the case in Rome on August 7 this year, when a Biman 787 operating from Toronto to Dhaka was stuck at Fiumicino Airport because of a technical problem.

Biman had to send two engineers and replacement parts from Dhaka, and nearly 260 passengers remained stranded there for more than 40 hours.

Amina Anjum Tonni, a Dhaka-based private-sector employee who was bringing her parents back from Canada on the flight, described the ordeal. “My father has had three bypass surgeries and had no opportunity to sleep during those 40 hours. They were sleeping upright throughout. He did not have his medication with him,” she said.

On August 22 this year, a Biman flight from Dhaka to Toronto via Rome was delayed by six hours, according to the airline’s operational summary.

Over the 24 hours from August 22 to 23, Biman recorded 10 flight delays, at least two of them caused by technical issues.

A Biman internal report recorded 37 delays due to technical issues over five weeks, from July 5, 2025.

The Biman report said recurring problems included wheel replacement or loss of tyre pressure (causing more than six delays), cabin-pressure control faults (causing more than five delays) and engine-related problems (causing more than four), as well as sensor faults, spoiler actuator problems, and cracked windscreens.

The report also cited several incidents.

On July 19, a Biman aircraft returned to Dhaka after developing a crack in its windscreen.

On February 28, 2025, a Dhaka-Bangkok flight was forced to return because of cabin decompression. Oxygen masks were deployed but allegedly did not work because their stated expiry date was June 2001, according to the report.

Air Commodore Mohammad Akhter Jamil, chair of avionics engineering at Aviation and Aerospace University Bangladesh, said the spare-parts shortage could be costly for the airline.

“When a plane is brought in for maintenance, and there are no spare parts, the engineer may refuse to sign it off as fit to fly. It would have to be taken out of the rotation, which would throw off the entire schedule,” he said.

The shortage could point to two possibilities, Jamil said, adding, “Either procurement is not being done on time, or parts are being consumed at a very high rate because of more frequent technical problems.”

The Daily Star contacted Biman’s managing director and CEO multiple times over two weeks but had not received a response as of filing this report yesterday.

Questions were also sent to the MD’s office through Biman’s public relations officer.

Asked whether Biman had acted on any of Boeing’s recommendations in the year since the report was prepared, a Biman official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it had not.



Six more die of dengue, 1,608 get hospitalised

UNB, *Dhaka*

Six more people died of dengue in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, raising the death toll to 256 in the country this year.

During the same period, 1,608 new patients were hospitalised across the country, according to the DGHS.

Of the latest fatalities, two were reported in Dhaka South City Corporation, two in Rajshahi division, while one each was reported in Khulna and Barishal divisions, the DGHS said.

Since January 1 this year, a total of 84,369 dengue patients have been admitted to hospitals nationwide. Of them, 78,482 have recovered.

Currently, 5,631 dengue patients are being treated in hospitals across the country.



Two workers dismantle a billboard structure as a crane-equipped truck waits nearby during Rajuk's drive to remove unauthorised billboards along 300 Feet Road in Purbachal yesterday.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**



Bus driver sued over M'singh road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A case has been filed against the bus driver over the deaths of seven people, including three women and a child, in a collision between a bus and a CNG-powered auto-rickshaw in Mymensingh on Friday.

Md Mobarak Ali, younger brother of one of the victims, Mofazzal Hossain Lebu, 50, filed the case early yesterday with Mymensingh Kotwali Model Police Station, accusing the bus driver, said Md Abdullah Al Mamun, additional superintendent of police in Mymensingh.

"It was alleged in the case that the deaths were caused by reckless and speeding driving by the accused," he also said.

Police were conducting a drive to arrest him, the police official added.

The bus driver's name and other details were not immediately known.

The Jamalpur-bound bus of Rajib Paribahan hit the oncoming CNG-run auto-rickshaw on the Akua bypass road on the Mymensingh-Jamalpur regional highway on Friday noon, leaving all its seven passengers dead on the spot.

Police seized both the vehicles involved, but the bus driver and his helper fled the scene.

Bulgaria's Tsar returns 'home' after 1,000 years



AFP, *Sofia*

More than 1,000 years after his death, the remains of what may be Tsar Samuel, one of the last major rulers of the First Bulgarian Empire, are returning "home" yesterday.

Greece and Bulgaria reached an agreement on their return this week, with Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev hailing the accord as "historic".

The remains "belong to our two peoples", Radev said as he attended a ceremony to mark the return alongside Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Greece will in return receive 48 objects pillaged by Bulgarian troops from churches and monasteries in northern Greece during World War I.

Samuel, who reigned from 997 to 1014, led several campaigns against the Byzantine Empire with his brothers, one of whom he later executed.

He gradually extended his authority over a swathe of the Balkans, making the Lake Prespa and Lake Ohrid region, now mostly in North Macedonia, his powerbase.

But the Byzantines regained the upper hand after 1001, soundly defeating Samuel's army in 1014.

Samuel is said to have died of shock when he saw thousands of his defeated soldiers returning home blinded by order of Byzantine emperor Basil II, known as the "Bulgar Slayer".

Samuel's state fell under Byzantine rule four years later.

While Radev said future generations would now be able to pay homage to their ancestors, Mitsotakis hailed the remains as having "incalculable cultural and spiritual but also emotional value".

Transparency, rights key to nation's rise

FROM PAGE 1

"We can build stronger cooperation based on equality, fairness and justice. Geography has brought us together, and we are confident that people-to-people ties can take us further."

The PM said Bangladesh believes in dialogue, partnership and mutual respect and would protect its national interests and sovereignty while working positively with all regional and global partners. "Because peace and harmony are the foundation of shared prosperity and development."

The three-day Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 is being organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) from October 3 to 5 under the theme "Fragments, Frontiers and Futures: Navigating Power, Technology and Trust in a World Rewritten".

The conference brings together around 200 speakers, more than 300 delegates and over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries.

Participants include former heads of state, ministers, diplomats, policymakers, researchers, academics, journalists, business and investment leaders, technology experts and civil society representatives.

Former Serbian President Boris Tadić and former Malian Prime Minister Moussa Mara are among the notable participants.

In his address, Tarique also outlined his government's five-year priorities, saying Bangladesh is moving "from commitment to implementation" with a focus on national interests, policy continuity, economic stability and institutional reform.

He said the government is working to make Bangladesh an attractive destination for investment and a strong manufacturing and investment hub, with a focus on creating jobs in production, services and exports.

Tarique also highlighted the government's social protection initiatives, including the Family Card, Farmer's Card, Health Card and an eventual Universal Card to provide integrated access to public services.

On healthcare, the premier said the government is working to employ 100,000 healthcare workers, around 80 percent of whom would be women, to provide basic care, health advice and referrals at the community level.

He said the government is also focusing on maternal and child healthcare and expanding access to education, including free uniforms, school bags, midday meals and scholarships from Class One.

The prime minister said Bangladesh's young population is a major national asset but noted that turning the demographic dividend into development required skills and jobs.

"We are embracing technological changes and artificial intelligence while promoting language skills and employment pathways," he said, adding that the government is supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and start-ups.

On agriculture and climate resilience, Tarique said his government is improving farmers' access to technology, irrigation, finance and markets while supporting fisheries, livestock and rural enterprises.

He said Bangladesh planned to dig 20,000 kilometres of canals and waterways over the next five years, advance the Padma Barrage project and develop a Teesta Master Plan.

Tarique also announced a target to plant 250 million trees over five years and said Bangladesh was expanding solar energy, waste recycling and green factories.

On the Rohingya crisis, he said Bangladesh continued to host around 1.2 million refugees and remained committed to their early, voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation to Myanmar.

"This requires sustained political support and global finance. It also requires addressing the root causes of the crisis, which started in Myanmar and must end in Myanmar."

The PM reiterated Bangladesh's readiness to play its part in promoting cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and beyond.

Tarique formally opened the three-day event around 10:00am.

CGS President Zillur Rahman and Executive Director Parvez Karim Abbasi delivered the welcome remarks at the opening of the conference.

The programme includes public sessions such as plenaries, leadership forums and spotlight talks, as well as smaller invitation-only roundtables for in-depth discussions, according to the organisers.

The discussions will focus on major regional and global issues, including geopolitics and security, technology, trade and connectivity, climate change, human security, democracy, governance, trust, spirituality and humanity.

WHO decries delays getting aid into Gaza

AFP, *Geneva*

Getting humanitarian aid through Israel into Gaza is layered with "delay after delay", the World Health Organization said Friday, as it decried "chronic shortages" of medical supplies.

Reinhilde Van de Weerdt, the WHO's representative in the Palestinian territories, said the health situation in the Gaza Strip "remains utterly dire", with none of its hospitals fully functional.

"Not enough humanitarian aid is entering Gaza, and definitely not enough to allow for a meaningful expansion and restoration of health services," she told reporters in Geneva, speaking from Jerusalem.

She said Israel's approval system for medical and other humanitarian supplies was proving a major bottleneck.

India had 'hardly any choice'

FROM PAGE 2

He was speaking at a panel discussion titled "Power and Prudence" at the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026, being held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon in Dhaka. The three-day conference, organised by the Centre for Governance Studies, began yesterday.

Described the circumstances as "tragic circumstances" under which Hasina landed in India following the fall of her government in August 2024, Trivedi said India had neither brought her nor been prepared for her arrival.

"At that point in time, Hasina Ji was still the prime minister of Bangladesh. We had hardly any choice on that. It was our duty as a neighbour to accept the reality of life."

Bangladesh has formally sought Hasina's extradition from India. New Delhi has previously said the request is being examined through established legal and judicial procedures and has not announced a final decision.

Trivedi also stressed the broader relationship between the two countries, saying it extended beyond transactional interests.

Bangladesh has formally sought Hasina's extradition from India. New Delhi has previously said the request is being examined through established legal and judicial procedures and has not announced a final decision.

"The Bangladesh-India relationship is more than transactional, it is cultural. A good neighbour always comes out in support of each other," he said.

On regional security, he said Bangladesh was an independent and sovereign country capable of assessing its own security interests.

He said India had "full confidence" in the people of Bangladesh and in the trust underpinning relations between the two countries.

"That's where the trust and faith between two nations and that bond makes India and Bangladesh a very, very special relationship," he said.

Trivedi also highlighted the need for continuous dialogue, mutual respect, and trust between the two countries to address bilateral issues, saying every issue between the two neighbours has a solution.

"In a democracy, the dialogue has to be there at the proper forum. And the dialogue has to be a continuous dialogue," he said, noting that the process of engagement between the two countries may be slow, but it has not stopped.

"I can guarantee you, there is no stoppage of process. The process is ongoing," Trivedi said. "Believe me, there has to be a solution, and there will be a solution," the Indian diplomat added.

'Won't accept govt's illegal orders'

FROM PAGE 12

head, Akhtaruzzaman said, "Don't hold my hand. Don't touch me. Why should I wear a helmet? Why the helmet? I won't accept the government's illegal orders."

Around 12:35pm, Akhtaruzzaman was brought to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court premises in a police prison van.

As he was being taken out of the van, he said: "I spoke about the mismanagement of the airline."

"Brothers, the struggle for people's rights will continue. The people's struggle will continue. We will fight for the people, InshAllah," he said, while raising both hands and making victory signs.

Meanwhile, court reporters were not able to enter the courtroom to cover the remand hearing due to police obstructions.

When journalists asked a police officer on duty why they were being stopped, he replied: "I won't say anything."

Taslim Hossain Rony, a journalist with Star News who was present at the scene, said he had been inside the courtroom around 12:30pm, before Akhtaruzzaman was brought there.

When Akhtaruzzaman was brought to the courtroom around 12:45pm, Mohiuddin Mahmud Sohel, deputy commissioner of the Prosecution Division at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, came and asked him to leave.

"The DC told me that no one could stay inside the courtroom. When I asked why, he said it was a court order," Rony said.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach DC Mohiuddin Mahmud Sohel for comments at the time of filing the report at 7:30pm.

Akhtaruzzaman's lawyer Abdur Razzaq also expressed dissatisfaction over the alleged restrictions on journalists and lawyers entering the courtroom.

"I consider this a deplorable incident. I do not know whether restrictions were imposed on journalists to hide something. I urge the authorities to ensure that this does not happen again," he told the journalists.

However, Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi denied the allegation that journalists had been barred from entering the courtroom.

"The DC of the prosecution division did not prevent journalists from entering the courtroom. I was present there."

He said Akhtaruzzaman had been "aggressive" during the hearing towards the prosecution, the judge and police.

"He himself was saying that no one except lawyers should remain in the courtroom. Basically, based on his statement, the judge asked everyone to leave," Faruqi said.

On Friday, airport security officer Mohammad Shahriar Alam Sajib filed a case against Akhtaruzzaman with Airport Police Station.

Later in the day, detectives arrested him from his residence in the Dhaka Cantonment area.

According to the case statement, the incident occurred around 10:40am on Thursday near the airport's baggage belt area after passengers arriving from Madinah on a Biman flight faced delays in receiving their luggage amid heavy passenger pressure and a shortage of trolleys.

As passengers grew agitated, Mohammad Kamal Hossain, identified in the complaint as the lawmaker from Dhaka-5, asked airport Executive Director Group Captain SM Ragib Samad to come to the scene, the statement said.

When Ragib arrived and tried to bring the situation under control, Akhtaruzzaman became agitated, moved towards him and hurled abuse at him.

The complaint alleged that Akhtaruzzaman threatened the airport executive director, saying, "I will beat you, I will grab you by the neck, and throw you out." He also allegedly made offensive remarks about the civil aviation and tourism minister.

The situation escalated when people accompanying Akhtaruzzaman began filming on their mobile phones inside a restricted Key Point Installation area, according to the complaint.

Warrant Officer Mohammad Kamal Uddin, a security supervisor on duty, asked them not to film in the restricted area. Akhtaruzzaman then allegedly verbally abused and physically assaulted him, the complaint said.

The case statement also said Akhtaruzzaman threw bottles of Zamzam water collected by other passengers off the trolleys, damaging them and behaved rudely towards a Biman representative.

Akhtaruzzaman joined Jamaat in December last year after being expelled from BNP.

236 women, children faced violence in Sept

FROM PAGE 3

and harassment in 20 incidents, the report said. Sixteen were injured, 12 assaulted and three threatened. One journalist was detained under the cyber security act, while three journalists were accused in four cases.

The report also said interference with freedom of expression continued during the month, with at least 14 people detained and 12 cases filed in 12 incidents involving 26 accused.

At least 21 prisoners died in jails across the country, including 11 convicts and 10 awaiting trial.

Three people also died in incidents involving law enforcement agencies and alleged torture. One allegedly died after being tortured and two died in law enforcement custody.

At the Bangladesh-India border, two Bangladeshis were killed and three injured in three incidents involving attacks by India's Border Security Force, while one person was detained, HRSS said.

The organisation also said there were attempts to push more than 100 people into Bangladesh through different border points.

HRSS Executive Director Ijajul Islam said the rights situation had improved in some areas but deteriorated in others.

He said political violence, violence linked to the upcoming local government elections, campus violence, mob violence and mass beatings, interference with freedom of expression, attacks on journalists, violence against women and children, border violence and labour abuse continued throughout the month.

He also expressed concern over arrests, harassment and legal action over opinions expressed on social media.

PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 4

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-45	12-45	4-15	5-53	7-30
JAMAAT	5-20	1-15	4-30	5-56	8-00

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**



Protect your heart before trouble strikes

The hidden risks to heart health in Bangladesh and steps to address them



SEAN TAYLOR

Heart disease can develop quietly, long before a person feels unwell. In Bangladesh, many people live with high blood pressure, diabetes or raised cholesterol without knowing it. By the time these conditions are detected, they may already have contributed to a heart attack or stroke.

World Heart Day, observed on September 29, reminds us that protecting the heart begins before symptoms appear. Regular checks, practical lifestyle changes and accessible treatment can help prevent avoidable illness and deaths.

High blood pressure is a concern. According to the World Heart Federation, around 28 percent of adults in Bangladesh have hypertension. Yet feeling well can create false reassurance: the condition often causes no obvious symptoms while damaging blood vessels.

Bangladesh has shown that better care can make a difference. Since its launch in 2018, the Bangladesh Hypertension Control Initiative has strengthened services and medicine availability, helping more people receive treatment and bring their blood pressure under control. These gains need to reach everyone who requires care.

Daily surroundings also shape cardiovascular risk. Tobacco smoke and air pollution damage blood vessels and promote inflammation. Diets high in salt, unhealthy fats and refined carbohydrates add to the burden. Average daily salt consumption in Bangladesh is approximately 10 grams, roughly twice the World Health Organisation's recommended maximum.

Meanwhile, urbanisation is changing how people work and travel. Walking, cycling and physically demanding everyday tasks may give way to more sedentary routines. Safe places to walk and cleaner air are therefore essential parts of prevention.

THERE ARE FIVE PRACTICAL STEPS PEOPLE CAN TAKE.

First, know your numbers. Have your blood pressure checked and discuss blood glucose and cholesterol testing with a healthcare professional. Detecting a problem early creates an opportunity to act before complications develop.

Second, avoid tobacco in all forms and exposure to second-hand smoke. Quitting can be difficult; support from healthcare professionals, family and friends can help people make and sustain this change.

Third, make manageable changes to meals. Use less salt in cooking, limit heavily fried and processed foods, and include more vegetables, fruit and pulses. A healthier eating pattern that lasts is more useful than a restrictive diet that is abandoned.

Fourth, build movement into daily life. Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Brisk walking and cycling are useful options. Where possible, choose routes and times with less air pollution.

Fifth, follow prescribed treatment even when you feel well. Take chest pain, sudden breathlessness, facial drooping, arm weakness or difficulty speaking seriously and seek urgent medical help.

Individual effort needs public support. Affordable medicines, reliable primary care, tobacco control, healthier food and action on air pollution make healthy choices more achievable. Bangladesh has policies to build on; their value depends on consistent implementation.

The World Heart Federation's *"Don't Miss a Beat"* campaign encourages people to recognise risks and calls for stronger action from decision-makers. That message must extend beyond a single day. Protecting hearts requires everyday habits and a health system that helps people sustain them.

The writer is the Director of Science and Public Health at the World Heart Federation.

BLOOD PRESSURE, SUGAR, CHOLESTEROL

Three numbers that could save your life

Knowing a few basic health numbers – blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol – could help identify serious disease before complications develop, European health experts have urged.

The call came during the first-ever EU Screening Week, launched on World Heart Day at the European Association for the Study of Diabetes annual meeting in Milan. Under the banner *"Know Your Numbers"*, the initiative encourages people to check key cardiometabolic indicators and take preventive action earlier.

Experts from the European Society of Cardiology, European Association for the Study of Diabetes and European Association for the Study of Obesity stressed that cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity are closely interconnected and often remain undetected until symptoms or complications develop.

The message is highly relevant for Bangladesh. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that about 13.9 million Bangladeshi adults aged 20–79 were living with diabetes in 2024, with around 39 percent undiagnosed.

Hypertension is another major concern. the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 28 percent of Bangladeshi adults aged 30–79 have hypertension, while only about 16 percent have it under control.

Regular checks of blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, weight and waist circumference can therefore provide an important opportunity for earlier diagnosis and preventive care.



The next pandemic cannot wait for another promise. Are we ready?



DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

World leaders have renewed their pledge to strengthen pandemic preparedness, with implications for Bangladesh: detecting outbreaks early and ensuring access to vaccines and treatment must remain priorities between emergencies.

At the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 81)'s second high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response on September 25, leaders called for sustained investment, stronger health systems and fairer access to medical tools, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

They recognised progress through the WHO Pandemic Agreement and amendments to the International Health Regulations. However, a crucial part of the agreement remains unfinished.

Countries are negotiating a Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing system, intended to link the sharing of pathogens with pandemic potential to equitable access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostics developed from them. WHO says adoption of the annex in May 2027 is necessary before countries can begin considering ratification of the agreement.

For Bangladesh, the relevance extends beyond COVID-19. Nipah virus infections have been reported almost every year since 2001, illustrating why threats emerging at the intersection of human, animal and environmental health require constant attention.

In February 2026, WHO reported a fatal Nipah case in Naogaon. The patient had consumed raw date palm sap. Authorities investigated the outbreak and traced contacts; no additional cases had been identified as of February 3. WHO assessed the overall risk as low at that time.

Bangladesh has foundations to build on. WHO identifies hospital-based Nipah surveillance established in 2006, rapid response teams at national and district levels, and capacity for rapid laboratory testing among its strengths.

These experiences suggest that practical preparedness



means supporting frontline health workers, maintaining dependable testing and reporting systems, and helping communities recognise risks. Coordination across health, livestock and environmental services is essential to the One Health approach highlighted at the UN meeting.

For Bangladeshis, the central issue is whether international commitments translate into timely protection close to home. A suspected infection must trigger investigation, health workers need protection, and communities need clear information they can trust.

The renewed pledge offers an opportunity to strengthen those everyday systems. Its success will depend on sustained funding and implementation before the next emergency arrives.

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DID YOU KNOW?

C-section pain can linger for years

Persistent pain after caesarean delivery can disrupt women's daily lives, sleep, mood and even sexual wellbeing for months or years after childbirth, according to a major review published in Anaesthesia.

Researchers analysed 30 studies involving 28,295 women across 22 countries. Chronic postsurgical pain after caesarean delivery was linked with difficulties in general activity, walking, work and sleep, as well as fatigue and poorer mental health.

In the early months after childbirth, more than half of women with chronic pain reported interference with general activity and mood, while 43% said it affected sleep. Some effects persisted at six and 12 months, and chronic pain was also associated with higher rates of depressive symptoms.

The findings are particularly relevant to Bangladesh, where caesarean delivery has become increasingly common. The Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2025 found that 51.8% of women with a recent live birth delivered by caesarean section.

Researchers say post-caesarean care should therefore extend beyond wound healing. Women with persistent pain need early assessment and, where necessary, multidisciplinary support addressing physical function, sleep and psychological wellbeing.



Beyond irregular periods: Understanding PCOS in teens



DR SHAHED IMRAN

Irregular periods, acne, unwanted facial hair and rapid weight gain are often dismissed as ordinary teenage changes. But for some girls, they may signal polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a hormonal and metabolic condition that can affect health well beyond adolescence.

In Bangladesh, delayed recognition remains a concern because menstrual problems are still difficult for many families to discuss openly. Teenagers may also face teasing or body-shaming over weight gain, acne or excess hair, discouraging them from seeking help.

The condition affects reproductive hormones and can cause irregular or absent periods, excess androgen-related hair growth and acne. It is also associated with metabolic problems and longer-term reproductive risks.

Bangladeshi research highlights the scale of the metabolic burden. In one study involving 175 adolescents with PCOS, 42.3 percent had metabolic syndrome, 90.9 percent had dyslipidaemia and 24 percent showed glucose intolerance. Vitamin D deficiency was also extremely common, affecting 92.6 percent of the participants.

Management should therefore go beyond medicines used to regulate menstruation. Doctors need to consider a teenager's weight, metabolic risks, symptoms and future reproductive health. Regular physical activity, a balanced diet and appropriate weight management remain central to care. Vitamin D deficiency, if present, should be corrected only under medical guidance.

Most importantly, families should treat persistent menstrual irregularity, rapid weight gain or abnormal hair growth as health issues rather than matters of shame. Earlier medical advice can help protect both physical and emotional wellbeing.

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DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, 2026, ASHWIN 19, 1433 BS

SPORT

Okafor hits hattrick against former club

SPORTS REPORTER

Onyekechi Okafor scored the first hattrick of the Bangladesh Football League season against his former club as City Club held Fortis FC to a thrilling 3-3 draw in the second round at the Bashundhara Kings Arena on Saturday.

The former Nigeria international, who joined newcomers City Club from Fortis this season, put his new side 2-0 ahead by the 19th minute before Mohammad Ibrahim pulled one back for Fortis on the half-hour mark.

Pa Omar Babou equalised for the hosts after the break, but Okafor completed his hattrick in the 54th minute to restore City Club's lead. Japanese recruit Noriki Akada, however, levelled the score in the 69th minute to ensure the spoils were shared.

Meanwhile, former champions Abahani registered their first victory with a 5-1 thrashing of Dhaka Wanderers Club at the Chandpur District Stadium.

Nigerian forward Anthony Okachi scored twice, while compatriot Michael Babatunde, Pakistani forward Moin Ahmed and local striker Al Amin added one each for the Sky Blues. New recruit Jahid Hossain scored Wanderers' consolation.

The other match of the day ended in a 2-2 draw between Arambagh and Rahmatganj at the Gopalganj Stadium. Senegalese forward Sene Ibrahima scored both goals for Rahmatganj, while Rayies Suraj and Mohammad Rocky found the net for Arambagh.

City Club, Abahani and Fortis have four points each from two matches, while Bangladesh Police lead the table with six points.





Alessandro Bastoni celebrates with teammates after scoring Italy's equaliser in the 68th minute to help secure a 1-1 draw with hosts France in their Nations League clash at the Stade de France yesterday. France had taken the lead through Michael Olise's spectacular curling freekick, but were reduced to 10 men late on after Dayot Upamecano was shown a straight red. The draw ended Zinedine Zidane's winning start as France manager after two victories. [Inset] Edin Dzeko takes a selfie with Bosnia-Herzegovina teammates after his 152nd and final appearance for his country. The 40-year-old received a standing ovation and a guard of honour when he was substituted in the 63rd minute as Bosnia drew 1-1 with Sweden. PHOTO: **AFP**

New-look NCL begins with seven new faces

SPORTS REPORTER

In the absence of national cricketers, seven players made their first-class debuts for their respective sides as the new-look National Cricket League 2026-27 got underway at four venues across the country yesterday.

Pacer Anik Debbarma and off-spinner Nayeem Ahmed debuted for hosts Sylhet against Mymensingh, who handed debuts to all-rounder Azijul Hakim Rony and wicketkeeper-batter Md Fahim.

In Mirpur, leg-spinner Shadhin Islam made his debut for Rangpur against Dhaka, while wicketkeeper-batter Abdullah Shifat and top-order batter Zawad Abrar debuted for Barishal against hosts Khulna.

The opening day, however, produced no century or five-wicket haul, with batters largely dominating proceedings.

In Khulna, Kalam Siddiki and skipper Mohammad Mithun missed out on centuries after scoring 92 and 89 respectively as Khulna reached 328 for five against Barishal after being sent in to bat. Afif Hossain (44 not out) and Nurul Hasan Sohan (47) also contributed, while Barishal pacer Ruyel Miah took three wickets.

In Sylhet, Mymensingh reached 273 for seven, with Mahfijul Islam unbeaten on 70 off 135 balls and Abdul Mazid and Abu Hider Rony scoring 46 each. Debutant Nayeem took three wickets, while Nabil Samad, who is set to retire after the season, claimed two.

In Chattogram, Rajshahi made 290 for six at stumps, with openers Sabbir Hosan (71) and Habibur Rahman Sohan (75) scoring half-centuries. Hasan Murad and Enamul Hoque Ashiq took two wickets each for Chattogram.

Bowlers fared better in Mirpur, where Dhaka reduced Rangpur to 229 for six. Openers Mim Mosaddeak (63) and Anik Sarker Shatu (50) shared a 114-run stand before Anamul Haque broke the partnership, after which Dhaka struck at regular intervals.

Earlier in the day, all eight team skippers wore blazers during the toss for the first time in a first-class match in Bangladesh as the 28th edition of the NCL got underway.

Empty-handed, under fire after historic failure

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh had never left an Asian Games cricket tournament without a medal. Until Aichi-Nagoya 2026.

A full-strength side arrived in Japan chasing gold but will return empty-handed after losing both matches that mattered, to Pakistan in the semifinal and then, most painfully, by 63 runs to a second-string Sri Lanka in the bronze-medal playoff.

The result ended Bangladesh's run of Asian Games cricket medals dating back to 2010 and exposed a side that failed when the stakes were highest. The bronze offered a route out after the semifinal defeat. Instead, Bangladesh produced another shambolic batting display.

The historic failure set the tone for an uncomfortable post-match press conference, where captain Litton Das faced questions over his own performance, the team's approach and whether Bangladesh's cricketers had taken the Games too lightly.

Litton was asked whether the team, despite receiving considerably more facilities and support than athletes from many other sports of his country, had shown enough responsibility. He was also confronted with questions about players being seen outside the team environment close to match days, with the suggestion that Bangladesh may not have treated the Games with the same seriousness as a bilateral series or major tournament.

Litton pushed back.

He argued that the squad had not been provided with adequate practice facilities and that there had also been problems with the food available to the players.

"When you play cricket, many things are required. You need practice. Was there any practice facility here? No," he said.

"If we had the option of practising, perhaps you would have seen us on the field practising all the time. But there was no option. That's it."

When a journalist pointed out that Pakistan and Sri Lanka had faced the same conditions but produced far better performances, Litton acknowledged the obvious: Bangladesh had simply not played good cricket.

Asked whether that failure would see him resign, he replied: "No, I do not want to resign. There are ups and downs in cricket. One day things will go well, another day they will go badly. There is no reason to resign over this."

The questioning continued, with a journalist arguing that expectations were higher because of the privileges and resources afforded to Bangladesh's cricketers.

Litton eventually snapped back: "What should I do then? Tell me."

When told that he should resign and admit that he had failed, the captain responded sarcastically: "Should I resign? Fine, I have resigned from the Asian Games."

The confrontation was uncomfortable, but so was the cricket that had prompted it.

On Saturday, Sri Lanka posted 165 for nine, with Tharindu Ratnayake smashing 65 off 32 balls after Bangladesh's promising start with the ball unravelled. The chase was worse: four wickets fell for 18 runs inside 3.5 overs, including ducks for Saif Hassan, Tanzid Tamim and Litton, before Bangladesh were bowled out for 102 in 17.3 overs.

Litton's own contribution across the two matches was two runs and a golden duck.

There were logistical problems at the Games, and Litton made sure they were heard. But they could not disguise the central failure: Bangladesh had the players, experience and opportunity to win a medal, yet failed when it mattered.

The contrast with India could hardly be starker. India have now won back-to-back Asian Games cricket gold medals, doing so in their first two appearances. This time, they completed a double, with both their men's and women's teams taking gold.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, saw a proud regional legacy reduced to rubble.

While the captain deflected, coach Mohammad Salahuddin had no such hesitation in assessing the outcome.

"To be honest, we are deeply ashamed. As a coach, I feel that we have failed, and we have not been able to deliver what was expected of us. It is very disappointing, and I want to apologise to the entire nation," he said.

WHAT TO WATCH



SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
Asian Games
Events and concluding ceremony
Live from 6:00 am
UEFA Nations League
Live from 12:45 am (Monday)
Greece vs Germany
Netherlands vs Serbia
Portugal vs Norway

T SPORTS
World Championship of Legends
SA vs WI
India Vs England
Live from 9:30 pm





Pedro (right) celebrates scoring Brazil's second goal with Estevao Willian during their 4-0 victory over hosts India in a FIFA international friendly at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday. The scoreline, however, only tells part of the story, as a spirited India refused to sit back against the five-time world champions. [Inset] Vinicius Junior could not find the net, but Estevao scored one while Samuel Lino netted a brace to seal the victory. However, the Blue Tigers can take heart from managing nine shots, including three on target, and six corners. PHOTO: **AFP**

IN BRIEF

Hockey team finish seventh

STAR SPORTS DESK

Bangladesh finished seventh in the men's hockey competition at the Asian Games after beating Thailand 3-0 in the seventh-place playoff at the Gifu Prefectural Green Stadium in Japan today.

Roman Sarker put Bangladesh ahead in just the third minute, giving Peter Gerhard's side an early boost as they dominated the opening quarter.

Bangladesh continued to press and doubled their advantage in the 27th minute when Amirul Islam converted a penalty corner.

Thailand struggled to create clear chances as Bangladesh maintained control of the contest. Ashraful Islam then put the result beyond doubt by converting a penalty stroke in the 53rd minute.

Thailand failed to find a response as Bangladesh comfortably protected their three-goal lead until the final whistle.





Workers' skills, migration on separate tracks

On top of this, CPD says over 70% going abroad unskilled

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

More than seven in 10 outbound workers leave Bangladesh without any training, according to a study, and experts say the problem goes beyond the capacity of technical training centres (TTCs).

A worker may be recruited for one job, have a different occupation listed on the visa, and be assigned yet another after reaching the destination.
Shakirul Islam, chairperson of OKUP

They say the recruitment process remains largely disconnected from the training workers receive and the jobs they eventually do abroad.

A worker may be recruited for one job, have a different occupation listed on the visa, and be assigned yet another after reaching the destination, said Shakirul Islam, chairperson of Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (OKUP).

Such practices discourage workers from acquiring skills and undermine efforts to match trained workers with suitable jobs abroad, he said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A date palm sap collector shaves the bark of a tree using a traditional sickle to prepare it for seasonal sap extraction as winter approaches the northern region. Harvesters like him clear the upper layers of the trees at the onset of winter to collect the sweet sap, which is later boiled to produce jaggery. The photo was taken in Durgapur upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.
PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Leave now or face 'mortal danger'

Russia warns diplomats, foreigners to leave Kyiv as it issues fresh threat

AFP, *Kyiv*



Russia yesterday issued a new call for diplomats and foreigners to leave Kyiv, warning the Ukrainian capital of new "massive" air attacks hours after striking another major bridge in the city.

Moscow has ramped up its pummelling of Kyiv, launching waves of drones at the city, targeting key infrastructure and putting the capital on a near-constant state of alert against attacks.

The strike on the Northern Bridge in the morning wounded two people and damaged the road surface and trolleybus overhead wires, restricting traffic, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

AFP reporters saw traces of an explosion on a pedestrian walkway and technicians repairing power lines on the bridge.

Hours after the attack, the Russian authorities warned of more strikes, issuing a fresh call for diplomats and foreigners to leave the city and refrain from visiting Ukraine.

"We note with concern that not everyone has heeded these warnings, and that individuals are knowingly exposing themselves to mortal danger," the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The Russian ministry also stated that "responsibility for any potential negative consequences rests entirely with those who ignore this warning."

Moscow issued a similar warning in May, but heads of state and governments from countries backing Ukraine have defied it by travelling to the war-torn country and the capital in a show of support.

On Friday, Klitschko said the city was in a "very dramatic situation" and should now be on a war footing as the enemy was "tearing Kyiv apart" with strikes on bridges and energy infrastructure.

President Volodymyr Zelensky accused his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, of ripping up the rulebook of armed conflict by sanctioning massive attacks on civilian areas, an accusation the Kremlin has rejected.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Spare parts, equipment shortages leave Biman 'vulnerable'

Claims Boeing in 2025 report, cites high unusual technical issues compared to Boeing's global fleet

ZYMA ISLAM

An inspection report by the US aircraft manufacturer Boeing claims that Biman is struggling to maintain its existing fleet.

Chronic shortages of spare parts and tools are forcing Biman to keep flying with components that should have been repaired long ago, while an inadequately trained workforce is contributing to disruptions, says the report of October 2025.

An expert sees no immediate safety concern, but the findings raise questions about Biman's ability to support a much larger fleet.

Its challenge is not just expanding the fleet but keeping aircraft in service reliably.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has ordered 25 new Boeing aircraft this year.

The "Biman Bangladesh Airlines 777/787 Onsite Enhanced Support Close-Out Report" compares Biman's 777 and 787 fleets with what the manufacturer describes as its global fleet standard. Boeing's on-site maintenance team spent several months at Biman last year at the airline's invitation, according to sources familiar with the exercise.

Of the 19 aircraft in Biman's fleet, four are 777-300ERs, four 787-8s and two 787-9s.

Biman suffers many flight delays due to a high rate of odd technical issues, unlike other carriers' Boeing fleets, and it takes Biman up to three times longer than "standard" to maintain its planes, the report said.

Of the top 10 problems identified in Biman's and the global fleets, Biman's 777s had only two in common with the global fleet -- the backup power system and the air-conditioning system's cooling and temperature controls.

Biman's 787s shared four, faults in a core computing unit known as the general processing

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

'Won't accept govt's illegal orders'

Akhtaruzzaman throws away helmet at court, which places him on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday placed former lawmaker Major (retd) Akhtaruzzaman, who joined Jamaat-e-Islami last year, on a one-day remand in a case filed over assaulting an on-duty security official, obstructing government work, and creating disorder at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Alberuni Mir passed the order after police produced him before the court with a five-day remand prayer, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

The ex-MP expressed anger over being handcuffed and threw a helmet away as he was taken out of a prison van at the court premises yesterday.

He was also seen pointing his finger at police officers from inside the van.

Inside the prison van, when a cop went to put handcuffs on him and a helmet on his

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



A special lorry carrying uranium fuel for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant heads towards the plant site in Ishwardi, Pabna, under tight security. The first consignment of the fuel for the plant's unit 2 landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Friday. The convoy reached the plant around 12:30pm. The photo was taken in Dashuria, Pabna, yesterday.
PHOTO: COLLECTED

IN FOCUS

4 teen gang leaders of Cumilla arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

Police on overnight drives in Cumilla and Cox's Bazar arrested four leaders of teen gangs and detained 363 others on suspicion of being involved with juvenile gangs.

The arrestees are Imran Hossain Raton, 19, and Saiful Islam, 20, both of the 'RAW' gang; and Md Sabbir alias, 24, and Rabiul Islam Nabi, 24, of the 'Crime Setup' gang, said police.

All of them are residents of different areas of Cumilla city, said Shamsul Alam Shah, the officer-in-charge of Cumilla District Detective Branch (DB) of police.

Raton and Saiful, both arrested from Cox's Bazar, are accused in nine and 10 criminal cases, respectively, he said, adding that the other two, arrested from Cumilla, are accused in several criminal cases.

Besides, 363 people were detained in the fifth phase of a district-wide drive against teen gangs conducted jointly by police from all 18 stations and the DB.

A total of 2,035 people have been detained in the five phases of the drive since September 23, according to district police.

Of them, 1,409 were released into the custody of their guardians after signing bonds, while the others were sent to jail through courts for their alleged involvement with different criminal activities, including drug and extortion issues.

A total of 2,035 people have been detained in the five phases of the drive since September 23, according to district police.

Over in Noakhali, police detained 45 individuals during anti-juvenile

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4