Do not pave way for return of autocracy: PM

Urges opposition to play constructive role

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday warned that if the opposition paved the way for a return to autocracy while opposing the government, it would amount to betraying the martyrs of both the 2024 July uprising and the 1971 Liberation War.

Calling for constructive opposition, he said political differences should not prevent the government and opposition from working together on national issues, including employment, public safety, healthcare, education and independence.

"If we continue with this old political culture of opposing for the sake of opposition, how can we move the country forward? The opposition must certainly oppose, but its opposition should be constructive," he said.

The PM made the remarks at a public gathering after inaugurating the July Martyrs' Memorial and the renovated Osmani Udyan in the capital.

Questioning the absence of opposition leaders from the programme, Tarique said the government had invited prominent opposition figures to join the event honouring the July martyrs.

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Plastic and other waste floats on the Buriganga in Dhaka's Islambagh, yesterday, despite an ongoing eviction and waste-removal drive along the riverbank. Plastic recycling businesses continue to operate, and garbage is still being burned along the bank, threatening the river's ecosystem and undermining restoration efforts.

PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

IN FOCUS

Dengue deaths mount amid treatment delays

Experts urge early diagnosis, timely referrals

HELEMUL ALAM

Four more people died of dengue yesterday, taking this year's death toll to 352, as health experts warned that delayed hospitalisation, late diagnosis and inadequate treatment facilities were contributing to fatalities.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 1,14,251 dengue patients have been hospitalised nationwide this year.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital recorded the highest number of deaths at 99, followed by Khulna division with 65, Dhaka North City Corporation with 46, Chattogram division with 32, Mymensingh with 27, Barishal with 26, Rajshahi with 23, Rangpur with six and Sylhet with four.

Health experts attributed the rising death toll to delayed hospitalisation and diagnosis, the absence of an effective three-tier dengue management system and increasing infections.

- Four more die; dengue death toll reaches 352
- Hospitalisations rise to 1,14,251
- Doctors report surge in critically ill patients
- Experts urge early testing, timely referrals, treatment

A recent death review by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), led by its Director Prof Quazi Ahmed Zaki, found that more than one-third of 119 patients reviewed died within a day of hospital admission.

The review found that 62.5 percent died from dengue shock syndrome, 31.2 percent from expanded dengue syndrome, 16.1 percent from dengue with bleeding and 12.5 percent from other causes. Many patients also experienced diagnostic delays of at least three days.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said, "If 20 patients arrive, around 15 may be in shock. Approximately 90 percent of the patients we are receiving are critically ill."

He identified delayed referrals and long journeys from remote areas as major factors behind severe complications.

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Invest in girls' rights, end child marriage

Speakers call for greater protection, equal opportunities at MJF event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adolescent girls yesterday called for stronger measures to prevent child marriage and ensure equal access to education, healthcare and safe spaces, saying discrimination and social barriers continued to limit their opportunities.

They made the call at an event organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) to mark International Day of the Girl Child 2026 at Alok Auditorium in the capital's Mirpur-2.

Held under the theme "End Child Marriage and Invest in Girls' Rights", the event brought together adolescent girls, civil society representatives and development partners.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said celebrating girls' achievements meant little without addressing barriers to their rights.

Ayesa Akter, an adolescent girl with a visual impairment, called for accessible learning materials, including Braille and audio resources, stressing that girls with disabilities needed equal opportunities, not sympathy.

"Simply saying that girls will conquer the world is not enough. We must ask how they will achieve that and what opportunities we are creating for them," she said.

Shaheen said child marriage violated girls' fundamental rights and undermined their education, health and employment prospects. She cited poverty, insecurity and a lack of alternatives as factors driving child marriage and called for stronger law enforcement and institutional accountability.

Presenting the keynote paper, MJF Assistant Project Manager Lysa Mahmud Hema cited findings from studies by UNICEF, UNFPA and BBS, which showed that 47.2 percent of women aged 20–24 had married before turning 18, while 13.4 percent had married before turning 15.

Educational completion rates also fell from 91.3 percent at primary level to 75.9 percent at lower secondary and 41.1 percent at upper secondary, she said.

During an intergenerational dialogue moderated by MJF Media and Communication Officer Nusrat Fatima, girls shared experiences of discrimination at home, in schools and online.

Sadia Akter Eva of Maer Achol, who lives in a shelter home, raised concerns about unequal opportunities in school sports, saying boys received more time and facilities.

Tasneem Ferdousi of BISC questioned the social acceptance of marrying

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At least 187 killed in mob violence in nine months

Says Human Rights Support Society report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 187 people were killed and 401 injured in 398 incidents of mob violence across Bangladesh in the first nine months of 2026, according to a Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) report released yesterday.

The death toll was more than two-and-a-half times the 73 deaths recorded in political clashes during the same period.

The incidents of mob violence reportedly stemmed from allegations of theft, robbery, mugging, rape and hurting religious sentiments, as well as attempts to establish dominance.

The report, signed by HRSS Executive Director Ijajul Islam, was compiled using reports from 16 national dailies and the organisation's investigations between January and September.

According to the report, 1,013 incidents of political violence left 73 dead and 6,473 injured. Of these, 931 incidents, or 91 percent, involved BNP infighting or clashes with rival parties.

BNP infighting alone accounted for 342 incidents, leaving 40 dead and 2,632 injured. Among the 73 people killed in political violence, 46 were from the BNP, eight from Jamaat-e-Islami and six from the Awami League.

More than 270 political cases named 5,809 individuals and accused 32,433 unnamed people. Of the 5,644 people arrested, 4,827 belonged to the AL.

At least 17 people died in law enforcement custody or in incidents involving torture, shootings and so-called "gunfights", while 10 died while fleeing police chases.

Another 95 inmates, including 55 undertrial prisoners, 20 AL men and one BNP activist, died in jail.

Under the Cyber Protection Ordinance 2025 and Cyber Protection Act 2026, 113 people were sued and 55 arrested in 40 cases. Another 12 were detained over objectionable posts about Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and 24 for allegedly hurting religious sentiments.

Fifty-one journalists were sued in 19 cyber cases. Overall, 518 journalists faced attacks or harassment in 288 incidents, leaving 297 injured and 20 arrested.

Police also foiled 58 rallies, leaving 439 people injured and 46 detained.

Along the Indian border, 43 attacks by the BSF killed 13 Bangladeshis and injured 39. Landmines laid by the Arakan Army along the Myanmar border killed eight and injured five.

The report also recorded abuse of 2,404 women and girls. At least 657 were raped, including 392 minors and 130 gang-rape victims, while 29 were murdered after rape.

Domestic violence claimed the lives of 457 women, while 494 children died in 1,810 incidents of abuse.

Meanwhile, 56 attacks on minorities resulted in the vandalism of 21 temples and 47 homes, while 535 workers died in workplace incidents.

AT A GLANCE

- Political clashes leave 73 dead, 6,473 injured
- BNP infighting accounts for 40 deaths
- 95 inmates die in jail
- 518 journalists face attacks or harassment
- 657 women and girls raped

Govt to constitute committees in upazilas to curb teen gangs

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to form committees in all upazilas across the country to prevent juvenile gang activities and strengthen efforts to tackle the problem.

Each committee will be headed by the upazila nirbahi officer, with the officer-in-charge of the local police station serving as member secretary, said Faisal Hassan, deputy chief information officer at the ministry, yesterday.

He, however, did not disclose the total number of members to be included in each committee.

The move comes amid growing concerns over juvenile gang activities in Dhaka and other parts of the country, with gang members allegedly involved in various crimes, including mugging, extortion and murder.

Education reforms must go beyond curriculum

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Curriculum reforms alone would not improve primary education unless teacher training, school supervision, infrastructure and technology were addressed together, said State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Bobby Hajjaj yesterday.

Speaking at a dialogue, organised by the ministry, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and Unicef, at a city hotel, he said the curriculum would place greater emphasis on Bangla, mathematics, English, play-based learning, digital content and practical activities.

The ministry presented findings from consultations across eight divisions and proposed a 12-month practical learning programme covering child protection, road safety, fire and disaster preparedness, environmental protection, water safety, hygiene, first aid, nutrition, digital safety, civic responsibility and community-level problem-solving.

It also plans to introduce a revised curriculum in 2028, with teaching materials and assessments to be tested in 2027.

The ministry proposed common minimum standards for government and non-government primary schools, including

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Several pedestrians climb over the two metal bars of a road divider in the capital's Paltan yesterday, despite a footbridge being just a few steps away. *Inset*, the footbridge, however, remains largely unused, with only a vendor on it.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

ICT rejects review plea by 5 accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday rejected a review petition filed by five detained accused, including former lawmaker ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, seeking reconsideration of its order framing charges against them.

The tribunal set October 15 for the prosecution's opening statement and recording of the first witness's testimony.

On June 30, the tribunal framed charges against former ministers Hasan Mahmud and Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury Nowfel, and 20 others over crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the July uprising in Chattogram, which left six people dead and more than 100 injured.

The other four detained accused are Jubo League leader Azizur Rahman, Touhidul Islam, Md Firoz and Debashish Pal Debu.

Meanwhile, prosecution witness Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, a BRAC University student, testified before ICT-1 yesterday in a crimes against humanity case against Sajeeb Wazed Joy, former ICT adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

Mesbah described how law enforcement personnel shot private university students in Badda and Rampura on July 18 and 19.

Separately, Sub-Inspector Sheikh Abzalul Haque became the first accused in a crimes

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