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YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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FERTILISER SUBSIDIES

Big farmers get half: WB

Top 20% landholders receive 50% of fertiliser subsidy

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The biggest 20 percent of landholders in Bangladesh receive half of fertiliser subsidies, while the smallest 40 percent get just 13 percent, exposing serious flaws in the costly government programme, according to a recent World Bank report.

The subsidy favours larger farms because benefits rise with the quantity of fertiliser purchases. Most farms are small: 92 percent operate less than 2.5 acres, and four in 10 are marginal holdings of less than half an acre, operating only 11 percent of farmland.

Ranked by income, the poorest 40 percent of farm households receive just over a third of direct benefits, while the richest fifth capture "almost twice its share of recipients", the World Bank said in its latest Bangladesh Development Update.

Indirect benefits through food prices and agricultural wages are also skewed towards better-off households, with the bottom 40 percent receiving about one-third.

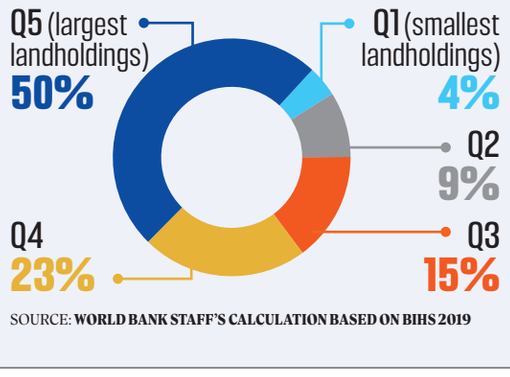
Fertiliser subsidy has nearly quadrupled to Tk 28,000 crore in five years. The World Bank has urged the government to phase out price controls and move to market-based pricing, while recommending direct support for small and marginal farmers through electronic vouchers linked to the farmer cards introduced by the BNP government.

Bangladesh spent Tk 1,02,024 crore on agricultural subsidies from FY2021-22 to FY2025-26, more than triple the previous five-year total, finance ministry data show.

The International Monetary Fund has also urged subsidy

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SHARE OF TOTAL FERTILISER SUBSIDY BY LAND QUINTILE (FY19)



SOURCE: WORLD BANK STAFF'S CALCULATION BASED ON BIHS 2019



Migrant workers wait at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport hoping to catch any flight to Saudi Arabia yesterday. After Houthi attacks, Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport has been closed until Saturday, leading to cancelled flights. Thousands of migrants with visa and job-rejoining deadlines are in trouble. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

PROBING FAKE NEWS

Press Council seeks suo moto powers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Press Council has sought the authority to launch suo moto investigations and take action against those spreading fake news, rumours and hate speech or violating journalistic ethics.

The quasi-judicial body has also proposed bringing online news portals under its jurisdiction, introducing a registration and certification system for journalists, and giving the council tribunal-like powers to adjudicate professional misconduct cases.

The proposals were

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Any flight to Saudi will do

Migrants run between airline offices and airport to get a flight before their visa, work-joining deadlines expire

TASNEEM TAYEB

Ridoy Ahmed was supposed to travel to Dammam for work, but with flights disrupted, he still does not know when he will be able to leave. His visa expires on October 17.

When The Daily Star met him at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday, he was heading towards the Biman Bangladesh Airlines office, hoping to find out what he should do next.

Some of the others The Daily Star spoke to are being placed in alternative flights to Jeddah or Medinah as airlines, recruiting agencies and government authorities try to keep migrant workers from losing valid travel windows and potentially their jobs, amid continued disruptions at two of Saudi Arabia's busiest airports.

All of Biman's Dhaka-Dammam and Dhaka-Riyadh flights would remain suspended until October 17. The airline said passengers needing to travel urgently could use Jeddah or Madinah instead and advised them to contact its sales centres for ticketing and travel arrangements.

According to the latest Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) figures, 62 flights have so far been affected by restricted operations at Saudi airports, involving 9,674 passengers. Many of them are migrant workers.

Mohammad Nasir, whose visa expires on October 20, was supposed to travel with US-Bangla Airlines. The carrier has suspended its Riyadh flights until October 21.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 12

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HOUTHI STRIKES

MBS moves from palace to palace

Say reports as KSA probes air defence failure

AGENCIES

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is being shuttled between heavily guarded palaces equipped with bunkers amid escalating Houthi attacks, according to reports.

Saudi Arabia faced its worst attack in a decade on Saturday after 13 were killed and at least 300 injured in an attack on Riyadh's international airport.

President Donald Trump has said that he is considering joining Saudi strikes on the Houthis while Riyadh's Makkah Pact allies have also voiced their support, reports The Independent.

Prince Salman, 41, has not been seen in public since last Tuesday when he made an appearance to give blood to support a national donation drive.

Since then, he has been shuttled between heavily guarded palaces that are equipped with bunkers, according to the Wall Street Journal citing officials familiar with his movements.

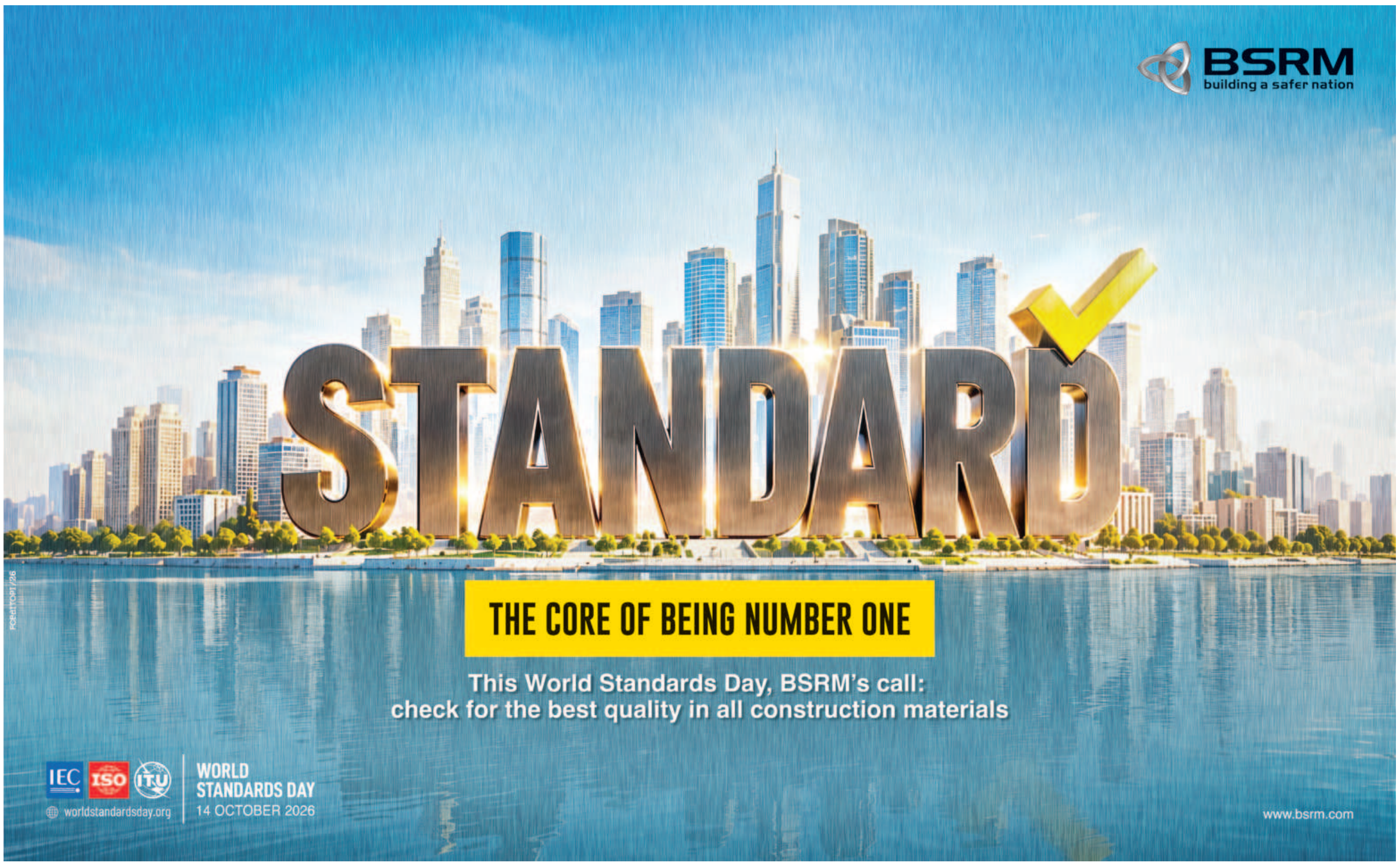
Houthis warn Riyadh airport, refinery and Aramco facility could be targeted if Sanaa oil site struck.

Saudi Arabia has launched an investigation to determine how its air defences failed to intercept a barrage of missiles and drones fired by Houthi rebels.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly, said the initial probe showed that Houthis first fired multiple drones to pave the way for a mix of cruise and ballistic missiles to reach Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport.

The Houthis possess ballistic missiles and advanced systems fitted with warheads that can change direction during flight and pose a challenge to Patriot interceptors and other defence systems used by the Saudis, reports AP.

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INDIAN VOTER LIST ROW

Delhi police detain top CJP leaders after flash protest

United INDIA bloc leaders vow to intensify fight against CEC; SC flags 14 'defects' in Rahul's plea

AGENCIES

India's youth-led Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) said yesterday that key leaders had been detained after entering an iconic protest site in New Delhi blocked by police.

Delhi Police said on Monday that Jantar Mantar in the heart of the capital had been taken off the list of designated official protest sites. The site has been sealed off for several days by yellow metal barricades and guarded by a heavy police presence.

But a video posted online by CJP leader Abhijeet Dipke yesterday showed protesters clambering over the barricades, running into the empty space and waving the national flag -- before police chased and detained them.

"CJP sneaks inside to reclaim Jantar Mantar," the group said in a post on social media, adding that the 20 people detained included leaders Saurav Das, Ashutosh Ranka and Ajinkya Shinde. "All of them have been detained by Delhi Police," it added.

"You cannot denotify the resistance," Dipke said, tagging Modi in his post.

In an attempt to keep up the pressure on the government, Rahul Gandhi hosted a high tea for leaders from the INDIA bloc as well as student bodies.

"Today I have invited the leaders of the INDIA alliance, opposition MPs, student organisations, and people from civil society to my home for tea. In this people's movement to protect democracy, we are all together... no matter what happens, or which institution plays a role or doesn't, political resistance will continue, people's resistance

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Security personnel detain student activists during a protest demanding the resignation of the nation's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged voter roll irregularities linked to the "special intensive revision" (SIR), in New Delhi, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Any flight to Saudi will do

FROM PAGE 1

Nasir said he went to the airline's counter at the airport and was told to remain prepared so that he could be accommodated on another Saudi-bound flight, subject to seat availability.

Mohammad Ruhul Amin was originally scheduled to travel to Riyadh on October 11. His recruiting agency later arranged a ticket for Jeddah, and he was expected to fly last night.

Workers affected by earlier cancellations are also being rerouted.

Mohammad Rezaul Karim said his agency had asked him to remain in Dhaka for another couple of days while it searched for a seat on another Saudi-bound flight.

Mohammad Shahin, whose visa remains valid for several months, has sought another month's leave and said he would consider travelling via Jeddah or Madinah if necessary.

Recruiting agencies say such rerouting has become a race against time.

"We are trying to find alternative flights to send our workers to protect them and their visas. We are also exploring other airports that are safe and operational," said Belayet of MRJ Global.

Once a visa expires, it becomes very difficult to renew, said representatives of Udayan Overseas Employment Service and GM Overseas, while urging workers to contact agencies well before expiry.

The government says it is trying to address the problem through diplomatic channels.

Workers whose travel has been disrupted, including those on leave and those facing visa expiry, were a concern for the government, Nurul Haque Nur, state minister for expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh had faced similar difficulties when the Middle East conflict escalated in February, and Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries had provided opportunities and flexibility at the time.

The government is now trying to resolve the latest cases through diplomatic discussions, he said.

The government is closely monitoring the situation of Bangladeshi migrant workers affected by the conflict, and ensuring their safety and providing consular assistance remain the immediate priority, said Humaiun Kobir, the state minister for foreign affairs.

"Our diplomatic efforts are focused on protecting the employment rights of Bangladeshi workers and maintaining engagement with host countries to minimise disruptions to their livelihoods," he told The Daily Star.

The foreign ministry was also strengthening coordination with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and other agencies.

For workers who may be forced to return, rehabilitation and reintegration would become important, he said, adding that the government wanted returnees to have access to appropriate support and livelihood opportunities.

In a directive dated October 12, CAAB told airlines operating direct and transit flights to Saudi Arabia to notify affected passengers through SMS, phone calls, email and other channels about cancellations and schedule changes, and provide information on rebooking and refunds.

Airlines were also told to guide passengers facing visa or immigration problems, assist stranded travellers and appoint focal points to coordinate with airport authorities.

Biman did not respond to The Daily Star's queries on whether affected passengers are being directly notified of cancellations or rescheduling through SMS or other channels.

The disruption has also brought Bangladesh's reliance on Middle Eastern labour markets into focus.

Nur said the government is mapping alternative markets in Asia-Pacific and Europe and strengthening skills training, while acknowledging that prolonged disruption in the Middle East could slow its overseas employment plans.

Bangladesh should not respond simply by looking for new destinations for low-skilled manpower, said Hossain Zillur Rahman, chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre.

"Instead of looking for new markets for unskilled labour, we should look at developing targeted markets for targeted professional manpower export."

Bangladesh should prepare not only for the immediate three to six months but also for the medium-term consequences over the next one to two years, he added.

But for Ridoy and Nasir, the concerns are immediate: whether a seat can be found before their visas run out.

MBS moves from palace to palace

FROM PAGE 1

One of the officials said the investigation also aims to find out why air defence systems did not provide earlier warning of the attack in which the Houthi missiles and drones flew over 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) to reach Riyadh.

The incident has exposed vulnerabilities in Saudi Arabia's defence system and signalled a dangerous inflection point in an expanding Mideast conflict that began more than seven months ago when the US and Israel launched their war against Iran.

Meanwhile, Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV yesterday reported an attack on the Yemen Oil Company in Sanaa.

The attack came shortly after the Saudi-led coalition ordered the evacuation of the facility ahead of a military operation.

Houthis also warned yesterday they would target Riyadh's airport, a refinery, and an Aramco facility in Dammam if the Saudi-led coalition follows through on its threat to strike an oil facility in Sanaa.

Saudi Arabia has in recent weeks launched strikes against the Houthis and is backing a Yemeni government counteroffensive after the group seized strategic territory along the Red Sea coast last month.

Press Council seeks suo moto powers

FROM PAGE 1

presented at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the information and broadcasting ministry at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Representatives of the ministry's departments and agencies submitted recommendations aimed at making their activities "more dynamic and people-oriented", according to documents.

Committee Chairman Aman Ullah Aman presided over the meeting, attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Andaleeve Rahman, State Minister Yaser Khan Chowdhury and other committee members.

The Press Council suggested empowering itself to investigate and take action against reports deemed harmful to national integrity, independence and sovereignty, contrary to public taste or journalistic ethics, or detrimental to public interest.

It also recommended effective penalties, including fines, for editors, publishers, and journalists in cases filed by aggrieved individuals over false, harassing or unethical reports.

The council sought exclusive jurisdiction over journalists' rights and professional misconduct, and proposed appointing a district judge as a member to strengthen its quasi-judicial powers.

To improve professional standards, it recommended a registration and certification system for journalists, modelled on the Bangladesh Bar Council.

EDITORS' QUALIFICATIONS, JOURNALISTS' FINANCIAL SECURITY

The council recommended amending the Printing Presses and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Act to set specific educational and professional requirements for newspaper editors.

Section 12(2)(j) of the existing law says an editor must have reasonable educational qualifications or adequate training or experience in journalism for a newspaper's declaration to be authenticated. The council said the requirements are not clearly defined, allowing virtually anyone to become an editor.

It proposed making a bachelor's degree, relevant training and at least 10 years' journalism experience mandatory for editors.

To improve journalists' financial security, the council proposed cancelling a newspaper's declaration if it employs journalists without appointment letters or fails to pay their salaries and allowances for three consecutive months or more.

It also suggested requiring newspapers receiving government benefits to submit annual audit reports to the district magistrate's office, the Department of Films and Publications and the Press Council. A monitoring committee comprising representatives of the three institutions would oversee regular publication and inspect newspaper offices.

For financial independence, the council sought authority to collect a levy of one percent of newspaper circulation revenue or a rate fixed by the authorities.

It also proposed setting up a research cell to study media freedom and ways to improve journalistic standards.

'CONTRADICTION'

Prof Gitiara Nasreen, a member of the Media Reform Commission, said retaining the Press Council contradicted the commission's recommendation for an independent media commission to oversee journalistic standards and codes of conduct, and guide media outlets towards professional practices.

She questioned why separate bodies were needed when the proposed commission could cover all media.

She also questioned the Press Council's independence, citing its placement under the information ministry and the potential influence of the executive and the judiciary.

"The commission should not be punitive. Its primary role should be to guide the media, address journalists' professional concerns and ensure they can work independently without interference," she said.

BTV, FILM ARCHIVE

Committee members stressed the need to consider the social impact of programmes and news broadcast by Bangladesh Television (BTV), according to a press release from the Parliament Secretariat.

They said BTV should not become a commercial channel but function as a media institution accountable to the state and society, with clearly defined goals and objectives.

They also emphasised the importance and relevance of news and called for programmes that appeal to the public.

The committee stressed including the history of the 1990 mass uprising and the July mass uprising, along with the 1971 Liberation War and other significant events, in historical documentaries and archival materials preserved by the Bangladesh Film Archive.

Fury as US federal agents search anti-Trump lawmaker's home

AFP, *Washington*

US federal agents searched the Washington home of Democratic congresswoman Ilhan Omar on Monday as part of what officials said was a criminal investigation, marking a dramatic escalation in President Donald Trump's confrontation with the outspoken lawmaker.

Omar said she was "ok" following the operation but accused the administration of targeting political opponents just three weeks before she seeks re-election in the November 3 midterms.

The early morning search -- described by Trump's "border czar" Tom Homan as part of a longstanding probe -- was conducted by agents from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the investigative arm of US immigration enforcement.

"Make no mistake: this is an attempt to target political enemies and weaponize federal law enforcement," Omar wrote on X.

"For ten years, Trump has targeted me with baseless lies and smear campaigns. This is just the latest escalation in his campaign of political intimidation."

The operation also sparked a furious backlash from Democrats who accused Trump of abusing government powers to pursue his political opponents.

Fox News reported that the search was linked to a criminal fraud investigation concerning immigration paperwork submitted on behalf of the Somali-born congresswoman by her late father when she was a child.

The president was asked about Omar hours after the operation and said she was being investigated "very carefully."

"I've always found her to be totally crooked personally, but that has nothing to do with me. I think she's a terrible person, just a complainer.

PUBACHAL PLOT SCAM

BTMA president, Partex MD sentenced to 14 yrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka special court yesterday sentenced Amber Group Chairman Showkat Aziz Russell, Partex Group Managing Director Ashfaq Aziz Rubel and six former Rajuk officials to 14 years' imprisonment each in a corruption case filed over allocating plots in the Purbachal Residential Project.

Judge Md Abdus Salam of the Special Judge Court-9 delivered the verdict in their absence in the courtroom, said a court employee.

The court also issued conviction warrants as all eight were absent during the verdict, he added.

According to the judgments, Russell and Rubel were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined Tk 10 lakh each for their abetment of criminal misconduct. They were also convicted for seven years and fined Tk 10 lakh each for abetting criminal breach of trust.

The six former Rajuk officials include former Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) chairman Iqbal Uddin Choudhury and former members: SD Foyej, AKM Wahedul Islam, SM Jafar Ullah, HM Jahurul Haque and Rezaul Karim Tarafdar.

All six were sentenced to seven years in jail and fined Tk 10 lakh each for criminal misconduct. Each of them was also convicted for seven years and fined Tk 10 lakh for criminal breach of trust.

The verdict said each of the eight accused would have to serve an additional year in prison for each Tk 10 lakh fine in default of payment.

"The sentence will run concurrently," the verdict also read.

The period the accused had already spent in custody would be deducted from their sentences, it added.

According to the verdict, the court ordered the cancellation of the plot allotments to Rubel and Russell, sons of Partex Group founder MA Hashem, and the plots confiscated in favour of the state.

According to the case documents, Rubel and Russell, also the president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, deposited Tk 1.5 lakh each as security for a 10 katha plot each.

As they were not allotted plots in the first phase, they withdrew their deposits in December 2003, rendering their applications paid off and cancelled. They did not apply again.



Showkat Aziz



Ashfaq Aziz

However, in June 2004, Rajuk allotted the two plots, measuring 10 kathas each and totalling 20 kathas, against the cancelled applications without any recommendation from the selection committee.

To favour the applicants, the board meeting unlawfully decided that the plots could be allotted if the applicants repaid the withdrawn deposits along with 17 percent interest.

The move amounted to an abuse of power and deprived eligible applicants of their rightful opportunities.

On February 8, 2017, Sylvia Ferdous, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, filed the case with Motijheel Police Station. Then on September 4, 2018, ACC Deputy Director Mirza Zahidul Alam submitted a charge sheet in the case.

On August 26, 2019, the court framed charges against the eight accused.

During the trial, nine witnesses testified.

"I have been targeted as I criticised different activities of the immediate past government," Russell told The Daily Star last night.

He said when he was given the plot as there were fewer applications against many number of plots, he said, adding that the value of the plot was less when he bought it.

"Its price has increased now," he said, adding that he will appoint a lawyer soon to seek bail from court.

Rubel could not be reached for comment about the verdict.

Big farmers get half: WB

FROM PAGE 1

rationalisation for several years and is expected to make fertiliser-subsidy reform a key condition of its upcoming loan programme.

The subsidy matters more to poorer households relative to income: combined direct and indirect benefits equal 1.04 percent of income for the poorest quintile, compared with 0.10 percent for the richest, the report said.

"These findings indicate that poorer households have less capacity to absorb the loss of support, even though richer households capture more benefits," the World Bank said.

Mustafa K Mujeri, former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said, "What matters is how subsidies on fertiliser and other farm inputs can be delivered effectively to small and marginal farmers."

Mujeri said removing agricultural subsidies is not easy because they support food security and production. "Keeping fertiliser prices low for farmers is not enough; it is also essential that fertiliser reaches them when they need it," he said, pointing to problems with availability and dealer distribution during the farming season.

The World Bank also cautioned that farm size is "an incomplete indicator of poverty", noting that about three-quarters of marginal rice farmers consumed more rice than they produced, potentially exposing them to both higher input costs and higher food prices. It said more effective targeting should therefore consider household welfare alongside cultivated area and input needs.

Bangladesh uses about 66 lakh tonnes of fertiliser a year, with more than 85 percent of requirements met through imports. Domestic production is constrained by gas shortages, ageing plants, and operational disruptions, leaving the subsidy bill exposed to global supply disruptions, price volatility and exchange-rate depreciation.

The vulnerabilities became particularly evident after the Russia-Ukraine War in 2022 and the Middle East conflict in 2026, adding pressure to the budget and foreign exchange reserves, the World Bank said.

Agricultural subsidies have absorbed about 80 percent of the agriculture ministry's budget since FY2022-23, up from 63 percent in FY2018-19.

Across the broader food and agriculture portfolio, subsidies accounted for 41.5 percent of spending, while agricultural research received just 4.2 percent -- nearly Tk 10 was spent on subsidies for every Tk 1 allocated to research.

The World Bank said redirecting part of the spending towards research, extension, soil health, and irrigation "could generate higher long-term returns than untargeted input subsidies". Investments in storage and marketing could also support diversification, private investment, and rural jobs, it said.

"Paper-based, poorly monitored distribution gives authorities little real-time information on low levels of supply and rising prices," the World Bank said.

Weak dealer oversight "allows diversion and unauthorised mark-ups", while farmers "reportedly pay above official prices". Higher costs and delays can be particularly difficult for cash-strapped farmers during critical stages of crop growth.

Only about 5 percent of farmers apply nutrients in the right balance, meaning part of the subsidy pays for fertiliser that does not raise yields, the report said. Small and marginal farmers also have less contact with government extension officials than larger farmers.

Administered fertiliser prices could be increased in small, preannounced steps over several cropping seasons, with changes communicated before farmers make planting and input-purchase decisions.

The World Bank warned that sudden increases could force cash-strapped smallholders to reduce fertiliser use or absorb higher costs, putting yields and food prices at risk.

In the near term, the World Bank said Bangladesh should secure fertiliser supplies for coming cropping seasons, maintain buffer stocks, and ensure timely distribution. Such measures "should complement, not delay" reforms to pricing and targeting.

The BNP government's farmer card initiative and digital farmer registry could provide the foundation for shifting "from subsidising supply to supporting demand", the bank said. The registry would identify actual cultivators, including tenants and sharecroppers, and record their land, crops and soil information, allowing support to be matched to holdings and input needs.

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NCP set to reshape central leadership

Focuses on grassroots expansion

SHAMIMA RITA

The National Citizen Party (NCP) is set to announce its restructured central leadership in the coming days, excluding current Senior Joint Convener Samantha Sharmin and Senior Joint Member Secretary Nahida Sarwar Niva from the proposed top-tier leadership, according to party sources.

Nahid Islam is likely to remain convener, and Akhter Hossen the member secretary.

The positions of chief organiser, chief coordinator and spokesperson will be abolished, with Nasiruddin Patwary and Hasnat Abdullah tipped to become senior joint conveners.

Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and Sarjis Alam are likely to become senior joint member secretaries.

The Political Council has agreed on the broad framework of the restructuring over two meetings in the past two weeks, leaving final approval to Nahid and Akhter, sources said.

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Vendors try to salvage their belongings from the debris of demolished makeshift roadside stalls in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday. The stalls were demolished during a DNCC drive to clear roads of encroachments. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

IN FOCUS

'Religion being exploited to fuel unrest'

37 citizens condemn alleged attempt to deface Tagore mural, politicise niqab issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-seven eminent citizens have expressed concern over demands for punitive action against a Dhaka University teacher over her alleged remarks about a student's attire and an alleged attempt to deface a mural of Rabindranath Tagore, warning that such incidents could fuel religious extremism and communal tensions.

In a statement yesterday, they demanded impartial investigations into both incidents and punishment for those responsible.

According to the statement, a master's student of the English department alleged in an October 7 Facebook post that teacher Tasneem Siraj Mahbub had commented on students' financial circumstances and clothing at the beginning of a class.

She alleged that the teacher had told a student wearing a niqab that she did not need to observe

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

A night of flames, a future of uncertainty

Chawkbazar traders fear losing life savings in Monday's fire



Traders after the fire. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For some traders, bags worth Tk 40 lakh may have gone up in flames. For others, the fire could mean losing cosmetics and other goods worth crores of taka. With their working capital and livelihoods at stake, they waited anxiously outside the building, unable to assess the damage.

This was the scene at Mansur Khan Plaza in Chhoto Katara Goli, Chawkbazar, Old Dhaka, yesterday afternoon, as traders feared their life savings had been reduced to ashes.

Businesses in another 10 to 15 nearby buildings also suffered

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Intensify dengue prevention efforts

Says PM; govt mulls dengue vaccine trials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed the authorities to intensify public awareness campaigns and strengthen coordination among government agencies to contain dengue, which has claimed 316 lives and hospitalised 1,03,396 people so far this year.

He issued the directives at a meeting on dengue prevention and control at the Cabinet Division in the Secretariat, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu.

The prime minister said the next few months would be crucial for controlling dengue and called for stronger preventive measures, particularly in areas reporting higher infection rates.

He directed the authorities to arrange regular loudspeaker announcements in neighbourhoods and include dengue prevention messages in Juma prayer sermons.

The meeting also decided to ensure cleanliness at government residential quarters and hospital premises.

Meanwhile, the government will consult experts on whether to conduct clinical trials of dengue vaccines vin Bangladesh or assess existing research before considering their use, State Minister for Health Dr MA Muhit said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after a seminar on mental health at Bangla Academy, he said the issue was discussed at the meeting with the prime minister.

"Before approving a vaccine, we need scientific data and must consult experts to understand how it will work for our population," he said.

Muhit said several dengue vaccine candidates were at different stages of development internationally, while India had recently approved one for private-sector use.

The government is also considering trials of a Japanese mosquito-control technology alongside conventional preventive measures.

Muhit said the two Dhaka city

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- Dengue claims 316 lives; 1,03,396 hospitalised this year
- Fever clinics planned across Dhaka for prompt testing
- Japanese mosquito-control technology under consideration
- Around 2,000 doctors trained in dengue management

Ensure safeguards against autocratic rule in constitution

Academics tell JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academics have proposed constitutional checks and balances to prevent any government from concentrating power and turning authoritarian on the strength of a parliamentary majority.

They said constitutional reform should define the powers of state organs and ensure accountability.

The proposals came at a meeting between academics and the special parliamentary committee on constitutional reform at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, chair of the committee, said he was unsure whether the opposition's absence would trigger controversy, but there would be opportunities for debate.

Responding to academic Ali Riaz's concern that reform could become a partisan agenda without opposition participation, Salahuddin said the government was working to implement the July National Charter.

Opposition leaders would be welcome if they submitted their names, he said, adding that the initiative would proceed even without them.

At the meeting, academics said majoritarian politics and the "winner takes all" principle fuel discrimination and autocracy. Checks and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Tabligh Jamat demands Ijtema date, security

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

Tabligh Jamat Bangladesh (followers of Maulana Saad) yesterday demanded an impartial investigation into the violence in 2018 and 2024 and security for the group's religious activities at mosques.

They also demanded an early announcement of the dates for holding the Bishwa Ijtema in Tongi under its initiative.

The organisation made a total of six demands in a press release issued yesterday.

The organisation also called for an end to religious and political interference in its internal affairs.

It described statements made at a recent press conference held under the banner of "Olama-Mashayekh Bangladesh" as false, misleading and politically motivated. It claimed those present did not represent Tabligh Jamat.

The press release called for an impartial investigation into the violence at the Bishwa Ijtema grounds in Tongi in 2018 and 2024, as well as other deaths, and demanded justice for those responsible.

According to the press release, Ismail Mondal and Shamsuddin Belal were killed at the Ijtema grounds in Tongi in

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



A boy rushes to buy a toy from Md Alamgir, who has been selling products from his bicycle in Patalia village of Jamalpur Sadar upazila for nearly four years. Earning Tk 15,000-20,000 a month from the business, he supports his family, who live in Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, while he stays away from them. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

70% of Jamaat women felt unprepared for polls

Says MP Mardia Mumtaz on why the party didn't nominate women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seventy percent of Jamaat-e-Islami's women members said they were not ready to contest directly elected seats in the national election, which is why the party did not nominate any women candidates, said the party's reserved-seat MP Mardia Mumtaz yesterday.

Speaking at a conference organised by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) at the BRAC Centre in Dhaka, she said the decision had been taken democratically by the party's Majlish-e-Shura, its consultative council.

"Many women had to support their families while male Jamaat members were in jail during the Awami League government, leaving them unprepared for electoral politics," said Mardia.

She said the party was not opposed to women's political participation but believed they needed training and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BSCIC JOB FAIR 2026

3,147 apply against 2,200 vacancies, 323 hired

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The BSCIC Job and Career Fair 2026, organised by the corporation's Chattogram regional office, was held at World Trade Centre in Agrabad, Chattogram city, yesterday.

The event, which began at 11:00am and continued until 5:00pm, saw 3,147 job applications and CVs submitted against 2,200 vacant positions at industrial estates under the BSCIC.

A total of 323 jobseekers secured immediate employment at the fair, according to the organisers.

Companies from seven industrial sectors participated in the fair, including textiles, food processing, pharmaceuticals, packaging, plastics and chemicals.

A total of 44 stalls were set up.

BSCIC Chairman Benazir Ahmed said initiatives such as trade and job fairs could help BSCIC emerge as a new driving force in the domestic economy.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mohammed Amirul Haque, CDA Chairman Engineer Belayet Hossain, BSCIC Director (Administration) Muhammad Kamruzzaman, and acting president of the Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Lutmeela Farid also spoke.

Nat'l research fest at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

The National Research Festival 2026 was held for the first time at the Chittagong University yesterday.

The daylong event was organised by the Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) at the university's Shaheed Minar and Buddhijibi Chattar premises.

Students from 31 universities across the country participated in the event.

LOST CERTIFICATE

I, Nusrat Mahmud Ananna, have lost my Provisional Certificate of B.Sc. in Economics (2023), issued by United International University (UIU), Student ID: 121131017, near Zigatola Post Office, Dhaka, on 11 October 2026. GD No. 761, dated 13 October 2026, Hazaribagh Police Station, DMP. If found, **please contact: 01787024827.**



Children and adolescents playing on the Cumilla Central Eidgah, one of the only few open spaces in the city, recently. PHOTO: **STAR**

Playfields disappearing in urban sprawl

KHALID BIN NAZRUL, *Cumilla*

Open spaces and playgrounds are rapidly disappearing in Cumilla city amid growing urbanisation, leaving children with fewer places to play and affecting their physical and mental development.

For instance, Sabbir Hossain Sentu from Cumilla city's Jhawtala said he plans to hand over his small house to an apartment developer. With the redevelopment, the open courtyard in front of the house, where children once played, will disappear.

Such changes are becoming increasingly common across Cumilla as urban development spreads through areas including Thakurpara, Munsef Bari, Chartha, Racecourse, Jhawtala, Badurtala and Kandirpar.

School playgrounds, once available for sports, are also becoming less accessible.

"Now, most educational institutions do not allow people to use their grounds for sports for various reasons, including security concerns," said Saiful Alam Babu, a member in-charge of the football committee of the Cumilla District Sports Association.

Debraj Ghosh, a teacher at a government school in Cumilla, said institutions were reluctant to allow outsiders to use their grounds, fearing they could face consequences if a criminal incident occurred there.

Meanwhile, academic pressure leaves children with little time for sports and cultural activities, said Biplab Saha, a cultural activist and director of Shabdartho Sanskriti Khola Chattar.

He said cultural organisations were largely inactive in neighbourhoods, where residents often barely knew one another, even within the same apartment building. He called for effective community-based social, sports and cultural activities involving children and adolescents.

Sayem Ahmed Bhuiyan, executive engineer of Cumilla City Corporation, said there were two parks within the corporation area -- Dharmasagar Park and Telikona Park. An initiative has also been taken to develop DC Park, which falls under the district administration.

"Children need playtime in vast green fields under open skies for proper physical and mental development. They need to grow up in a safe environment free from fear and pollution," said Dr Mohammad Iqbal Anwar, a renowned paediatrician in Cumilla.

Drawing on four decades of experience treating children and adolescents, Dr Iqbal said many were growing up with unexplained psychological pressure and anxiety.

Busy parents, a lack of outdoor sports facilities and dependence on digital devices were among the main reasons, he said.

Power plant fined Tk 20 lakh for polluting Sangu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The Department of Environment (DoE) has asked a government-run power plant in Chattogram to pay Tk 20 lakh in compensation for environmental damage after sludge from the facility polluted nearby areas and the Sangu river.

In an order issued yesterday, signed by DoE's Chattogram Regional Director Zamir Uddin, the department directed the Dohazari-Kaliaish 100MW peaking power plant in Satkania to pay the compensation within seven days.

The order followed an inspection and laboratory tests that found pollution levels in water discharged from the plant into the Sangu river exceeded permissible limits.

According to the test results, oil and grease levels were 3.1 times the allowable limit, suspended solids were 4.4 times the limit, and chemical oxygen demand (COD) was 3.9 times the standard.

The DoE also instructed the plant authorities to renew its environmental clearance and ensure operations without causing environmental pollution.

Earlier, plant manager Md Abdul Mannan said floodwater had entered a pond where sludge from furnace oil used for power generation was stored, carrying the waste through a canal into surrounding areas.

He said around 150 litres of sludge were later collected following complaints.

3 killed, 5 hurt in Cumilla road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

At least three people, including a couple, were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Cumilla yesterday.

In Daudkandi, a man and his wife were run over by an unidentified speeding vehicle on Dhaka-Chattogram highway near Haripur Mosque in Gouripur union around 7:00am.

The deceased were identified as Nazrul Islam, 62, and his wife Jharna Begum, 48. They lived near the Jinglatoli Union Board Office.

According to locals, the couple were collecting discarded bottles from the roadside when the vehicle hit them and fled.

They were taken to Gouripur Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared them dead, said Prem Lal Das, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Highway Police Station.

In Barura, a bus of Balaka Paribahan lost control and plunged into a roadside ditch in Deora Fakira Mokam area, leaving the bus helper dead and five passengers injured.

The deceased was identified as Atikullah Sabuj, 22. Kazi Nazmul Haque, officer-in-charge of Barura Police Station, said police seized the vehicle and recovered the body.

CIU launches Bangla language course for foreigners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

Chittagong Independent University (CIU) has launched a specialised "Certificate Course in Bangla for Foreigners" aimed at enhancing Bangla language proficiency among foreign nationals and providing them with a deeper understanding of Bangladeshi culture and heritage.

It is the first time a dedicated Bangla language course for foreigners has been introduced in Chattogram, says a CIU press release.

UNESCO Representative and Head of Office in Bangladesh Dr Susan Vize joined the inauguration ceremony virtually as the chief guest on Monday.

CIU Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr MM Nurul Absar presided over the event, while Dr Md Khaled Bin Chowdhury, dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, delivered introductory address.

Yan Yijiang, a representative from the Overseas Chinese Association in Chattogram, also spoke. Deans of various schools, faculty members, senior officials, and the university registrar were also present.

PRAYER TIMING
OCTOBER 14

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-45	12-45	4-15	5-45	7-15
JAMAAT	5-20	1-15	4-30	5-50	7-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Maddhapara Granite Mining Company Limited (MGMCL)
(A Company of Petrobangla)
Maddhapara, parbatipur, Dinajpur
www.mgmcl.gov.bd

Ref.: MGMCL/SO&M/CC&M/2026-2027/Building Maintenance/01 Date: 12-10-2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1	1348030	Painting and necessary maintenance works of Head Office, VIP Guest House and GM Banglow Building of MGMCL	26-Oct-2026, 10:00	26-Oct-2026, 15:00	26-Oct-2026, 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 10:00 on 26/10/2026.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and also from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

12.10.2026
(Mir Pinak Iqbal)
General Manager (SO&M)
Contact No: 01730-332205

GD-2502

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd

"কালিয়াকৈর-ময়মনসিংহ (শম্ভুগঞ্জ) ৪০০ কেভি ডবল সার্কিট সঞ্চালন লাইন" চালুর সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রীড নেটওয়ার্ক স্ট্রেংথেনিং প্রজেক্ট (জিটুজি) প্রকল্পের আওতাধীন কালিয়াকৈর ৪০০/২৩০/১৩২ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র হতে নবনির্মিত শম্ভুগঞ্জ ৪০০/১৩২/৩৩ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র পর্যন্ত ৯৬.৮৯১ কিঃমিঃ দীর্ঘ "কালিয়াকৈর-ময়মনসিংহ (শম্ভুগঞ্জ) ৪০০ কেভি ডবল সার্কিট সঞ্চালন লাইন" আগামীকাল ১৫ অক্টোবর ২০২৬ তারিখ, রোজ বৃহস্পতিবার, দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকায় পরীক্ষামূলকভাবে চালু করা হবে। সঞ্চালন লাইনটি গাজীপুর জেলার কালিয়াকৈর ও শ্রীপুর উপজেলা, টাংগাইল জেলার মির্জাপুর ও সখিপুর উপজেলা এবং ময়মনসিংহ জেলার ভালুকা, ত্রিশাল, ময়মনসিংহ সদর, ঈশ্বরগঞ্জ ও গৌরীপুর উপজেলার উপর দিয়ে অতিক্রম করেছে। চালুর সময় হতে পরবর্তীতে লাইনটি বিদ্যুতায়িত থাকবে।

এমতাবস্থায় উক্ত নবনির্মিত সঞ্চালন লাইনের টাওয়ারসমূহে আরোহণ, গবাদি পশু বাঁধা, টাওয়ারে রশি বেঁধে কাপড় শুকানো, লাইনের নিচে ও পাশে বাঁশঝাড় ও বড় বৃক্ষাদি রোপণ প্রভৃতি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজ হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য এবং সঞ্চালন লাইন হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্ব বজায় রাখার জন্য সর্বসাধারণকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। উচ্চ ভোল্টেজে বিদ্যুতায়িত উক্ত সঞ্চালন লাইন/টাওয়ারের সংস্পর্শে এসে কেউ দুর্ঘটনার শিকার হলে পাওয়ার গ্রিড কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না।

মোঃ আলমগীর হোসেন
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (প্রধান প্রকৌশলী)
পাওয়ার গ্রিড নেটওয়ার্ক স্ট্রেংদেনিং প্রজেক্ট আন্ডার পিজিসিবি

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
অঞ্চল-১ (উত্তরা)

Memo No: 46.10.0000.063.14.115.26 Date: 13/10/2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Ref No.	Name of Works	Last date and Time for Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing & Opening Date & Time
1.	ID No- 1349032, Ref No- 46.10.0000.000.058.14.0090.26 Date: 24-09-2026	Emergency repair and maintenance works of damaged roads, drain, cross-drain, manhole cover, footpath, median, grill and other infrastructures in the jurisdiction of Engineering Division (Civil), Zone-01, Under the framework contract for the FY 2026-2027(Group-Ka).	29-Oct-2026 14:00	29-Oct-2026 15:00
2.	ID No- 1349033, Ref No- 46.10.0000.000.058.14.0089.26 Date: 24-09-2026	Emergency repair and maintenance works of damaged roads, drain, cross-drain, manhole cover, footpath, median, grill and other infrastructures in the jurisdiction of Engineering Division (Civil), Zone-01, Under the framework contract for the FY 2026-2027(Group-Kha).	29-Oct-2026 14:00	29-Oct-2026 15:00
3.	ID No- 1349034, Ref No- 46.10.0000.000.058.14.0088.26 Date: 24-09-2026	Under the frame work contract Supply of materials such as bricks, sand, khori, bitumen, diesel, fire wood etc. for emergency repair work of damaged roads in Engineering Department of Zone-1 through departmental workers for the FY 2026-2027.	29-Oct-2026 14:00	29-Oct-2026 15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The Fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches. Further Information and guidelines are available in National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md. Nuruzzaman Khan)
Executive Engineer
Zone-1 (Uttara)
Dhaka North City Corporation

GD-2499

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate, Cox's Bazar
Hospital Road, Cox's Bazar
(Temporary Office)
www.coxbazarvat.gov.bd

Number: 08.01.2200.039.004.07.003.26. Date: /10/2026

e-Tender Notice (e-GP)

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of physical services/goods mentioned in the table below:

SL. No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Package No. & Description	Last Date & Time of Tender Documents Selling	Closing Date & Time of Tender
01	1344792	Procurement of Computer & Accessories	25 October, 2026; 10.00	25 October, 2026; 16.00
02	1352238	Procurement of Office Equipment	25 October, 2026; 10.00	25 October, 2026; 16.00
03	1353092	Procurement of Furniture	25 October, 2026; 11.00	25 October, 2026; 16.00
04	1353173	Procurement of Others Equipment	25 October, 2026; 11.00	25 October, 2026; 23.59
05	1344879	Procurement of Others Stationery	25 October, 2026; 11.00	25 October, 2026; 23.59

1. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
2. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
3. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank.
4. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
5. Authority reserves the right to accept and reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Signed.
(Minhaz Uddin Ahmed Sourav)
Assistant Commissioner
On Behalf of the Commissioner.

GD-2494

11 sailors missing after drone sinks ship off Bulgaria

Russian ambassador summoned

REUTERS, *Sofia*

Eleven sailors were missing at sea yesterday from a ship sunk by a drone attack off the coast of Bulgaria, possibly the second deadly sinking of a cargo vessel in the area in a week, prompting Bulgaria to summon Russia's ambassador.

Two cargo ships were hit by drones overnight and one was sunk, Bulgarian officials said. Bulgaria stopped short of explicitly accusing Russia of carrying out the attacks but Prime Minister Rumen Radev said their outcome "benefits the Russian Federation".

There was no immediate comment from Moscow on the incidents. "This is absolutely unacceptable – another attack in the immediate vicinity of Bulgarian territorial waters," Radev said in a televised address.

The attacks were also condemned by Ukraine and the EU. "The Black Sea has become another front of escalation of the Russian war in Ukraine," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on X. "Those responsible should be held accountable."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on X yesterday that the strike "once again demonstrates Moscow's deliberate disregard for civilian lives".

"The Black Sea is a lifeline for global food security. Russia is attacking it to weaponise hunger and hold the world hostage," he said.

Speaking with von der Leyen and Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte by telephone yesterday, Radev urged their support to bolster his country's maritime and airspace surveillance, the Bulgarian government said in a statement.

Nato will continue to adjust its military presence on its eastern flank "as needed", Rutte said.



Rescuers work at the site of an apartment building damaged in a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, early yesterday. Russia refrained from striking Ukrainian energy targets for the first time since US President Donald Trump announced an "energy ceasefire" over the weekend, while launching ballistic missiles and drones at cities' transport and logistics infrastructure overnight.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran Guards strike tanker in Hormuz

Trump doubts China, Russia are helping Tehran

AGENCIES

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they struck a vessel on Monday that was attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that is crucial to global energy flows.

Iran has imposed a blockade on the strait since the United States and Israel launched strikes against the Islamic republic in February, triggering the Middle East war.

The blockade has been met with a US counter-blockade of Iranian ports, and US forces routinely escort vessels crossing the strait. Iran has since the start of the war frequently targeted vessels crossing Hormuz without its permission, reports AFP.

The Guards' navy said in a statement published on the force's news platform, Sepah News, that "a supertanker, was hit in the Strait of Hormuz and caught fire".

The ship targeted on Monday had tried to sail through the area "by disabling its transponders" and "by ignoring warnings from the Guards' Navy", the statement said.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump said late on Monday he did not believe that China and Russia were helping Iran "at all," adding that Moscow and Beijing had "too much to lose" if they enabled Tehran.

Trump said on Truth Social that he had seen comments from his critics and opponents that China and Russia were helping Iran, reports Reuters.

"If they are, it's at a very low level, but I don't believe they are at all. They have too much to lose, and we would know about it, and know about it very fast," Trump wrote.

Trump said in July he trusted China and Russia not to help Tehran in the Iran war, but warned that if they did get involved "it would be very bad for them."

The United States and Iran have been at war since February 28 when the US and Israel attacked Iran and Tehran responded with its own strikes on Israel and Gulf states that host US bases. US-Israeli strikes on Iran and Israeli attacks on Lebanon have since killed thousands and displaced millions.



Trump has previously described Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin as "neutral" during the Iran war.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty have discussed regional developments, including the situation in Yemen, in a phone call yesterday, state-run IRNA reports.

The two top diplomats exchanged views on the latest regional developments and also discussed diplomatic initiatives aimed at de-escalating tensions across the region.

IN BRIEF



BBC FM RADIO

Afghanistan halts broadcasts nationwide

REUTER, *London*

Afghan authorities have suspended the BBC's FM radio broadcasts across Afghanistan, the British broadcaster said yesterday.

"Millions of people across Afghanistan rely on the BBC for accurate news and information and we are working with the authorities to address the situation," a BBC spokesperson said in a statement.

Khubib Ghufran, the spokesperson for the Afghan Taliban government's Information and Culture ministry, said that the BBC's activities had been suspended for the "time being due to repeated violations committed" by it.

At least 52 women were arrested or detained in the Afghan cities of Herat and Kabul for not wearing cloak-like garment between July and September of 2026, according to a statement released by UN.

PTI braces to fight federal takeover of KP

AGENCIES

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan is planning to legally challenge the federal government's Sunday takeover of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a province that the party governed.

Sheikh Waqas Akram, the PTI's central information secretary, told Al Jazeera that the party would challenge the imposition of emergency laws – suspending civil liberties – and governor's rule in the province in court. A petition had been drafted by a legal committee headed by PTI Secretary-General Salman Akram Raja, but Akram did not say whether it would be filed in the Supreme Court or the Federal Constitutional Court.

The brother of KP CM Sohail Afridi approached the Peshawar High Court (PHC) to trace his whereabouts

Meanwhile, the brother of KP CM Sohail Afridi yesterday approached the Peshawar High Court (PHC) to trace his whereabouts.

Thunberg joins France student protests

AFP, *Paris*

Thousands of protesters yesterday marched through central Paris as part of nationwide demonstrations supporting high school pupils who have been protesting for better classroom conditions, with Swedish activist Greta Thunberg taking part.

With just six months to go before



elections to replace President Emmanuel Macron, French authorities had been hoping that the protests were easing ahead of half-term holidays starting at the end of this week. But teenagers at high schools called lycees -- backed by university students, teachers, unions and the far-left opposition party France Unbowed (LFI) -- have said their demands have not been met.

French presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon was seen among the crowd of demonstrators in Paris.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Eastern Zone of Bangladesh Railway Project
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram.
Mobile No. 01711-506101
E-mail: pd.trep@railway.gov.bd

1st Corrigendum e-Tender Notice

Reference No. 54.01.1500.109.07.020.26-1194 Dated: 12.10.2026

The following e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP Portal System (http://eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of below works (Original Notice reference no. 54.01.1500.109.07.051.26-1161; dated: 10.09.2026):

Sl. No.	Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Procurement Nature and Name	Tender Method	Field Name	Old Value (Date & time)	New Value (Date & time)
1.	e-Tender/ trep/ 2026-2027/ WD-7	1321149	**Works:** Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Akhaura (AKA) - Satiajuri (SJX) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Akhaura (AEN/AKA) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone.	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	14-October-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	15-October-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.
2.	e-Tender/ trep/ 2026-2027/ WD-8_Lot-A	1321155	**Works:** Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Satiajuri (SJX) - Langla (LNG) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Sylhet (AEN/SYT) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone. (From Km 264/4 to Km 320/4=56.00 Km)	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	14-October-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	15-October-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.
3.	e-Tender/ trep/ 2026-2027/WD-8_ Lot-B	1321157	**Works:** Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Langla (LNG) - Sylhet (SYT) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Sylhet (AEN/SYT) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone. (From Km 320/4 to Km 377/4=57.00 Km)	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	14-October-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	15-October-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	15-October-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.

N.B.: All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

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12/10/2026
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Ref. No: Proka/Prokibi-2/2026/28 Dated: 13.10.2026

e-Tender Notice
Open Tendering Method (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following Goods—

Invitation Ref. No	Tender ID	Name of work	Tender publishing Date and Time	Tender Closing and opening Date & Time
HO/ICT/ 2026/41	1343044	AMC (Annual Maintenance Contract) of Active Directory Domain Service (ADDS), System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM), Dynamic host Configuration Protocol (DHCP), 03 set Server and Domain Name System (DNS) for 02 years for ICT Systems Division of Rupali Bank PLC.	14.10.2026 4:00 PM	25.10.2026 4.00 PM
HO/ICT/ 2026/47	1349139	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 21 sets PC (With Monitor), 21 sets UPS, 02 sets Scanner (Flatbed A4 Size), 02 sets Roller Scanner, 02 sets Laser Printer and 04 sets Laser Printer (Network) for Divisional Office, Bogura and Zonal Office, Natore of Rupali Bank PLC.	14.10.2026 4:00 PM	25.10.2026 4.00 PM
HO/ICT/ 2026/48	1350330	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 36 sets PC (With Monitor) , 36 sets UPS (650VA), 05 sets Scanner (Flatbed A4 Size), 02 sets Roller Scanner, 05 sets Laser Printer, 18 sets Laser Printer (Network) and 07 sets Monitor for different Branches and Zonal Office under Divisional Office, Faridpur of Rupali Bank PLC.	14.10.2026 4:00 PM	25.10.2026 4.00 PM

- This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branch.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-2497

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

Ease the debt burden on rural poor

Lower borrowing costs, debt relief, and strict oversight of microfinance institutions vital

The grim finding that the debt burden on the rural poor has nearly doubled over the past 15 years is deeply concerning. A study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), a government think tank, published on October 12, reveals that four out of every five poor rural households are now spending 40 percent of their incomes on repaying instalments to microfinance institutions (MFIs) and other informal lenders. The study found that the share of borrowers spending 40 percent of their earnings on loan repayments has risen to 41 percent, up from 22 percent in 2010.

The BIDS research once again highlights how disproportionately the poor are bearing the burden of an inequitable credit system. The problem extends beyond this alarming headline figure. The survey also found that nearly one in three poor households had taken out two or more loans. In many cases, borrowers have resorted to taking out new loans to repay instalments on existing ones, trapping them in a crippling and potentially endless cycle of debt.

Experts have long advocated expanding formal banking services in rural areas to meet the substantial demand for credit through greater competition and an increased supply of affordable loans. Despite the growth of agent banking, formal banking services in rural areas remain limited, particularly in agricultural financing. Microcredit institutions have stepped in to fill the gap created by the absence or inadequate presence of commercial banks in the rural credit market. However, the interest rates charged by MFIs remain high, placing an excessive and often unaffordable burden on poor households.

We fully endorse the view expressed at the presentation of the research findings that borrowing costs must be reduced and that the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA) should take the lead in pressing MFIs to bring them down. This requires urgent action and greater transparency in all charges associated with lending, including management costs, fees and the spread between deposit and lending rates. The government should also explore ways to ease the accumulated debt burden, including relief on accrued interest or partial loan write-offs. Such measures deserve consideration, especially given the relief and concessions extended to large defaulters in the trade and industrial sectors. Poor borrowers should not be denied comparable consideration when they are struggling under the weight of unsustainable debt.

The findings should prompt a broader review of MFIs' role and an honest reassessment of why their lending has failed to deliver the intended improvements in the lives of millions of poor people.

Unfortunately, the BIDS study did not examine the wider consequences of mounting debt on the lives of poor borrowers. Such an assessment could have provided policymakers and other stakeholders with a stronger basis for debating possible remedies. Research institutions should therefore investigate the economic and social effects of indebtedness on individuals, families and communities. The findings should also prompt a broader review of the role of MFIs and an honest reassessment of why their lending activities have fallen short of delivering the intended improvements in the lives of millions of poor people.

Take better care of children in prisons

They deserve family-based care and better facilities

We are deeply concerned that around 300 children are growing up behind bars with their incarcerated mothers in 74 jails across the country, according to a report by this newspaper. While keeping young children with their mothers is necessary, the conditions at prisons are unsuitable for their long-term physical and mental development.

According to an earlier report by Desh Rupantor, most of these mothers are accused or convicted in drug-related cases, while their children live alongside adult detainees and convicted prisoners. Although some central jails have daycare facilities and provide food, toys, and limited opportunities for learning and play, district prisons lack adequate facilities. Many prisons have no trained teachers, formal schooling, or counselling services, while arranging medical treatment for sick children can also be difficult. Moreover, delays in the disposal of cases leave children in prisons for years while their mothers await the final outcome of legal proceedings.

In response to a recent High Court directive, the Department of Social Services has recommended placing these children with close relatives under foster care or other family-based arrangements, provided this serves their best interests. Where relatives are unavailable or such arrangements are unsafe, it has proposed keeping them in government children's homes or other suitable facilities. However, any decision to separate a child from their mother must be carefully considered, taking into account the child's safety, emotional needs, and overall best interests. Authorities must also consider whether these children can legally live with their mothers outside prison. For instance, Section 497 of the Code of Criminal Procedure allows courts to consider bail for women, children, and sick people in relevant circumstances. The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960 also provides for probation in certain cases, allowing eligible offenders to serve their sentences under supervision in the community rather than in prison. However, legal experts say these alternatives remain underused.

The government must urgently develop and implement a clear policy for children living in prisons with their mothers. Courts should consider bail and probation in eligible cases, particularly where the offence is relatively minor and community supervision would better serve the child's welfare. The government must also strengthen family-based care and ensure that children in government homes receive proper education, healthcare, nutrition, and emotional support. For the children who remain in prison with their mothers, every facility must provide safe living conditions, age-appropriate learning and play, and access to medical and psychological care.

Can govt and fishers work together to restore hilsa abundance?



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■ **MIR MOHAMMAD ALI**

For years, the government has been enforcing an annual ban on hilsa fishing in October, which falls in the fish's peak breeding season, so that brood fish can spawn in peace. For two decades, this move worked: hilsa production saw a steady rise. However, over the last few years, hilsa production has been in decline. In 2007-08, Bangladesh produced about 295,000 tonnes of hilsa. Fifteen years of conservation nearly doubled that figure to a record 5.71 lakh tonnes in 2022-23. Then the trend reversed: production fell to about 5.29 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 and to around five lakh tonnes in 2024-25—a loss of roughly 71,000 tonnes in just two years. The sea tells an even harsher story: hilsa catch dropped from about 3.22 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 to about 2.51 lakh tonnes in 2024-25—a decline of nearly 22 percent. Much of this decline unfolded while a Tk 229 crore hilsa development project, launched in July 2021, was underway.

What went wrong? The answer lies in a partnership that once worked and is now fraying: the partnership between the government and the fishers who live by the rivers.

The annual ban of catching brood hilsa began in 2008 as an 11-day closure around the full moon in the month of Ashwin in Bangla calendar. When researchers found that hilsa also spawn around the new moon, the ban was extended to 22 days. The impact was dramatic: in 2008-09, only 17.62 percent of brood hilsa managed to spawn, but by 2017-18, spawning success rose to 47.74 percent. That season, around 7.28 lakh kg of hilsa eggs was released, adding an estimated 36,000 crore juveniles—"jatka"—to the population. Spawning success reached a record 52.5 percent in 2023. These gains did not come from the ban alone. They came because the government set the rules and offered support, while fishers stayed off the water.

Community co-management offers further proof. Between 2014 and 2019, the ECOFISH project, jointly run by the Department of Fisheries and WorldFish, brought co-management to 136 fishing villages around hilsa sanctuaries. It formed 575 hilsa conservation groups, set up co-management committees in the six sanctuaries of the Padma-Meghna system, and trained around 400 community fish guards. Those years saw four consecutive seasons of bumper hilsa production. Feeling ownership of the resource, fishers themselves became the hilsa's most reliable guardians.

Most fishers want to follow the rules. What they seek is dignity, fair support and trust. If the government treats fishers as partners, the country will find its most dedicated river guardians among them.

Sadly, the partnership is breaking down at three points. The first is support: during last year's ban, more than 6.2 lakh fishing households in 165 upazilas of 37 districts received 25 kg of rice each under the government's VGF programme. For a family facing three weeks without income, that is far from enough. Furthermore, officials acknowledged that not every fisher received even this support last year. They promised to cover everyone this time and to raise the allocation in the future. Whether that promise is kept on the ground is going to be the first test of this season's drive.

The second is fairness in enforcement. During the 2024 ban, in Barishal division alone, authorities conducted 3,212 drives, seized more than 1.3 crore metres of illegal nets and jailed 630 fishers. Such figures show official effort, but they also reveal who bears the punishment. Those caught are mostly poor, young and indebted fishers. The factories that produce current nets, the wholesalers who sell them, and the moneylenders whose advance loans, known as "dadon", push fishers into the rivers largely escape. Every year, crores of metres of nets are burnt, and every year new nets appear. As long as the source stays open, burning nets will hardly make any difference.

The third, and most neglected, point is jatka-catching. The fry born during the October spawning drift into coastal rivers and estuaries from November. Because of this reason, catching, transporting or selling hilsa smaller than 25 cm is banned from November 1 to June 30. Violations carry up to two years' rigorous imprisonment or a fine of up to Tk 5 lakh. But this eight-month jatka ban receives far less attention than the 22-day brood ban. Food support for the fishers doesn't cover the entire ban period. Jatka is still sold openly in many markets. Putting so much effort into protecting the mother hilsa and then allowing the jatka to be caught is like sowing a crop and cutting the seedlings before they can grow. The mother hilsa doesn't always get spared either. After this year's 22-day ban came into effect on October 8, several incidents of fishers being caught illegally catching brood hilsa have already been reported.

It all comes down to restoring the partnership between the government and the fishers, which demands action from both sides. First, the government must treat support during bans as compensation, not charity. Rice should be supplemented with cash, delivered before each ban begins and extended across the full jatka season. Second, fisher lists must be updated and made transparent, displayed at union parishads and verified in front of the community, so that genuine fishers are not left out and fake names do not slip in. Third, every landing ghat should have government-recognised fisher conservation groups to guard remote chars and channels at night, where patrol boats rarely reach, backed by a hotline that protects the identity of informants. Fourth, enforcement must move upstream to the factories, warehouses and traders of illegal nets, while the navy, coast guard and River Police should strengthen night patrols across the roughly 7,000 sq-km of core spawning grounds, which the Department of Fisheries has already sought. And lastly, the government must publish spawning success, jatka abundance and enforcement data every year, so that the public can see what works and where gaps remain.



Fishers sort the last hilsa haul before the 22-day ban took effect at the New Fishery Ghat market in Chattogram on October 7, 2026.
FILE PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Fishers, too, carry responsibility. A brood hilsa is a fisher's capital. The fish that spawns safely this October will return as many fish next season. A fisher who casts an illegal net during the ban is stealing from his own future income as well as his neighbours. If fisher associations, boatmen and elders take a stand against violators, that social pressure can achieve more than any drive.

In my experience, most fishers want to follow the rules. What they seek is dignity, fair support and trust. If the government treats fishers as partners, the country will find its most dedicated river guardians among them. Hence, the government must provide fairness and security, and fishers must offer restraint and cooperation. When the two stand together to protect the mother hilsa and the jatka, the country's hilsa abundance will return.

Protecting farmers from heat stress is also part of climate adaptation



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■ **SHAHRINA AKHTAR**

When a farmer has been working all day in the sun and goes home dizzy and nauseous, nobody counts it as a climate change impact. We usually talk about what rising temperatures do to crops, but rarely about what they do to the human body that grows and harvests them.

Bangladesh has a strong record in agricultural adaptation. Our research institutes have come up with rice varieties that tolerate salinity, submergence, and drought. Farmers have adopted floating gardens, alternate wetting and drying, and new cropping calendars. Embankments, cyclone shelters, and early warning systems have saved countless lives.

Yet, throughout this adaptation success story, the farm worker is almost invisible. Agriculture still employs close to half of the country's workforce and much of the work is done by hand, in open fields, and during the hottest months of the year. The Boro harvest, which produces more than half of our rice, falls in April and May. Those months have become steadily hotter. In 2024, a prolonged heatwave pushed temperatures in the southwest above 43 degrees Celsius and forced schools to close across the country. But work on the fields did not stop.

What makes the heat in Bangladesh especially dangerous is the accompanying humidity. A reading of 38 degrees Celsius in Bangladesh can feel far worse and be far more harmful than the same temperature in a drier climate. When the body cannot shed heat, the result ranges from exhaustion and cramps to heatstroke, which can be fatal.

According to a study by Adelphi Global, Bangladesh could lose 4.84 percent of its total working hours to heat stress by 2030, with agriculture and construction projected to be hit hardest. The cost of climate change falls first on those with the least protection. A salaried officer who feels unwell can stay home, but a daily labourer who stops working loses the day's wage. So, farmers keep working through dizziness and headaches while drinking less water than they need, often because clean water is not available. In Sri Lanka, researchers have linked chronic kidney disease among agricultural workers to hard labour in extreme heat. We do not know how widespread the problem is in Bangladesh because we have not yet looked into it.

Meanwhile, as men migrate to cities or abroad, women are doing more of the field work, with less access to shade, drinking water, and sanitation. Some drink less water on purpose to avoid needing a toilet, which makes them more vulnerable to heat illness. Pregnant women and older farmers, whose numbers are growing as rural youth exit agriculture, are at even greater risk.

There is a food security dimension, too. In haors, a delayed harvest can mean losing the entire crop to an early flash flood. Elsewhere, ripe paddy left standing is exposed to the elements and weather events. When heat slows workers down or keeps them out of the field, crops and incomes suffer together.

A cyclone leaves behind visible destruction, but a heatwave exhausts bodies, lowers wages, and causes kidneys to fail. These are usually reported too late. Our health system also rarely records heat-related illness, and almost never links it to occupation.

A cyclone leaves behind visible destruction, but a heatwave exhausts bodies, lowers wages, and causes kidneys to fail. These are usually reported too late. Additionally, national climate change adaptation planning focuses mainly on water, crops, coastal protection, and infrastructure. Our health system also rarely records heat-related illness, and almost never links it to occupation. But what we do not measure, we cannot manage.

Fortunately, many of the solutions are simple and affordable. First, the working day's length should be changed. The Bangladesh Meteorological Department already issues heatwave alerts, and the Department of Agricultural Extension sends agro-advisories to farmers. These systems should be linked so that heat alerts reach farmers and labour contractors in plain Bangla, with clear advice to shift work to early morning and late afternoon.

Secondly, low-cost shaded shelters and drinking-water points at field clusters could be built through union parishads and local government programmes. Public employment schemes could adjust their summer working hours as a matter of rule. Third, heat-index-based parametric insurance could compensate labourers for workdays lost to extreme heat, so that no one has to choose between wages or their health. Fourth, mechanisation should be handled carefully. Combine harvesters reduce time spent in the heat, and government subsidies are expanding their use. But machines also displace labourers. Mechanisation should come with skills training so that displaced workers can move into operating and repairing machines instead of losing their livelihoods.

Finally, numbers about heat-related illnesses and affected occupations should be included in health surveillance. Farm labourers' heat risk should be written into adaptation plans and climate finance proposals, including loss and damage claims. Sustainable development is not only about sustaining soil, water, and crop yields. It is also about sustaining the people whose labour turns those resources into food.

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What India's current protests mean, and what they do not



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■ JANNATUL NAYM PIEAL

For decades, successive Indian governments have answered external critics with a familiar claim: whatever their flaws, whether corruption, patronage, or communal tensions, India is the world's largest democracy where elections are free and fair, power changes hands legitimately, and so the government reflects the people's aspirations. The protests now brewing in Delhi and elsewhere strike at the heart of that claim by targeting the very man who oversees elections: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Protesters want him to resign over a controversial voter-roll revision that has removed 13 crore names across the country, which critics say has benefitted the ruling BJP unfairly. The Election Commission, meanwhile, says it is removing only "duplicate and ineligible" entries.

The pressure grew after it was revealed that Kumar's two fellow commissioners had formally raised concerns at least 14 times in 10 months. The commission describes this as "a normal part of deliberation" and, like BJP, denies wrongdoing. The Supreme Court has sought the commission's response but has not suspended Kumar. Whatever the merits of the competing claims, the dispute has moved from a policy disagreement to a crisis of confidence in the election referee, and when millions doubt the impartiality of that referee, it is hard to fix. This is what makes this second phase of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protests seem far more significant than the first.

The first phase, which saw education minister Dharmendra Pradhan forced to resign over exam paper leaks, looks mild beside what is unfolding now. At that time, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke distanced the movement from the uprisings in Nepal and Bangladesh, pledging to keep dissent within the bounds of India's constitution. The mood has since hardened, and the opposition has now moved from the sidelines to the front rows. Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition, was detained three times in two days last week, once while leading nearly 300 INDIA bloc MPs towards Jantar Mantar. He has also called for the election chief to be tried for treason. Mamata Banerjee, who lost power in West Bengal in May, has vowed that her movement will continue until Kumar goes, while her Trinamool Congress (TMC) party is joining forces with its old rival, the CPM, against him. Even Bollywood, long wary of crossing the government, is showing up. Prakash Raj has emerged as a prominent figure in the movement, Imran Khan was among those detained, and Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah, and Vishal Dadlani joined the CJP's October 2 rally at Mumbai's Shivaji Park. A movement that began as a youth-led campaign is becoming a broader platform of resistance cutting across political, cultural, and generational lines.

The government's response has, perhaps unsurprisingly, increasingly echoed the playbook Bangladesh witnessed in July-August 2024. On Saturday, Delhi was effectively locked down. Dozens of metro stations were shut, and mobile internet was suspended in the central business district. According to an estimate, around 3,000 people have been detained so far, while Dipke and two colleagues were taken off a plane upon arrival. Popular YouTuber Dhruv Rathee was also picked up from his home in Gurgaon. They were later released. At a special sitting on Sunday, the Supreme Court directed that metro and rail services as well as internet access resume normal operation and that peaceful protesters not be illegally detained, subject to law-and-order conditions.

The political rhetoric has also followed the same pattern as Bangladesh. On October 2, BJP legislator Parinay Fuke alleged that Naxalites and leftist groups were behind the protests and wanted to create "Bangladesh-like chaos" to overthrow the government. Some commentators even dismissed the "cockroach" movement as a "farce", built on what they see as the myth of Gen Z revolutions in Bangladesh and Nepal. During Bangladesh's uprising, the UN human rights office documented internet shutdowns timed to prevent protesters from organising, and estimated that as many as 1,400 people were killed between July 1 and August 15, 2024. Nothing on that lethal scale has occurred in Delhi, of course. But the use of pre-emptive shutdowns, mass detentions, communication restrictions, and accusations of foreign-inspired subversion is recognisably similar.

Still, India is not Bangladesh or Nepal, and the parallel should not be pushed too far. Bangladesh's movement hardened into a one-point demand for the Awami League government's exit only after the state responded to protests over the quota system with live fire. Nothing comparable has happened in India. India's huge size and scale also factor in this: there is no single pressure point, as its federal structure disperses power, and BJP governs in so many states that turmoil in one or even a few cities would not bring its administrative machinery to a halt. But there is a "but," and it lies in the ballot box. In the 2024 general election, Narendra Modi's BJP lost its parliamentary majority and has since governed with the help of coalition partners. If the opposition sustains its protests, and doubts about voter rolls and other institutions keep gnawing at public confidence, BJP may find it much harder to retain power in 2029. The controversy has already cast a shadow over some of the party's recent electoral conquests.

In West Bengal, for example, where BJP won 207 of 294 seats in May and ended the Trinamool Congress's 15-year rule, more than 90 lakh names, disproportionately from TMC strongholds and Muslim-majority constituencies, were removed under the same revision. An analysis by Scroll found that in 105 BJP-won seats, the number of deleted voters exceeded the winning margin, suggesting that restoration of their votership could have delivered a different result. This, however, could not be the only deciding factor, with survey company C-Voter's Yashwant Deshmukh also attributing the swing to disillusionment with Banerjee's rule. Still, this is the kind of doubt that a credible election commission exists to prevent. Protesters are fighting to ensure that the election process remains fair and inclusive, and the government's attempt to cast them as agents of chaos only reinforces their argument.

This again brings us to the most curious part of Delhi's response: the attempt to use alleged foreign interference as a weapon against protesters. In Bangladesh, National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam has issued a statement expressing solidarity with India's youth, saying their struggle "is not yours alone" and urging the authorities to release detained protesters and respect peaceful assembly. NCP spokesperson Asif Mahmud has separately condemned the detention of YouTuber Dhruv Rathee and Dipke. Certain sections of the Indian media, along with some senior BJP leaders, have seized on this as proof of a "foreign hand." It is hard not to find this a little laughable. During Bangladesh's uprising, many Indians—including students, writers, and commentators—stood in solidarity with the protesters. Rathee, now one of the most recognisable faces of the Indian protests, made several videos in support of Bangladesh at the time. Solidarity between young people across borders is not a conspiracy. It is what happens when people recognise a familiar struggle.

The questions that brought thousands onto the streets in India are locally grounded: how voter rolls have been revised, why two commissioners voiced objections, whether the process has been thoroughly transparent, and whether the man at the centre of the controversy should remain in office. These questions will be answered, or not, by Indian courts, institutions and, eventually, voters. Pointing at outside influences is just a cynical attempt to discredit the protesters and evade accountability for the questions they are raising.



PHOTO: **AFP**

Supporters of India's opposition Congress party scuffle with security personnel during a protest march demanding the resignation of the country's chief election commissioner over alleged voter roll irregularities linked to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), in New Delhi on October 12, 2026.

If the opposition sustains its protests and doubts about voter rolls and other institutions keep gnawing at public confidence, the BJP may find it much harder to retain power in 2029. The controversy has already cast a shadow over some of the party's recent electoral conquests.

Navi Pillay's Nobel win and the conveniently selective conscience of international law



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■ MIND THE GAP

■ NOSHIN NAWAL

A world that celebrates international justice while punishing the institutions entrusted with delivering it is profoundly dishonest. On October 9, South African jurist Navi Pillay was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for a lifetime devoted to human rights and international law. On that same day, the United States imposed sanctions on the International Criminal Court (ICC), where Pillay had once served as a judge. One institution was honouring the pursuit of accountability while one of the world's most powerful governments makes that pursuit considerably more difficult.

The contradiction is almost too convenient. But before US President Donald Trump occupies yet another international headline, it is worth considering the woman whose work has brought us to this moment. Navanethem Pillay was born in Durban in 1941, when South Africa was already governed by racial segregation, later formalised under Apartheid. As a woman of Indian descent, she entered a legal profession that was hardly designed to accommodate her. In 1967, she established her own practice in Natal, becoming the province's first woman to do so. She represented anti-Apartheid activists and fought for the rights of political prisoners, including challenging the conditions under which Nelson Mandela and others were held.

We find this chapter of her career particularly important because it complicates the comforting assumption that the law is inherently just. Apartheid was not simply a collection of prejudices enforced by violent men. It was a system sustained through legislation, courts, administrative decisions and the machinery of the state. Discrimination had paperwork. Oppression had statutory authority. A lawyer confronting Apartheid was therefore not merely fighting unlawful conduct. She was confronting laws that had made injustice perfectly legal. That distinction should trouble anyone who believes that legality alone confers legitimacy.

Pillay later became the first non-white woman appointed to South Africa's High Court in 1995. But her contribution to international jurisprudence became especially significant at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where she served as a judge and subsequently president. In 1998, the tribunal delivered its landmark judgment in Prosecutor v Jean-Paul Akayesu. For the first time, an international tribunal recognised that rape and sexual violence could constitute acts of genocide when committed with the requisite intent to destroy a protected group. Pillay was one of the judges who decided the case.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this development. For generations, the rape of women during armed conflict had been documented, condemned and then pushed to the periphery of legal accountability. The suffering was acknowledged, but its relationship to the destruction of entire communities was inadequately recognised. The Akayesu judgment helped change that. What makes this jurisprudence especially consequential is that it required international criminal law to recognise violence against women not as an incidental tragedy of war, but as conduct capable of forming part of genocide itself. It also exposed how supposedly universal legal systems had historically reflected deeply selective understandings of whose suffering mattered.

Pillay's subsequent appointments to the ICC and as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights extended her influence beyond the courtroom. More recently, she chaired the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. The Commission's findings concerning Gaza, including its conclusion that Israel has committed genocide, attracted fierce criticism and rejection from Israel. These conclusions must be distinguished from a final judicial determination by the International Court of Justice. A UN commission of inquiry is not a criminal court, and its findings do not establish individual criminal guilt. Yet the controversy surrounding its work raises a question that deserves a serious answer: should the willingness to investigate alleged international crimes depend upon the political identity of those accused?

The answer cannot change according to the flag. The United States has long maintained objections to aspects of the ICC's jurisdiction, particularly concerning nationals of countries that have not joined the Rome Statute. Those concerns are not automatically frivolous. International criminal jurisdiction raises difficult questions about consent, sovereignty and the limits of treaty-based institutions. Lawyers should engage with those arguments rather than dismiss them. But jurisdictional disagreement is one thing. Economic sanctions designed to constrain a judicial institution are quite another. If a government believes that a court has exceeded its authority, the appropriate response is to challenge its legal reasoning and jurisdiction. Punishing the institution, its personnel, or those who assist its work risks substituting economic coercion for legal argument.

The distinction matters because the ICC is already structurally vulnerable. It has no independent police force and depends on states to execute arrest warrants and cooperate with investigations. Its jurisdiction is limited, and its enforcement record reflects persistent inequalities in international power. Those weaknesses warrant reform and scrutiny. They do not make political interference by any country defensible.

On October 9, Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement opposing American sanctions and reaffirming their support for the ICC. Their intervention was welcome, but statements are the easier part of defending the rule of law. The more demanding question is whether these governments will consistently support international accountability when investigations concern their own allies, military partnerships, or diplomatic interests.

This is where international law faces its most damaging credibility problem. States frequently insist upon universal principles while treating their application as negotiable. Sovereignty becomes sacred when scrutiny approaches home, but remarkably flexible when another country is under investigation. Accountability is celebrated as a civilisational achievement until it acquires inconvenient political consequences. Pillay's Nobel Peace Prize should therefore provoke more than admiration for an exceptional legal career. Her work, from Apartheid South Africa to Rwanda and the contemporary scrutiny of alleged atrocities, illustrates why international justice cannot be reduced to the preferences of governments. Courts and investigative bodies must be judged by their legal authority, evidence and procedures, not by whether their conclusions are diplomatically palatable.

We do not believe international law is beyond criticism. Its selective enforcement, dependence on state cooperation and limited ability to restrain powerful actors are serious defects. But the response to unequal justice cannot be to weaken the institutions that might eventually make justice more equal. The real question raised by Pillay's Nobel is not whether the world admires her commitment to accountability. It is whether that commitment survives when accountability becomes politically expensive. Because a legal order that prosecutes the powerless while negotiating exemptions for the powerful is not yet a universal system of justice. It is a hierarchy with a law degree.



An illustration of Peace Prize laureate Navanethem 'Navi' Pillay after the announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2026 at the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway on October 9. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Whenever Puja approaches, I miss my mother

APU BISWAS

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

For Apu Biswas, Durga Puja brings cherished childhood memories and thoughts of her late mother. As she looks forward to the festival, the Dhallywood actress is also keeping busy with three upcoming films, ***Shikar***, ***Durbar*** and ***Secret***.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Apu spoke about her hopes for this year's Puja, the memories that make the festival special to her, and her plans for the big screen.

"Puja is all about joy. I hope everyone can celebrate this year's Puja happily, with the festive spirit intact and without any problems," she said.

For the actress, the festival holds a special place in her heart, bringing back memories of celebrations from her childhood.

"Since childhood, I have seen everyone celebrate the days of Puja beautifully. We did the same. I have always wished for the Puja days to be filled with joy and happiness. My best wishes to everyone on the occasion of Durga Puja," she added.

However, the festive season also brings a sense of longing. Having lost her mother a few years ago, Apu finds herself missing her more as Puja approaches, particularly remembering the special moments they shared.

"My mother passed away a few years ago. Whenever Puja approaches, I miss her dearly. I will never again get to taste the payesh she made. I often think about it. She would prepare a special payesh for the occasion. Those days were truly beautiful," she recalled.

While the memories remain close to her heart, Apu is also looking ahead to her professional commitments, with three films in various stages of production.

She recently travelled to Nepal to shoot ***Shikar***, but sudden flooding disrupted the production, forcing her to return to Bangladesh before completing the shoot.

"I couldn't complete the work entirely," she said.

Filming for her other two projects, ***Durbar*** and ***Secret***, has also progressed considerably, although neither has been completed. The actress hopes to gradually wrap up the remaining work.

Having starred in numerous commercially successful films that drew audiences to cinemas, Apu remains deeply invested in the future of Dhallywood. She hopes to see the industry regain its former glory and has plans of her own for the coming years.

"Cinema is what has made me who I am today. I want to see Dhallywood enjoy its glorious days again. I have many plans for cinema as well, and I hope something good comes out of them in the future," she said.

Beyond filmmaking, Apu continues to juggle several professional commitments, including inaugurating establishments and participating in product photoshoots. She also makes time to manage her beauty parlour and spend time with her son.

"I will travel to Bogura on October 17 to inaugurate an establishment. I enjoy these engagements as well," she said.

Family, meanwhile, was at the centre of another special occasion for the actress. Apu celebrated her birthday on October 11, and the most memorable surprise came from her son, who saved money to buy her a cake.

"He saved Tk 1,000 to buy a cake for me and surprised me on my birthday. I was deeply moved. My heart was filled with happiness because of my son's love," she said.

The celebrations also included the women who work at her beauty parlour, who organised a gathering and cut a cake with her. Apu considers them part of her extended family. Her fans also celebrated her birthday by cutting cakes, gestures that made the occasion even more meaningful.

"They are also my family. Besides, my fans cut cakes to celebrate my birthday, which makes me even happier," she added.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

JAMES, HASAN among major acts at upcoming Dhaka rock concert





Nagar Baul's James and Ark's Hasan are set to share the stage after a long time at ***Rock N Rhythm 5.0: No Limits in the Zone*** on October 23 at Carnival Arena, Jamuna Future Park, Dhaka.

Organised by Adventor Communications, the concert will also feature Warfaze, Aurthohin and Shunno. Guitarist Oni Hasan will perform with Warfaze and deliver a solo set, while AK Rahul is also scheduled to perform.

The organisers confirmed that all necessary administrative permissions have been secured. Early-bird tickets went on sale on Monday through Tickify.live, priced at Tk 999.

Launched in 2022, the ***Rock N Rhythm*** series has held four editions, with the fifth planned on a larger scale.

EVENTS

'12 Angry Men'



After a short break, ***12 Angry Men*** returns to the stage. The play follows 12 jurors who must decide the fate of a young man accused of murder. While most favour a guilty verdict, one juror questions the evidence and urges the others to reconsider. Their discussion soon turns into a tense debate about justice, prejudice and reasonable doubt. The production has completed 80 shows over nearly a decade, drawing audiences and sparking discussions.

Date: Thursday | October 15

Time: 4:30 pm and 7:15 pm

Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

NEWS

Cops escort Cuet VC, JCD leaders out after 30hrs

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that he would not return to the campus.

Current and former leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, who had been trapped inside the building alongside the VC since Monday noon, were also escorted out.

The demonstrating students also cut power and water supplies to the building.

Addressing the gathering through a megaphone, DC Zahidul explained that the administration stepped in after the VC informed them that he was feeling unwell.

"He has been confined for a long time. Excessive sweating and hypertension due to the heat have made him feel uncomfortable," he said.

Prof Shariful's health had been a much-talked-about issue throughout the day. Around 11:00am, he complained of chest pain and headache. At 1:30pm, a medical team led by the university's Medical Centre doctor Shahabuddin examined the VC, and found his blood pressure normal despite sweating and discomfort due to severed electricity and water supplies.

However, Raozan Upazila Health Complex Resident Medical Officer Tiplu Kanti Dey later found his blood pressure fluctuating, sweating, and chest pain. The doctor then recommended immediate hospitalisation. After students sought clarification, both doctors re-examined the VC, confirmed blood pressure fluctuation, and agreed that hospitalisation would be beneficial.

At 5:49pm, the students opened the administrative building gate, allowing the Chattogram DC, the SP, and Additional District Magistrate Mahbubul Haque to enter. Additional police personnel were deployed on the campus.

Around 25 minutes later, the VC, along with current and former leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, was brought out of the building.

Protest coordinator Arnab Shahriar reiterated that the new VC must resign because he had "brought outsiders to the campus". Another student, Asadul Galib, criticised the district administration for failing to act against those allegedly involved in Monday's attack on student buses.

DC Zahidul assured them that he would convey their demands to higher authorities.

SP Masud said a thorough investigation would be conducted over the alleged attack on student buses and the presence of outsiders inside the administrative building.

He added that action would be taken against anyone found guilty.

Migrants face growing risks at home, abroad

FROM PAGE 12

and Central Asia instead of relying heavily on South Asia, posing a long-term challenge.

Citing a 2016 World Bank-International Labour Organisation survey, Ratha said some workers paid agents recruitment fees equivalent to two or three years of expected wages abroad.

Some borrowed at 40 to 50 percent annual interest, exposing them to exploitation and reducing remittances to their families.

He called the resulting debt burden "modern day slavery" and urged lower fees. Referring to press reports, he said Bangladeshis paid $4,000 to $5,000 for jobs abroad.

Migration would keep growing due to income gaps, ageing populations, climate change and conflict, he said, urging greater use of remittances for development.

At the event, Neil Adger, professor of human geography at the University of Exeter, said research found that many people leaving coastal Bangladesh did not consider themselves climate migrants.

They cited jobs, income, and their children's education as reasons for migration, although changing rainfall patterns, storms, and other environmental pressures were undermining their livelihoods and influencing their migration decisions, he said.

In Chattogram, migrants sometimes earned more but faced illness, eviction threats, flooding, and poor access to public services, his research found. Such insecurity worsened during prolonged stays in informal settlements.

Prof Neil said migration helped people adapt to climate change only when it reduced insecurity, improved wellbeing, and strengthened resilience to future shocks.

Planned relocation could improve housing security but fail to secure livelihoods or address gender inequality.

"We need a plan for internal migration," he said, also calling for safer international migration and city planning involving migrant communities.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Nurul Haque Nur admitted that the government had not done enough to protect migrants or regulate recruiters.

His ministry received complaints from people who paid agents but could not travel, or reached abroad to find no promised jobs, he said.

Of over 3,000 recruiting agencies, only 300-500 might meet strict performance standards, he said. Some agencies blocked from online recruitment over alleged irregularities have resumed operations.

Nur said training was being revised for overseas demand, and acknowledged inadequate support for women migrant workers facing abuse abroad.

The "Probashi Card" was being tested in four or five countries, including Jordan and South Korea. The government sought to raise the cash remittance incentive from 2.5 percent to 3 percent for cardholders and offer priority services.

At the programme, Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said expatriates faced years of disputes over money sent home and property bought with overseas earnings. Some cases continued after their deaths, leaving heirs to pursue them.

The government is drafting a proposal for special courts, particularly at district headquarters, to hear expatriates' cases, he said. The proposal would undergo consultations before possible placement in parliament.

Expatriates could seek help through a 24-hour legal aid hotline and district mediation, the minister said. He also criticised recruiters for submitting forged certificates from non-existent institutions.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said women workers' remittances were often overlooked. Migrants sometimes faced court battles to recover money sent home, she said. ActionAid's research collaborations also examined how disasters forced people to migrate to cities, informing policy responses.

Diepak Elmer, chargé d'affaires at the Swiss embassy, said, "Migrants are not simply senders of money, they are people with ambitions, families, and rights."

Citing a limited survey, Elmer said the share of prospective migrants checking their visas before departure rose from 3 percent to 58 percent. More than 300 recruiting agency representatives received ethical recruitment training this year, while migrants recovered over Tk 10 lakh with programme support.

Elmer said migration was increasingly a form of climate adaptation, demanding development policies rather than humanitarian measures alone. Strong national institutions were needed to sustain reforms beyond short-term projects.

Overhaul the child marriage

FROM PAGE 12

The law should include provisions to protect girls who escape or experience child marriage, ensuring access to shelters, rehabilitation, livelihood opportunities and financial support.

"A girl may escape a child marriage but find that her family will not accept her or that she faces stigma in her community. Where will she go? The current law does not adequately address these social protection needs," she said.

WHAT THE REVIEW SAYS?

Child marriage is a major barrier to development, perpetuating poverty by cutting short girls' education, exposing them to early and repeated pregnancies, and severely limiting their employment opportunities, the review says.

The link is reflected in the rising adolescent birth rate, which increased from 83 to 92 per 1,000 adolescent girls between 2019 and 2025, according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2025.

The review attributes persistently high child marriage rates to poverty, poor quality and unequal access to education, entrenched harmful social and gender norms, and safety concerns.

Deep-rooted social norms, fears of elopement and widespread economic insecurity, particularly in climate-affected or remote areas and urban slums, often lead families to view early marriage as a way to ease financial hardship and a better option for girls, it says.

A major shortcoming of the act is that it sets minimum marriage ages but does not declare underage marriages void.

Personal laws continue to recognise such marriages, meaning they can be both punishable offences and legally valid unions.

Section 19 is another major flaw. It allows marriage below 18 in "special circumstances" with court approval but does not clearly define those circumstances, "leaving the term dangerously open to misinterpretation and misuse".

The law contains other contradictions. The minimum marriage age is 18 for girls and 21 for boys, meaning a woman aged 18 or older who marries a man under 21 could face prosecution.

Section 7(2) also allows minors to be detained and fined for child marriage, contradicting the law's protective purpose and the Children Act 2013, which prohibits penal sanctions against children.

The review identifies other weaknesses, including the absence of a legal requirement for all marriages to be registered and the lack of criminalisation of marital rape.

Enforcement also remains weak, it said.

Child marriage prevention committees often fail to function properly, and officials sometimes arrive after wedding ceremonies have taken place.

Some families move ceremonies to neighbouring districts to avoid scrutiny while forged birth certificates and marriages through affidavits also persist.

To address the problems, UNFPA and Unicef recommend setting 18 as the minimum marriage age for both sexes and removing Section 19 entirely.

They also want the act to take precedence over conflicting personal laws and customs.

The agencies propose allowing children to annul their marriages at their own request until the age of 22, with compensation paid by the adult party.

The other recommendations include protecting the rights of children born from such marriages and removing criminal penalties for children involved in child marriages.

The review also proposes renaming the law "Shishu Bibaho Nirodh Ain" in Bengali.

To strengthen enforcement, the agencies call for functional prevention committees at every administrative level, trained Child Marriage Prohibition Officers down to the union level, and clear procedures for police and local officials.

They also recommend a state-funded support system providing survivors with rescue services, healthcare, shelter, counselling and legal aid, alongside a dedicated compensation fund.

Contacted, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division Secretary Hafiz Uddin Chowdhury said the women and children affairs ministry is supposed to take the initiative in this regard.

"If they take steps and submit it to the cabinet division, then we will have a role to play," he told this correspondent.

Rowsan Ara Begum, women and children affairs secretary, could not be reached for comment.

Yunus harassed

FROM PAGE 12

responsible and take appropriate action.

In a statement, the foreign ministry strongly denounced the incident, saying those responsible were suspected of having links to the Awami League, political activities of which are banned in Bangladesh.

It said Bangladesh's mission in New York had been asked to take up the matter with local law enforcement agencies to identify those involved and seek legal action.

The ministry also urged Bangladeshi expatriates to refrain from such conduct, saying the incident had tarnished the country's image.

PM's Information and Broadcasting Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman also criticised the incident.

"The government views these incidents as Awami League terror," he said, referring to earlier incidents involving people associated with the July uprising.

"If anyone from the Awami League abroad attempts to take such steps, it will not go unchallenged," he said while briefing the press at the Secretariat.

Zahed said Yunus's actions as interim government chief adviser could be legitimately criticised, but harassment was unacceptable. He added that Yunus might have been targeted for taking charge of the country after Sheikh Hasina fled.

The government would also verify whether there had been any lapse in arrangements related to Yunus's VVIP status as a former chief adviser, he said.

Zahed said legal proceedings would be initiated against those responsible, referring to steps taken after actress Azmeri Haque Badhan was harassed in Italy last month.

National Citizen Party Convener and Opposition Chief Whip Nahid Islam condemned the incident, blaming AL supporters.

In a Facebook post, he called for action against what he described as a network of violent activists at home and abroad. He also demanded speedy trials in cases involving killings during the July uprising, enforced disappearances, and other killings under the AL government.

Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher said it had humiliated Bangladesh internationally.

He urged everyone to refrain from such conduct towards respected figures of Bangladesh and called on officials at Bangladeshi missions abroad to take responsible and courageous steps.

Several former interim government advisers, in a statement, expressed their unreserved outrage and strongest possible condemnation of the persistent harassment, online smear campaigns, and targeted attacks on former chief adviser Yunus.

They are Salehuddin Ahmed; M Fouzul Kabir Khan; CR Abrar; Asif Nazrul; Adilur Rahman Khan; Lt Gen Jahangir Alam Choudhury (retd); Brig Gen Sakhawat Hussain (retd); Faruk E Azam BP; Farida Akhter; Sharmeen Soneya Murshid, Mostafa Sarwar Farooki; and Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

Delhi police detain

FROM PAGE 2

will continue, and it will triumph," he wrote on X.

Meanwhile, a joint petition filed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and several opposition leaders against alleged electoral irregularities and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has 14 "defects", the Supreme Court said, including a shortfall of Rs 220 in court fees.

Other errors cited by the top court are missing authorisations from nine petitioners and an illegible photocopy of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's identity card, reports NDTV online.

The youth movement, which has mobilised protests in recent months against issues ranging from government school infrastructure to jobs, is among the biggest political challenges to Modi and his BJP in his 12 years in power.

A weeks-long sit-in by its supporters at Jantar Mantar earlier this year forced the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over exam paper leaks.

The latest protests erupted after the Indian Express newspaper reported last month that Kumar's two deputies raised several concerns internally about voter list revisions, registration procedures and digital systems.

NCP set to reshape central leadership

FROM PAGE 3

The restructuring aims to strengthen its grassroots activities ahead of local government polls and its first national council next February, they added.

The revised central committee and political council lists were initially expected yesterday but are now likely to be announced today or tomorrow, after Nahid returns from visits to Shariatpur and Madaripur.

Two senior leaders, speaking anonymously, said Samantha and Niva were left out because they resigned from the party council before the national election in protest against the NCP joining the Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance.

Both remain party members and members of its advisory committee but have largely been inactive in organisational activities.

Under the proposed structure, at least 10 of the 16 Political Council members will serve as joint conveners, overseeing specialised subcommittees and policy work. They include Abdullah Al Amin, Ariful Islam Adeeb, Atiq Mujahid, Abdul Hannan Masud, Ali Ahsan Junaid, Sarwar Tushar, Akram Hossain, Saleh Uddin Sifat, Mahmuda Alam Mitu and Nusrat Tabassum.

The party also plans to distribute around 30 specialised cell portfolios covering areas including international relations, administration, finance, human rights and law.

Another 10-11 joint conveners and seven to eight joint member secretaries are expected to be appointed to expand the central committee beyond the Political Council.

A 23-member Organisational Subcommittee, led by Sarjis Alam, has been formed to strengthen grassroots activities.

The party is also considering changes to the top leadership of its women's wing, Jatiya Nari Shakti. Five leaders -- Mahmuda Alam Mitu, Monira Sharmeen, Nusrat Tabassum, Humaira Noor and Manjila Jhuma -- are being considered for the posts of convener, member secretary and organising secretary.

A senior party leader said Monira Sharmeen, Manjila Jhuma and Humaira Noor had been recommended for positions among the party's top five leaders. The proposal remains under consideration.

Sarwar Tusher, an NCP Political Council member, told The Daily Star that the changes were being made ahead of local government elections expected within a year and the party's first national council next year.

"The final list will be officially released very soon," he said.

Intensify dengue prevention efforts

FROM PAGE 3

corporations would establish fever clinics at different locations across the capital to facilitate prompt dengue testing.

He advised people with fever to seek medical attention at hospitals or the clinics rather than rely on pharmacies or unqualified practitioners.

Around 2,000 doctors, including physicians at medical college and district hospitals, received refresher training on dengue management last month, he said.

Muhit also said the government had begun recruiting 5,000 doctors, planned to recruit 2,500 nurses soon and initiated discussions on recruiting medical technologists to address staff shortages in public hospitals.

Tabligh Jamat demands

FROM PAGE 3

2018, while Belal Hossain and Mizanur Rahman were killed on December 18, 2024. The organisation also called for investigations into the deaths of Abdur Rahim Rajon in Kishoreganj in 2019 and Shamsul Haque in Dhaka's New Market area in 2023.

The organisation said a written decision was made at a joint meeting at the Gazipur Metropolitan Police commissioner's office on December 14, 2024, regarding the vacation of the Ijtema grounds.

It called for the decision to be implemented and urged the authorities to verify the authenticity and context of an audio recording allegedly attributed to Dr Asgar, circulated on the night of December 17, followed by appropriate legal action.

The organisation's demands also include fair access to the Ijtema grounds for the parties concerned and resolution of disputes over "Markaz mosques" in different districts and police station areas through legal procedures.

It called for administrative and security measures to prevent anyone, acting in the name of "Tawhidi Janata" or any other group, from unlawfully obstructing its activities.

The organisation urged the government to ensure the fair rights of all parties, consider its demands and take necessary steps.

The press release was sent by Md Sayem, media coordinator of Tabligh Jamat Bangladesh (followers of Maulana Saad).

'Religion being exploited to fuel unrest'

FROM PAGE 3

purdah in that manner and could leave her face, hands and feet uncovered.

She and two other students subsequently left the classroom. She later submitted a written complaint to the university administration under the banner of a student organisation, demanding action against the teacher.

In a Facebook post, Tasneem denied asking the student to change her clothing, remove her niqab or leave the classroom.

She said she had expressed discomfort because she could not see the student's eyes, making identification and communication difficult.

Tasneem said her nearly 34 years of teaching reflected her respect for students' religious beliefs and values, and that she had no intention of insulting anyone's faith or attire.

According to the statement, Tasneem had asked the student to meet her after class so she could apologise if her remarks had caused hurt.

The signatories alleged that the incident was being used for political purposes, saying freedom of dress is part of personal liberty and misunderstandings should be resolved through discussion rather than politicisation.

The statement also condemned an alleged attempt on October 9 by several young men and a young woman, under the banner of the Rashtra Sanglap Forum, to deface Tagore's portrait on a wall of the Shilpakala Academy in protest against what they called "Indian aggression".

Police at the scene intervened to stop them, it said.

Earlier, on October 5, Dhaka South City Corporation cleared encroachments from a footpath in Segunbagicha. Portraits of prominent cultural figures, including Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, Satyajit Ray, Rabindranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Kazi Nazrul Islam, were subsequently painted on nearby walls.

The statement said a Facebook page named July Revolutionary Alliance questioned the inclusion of the figures in the murals on October 9, particularly Satyajit Ray and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, describing them as cultural figures from West Bengal.

The signatories said the two incidents, though seemingly unrelated, reflected attempts to exploit religious sentiments to encourage extremism and create social and communal tensions.

They recalled that Pakistani rulers had portrayed Tagore as anti-Muslim in the 1960s for political purposes, drawing parallels with the recent attempt to deface his portrait.

"Language, literature, art and culture are indivisible common heritage of humanity," the statement said, adding that cultural traditions should not be divided along religious, geographical or ideological lines.

The signatories expressed confidence that rights-conscious citizens, culturally aware people and younger students would not be misled.

They include former Jahangirnagar University professor Anu Muhammad, rights activist Sultana Kamal, Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, photographer Shahidul Alam, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam, Naripokkho member Shireen Parveen Huq, writer and journalist Abu Saeed Khan, and Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna.

Other signatories include Dhaka University professors Samina Luthfa, Geeti Ara Nasreen, Tanjimuddin Khan, Zobaida Nasreen and Robaet Ferdous; London School of Economics and Political Science visiting professor Swapan Adnan; North South University professor Nova Ahmed; and BRAC University professor Firdous Azim.

The statement was issued by Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reform and Development.

ঐশী জ্যোতিই আমাদের পথ প্রদর্শক

রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

রাজশাহী-৬২০৪, বাংলাদেশ।

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স্মারক নং-১৯৮১

তারিখঃ ২৭ আশ্বিন, ১৪৩৩। / ১২ অক্টোবর, ২০২৬।

-ঃ পিএইচ.ডি/এম.এসসি ইঞ্জিঃ/ এম.ইঞ্জিঃ/ পিজিডি ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঃ-

রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ২০২৬-এর Fall Semester-এ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি (IICT) ও ইনস্টিটিউট অব এনার্জি এন্ড ইনভায়রনমেন্ট স্টাডিজ (IEES)-তে পিএইচ.ডি/এম.এসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/এম.ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/পিজিডি (Post Graduate Diploma) প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তির জন্য নিম্নলিখিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত ফরমে Online Portal- এর মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১. IICT ও IEES-এ এম.এসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ এম.ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং-এ ভর্তির জন্য প্রার্থীদেরকে মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চমাধ্যমিক পর্যায়ে জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে কমপক্ষে ৩.৫০ পেয়ে পাশ করতে হবে (ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিপ্লোমাতে জিপিএ ৪.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.৭৫ পেয়ে পাশ করতে হবে) ও কোন স্বীকৃত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিসিপ্লিনে চার বছর মেয়াদী বিএসসি (ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/সায়েন্স) বা সমতুল্য ডিগ্রীতে সিজিপিএ ৪.০০-এর মধ্যে ২.৭৫ পেতে হবে এবং পিএইচ.ডি কোর্সে ভর্তির জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিসিপ্লিনে সিজিপিএ ৪.০০-এর মধ্যে ৩.০০ পেয়ে এমএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বা সমতুল্য ডিগ্রী থাকতে হবে।

অথবা

সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিসিপ্লিনে PGD ডিগ্রীধারী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে B.Sc. Engg./B.Sc. Ag./B.Sc.Econ. or B.Sc./ B.S.S. degree/M.A. or M.Sc. or M.S.S degree/BURP/ B.Arch. degree বা সমতুল্য ডিগ্রীতে সিজিপিএ ৪.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.৭৫ পেতে হবে।

০২. IICT ও IEES-এ PGD (Post Graduate Diploma) কোর্সে ভর্তির জন্য প্রার্থীদেরকে মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চমাধ্যমিক বা সমতুল্য পর্যায়ে যে কোন একটিতে জিপিএ ৫.০০-এর মধ্যে কমপক্ষে ৩.৫০ পেয়ে পাশ করতে হবে, তবে কোন পরীক্ষাতে জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ৩.০০ এর নীচে/৩য় বিভাগ গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় এবং কোন স্বীকৃত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান/ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিসিপ্লিনে B.Sc. Eng./B.Sc.Ag/B.Sc. Econ. অথবা B.Sc./BSS Degree/M.A অথবা M.Sc. অথবা MSS Degree/ BURP/B. Arch. ডিগ্রী বা সমতুল্য ডিগ্রীতে ৪.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.৫০ পেতে হবে।

০৩. দরখাস্তের সাথে SSL সার্ভিসের মাধ্যমে ১,০০০/= (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করতে হবে।

০৪. বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট (www.pg.ruet.ac.bd) হতে Online-এর মাধ্যমে ভর্তি ফরম পূরণপূর্বক ১৫.১০.২০২৬ খ্রি. হতে ০২.১১.২০২৬ খ্রি. মধ্যে আবেদন করতে হবে। সকল পরীক্ষার সনদপত্র ও ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট/মার্কসীট-এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি এবং সিলেবাস/কারিকুলাম-এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি ওয়েবসাইট লিংকে জমা দিতে হবে। তবে পাবলিক প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে পাশকৃত শিক্ষার্থীদের সিলেবাস/কারিকুলাম-এর ফটোকপি জমা দিতে হবে না।

০৫. যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের তালিকা প্রকাশ: ০৮.১১.২০২৬ খ্রি. ।

০৬. ভর্তি পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ: ১৪.১১.২০২৬ খ্রি. ।

০৭. ফলাফল প্রকাশ: ১৪.১১.২০২৬-১৬.১১.২০২৬খ্রি. ।

০৮. সকল নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীকে (স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষায় উপযুক্ত বলে গণ্য হলে) PGD- এর নির্ধারিত ভর্তি ফি= ১২,০০০/- (বার হাজার) টাকা এবং পিএইচ.ডি/এম.এসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/এম.ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং-এর নির্ধারিত ফি =২০,৫০০/-(বিশ হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা প্রদানপূর্বক ২৩.১১.২০২৬ খ্রি. মধ্যে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হতে হবে এবং শিক্ষা শাখায় কাগজ-পত্রাদি জমা দিতে হবে।

০৯. ক্লাস শুরু: ২৮.১১.২০২৬ খ্রি. ।

১০. চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

১১. প্রার্থী ইতোপূর্বে কোন শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে ভর্তি হয়ে থাকলে ভর্তির সময় ভর্তি বাতিলের সনদ পত্র জমা দিতে হবে।

১২. চাকুরীরত প্রার্থী নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সম্মতিক্রমে খন্ডকালীন ছাত্র হিসাবেও ভর্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবে।

১৩. চাকুরীরত পিএইচ.ডি প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হতে ০১ (এক) বছরের ছুটি নিতে হবে।

১৪. বেসরকারী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে পাশকৃত ভর্তিচ্ছু প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নের বিষয়গুলো প্রযোজ্য হবে।

(ক) বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়টি ইউজিসি কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত হতে হবে।

(খ) রুয়েটের সাথে উক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সিলেবাস এবং ক্রেডিট সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ হতে হবে।

২২.১০.২০২৬

(আরিফ আহম্মদ চৌধুরী)
রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
রাজশাহী প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

GD-2493

A night of flames

FROM PAGE 3

losses as their premises remained shut for safety reasons.

The fire broke out shortly after 5:00pm on Monday and was brought under control at 5:20am yesterday. However, the extent of the damage remained unclear as thick smoke, intense heat and the removal of burnt goods prevented traders from entering the building.

Mohammad Robin, who owns a warehouse on the sixth floor, said he had been waiting outside since learning of the fire.

"Our warehouse is on the right side of the sixth floor, where the fire broke out. We still cannot enter.

The fire broke out shortly after 5:00pm on Monday and was brought under control at 5:20am yesterday.

There were bags worth around Tk 40 lakh inside. If everything has been burnt, I will be ruined," he said.

Robin said the fifth, sixth and seventh floors of the seven-storey building housed more than 50 warehouses stocking bags and cosmetics, with goods worth an estimated Tk 20 lakh to Tk 40 lakh in each. The lower floors housed shops selling similar products.

Mohammad Imtiaz, who owns a bag shop on the ground floor, said, "The fire broke out at 5:00pm on Monday, and smoke was still coming out of the building at 10:00am on Tuesday. Our question is why it took so long to control the fire."

Fire service officials, however, said narrow roads, traffic congestion, intense heat, thick smoke and locked warehouse shutters had hampered firefighting efforts.

Kazi Nazmuzzaman, assistant director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the sixth floor suffered the most damage, with seven to eight of its 12 to 14 large warehouses catching fire.

The warehouses contained umbrellas, cosmetics, perfume bottles and other goods. Damage to the seventh floor was comparatively limited, he said.

Nazmuzzaman said firefighters had to cut through multiple locks on warehouse shutters and internal gates. They also had to find alternative water sources after nearby reserves ran low.

The cause of the fire remained unclear. Officials said an electrical short circuit was among the possibilities, but an inquiry would be needed to determine the cause.

Security barriers were erected around the building, with police guarding the entrance cordoned off with crime-scene tape. Workers were seen removing goods from shops on other floors amid fears of the fire spreading.

Shah Alam, an employee at a bag shop, said business had been running normally the previous day before the blaze changed everything.

Building caretaker Md Mojibullah said firefighters had continued pouring water into the building since Monday afternoon, but smoke was still billowing from inside.

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director (ACE, RHD)
Bangladesh Road Safety Project
Roads and Highways Department
Level-2, Block-A, Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
E-mail: pd.brsp@gmail.com

Memo No: 35.01.2690.078.07.057.25-2885 Date: 13 October 2026

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) for Consulting Service (Individual Consultant Selection)

BANGLADESH
Bangladesh Road Safety Project
Credit No. 7059-BD
Project ID No. P173019

Assignment Title: **Consulting Service for Individual Procurement Specialist (National) Under Bangladesh Road Safety Project**

Reference No.: **Package SP(RHD)-05(A)**

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank towards the implementation of Bangladesh Road Safety Project (BRSP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for Consulting Service for Individual Procurement Specialist (National) to assist the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in implementing the project. As a multi-sectoral approach, the project is being jointly implemented by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Bangladesh Police (BP) and Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). RHD is playing the role of the lead implementing agency.

2. The broad scope of the consulting service include to carry out following tasks under the project:
   i. Prepare drafts of Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI), Invitation for Bids (IFB), Invitation for Prequalification (IFP), Bidding Documents (RFB, RFP), Pre-Bid Meeting Minutes etc. as per World Bank Procurement Regulations;
   ii. Guide the PIU and Conduct Procurement in accordance with World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (November 2020). The Bank's Systematic Tracking and Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system will be used to prepare, clear and update Procurement Plans and to conduct all procurement transactions for the Project;
   iii. Take part, as a member of Bid/Proposal Evaluation Committees;
   iv. Ensure that all Procurement management activities are conducted in accordance with World Bank (IDA) guidelines and GOB rules and procedures for the intended purposes.

3. The service is expected to commence in December 2026 and the tentative duration of the entire assignment is about 17 (Seventeen) months. The Terms of Reference (TOR) can be found at the link below:
   https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wQwC39GV36vvkAZ7z67ZYuYSZZDD9KEJ/view?usp=sharing
   TOR can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned at office hours.

4. The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) under Road Transport and Highways Division, Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh now invites eligible Individuals to submit their interest in providing the Service. Interested Individuals should provide information demonstrating that they have the following required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the service:

   Education
   a) Bachelor's degree in Engineering, Procurement, Law, Commerce, Finance, Business Administration, Management, or a related discipline from a recognized university.
   b) A Master's degree in Procurement or relevant professional certifications e.g. CIPS, PMP etc. will be considered an advantage.

   Experience
   a) 10 (ten) years of general experience out of which 07 (seven) years of experience in public procurement, with substantial responsibilities in procurement planning, contract management, and implementation of procurement processes for works, goods, and services.
   b) Demonstrated experience in managing procurement activities for large-scale infrastructure projects, advanced contract management, in particular experience in FIDIC contracts.
   c) Proven track record in preparing procurement plans, bidding documents, Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and evaluation reports in accordance with national regulations and international donor agency guidelines, particularly World Bank Procurement Regulations.
   d) Experience with e-Government Procurement (e-GP) systems and familiarity with the technical, commercial, and legal aspects of procurement in government and donor-financed projects is highly desirable.
   e) Prior involvement in projects requiring coordination among multiple government agencies and stakeholders is preferred.

   Skills and Competencies
   a) In-depth knowledge of the national legal and institutional framework governing public procurement in Bangladesh.
   b) Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to identify and resolve procurement-related issues efficiently.
   c) Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to present, discuss, and resolve complex procurement matters with diverse stakeholders.
   d) Proficiency in English (written and spoken) is required; fluency in Bengali is essential.
   e) Advanced computer skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and familiarity with procurement-related software and e-GP platforms.
   f) Ability to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams and under tight deadlines.
   g) High standards of integrity, professionalism, and attention to detail.

5. An Individual will be selected in accordance with the following method as set out in the World Bank Procurement Regulations:

Selection Method	:	Individual Consultant Selection
Market Approach	:	Open - National

6. Attention of the interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, Para 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (November 2020) setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

7. Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in written form to the address below (in person, or by mail) by **02:00 PM (BST), 10 November 2026:**

Attn.	:	The Project Director
Address	:	Office of the Project Director, Bangladesh Road Safety Project, Room No. 201, Block-A, Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka 1208.

Further information can be obtained from the address above during office hours (9:00 AM to 4:00 PM BST).

13-10-2026
(Mohammad Shabbir Hasan Khan)
Project Director (ACE, RHD)
Bangladesh Road Safety Project

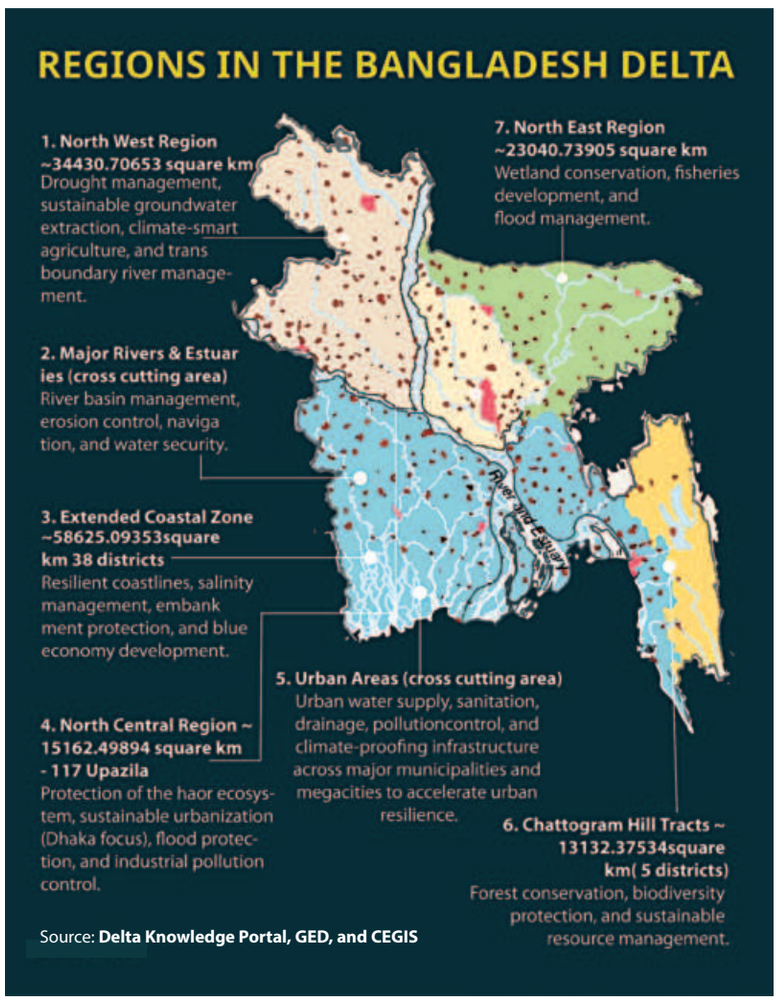
GD-2496

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Why Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 Matters for the Country's Future

While emergency response remains the immediate priority, experts argue that the real challenge lies beyond relief. The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (BDP 2100) offers a blueprint for making the country more resilient but only if it becomes a shared national mission embraced by government, businesses, local communities and citizens alike. As Bangladesh faces growing climate, water, environmental and economic challenges, BDP 2100 is crucial for guiding sustainable water management, climate resilience, environmental protection and inclusive growth. Its effective integration into national policies, investment priorities and budgetary decisions can help turn this long-term vision into a stronger driver of development. These were the conclusions of the roundtable organised by RedOrange Limited and The Daily Star, and supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands held on 24 June 2026.







DR. MAHFUZ KABIR
Research Director
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) (Keynote Speaker)

Integrating the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 into national policies and budgetary frameworks is vital to achieving a one-trillion-dollar economy and ensuring climate resilience. While strong convergence exists regarding river restoration and adaptive social protection, introducing a specialised Delta budget tagging system and an annual Delta report will significantly enhance public investment transparency. Additionally, establishing a high-level Delta Implementation and Coordination Council will streamline multi-sector execution. Empowering local governments through spatial planning cells is equally essential. Ultimately, forging a comprehensive implementation compact that unites the private sector, youth, and media will successfully transform climate vulnerabilities into long-term national prosperity.



MOHAMMAD MONIRUL ALAM
WASH Specialist
UNICEF

Bangladesh's 100-year Delta Plan offers an extraordinary opportunity to move past short-term planning and address long-term environmental degradation. Consequently, the newly approved 15-year Sector Development Plan and bankable Sector Investment Plan serve as vital short-term bridges focusing on climate resilience, surface water development, and sustainable sanitation. Furthermore, addressing the current $1.3 billion funding gap is critical, as inaction risks a 6.2% loss of GDP. Therefore, climate-resilient service standards, sustainable water management, safely managed sanitation, and greater investment should remain priorities. Strengthening economic planning and closing the financing gap will help achieve long-term, resilient, and inclusive WASH services.



DR. FARHANA AHMED
Director, R&D
CEGIS

Unlike traditional strategies, the BDP 2100 stands out for its future-focused, scenario-based model that aligns short, mid, and long-term national frameworks. However, executing its multi-sectoral and multi-agency programs introduces unique institutional, political, and coordination challenges. To streamline this implementation, national strategies are transitioning into specific regional documents spanning five diverse geographic areas. Furthermore, adopting an Adaptive Delta Management concept helps untangle leadership overlaps, while customised Public-Private Partnership formats are being structured for regional investment. Ultimately, operationalising spatial planning through recent legislative acts and prioritising collaborative, knowledge-driven networks will successfully address transboundary and localised structural challenges.



ALOK KUMAR MAJUMDER
WASH Expert and Director, Programme & Operations
RedOrange Limited

The BDP 2100 must be fully aligned with national and sectoral development priorities to ensure its long-term impact. Since the plan covers water, climate, agriculture, disaster management, land use, and sanitation, stronger participation from the government, the private sector, civil society, development partners, and academia is essential. Furthermore, institutional knowledge and cross-sector expertise should be translated into practical recommendations that can guide policymaking. This collaborative approach will help turn the Delta Plan into an effective framework for sustainable and resilient development.



PATRICIA SOLORZANO
Senior Project Manager
SNV

A long-term vision, like the Bangladesh Delta Plan, can succeed only when translated into practical local action. Stronger municipal ownership, institutional capacity, sustainable financing, and evidence-based planning are essential to align local investments with national priorities. Public-private partnerships, supported by inclusive business cases, can strengthen service delivery and mobilise investment from local financial institutions and international partners. Simultaneously, improved contract management, academic engagement, operations and maintenance in parenthesis, and locally appropriate financing mechanisms can ensure sustainable urban water and WASH services.



MOLLA KARIMUL ISLAM
Operational Head, Sustainable Finance Department
City Bank PLC

The commercial banking sector demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, having disbursed substantial climate-aligned funding to the private sector. However, effectively financing the infrastructure-heavy components of the Delta Plan requires transforming traditional government projects into viable Public-Private Partnerships. Therefore, utilising blended finance models and viability gap funding is essential to make these initiatives commercially attractive to commercial banks. Furthermore, securing low-cost capital from international sources like the Green Climate Fund remains critical. Clearly articulating these financial structures within the plan will successfully unlock private sector investment for long-term climate resilience.



DR MD. SHIBLY SADIK
Senior Policy Advisor (IWRM)
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Supporting institutions, government - private sector - knowledge organization - civil society partnership and strong political commitment of guaranteed long-term financing are three essential pillars for successful Delta management. The gap in public finances in Bangladesh can be filled by alternative sources. Therefore, innovative finances like bonds, green climate funds and private finances through collaboration (e.g. PPP) must be explored.. Transboundary water cooperation is another challenge which risks effectiveness of Delta management in Bangladesh. Netherlands as a twinning partner of Bangladesh helps strengthen its capacity of hydro-diplomacy for implementing the UN Water Convention. The Netherlands is improving its cooperation with Bangladesh towards a mutually beneficial partnership where Dutch knowledge institutions and the private sector would also play important roles specially in water and Delta management and maritime sector.



DR. KAZI MATIN UDDIN AHMED
Professor, Department of Geology
University of Dhaka

Addressing agricultural and water management challenges requires an Adaptive Delta Management approach. Consequently, ongoing research projects are focusing on coastal water systems, sustainable landscapes, and resilient agriculture. Furthermore, scientific solutions must be co-created alongside local communities, the private sector, and government agencies to ensure practical application. Additionally, establishing a centralised, unified knowledge management platform remains crucial for long-term data accessibility. Ultimately, building institutional capacity by training future Delta leaders will successfully bridge existing gaps between academia and policymakers, thereby ensuring the sustainable implementation of the Delta Plan.



SHUME AKHTER
Senior Specialist
Institute of Water Modelling (IWM)

Understanding hydrology is critical for effective water sector planning, which relies heavily on advanced mathematical modelling. Notably, coarse-scale meta-models serve as vital planning tools to simulate future scenarios, factoring in climate change and rising sea levels. These simulations allow planners to predict long-term impacts on agriculture, polder management, and coastal salinity, enabling immediate, well-informed project decisions. Furthermore, detailed fine models remain essential for designing localised hydraulic structures during actual implementation. Combining these forecasting tools provides the strategic foresight necessary to evaluate intervention outcomes and ensure long-term climate resilience.



S.A. ABDULLAH AL MAMUN
Senior Project Officer (Urban Structure) Bangladesh Resident Mission
Asian Development Bank

The long-term Delta Plan requires extensive investment and joint action through strong multi-stakeholder partnerships. Clarifying government alignment with the plan's infrastructure projects remains essential for effective development assistance. Major international commitments, such as the $5 billion pledge for the Integrated Growth Network Development project, are crucial for urban infrastructure and agriculture. Furthermore, a specialized Small Expenditure Financing Facility will be signed to focus on resilient river and canal restoration. This facility will successfully enhance cross-sectoral coordination, improve institutional capacity, ensure project readiness, and shift fragmented river management toward sustainable, long-term programmatic solutions.



GOLAM IFTEKHAR MAHMUD
Editor-in-Chief
Dhaka Stream

Historically, major ecosystem interventions face localised public resistance when critical data is withheld, or single-sided narratives dominate. As a result, ensuring complete, timely transparency regarding feasibility and environmental impact studies is vital to building positive public opinion before launching flagship initiatives like the Delta Plan. Furthermore, actively encouraging open media debates and providing prompt, evidence-based responses from authorities will successfully clarify complex project goals. Expanding information disclosure will transform abstract strategic frameworks into well-understood physical projects, thereby preventing unintended public repercussions and fostering genuine national ownership.



TOWFIQUL ISLAM KHAN
Additional Director (Research)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

The long-term Delta Plan remains essential, yet a shifting macroeconomic context with rising budget deficits requires a realistic financial approach. To ensure policy continuity across varying regimes, future execution must actively engage a broader spectrum of political and public stakeholders. Consequently, the plan should not be abandoned; instead, unbundling it into smaller strategic packages will foster immediate alignment with national climate policies, sectoral plans, and investment priorities is essential. Moreover, regular monitoring of implementation, greater public awareness, and wider engagement of government, civil society, and the private sector can strengthen ownership. Climate finance should be treated as a long-term investment rather than expenditure, while ensuring climate justice remains central to financing and implementation so that vulnerable communities receive adequate support and protection.



SHAIKH MUHAMMAD MEHEDI AHSAN
Vice President (01)
Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP)

Achieving the Delta Plan's objectives depends heavily on robust spatial planning across urban, regional, and rural areas to prevent environmental and infrastructural nuisances. Consequently, effectively implementing the newly enacted Spatial Planning Act through a structured three-tier system remains vital. This framework ensures that all time-bound public projects strictly align with local master plans and land-use regulations. Furthermore, broad policy debates involving professional institutions and citizens are necessary for major development frameworks. Prioritising local government and institutional reforms is the fundamental first step required to successfully deliver long-term national resilience.



MATSUKAWA MINAKO
Expert
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Successful implementation of the BDP 2100 requires dismantling long-standing institutional silos in favour of cross-sectoral collaboration. Aligning public investment guidebooks to encourage multi-ministerial projects is crucial, as isolated sectoral approaches cannot effectively address complex climate challenges. Simultaneously, shifting toward evidence-based planning demands robust data governance to make vast existing scientific data publicly accessible, interoperable, and shared across agencies. Ultimately, mobilising the highest national authorities beyond planning divisions is essential to spearhead this multi-sector roadmap. Securing strong public opinion and collaborative development partner support will successfully drive these transformative, long-term national climate resilience goals forward.



TANJIM FERDOUS
Head of Strategic Partnerships
The Daily Star
(Moderator of the Session)

The BDP 2100 provides a long-term roadmap for sustainable water management, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and inclusive economic growth. However, translating this vision into measurable outcomes requires stronger alignment with national policies, investment priorities, and budget allocations. The roundtable explored ways to strengthen policy coherence, address institutional and financing challenges, enhance stakeholder ownership, and identify priority actions to accelerate Delta Plan implementation over the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure sustained political commitment, institutional continuity, and long-term financing for implementing the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100.
- Mainstream Delta Plan principles into sectoral, regional, and spatial plans, with strong local ownership and implementation capacity.
- Develop diverse and sustainable financing mechanisms, including blended finance, PPPs, and climate finance, to mobilise long-term investment.
- Strengthen evidence-based and adaptive planning through research, modelling, data systems, monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management.
- Improve transparency and public engagement through timely disclosure of project information, feasibility studies, and environmental assessments.
- Shift from reactive to proactive operation and maintenance, with adequate and sustained O&M financing.
- Build institutional and human capacity across government, municipalities, and future Delta professionals for effective adaptive Delta management.
- Promote integrated, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable planning across water, rivers, agriculture, ecosystems, and urban development.
- Prioritise vulnerable communities in climate-resilient investments, while balancing social, environmental, and economic sustainability.
- Regularly review and adapt implementation strategies to respond to changing economic conditions, climate risks, and technological developments while maintaining the long-term Delta Plan vision.



DR. MD. LIAKATH ALI
Director, Climate Change Programme
BRAC

BDP 2100 should be regularly reviewed to reflect changing climate, water, and economic realities. Therefore, stronger

DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14, 2026, ASHWIN 29, 1433 BS

SPORT



Spin misfires amid dogged defiance

SPORTS REPORTER

Afghanistan did what had appeared impossible. They batted out 92 overs on the final day, losing five of their remaining seven wickets to draw the one-off Abu Dhabi Test yesterday. They would liken it to a win, but for Bangladesh, who had a day and a half to bowl them out with three frontline spinners at their disposal, the draw was a bitter disappointment.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam has 272 wickets in 62 matches, while Mehidy Hasan Miraz has 225 in 60. Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan, drafted in in anticipation of assistance from the pitch, has 48 Test wickets. Yet the trio managed just five wickets despite bowling in the fourth innings.

Mehidy was the pick of the spinners, claiming four scalps, including three in the second innings that set up a chaotic final hour. But more was expected from a spin group that bowled 95 of 142 overs Afghanistan saw through in their second innings. Asked whether he was disappointed that the spinners had not done more, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto agreed.

"I really expected the spinners to come into this match because of the weather and the condition, but I think they tried," Shanto said during the post-match presser.

The pitch, as it turned out, became better for batting as the match progressed. The hosts lost three wickets on day four but returned with steely resolve on the final day, when the surface offered signs of cracking and rough patches to exploit. Afghanistan, however, showed their Test-match capabilities by countering the spin trio.

Miraz flighted the ball well and reaped some rewards, but Taijul, apart from a missed stumping opportunity, rarely threatened. Eventually, 25-year-old Sediqullah Atal proved to be the difference.

Known primarily for his white-ball exploits, Atal opened the innings and faced 332 deliveries for 111, his maiden Test century. When Taijul finally dismissed him after tea, the game opened up. But Yamin Ahmadzai, whose first-class averages are in the 20s, batted out 85 deliveries in one innings and 80 in another to help Afghanistan secure a hard-earned draw.

The 142 overs Afghanistan faced was the third-highest total a team had negotiated to force a draw. Their resistance was remarkable, but Bangladesh's missed opportunities made the outcome all the more frustrating. Two run-out chances went begging in the same over late in the day, Mominul Haque failed to take a half-chance at short leg, and Hasan Mahmud dropped a regulation catch at deep mid-on.

Yet the bigger concern will be the spinners' ineffectiveness. They usually run through opposition batting line-ups when the pitch offers assistance. When it did not, they could not force a result that had once looked inevitable.



"Messi is a monster, but he doesn't compare to Pele. There will never be another with that combination of technique, speed, and precision. I have a lot of respect for Messi; he is one of the greatest of all time, but 50 years ago Pele was already playing ahead of his time!

Brazil legend **ROMARIO**

How Afghanistan survived a session of madness

Test cricket rarely delivers drama as chaotic as the final session in Abu Dhabi yesterday. Four wickets were all Bangladesh needed to crown five days of toil, thirty-odd overs were all Afghanistan had left to endure. What followed was less a rearguard and more an improbable comedy of errors and survival. Balls kissed the timbers without the bails budging, fielders snatched at thin air, and routine run-outs turned into wild throwing contests.

SPORTS REPORTER

118.4 | The wall finally falls
Taijul Islam ended Sediqullah Atal's marathon resistance on 111 off 332 balls. A faint edge lobbed off the pad to Tanzid Hasan Tamim at short leg. Atal reviewed, but UltraEdge confirmed the nick, finally giving Bangladesh their long-awaited opening.

120.5 | The bails refuse to budge
Yamin Ahmadzai edged a Taijul delivery straight onto his stumps, but the bails stayed stubbornly in place. Litton Das and the close-in cordon stood frozen in sheer disbelief at the laws of physics betraying them.

121.1–121.2 | Two run-out chances thrown away
A dreadful mix-up left Qais Ahmad stranded, but Bangladesh threw to the wrong end before the bowler missed the stumps with Qais well short of safety. On the very next ball, another hesitant call nearly cost Ahmadzai his wicket. This time the throw reached the bowler's end, but Ahmadzai scrambled home by millimeters after a tense third-umpire review.

122.4 | Qais survives a stumping chance
Beaten by Taijul's flight, Qais lost his balance as the ball rolled off his pads towards silly point. Litton whipped off the bails in a flash, but Qais managed to drag his foot back in just in time.

126.3 | Another chance goes begging
Qais offered a sharp, airborne chance towards silly point, but the fielder could not make it stick. It was another reprieve for an increasingly adventurous lower-order batter.

130.5 | Hasan Mahmud drops a costly catch
Qais mistimed an aggressive heave off Mehidy Hasan Miraz, slicing the ball toward deep mid-wicket. Hasan Mahmud charged in, got both hands to the ball on the slide, and watched it spill out.

136.6 | Miraz offers late hope
Mehidy Hasan Miraz finally breached Yamin Ahmadzai's defences. Playing at a floated delivery with hard hands, Ahmadzai looped the ball toward short leg, where Mominul Haque showed brilliant anticipation with a diving catch. At 326/8, Bangladesh had five overs to claim the final two wickets.

139.3 | Qais's tactical cramp break
Qais suddenly collapsed onto the turf clutching his hamstring. As the physio spent four minutes stretching him out, Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto fumed.

141.2–141.6 | Two sixes to finish the madness
Qais danced down the pitch to clear long-off for six off Taijul, survived three defensive prods, and then capped the madness by slog-sweeping the final ball of the match over cow corner for another maximum. Falling just one run short of a half-century at 49 not out.

- **A total of 1,304 runs were scored in the one-off Test, making it the highest match aggregate in Tests involving Bangladesh and Afghanistan.**
- **Named Player of the Match, Bangladesh's Litton Das celebrated his 32nd birthday by becoming the first cricketer in Test history to register nine dismissals as a wicketkeeper while scoring a century and a half-century in the same match.**
- **Litton, who scored 53 and 102 in the first and second innings respectively, reached the milestone on the final day with a one-handed catch to dismiss Ikram Alikhil. He surpassed South Africa's Denis Lindsay, who recorded eight dismissals and scored a half-century and a century in the same Test in 1966.**
- **Afghanistan batted for 142 overs to reach 346 for eight in the fourth innings, making it the fourth-most overs batted in a final innings to save a Test match.**
- **Sediqullah Atal scored 111 off 332 balls, making it the seventh-highest number of deliveries faced by a batter in Asia in order to save a Test.**





PHOTO: ACB



Josh Hazlewood took six wickets as Australia completed a 214-run victory over South Africa on the fifth day of the first Test at Kingsmead on Tuesday. The fast bowler finished with six for 49, breaking two promising partnerships to help dismiss the hosts for 206 while chasing a target of 421. Matt Renshaw was named Player of the Match after scoring 190 in the first innings and 82 in the second, as Australia made a memorable return to South Africa in Tests for the first time since the sandpaper scandal in 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Sabbir's first-class ton after 8yrs

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Division's Sabbir Rahman ended an eight-year wait for a first-class century to help his side secure a draw against Khulna Division on the final day of the second round of the National Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday.

Sabbir struck 113 off 221 balls, featuring eight fours and a six, to register his fifth first-class century. His previous hundred came in 2018, when he scored 165 in Bangladesh A's opening unofficial Test against Sri Lanka A in Chattogram. That remains his highest first-class score.

Pritom Kumar (44), Sunzamul Islam (39), Ali Mohammad (11 not out) and Shafiqul Islam (15 not out) also made valuable contributions as Rajshahi reached 500 for nine in their second innings before the two sides agreed to a draw.

Resuming at 300 for three, Rajshahi came under pressure in the final session when Khulna's Afif Hossain took two wickets and Sheikh Paeviz Jibon dismissed Sabbir within six deliveries to reduce them to 474 for nine.

With Rajshahi leading by 109 runs and nearly 26 overs remaining, last-wicket pair Ali and Shafiqul frustrated Khulna's bowlers, facing 50 and 58 deliveries respectively, to bat out 18 overs and secure the draw.

Khulna's Mahedi Hasan was named Player of the Match after scoring 104 in the first innings and taking eight wickets.

The two other matches in Sylhet also ended in draws. Ashraful Hasan's 122 helped Sylhet to 496 before Dhaka declared at 219 for six in their second innings, with Ashikur Rahman Shibli scoring an unbeaten 101. Chasing 271, Sylhet reached two for one.

At the other venue, Rangpur declared at 245 for six, setting Mymensingh a target of 373. Mymensingh ended at 189 for four.

Chattogram Division recorded the round's only victory, beating Barishal Division by an innings and one run in Cox's Bazar.

Tigresses eye strong finish after Sobhana's record ton

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will aim for a strong finish to their three-match WODI series against Australia in today's final game at Allan Border Field in Brisbane.

While the hosts have already sealed the series with dominant seven- and nine-wicket victories -- chasing down both targets in under 29 overs -- Bangladesh have finally found a silver lining in their historically fragile batting.

After managing just 166 in the series opener, the visitors posted an improved 220 for six in the second match. The innings was anchored by Sobhana Mostary, whose 118 off 134 deliveries set a new record for the highest individual WODI score by a Bangladesh batter. She also stitched a record-breaking 195-run partnership with unbeaten skipper Nigar Sultana Joty (74).

Speaking ahead of the match, batter Sharmin Akhter Supta emphasised the value of the tour. "Playing in such conditions is a great opportunity. We want to finish the series with a good knock," she said yesterday.

"Our batting was really good in the last match, and we want to carry that forward. If we can also step up in the bowling and fielding departments, we can finish the series on a high note."

City-PSG headline UCL action

STAR SPORTS DESK

Manchester City host reigning champions PSG in a blockbuster Champions League clash tonight, with Pep Guardiola returning to the Etihad for the first time since ending his 10-year reign. City, under Enzo Maresca, have won all eight matches this season, including a 3-0 victory over Liverpool in the last match. PSG, meanwhile, have struggled domestically but opened their European campaign with a 6-1 demolition of Slovan Bratislava. Both sides will look to strengthen their continental credentials.





- This will be Man City and PSG's ninth meeting. City have won four (D2 L2) and are unbeaten in four home games (W3 D1).
- PSG are unbeaten in nine consecutive European Cup/Champions League games against English sides (W7 D2). They could become only the second team to reach 10 such games, after Real Madrid's 11-match run from 2011 to 2017.
- Reigning Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele has been directly involved in 31 goals in 41 Champions League appearances for PSG (20 goals, 11 assists).
- Erling Haaland has scored 42 goals in 39 Champions League group-stage/league-phase appearances, more than any player since his debut season in the competition in 2019-20.
- Haaland has 36 goals in 40 appearances for City in the competition. Another goal would take him past Sergio Aguero's 36 in 64 appearances to become the club's outright top scorer.
- Since the start of last season, Vitinha leads all Champions League midfielders in completed passes (1,703), line-breaking passes (327) and possession won (106 times).

WHAT TO WATCH

Star Sports 1
4th T20I
India vs West Indies
Live from 7:30 pm

T Sports
World Championship of Legends
England vs Australia
Live from 5:30pm
Bangladesh vs South Africa
Live from 9:30pm

Sony Sports 1, 2, 5
UEFA Champions League
Live from 10:45 pm
LASK vs Liverpool
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)
AS Roma vs Real Madrid
Man City vs PSG





Migrants face growing risks at home, abroad

Say researchers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi migrant workers face growing uncertainty as job opportunities in the Gulf decline and recruitment costs remain high, while people moving to cities struggle with unsafe housing and poor services, researchers said yesterday.

Gulf countries were hiring more from Africa and Central Asia instead of relying heavily on South Asia, posing a long-term challenge.

Dilip Ratha, CEO of Ratha Global and former World Bank lead economist

They urged cheaper recruitment, stronger migrant protection, and safer cities. They spoke at the 30th anniversary programme of the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) and Shonar Manush Shommilon 2026 at a hotel in the capital.

In a presentation, Dilip Ratha, CEO of Ratha Global and former World Bank lead economist, said Bangladeshi recruitment slowed in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries amid the Middle East conflicts.

He warned that Gulf countries were hiring more from Africa

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

While the authorities conducted a drive to remove waste just across the Buriganga, following a photo published in The Daily Star and a subsequent High Court directive, garbage continues to be dumped on its banks. The photo of the Old Buriganga Channel was taken in Ashrafabad, Kamrangirchar, yesterday.

CUET IN FOCUS

Cops escort Cuet VC, JCD leaders out after 30hrs

Protesters say VC was freed after he promised never to return



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Police escort Cuet VC Prof Shariful Alam out of his office.

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, *Ctg*

Prof Sheikh Mohammad Shariful Alam, the newly appointed vice-chancellor of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, was taken out of his office under heavy police protection yesterday evening, ending a 30-hour confinement.

Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Zahidul Islam Mia and Superintendent of Police in Chattogram Masud Alam entered the administrative building after students opened its gate and brought the VC out at 6:15pm.

The VC was whisked away in an ambulance while around 150 agitating students chanted "Bhua, Bhua (fake, fake)" slogans, reiterating their demand for the reinstatement of former VC Prof Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem.

The students had been demonstrating for the last 21 days to press home their demand. They said Prof Shariful was allowed to leave only on the condition

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Yunus harassed at New York's JFK

Dhaka to raise the issue with Washington; parties and ex-advisers condemn

STAR REPORT



Former interim government chief adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus was harassed by a group of people at the John F Kennedy airport on Monday (New York time), prompting the Bangladesh government to announce plans to raise the issue with Washington.

A video clip circulating on social media shows several people hurling abuse at Yunus, who was in a wheelchair. Yunus and his associates later went back inside the airport before security personnel escorted him away from the crowd.

Condemning the incident, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir yesterday said Dhaka would seek action by US law enforcement agencies.

"We will take it up strongly with the government of the United States of America so that necessary steps are taken from a law enforcement point of view," he told reporters at his ministry.

Humaiun said embassy protocol for private visits could depend on whether the government had earlier been informed. However, the harassment of a former chief adviser could not be taken lightly, he added.

He alleged that those involved had fled Bangladesh and were inciting violence from abroad. "We will have to hunt them down, and we will do it with our bilateral partners in those countries," he said, urging US authorities to identify those

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Overhaul the child marriage law

Say Unicef, UNFPA, call for plugging loopholes

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Nearly a decade after Bangladesh replaced its colonial-era child marriage law, a new review by UNFPA and Unicef says the Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 2017 is undermined by legal loopholes, contradictions and weak enforcement, and calls for sweeping reforms.

The review identifies two major problems: flaws in the law and poor implementation.

The act penalises those involved in child marriages but does not invalidate the marriages themselves. It also allows marriage below 18 in undefined "special circumstances" and contains provisions that conflict with other laws and children's rights.

Meanwhile, child marriage prevention committees often fail to function, and officials lack proper training and logistical support.

Survivors also have limited access to shelters and legal aid, leaving the law unable to adequately protect girls most at risk.

The review recommends setting 18 as the minimum marriage age for both sexes, removing the provision allowing underage marriage in special circumstances, making the act take precedence over conflicting personal laws, and allowing children to annul their marriages.

The review recommends setting 18 as the minimum marriage age for both sexes, removing the provision allowing underage marriage in special circumstances, making the Act take precedence over conflicting personal laws, and allowing children to annul their marriages.

The report comes at a time when Bangladesh continues to have the highest prevalence of child marriage in South Asia and ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide.

About 41.6 million child brides live in the country, including 22.3 million who married before the age of 15, according to the report, even after the prevalence of child marriage among girls under 18 fell from 51.4 percent in 2019 to 47.2 percent in 2025, according to the review, uploaded on the UN agencies' website on Sunday.

The review rightly identifies several weaknesses in the act, said Taslima Yasmin, an associate professor in the Department of Law at Dhaka University, while arguing that legal reform should go beyond punitive measures to include stronger social protection for victims of child marriage.

Bangladesh has long relied on punitive measures to prevent child marriage, but decades of legislation have failed to end the practice, she said.

"Child marriage is a social custom, and punishment alone cannot end it. We need social measures, policy interventions and community-level initiatives and amend the act accordingly," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Some fishermen are catching hilsa at different points in the Meghna and Kalabadar rivers in Barishal's Mehendiganj upazila, defying a 22-day ban on hilsa fishing from October 8 to 29 to protect hilsa spawning. This photo, taken yesterday, shows fishermen at the confluence of the two rivers.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

POWERTEK

MEGHNAGHAT POWER LIMITED ("MPL")

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST ("RFEOI")

Meghnaghat Power Limited ("MPL") is a private company incorporated in Bangladesh, which owns a 450 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant at Meghnaghat, Sonargaon, Narayanganj, Bangladesh. MPL is a wholly owned subsidiary of **PEL**, a joint venture between **Edra Power Holdings Sdn Bhd, Malaysia and Aljomaih Energy and Water Co., Saudi Arabia**, leading international independent power producers which own and operate a diversified portfolio of power generation assets in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

MPL wishes to invite prospective applicants to express their interest in participating in the tender (the **"Tender"**) as stated below:

TENDER NO.	TENDER DESCRIPTION
HO-MPL-2026-001 (BD)	**Tender:** tender for the purchase of a 450 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant in Bangladesh comprising 2 x Gas Turbine (Ansaldo Energia S.p.A, Model: V94.2) + 1 x Steam Turbine (Fuji Electric Co Ltd, Japan, Model: KN30-2*6.3) + 2 x HRSG (Hyundai, Model: HRSG-H-28.4-68.9) and all its auxiliaries, in the form of an asset sale.

Prospective applicants interested in participating in the Tender are required to send their Expression of Interest (**"EOI"**) on company letterhead stating their interest and providing the information stated below via email to **mpl.sales@edra-bd.energy** by **10th November 2026**.

Information to accompany the EOI:

1. **Name of applicant (company name)**
2. **Country of incorporation**
3. **Authorized contact person with contact details**
4. **Company Profile**

The EOI along with the information provided therein will be reviewed and evaluated to determine the Responsive Applicants. MPL will issue invitations via email to the Responsive Applicants to participate in the Tender. The complete information on the Tender and related documents shall be attached with the invitation email.

Any inquires related to the above RFEOI shall be directed to: **mpl.sales@edra-bd.energy**