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'Ensure safe migration, decent jobs'

President calls for skilled workforce, greater protection of workers' rights

BSS, *Dhaka*

President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday called for ensuring safe migration, creating decent employment opportunities and developing a skilled workforce to strengthen Bangladesh's position globally.

"Let us build a Bangladesh where migration will be safe, employment will be decent, a skilled workforce will strengthen the country's position in the global market, and expatriate and returning workers will become equal partners in national development," he said.

The president made the remarks at a programme marking the 30th founding

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A relieved passenger smiles and holds up his travel documents after managing to secure a flight to Saudi Arabia via an alternative destination at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday. Many travellers face uncertainty as airlines had to cancel or reschedule flights following the announcement that Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport will remain closed until Saturday.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

IN FOCUS

RMG workers block highway for third day

Demand Tk 30,000 minimum wage; blockade, fire cause tailbacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

RMG workers, mostly women, blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in the capital's Uttara for the third consecutive day yesterday, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000.

Workers from eight to 10 factories in Dakshinkhan marched to Azampur and gathered in front of Rajlakshmi Complex around 9:00am, carrying placards reading, "Why are commodity prices so high?" and "Tk 30,000 minimum wage".

The blockade, coupled with a fire at a pharmaceutical factory in Tongi's Cherag Ali area, caused severe traffic congestion stretching from Mohakhali to Gazipur.

With traffic halted from 10:30am, hundreds of commuters were forced to get off buses and walk to their destinations, while others took detours to use the metro rail.

Uttara East Police Station OC Morshed Alam said workers blocked both sides of the highway around 11:00am. Police persuaded them to clear the road around noon, but they regrouped near the airport and continued protesting until



PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

The blockade, coupled with a fire at a pharmaceutical factory in Tongi's Cherag Ali area, caused severe traffic congestion stretching from Mohakhali to Gazipur.

1:00pm, after which traffic gradually normalised.

Protesters said rising prices of essentials, house rents and medical expenses had made it difficult to run their households on current wages.

Salma Begum, 28, a senior machine operator at Nipa Garments in Dakshinkhan, earns Tk 16,500 a month, while her auto-rickshaw driver husband earns Tk 15,000.

She sends Tk 10,000 monthly to her ailing parents and two school-going sons in Lalmonirhat. Her Dhaka landlord has also announced a rent increase from Tk 5,500 to Tk 6,000 in January.

"Despite bone-crushing labour, we cannot even afford decent meals," she said, adding that she buys groceries worth Tk 2,000-3,000 on credit each month.

Mansura Begum, 25, a junior sewing operator at Amena Garments, echoed her.

"If commodity prices come down, there is no need to increase our wages," Mansura said.

Give workers a voice at COP31

Labour rights groups unveil 23-point charter, demand compensation, protections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour rights organisations yesterday demanded fair compensation for climate-related losses, stronger labour protections and representation of workers, particularly women and those in informal employment, in Bangladesh's delegation to the upcoming COP31 climate conference.

The demands came as the National Alliance for Just Transition Bangladesh (NAJTB), in collaboration with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Bangladesh Labour Foundation (BLF), and supported by Oxfam in Bangladesh, unveiled the Bangladesh Workers' Charter for COP31 at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

The charter outlines 23 demands across eight negotiation tracks, focusing on the impact of extreme heat, climate-induced displacement and industrial decarbonisation on workers' jobs and livelihoods.

Speakers called for social protection, workplace safety, worker participation in climate policymaking and funded reskilling programmes to help workers adapt to a greener economy.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, said informal workers, who account for approximately 84 percent of Bangladesh's workforce, face disproportionate impacts of climate change.

She called for income protection, job security and targeted support for women, who face additional unpaid care responsibilities and risks of technological displacement.

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Build safeguards against quantum-era cyber threats

Speakers call for adaptable security systems at Star-Cipher Core Inc roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to prepare its banking systems, government communications and critical infrastructure for cybersecurity threats posed by quantum computing, with experts calling for stronger research collaboration, adaptable security systems and a national roadmap.

At a roundtable organised by The Daily Star and Japan-based Cipher Core Inc at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, participants discussed how advances in quantum computing could threaten existing encryption methods and the need to prepare before current systems become vulnerable.

Quantum computing uses quantum mechanics to process information much faster than conventional computers for certain complex tasks.

Sadia Sharmin, director general of the Department of ICT, said Bangladesh had begun addressing quantum-related security concerns



Participants at a roundtable organised by The Daily Star and Japan-based Cipher Core Inc at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: **STAR**

through its legal and policy frameworks, including the Cyber Security Act 2026, the Personal Data Protection Act and the Cyber Security Framework for 2026–30.

She said Bangladesh had designated 37 critical information infrastructures, underscoring the importance of protecting systems that handle sensitive national information.

Sharmin emphasised that Bangladesh did not need to buy expensive quantum computers immediately. Instead, it should ensure existing systems could adapt to changing security requirements.

She called for systems that allow encryption algorithms to be changed without replacing the entire infrastructure.

Sharmin stressed collaboration

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Need joint efforts to protect rights of Hindus: Shafiqur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman yesterday called for the government and the opposition to work together to protect the rights, security and interests of the country's Hindu community.

He made the call during a views-exchange meeting with leaders of Hindu organisations at his official residence on Dhaka's Minto Road.

"None of us is a minority or majority in this country. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and ethnic communities are all Bangladeshis and proud citizens of this country," Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar quoted Shafiqur as saying at a press briefing afterwards.

Shafiqur also said protecting the country's independence and sovereignty was everyone's sacred responsibility and urged all citizens to work together for national development and prosperity.

Porwar said Hindu community leaders praised Jamaat leaders and activists for helping ensure security during religious ceremonies and at puja mandaps and temples after August 5, 2024.

They also raised concerns about discrimination, deprivation and other difficulties facing the community, he added.



Makeshift stalls crowd the footpath and spill onto the road outside Dhaka Medical College Hospital, while a long row of ambulances parked along the roadside further narrows the busy thoroughfare. Rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, cars and other vehicles jostle for space, causing severe congestion and hampering access to the hospital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

352 accused still at large in ICT cases

Tribunals hand down 22 death sentences in 7 cases since reconstitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 352 accused in crimes against humanity cases before the International Crimes Tribunals (ICTs) are still absconding, according to prosecution statistics released yesterday.

Another 203 are in custody, one has died, one has been acquitted, and another has been sentenced to the period already served in custody.

Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim presented the figures at a briefing marking two years since the tribunals were reconstituted on October 14, 2024.

The two tribunals have so far delivered verdicts in seven cases, sentencing 22 people to death and 39 to different terms of imprisonment.

Another 26 cases are at the trial stage, including 12 before ICT-1 and 14 before ICT-2, while 44 are at various pre-trial stages.

The prosecution and investigation agency have received around 700 complaints concerning alleged crimes against humanity linked to the July uprising, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

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