DHAKA SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2026



"Well, I think that's a disgrace. It should end soon...But I think I find Zelensky to be more difficult to deal with than Putin."
TRUMP on Ukraine's renewed strikes on Russian refineries

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WR1 | DURGA PUJA: THE JOY OF COMING HOME

WR2 | CAN BANGLADESH BRING ITS HILSA BACK?

WR3 | THE POLITICS OF STAYING COOL IN A WARMING BANGLADESH

WR4 | SILK CITY TANGLED IN CHINESE YARN

A year on, July charter remains mired in discord

BNP, opposition divided over reform mechanism

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR, MAMUNUR RASHID, SHAMIMA RITA

A year after political parties signed the July National Charter, disagreements over how to implement its reforms continue to strain the consensus that once united them.

Opposition parties accuse the ruling BNP of abandoning its pre-election commitments by replacing a referendum-backed reform process with one that would leave constitutional changes largely in the hands of the parliamentary majority.

When political leaders gathered at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on October 17 last year, the charter was presented as a roadmap for turning the aspirations of the July uprising into lasting institutional reforms.

After months of negotiations, the parties agreed on 84 reform proposals, 48 of which require constitutional amendments. The proposals aimed to prevent a return to authoritarian rule and reshape state institutions.

But as the charter marks its first anniversary, that unity appears increasingly fragile. At the heart of the discord is how the constitutional reforms should be implemented.

The BNP says it will implement the charter as signed, but maintains that constitutional amendments must ultimately be enacted through parliament. The government has formed a special parliamentary committee to recommend the changes.

At the same time, it rejects the legal basis of the proposed Constitution Reform Council. On March 31, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told parliament that the July National Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order was "void ab initio", or invalid from the beginning.



"The unprecedented opportunity to establish an accountable system of governance and undertake state reform, created following the July mass uprising, has been held hostage by power politics and a vicious bureaucratic cycle."
Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

He argued that the president had the authority to issue such orders only between March 26, 1971 and April 7, 1973, and lost that power after the first parliament was formed in 1973. He also described the implementation order as "a document of endless deceit and national betrayal".

Opposition parties led by Jamaat-e-Islami, however, insist that the government comply with the order, which provided for a Constitution Reform Council.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad said voters had endorsed a specific process for implementing constitutional reforms through a referendum.

"The people approved constitutional reform through a Constitution Reform Council, but the BNP is now relying on its overwhelming parliamentary majority to amend the constitution," he said. "The BNP is moving against public opinion."

Azad warned that bypassing the agreed mechanism could invite legal challenges and jeopardise months of political negotiations.

Jamaat would continue its campaign both inside and outside parliament,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Workers sort stacks of newly printed government textbooks at a printing press in the Bhanga Press area of Matuail in the capital yesterday. Printing presses are operating round the clock to complete textbooks for primary and secondary students ahead of distribution in January, when the new academic year begins.
PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

How FB posts led to Satkhira mob killing

ABIR AYON *and* **TAREK HOSEN**

When Wahiduzzaman Shamim was accused of making derogatory remarks about Islam, Facebook became more than a platform for circulating the allegation. It became a place to identify the accused, mobilise people, incite violence, and, after his death, justify the killing.

An analysis by The Daily Star of 33 Facebook posts published between October 13 and 15 traces how an allegation of religious insult in Satkhira's Debhata escalated into calls for punishment, followed by celebrations, justifications, threats, and glorification of the perpetrators.

Shamim, however, is not the only victim of such violence. In October 2025, another young man was beaten by a mob over allegations of desecrating the Quran in the same upazila.

HOW SHAMIM WAS KILLED

According to Shamim's family, an audio recording of a conversation between him and his wife went viral

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Middle East crisis threatens a lifeline for the poor

Flight disruptions, shrinking job prospects put migrant workers, families at risk

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Bangladesh's struggle with poverty is making overseas jobs more important for millions of families, but turmoil in the Middle East is putting that escape route at risk.

For families that have borrowed heavily to send a member abroad, a lost job or delayed flight can quickly turn years of sacrifice into fresh debt.

Mohammad Rezaul Karim, 30, knows the risk all too well. He spent two years repaying the Tk 4.5 lakh he borrowed to secure a job in Saudi Arabia and had only recently begun to feel financially secure.

Now stranded in Bangladesh after his October 11 flight was cancelled, he fears having to borrow another Tk 4 lakh to Tk 5 lakh if he cannot return before his visa expires on November 5.

"Now, if this gets cancelled, I will have to borrow money again and go through the whole process all over again," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

Rezaul, who works at a residential hotel in Dammam, has been asked to wait until October 18 but has yet to receive confirmation of a new flight.

Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh's largest overseas labour market, is at the centre of the latest disruption. Attacks by Houthis and security restrictions at Saudi airports have disrupted flights, raising uncertainty.

The sole earner for his family in Satkhira, he supports his parents, daughter and younger brother. He had to drop out of a diploma course in electrical engineering after completing his Secondary School Certificate because his family could not afford his education.

"If we were not poor, why would we want to work abroad?" he said.

The World Bank estimates that the country's poverty rate rose to 22.5 percent in 2026 from 18.7 percent in 2022, with around 21 lakh more people pushed into poverty in FY26. Another

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



'Reporting cost him his life'

Says brother of slain journalist Alif

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

Sadequr Rahman Fakir, younger brother of journalist Lutfozzaman Fakir Alif, who was shot dead in Netrokona's Durgapur yesterday, alleged that his brother had faced previous attacks and threats.

"They [attackers] did not let my brother live. He was hacked before as well. A case was filed, but nothing came of it. Perhaps nothing will happen this time either. Please, at least stand by us. We want exemplary punishment for those responsible," he said

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Colourful lights illuminate the surroundings of Shankar Math Temple on College Road in Barishal city as Hindu devotees celebrate Durga Puja, their biggest religious festival. The dazzling decorations reflect on the water, creating a spectacular display. The photo was taken yesterday.
PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

We Remember

17th October 2005

21 years into your eternal journey you still remain in our hearts as you did when you left office the evening of 16th October 2005. Though we miss and feel your absence every working day the insurance Industry in Bangladesh shall continue to remember your life time service to promoting Insurance and an inspiration and mentor to the future generations to feel your presence through the Books and Articles that you have left behind to pursue this noble profession...

We pray to the Almighty to grant our founder and mentor Jannatul Firdaus. Ameen. **- The BGIC Family.**



M. A. Samad
(1923-2005)



বাংলাদেশ জেনারেল ইনসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী পিএলসি.
Bangladesh General Insurance Company PLC.
(The first Private & Public Non-Life Insurance Company of Bangladesh)