DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2026



"Zelensky doesn't know what he's talking about. To be honest, I think it's time for somebody else to negotiate on behalf of Ukraine."
President **DONALD TRUMP**

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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B1 | WHY GARMENT WAGE UNREST KEEPS RETURNING

P3 | AFTER 14 YEARS, BRT PROJECT REACHES DEAD END

P5 | TRUMP APPROVAL FALLS TO RECORD LOW OF 31PC: POLL

P6 | WHEN DID PLAY STOP BEING A PART OF CHILDHOOD?

HOSPITAL EXPANSION

Priority by POWER

93% new beds go to districts, constituencies linked to ministers; many overcrowded hospitals left waiting

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Over the past eight months, the expansion of public hospitals has been concentrated in the home districts or constituencies of a handful of ministers and state ministers, even though health facilities in other districts have a greater need for capacity expansion.

higher bed occupancy rates in 2024, show data from the Health Bulletin published by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in April this year.

"Priority should be determined based on bed occupancy and the number of patients a hospital treats compared with its existing capacity. This should guide decisions

2,879 beds added to 19 hospitals in 14 dists from Feb 17 to Sept 22

Of the beds, 2,688 allocated to 14 hospitals in 10 dists associated with ministers

Only 191 beds approved for 5 hospitals outside ministers' home districts, constituencies



Mymensingh Medical College Hospital had highest bed occupancy rate in 2024 but received no capacity expansion

A total of 2,879 beds have been added to 19 hospitals in 14 districts since the BNP government assumed office on February 17. Of those, 2,688 -- or about 93 percent -- were allocated to 14 hospitals in 10 districts linked to several ministers, including Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

Only 191 beds were approved for five hospitals in other districts, according to documents regarding the health ministry's decisions on hospital expansion between April 28 and September 22.

Moreover, the BNP government approved two new government medical colleges -- one in Thakurgaon, the home district of Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, the then LGRD minister, on May 15; and another in Narsingdi, the home district of Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain, on June 14.

Experts said some hospitals in ministers' areas needed expansion because they were already treating more patients than their sanctioned capacity.

However, several facilities elsewhere were under even greater pressure, with

on which hospitals need to be expanded first," Prof Muzahrul Huq, a member of the erstwhile Health Sector Reform Commission, told The Daily Star.

He further said that reducing the flow of patients to Dhaka should also be a priority. To achieve this, public hospitals around Dhaka need to be expanded by adding more beds and healthcare personnel so that patients can receive treatment closer to their homes.

Prioritising hospitals based on political considerations is unfair. "If the home districts and constituencies of ministers or policymakers are given priority, it would be unjust and would not ensure proper services for people," he said.

Of the 19 hospitals, Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogura, the home district of the PM, saw the largest increase in bed allocation on September 8, with the number rising from 1,200 to 1,800 beds.

Seeking anonymity, a health ministry

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



The mangled remains of an RP Special Paribahan bus following a head-on collision with a sand-laden truck near the Bonpara Police Investigation Centre on the Pabna-Rajshahi Highway early yesterday. Most of the 12 people killed in the crash were passengers on the bus, which was travelling from Barguna to Chapainawabganj.
PHOTO: **AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU**

NATORE CRASH KILLS 12

'Helper drove as driver slept'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

At least 12 people were killed and 20 others injured when a bus collided head-on with a sand-laden truck on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway in Natore early yesterday.

Many of the survivors alleged that the bus helper was driving recklessly while the driver was asleep at the back. Police, however, could not confirm the allegation.

The Chapainawabganj-bound RP Special bus, which started from Barguna, collided with the truck near the Bonpara police outpost around 4:00am, when most passengers were asleep.

Rakib Hossain Fahim, who was travelling to Rajshahi for

"My father was supposed to return with onion seeds in the afternoon. Instead, he is returning home in a hearse."
Md Badsha Fakir,
son of Abdus Samad, 70, who lost his life

business, said the bus was being driven recklessly after a late-night break.

"I could sense something bad was about to happen."

"I suspect the helper was at the wheel. I sensed a collision was imminent with the truck coming from the other side. Within moments, it happened," he recounted from a hospital bed.

Fahim believed sitting at the back probably saved his life.

Md Shariful Haque, superintendent of police in Natore, said, "The bus driver may have been attempting an overtaking manoeuvre, lost control and collided head-on with the truck."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Relief for errant bank owners?

Reforms to curb family control being rolled back

ARUN DEVNATH

Bank owners look set to win back the control the interim government tried to take from them. The new government is rewriting the Bank Company Act, and the version taking shape would undo some of the tighter rules meant to stop families from running banks as private fiefdoms.

their hands in the air and finally walking out. The trigger was a last-minute amendment to the Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 2023, slipped in by Awami League MP Ahsanul Islam and pushed through by then finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

The change was startling: bank directors could now serve twelve consecutive years, up from nine. As the then parliament

ANALYSIS

Two changes stand out. Bangladesh Bank, under the then governor Ahsan H Mansur, had proposed cutting family seats on a bank board from three to two; that ceiling is now going back to three. Its proposed six-year cap on directorships, meanwhile, will be stretched to nine.

That should worry anyone with money in a bank, and anyone who pays taxes. The last time the rules bent this far towards the owners was in 2023, under the Awami League government, and the episode is worth revisiting.

It was a chaotic Wednesday. Bangladesh's parliament had descended into uproar, with opposition lawmakers shouting, throwing

speaker, Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, cut the opposition's microphones and shut down debate, Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Feroz Rashid reached for satire. Had the government simply granted bank owners a lifetime appointment, he asked, adding that whenever these directors caught a cold, they flew to Singapore on depositors' money. His party colleague Mujibul Haque was blunter still. He called bank directors the "masterminds of bank looting" and warned that the state had handed its authority to private financial barons who even decided who became central bank governor.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Ousted autocrat, opposition out to stir unrest

Says Tarique during his whirlwind puja tour

BSS, *Rajshahi*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday urged people to remain vigilant against attempts to create unrest, alleging that the ousted autocrat and a faction of the opposition had joined hands to destabilise the country.

"We've intelligence reports that the ousted autocrat is providing money from across the border to a particular political party, which is trying to create instability here," he said at a rally at Haji Muhammad Mohsin Government High School ground in Rajshahi.

He said people must remain alert to ensure that no one could create disorder or disrupt efforts to revive the economy and improve their livelihoods.

"We say: 'We will work, we will build, Bangladesh first.' Those who do not believe in this slogan and principle are now involved in conspiracies," he said, referring to recent attempts to foment labour unrest at factories in different parts of the country.

The prime minister said the government had taken initiatives to reopen closed mills

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman watches a cultural performance organised to mark Nabami of Durga Puja at the Rangpur Dharma Sabha Puja Mandap yesterday.
PHOTO: **PID**

To mourn or to wait: A family's grim dilemma

No official confirmation of daughter's execution in KSA

STAR REPORT

Fazal Mia still does not know whether to mourn his youngest daughter or wait for her to come home.

The day labourer from Tangail learned just two days ago that his daughter, Sweety Akhtar, who had been working in Saudi Arabia, had been executed.

Yet, with no official confirmation from the government, the family has neither the certainty of her death nor the comfort of knowing she is alive.

Nearly four years ago, Fazal borrowed Tk 1.5 lakh to send Sweety to Saudi Arabia, hoping to secure a better future for her.

A resident of Nagar Chhawali village in Mahera union of Tangail's Mirzapur upazila,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

French PM vows 'massive' police deployment

Blames ultra-left groups for 'insurrectionary plan' in riots

AGENCIES

French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu said yesterday authorities would mobilise a "massive" security presence next weekend, with organisers announcing plans for new protests after riots erupted on the sidelines of nationwide demonstrations.

"The deployment for next Saturday will be massive," Lecornu said in parliament, acknowledging that the security operation for the protests last weekend had been "too static and not mobile enough."

He accused ultra-left radical groups of forging an "insurrectionary plan" that led to the violent rioting over the weekend, reports AFP.

Paris police yesterday ordered a temporary ban on people carrying cans or bottles of petrol or gas, or possessing fireworks.

Overnight curfews in violence-hit zones of France's biggest cities helped bring respite from the nation's worst unrest in years, the government said.

"The targeted curfews have contributed to the calm of last night," Lecornu said earlier in a post on X, adding they may be extended further into the week where needed.

Buoyed by protests in France, crowds have also taken to the streets in other countries, including Italy and Albania, where similar anger over living conditions has led to clashes, reports Reuters.

In central Paris, police emptied and guarded the Place de la Republique overnight, with a helicopter overhead. In Lille, in the north, where the curfew only applied to minors, officers patrolled the city centre, checking bypassers' identities.

Paris police yesterday ordered a temporary ban on people carrying cans or bottles of petrol or gas, or possessing fireworks.

Marseille Mayor Benoît Payan said curfews for minors would be imposed in commercial areas hardest hit by the weekend's riots, with the measures due to begin last night.

High-school pupil strikes and demonstrations against falling standards and growing dilapidation have converged with a broader outpouring of anger at rising prices and the sense that health, housing and welfare needs are also no longer being met.



Vehicles were few and far between around the SAARC Fountain at Karwan Bazar in the capital yesterday afternoon. Dhaka's usually bustling streets remain relatively quiet during the Durga Puja holidays, with major intersections seeing fewer vehicles than on regular working days.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ousted autocrat, opposition out to stir unrest

FROM PAGE 1

and factories had reopened in the past seven months, he said.

"The core objective is to ensure that our workers do not remain unemployed and can return to work," he said.

The government had also taken initiatives to reopen around 46 more closed factories across the country between January and December next year, he said, adding, "We want our workers to have jobs so they can earn a living and sustain themselves."

Tarique said the government planned to double the bed capacity of every upazila health complex from 50 to 100 over the next five years to improve access to healthcare.

Separate beds for women and children, along with dialysis facilities for kidney patients, would also be introduced so rural residents would not have to travel to distant towns for routine treatment, he said.

At the start of the rally, the prime minister distributed Tk 12 crore in incentives among 38,970 sugarcane farmers in the Rajshahi region. He transferred the money to their mobile accounts with the press of a button on a computer and handed cheques to 15 farmers.

The rally was chaired by BNP Acting Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and addressed by Land Minister Mizanur Rahman Minu, Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir, Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury, BNP Standing Committee Member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and Rajshahi lawmakers.

Thousands of BNP leaders and activists from across Rajshahi district attended the rally, along with men and women from the Hindu community who are celebrating Durga Puja.

Earlier, Tarique arrived at Shah Makhdum Airport in Rajshahi aboard a military aircraft at 2:50pm and went straight to the rally venue. Before visiting Rajshahi, he had attended a Durga Puja mandap at Dharmasabha Temple in Rangpur. After his engagements in Rajshahi, he left for Shah Makhdum Airport to fly to Chattogram.

Priority by power

FROM PAGE 1

official said more than three patients were being treated against every available bed at the hospital, underscoring the need to expand its capacity.

However, the same rationale was not applied in the case of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). Despite recording the highest bed occupancy rate among all medical college hospitals in 2024, the facility has not seen an increase in bed capacity since 2013.

The 1,000-bed facility had a bed occupancy rate of 329 percent in 2024, compared with 308 percent at the hospital in Bogura.

Moreover, MMCH treated 3,21,524 inpatients, more than double the number (1,23,364) handled by the Bogura hospital.

A recent visit to MMCH laid bare a severe shortage of beds, with dozens of patients being treated on floors and corridors.

"I have been trying to get a bed, but none is available," 65-year-old Ishaq Ali, who was being treated in a corridor after being admitted with a lung infection, told our correspondent on October 7.

On October 6, the hospital had 4,098 patients against its 1,000-bed capacity, said the hospital's assistant director (administration) Mohammad Mainuddin Khan. "We are providing food and emergency medicines for all admitted patients, but we cannot arrange beds for everyone."

BED ALLOCATION

The second-largest bed expansion went to Mugda Medical College Hospital in Dhaka-9 constituency of State Minister for Road Transport, Bridges and Railways Habibur Rashid Habib and the medical college hospital in Dinajpur, the home district of Social Welfare Minister AZM Zahid Hossain.

The 500-bed hospitals in Mugda and Dinajpur were each expanded to 1,000 beds between May 21 and August 19 despite occupancy rates of 157-169 percent.

By contrast, hospitals in Khulna (266 percent), Sylhet (259 percent), Cumilla (221 percent), Rangpur (199 percent) and Barishal (190 percent) received no such expansion.

The case of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital underscores the unmet need for expansion at some of the excluded hospitals.

A total of 3,172 patients were receiving treatment at the hospital against its capacity of just 900 beds on October 8, meaning the number of patients was more than three times the hospital's bed capacity.

"I have been asking for a bed for the past two days, but they cannot provide any," said Rustam Ali from the city's Jalalabad area who was being treated for injuries to his hands and feet.

Asma Begum from Sylhet's Osmaninagar upazila was tending to her grandson Jisan, who had developed measles-like symptoms, on the hospital floor.

"I found a small space, so I spread a mat for my grandson to lie on. A doctor came by once, examined him, and said we could remain here for now," she told our Sylhet correspondent on October 7.

Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, which treated more than two patients for every available bed, saw a relatively modest expansion in July with its capacity rising from 1,200 to 1,300 beds. The facility is located in the constituency of Land Minister Mizanur Rahman Minu.

Besides, the capacity of the Sadar hospital in Rajbari, home district of State Minister for Cultural Affairs Ali Newaz Mahmood Khyom, and the general hospital in Joypurhat, the home district of State Minister for Public Administration Abdul Bari, was raised by 150 beds in the same month.

Rangamati General Hospital and Langadu Upazila Health Complex (UHC) in Rangamati, home district of the then Chattogram Hill Tracts affairs minister Dipen Dewan, were also among the facilities that received capacity upgrades.

Earlier in May, the 100-bed district hospital in Narsingdi, the home district of the health minister, saw its capacity rise to 250 beds. It had an occupancy rate of 117 percent, lower than that of at least 25 hospitals in other parts of the country. Besides, the district has another 100-bed hospital.

In addition to district hospitals, three UHCs in the constituencies of two ministers saw their bed capacity double between May 17 and August 2.

On May 17, two 50-bed UHCs were upgraded to 100 beds in Chakoria and Pekua under Cox's Bazar-1, the constituency of Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed.

The UHC in Bhairab under Kishoreganj-6, the constituency of State Minister for Textiles and Jute Shariful Alam, saw a similar rise in bed capacity on August 2.

In June, the government had decided to upgrade all UHCs to 101-bed facilities to improve access to public healthcare services nationwide. On August 12, the decision was revised, and a new plan was adopted to upgrade all UHCs to 151-bed facilities in phases.

Around a month later, the health ministry upgraded Nandigram UHC in Bogura from 31 to 50 beds, along with another UHC in Feni. It also expanded the capacity of the 500-bed National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital in Dhaka by 200 beds in September.

By contrast, only 191 additional beds were approved for five hospitals outside ministers' areas, including four 31-bed UHCs that received just 19 beds each in Taraganj of Rangpur, Osmaninagar of Sylhet, Atgharia of Pabna and Fulgachhi of Feni. The National Institute of ENT in Dhaka received the remaining 115 beds and was expanded to 250 beds.

When contacted, the health minister rejected allegations that hospital expansion projects were influenced by political considerations.

"We are doing this entirely on the basis of need. We are increasing facilities in areas where medical services are inadequate," he told The Daily Star on October 14.

Sakhawat said the government was planning to establish a 1,600-bed hospital in Lalmonirhat and implement several other healthcare projects in different districts.

Asked why most hospital expansion projects were concentrated in the constituencies of ministers and state ministers, he said, "Would you judge the hospital expansion in Rangamati based on the minister representing the area, or on the healthcare needs of the people there? Remote and neglected areas need to be brought into the mainstream."

When this correspondent pointed out that many hospitals with higher bed occupancy rates did not receive similar expansions, the minister said projects for those facilities were also under consideration and urged all to wait for a year to see the progress.

[Our Mymensingh and Sylhet correspondents contributed to this report]

HOSPITAL EXPANSION AT A GLANCE

FACILITY	APPROVAL DATE	EXPANSION	HOME DIST/CONSTITUENCY	MINISTER/STATE MINISTER
Rangamati General Hospital	April 28	From 100 to 250 beds	Rangamati	Dipen Dewan, the then CHT affairs minister
Langadu UHC	April 28	From 31 to 50 beds	Rangamati	Dipen Dewan, the then CHT affairs minister
District Sadar Hospital, Rajbari	April 28	From 100 to 250 beds	Rajbari	Ali Newaz Mahmood Khyom, state minister for cultural affairs
Chakoria UHC	May 17	From 50 to 100 beds	Cox's Bazar	Salahuddin Ahmed, home minister
Pekua UHC	May 17	From 50 to 100 beds	Cox's Bazar	Salahuddin Ahmed, home minister
Mugda Medical College Hospital	May 21	From 500 to 1000 beds	Dhaka-9	Habibur Rashid Habib, state minister for road transport
Narasingdi District Hospital	May 24	From 100 to 250 beds	Narasingdi	Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain, health minister
Joypurhat General Hospital	July 12	From 250 to 400 beds	Joypurhat	Abdul Bari, state minister for public administration
Rajshahi Medical College Hospital	July 13	From 1200 to 1300 beds	Rajshahi	Mizanur Rahman Minu, land minister
Bhairab UHC	Aug 2	From 50 to 100 beds	Kishoreganj	Shariful Alam, state minister for textiles and jute
Dinajpur Medical College Hospital	Aug 19	From 500 to 1000 beds	Dinajpur-6	AZM Zahid Hossain, social welfare minister
Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital	Sept 8	From 1,200 to 1,800 beds	Bogura	Tarique Rahman, prime minister
Nandigram UHC	Sept 22	From 31 to 50 beds	Bogura	Tarique Rahman, prime minister

To mourn or to wait

FROM PAGE 1

he recalled how his daughter initially sent money home before the family received troubling news.

"She sent money home for the first five months. One day, she called and told us she had been sent to jail," Fazal told The Daily Star.

According to him, Sweety said she had been framed and imprisoned following an argument with other female workers in Saudi Arabia. The family then lost contact with her for about a year.

"She later began calling home again, usually once a month, but never told us about her trial or sentence.

"During one of her last calls, she said she might be released from jail in two months. She called us from jail as recently as 15 days ago. Even then, she said nothing about her sentence."

The foreign ministry recently said it had learned of the executions of two Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia but had been unable to confirm their identities.

"We do not know what has happened to my daughter. We do not even know whether she is alive or dead. We have only heard rumours," Fazal said.

Sweety's mother, Johura, said her daughter was divorced and had a four-year-old daughter.

"After Sweety left for Saudi Arabia, her elder sister, Beauty, took responsibility for raising the child.

"I want the government to tell me what happened to my daughter. I want her back. Whether she is alive or dead, I just want my daughter back," Johura said.

Mahera Union Parishad chairman Bibhas Sarkar and Mirzapur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdullah Al Mamun said they had received no information about Sweety from the government.

CONSULAR MEMO RAISES QUESTIONS

A confidential consular memo obtained by The Daily Star shows that the two Bangladeshis executed in Makkah on October 14 had been detained since August 2023 on separate allegations, but a prisoner list received by the consulate made no mention of death sentences.

The October 18 memo, sent by the Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, identifies them as Nazrul Islam Abdul Basir and Suety Akhter (identified by her family as Sweety Akhtar).

The prisoner list, received on September 30, shows Nazrul was detained on August 1, 2023, under Saudi Arabia's cybercrime law, while Suety was detained a day later on allegations of adultery. Both had worked as cleaners for Al Majal Company and were held at Jeddah Correctional Facility and Jeddah Women's Prison, respectively.

Although the list included brief descriptions of offences involving 97 prisoners, it contained no details of the offences or death sentences involving the two Bangladeshis.

Saudi Arabia's interior ministry, however, said the two were executed after being convicted of an "immoral act" inside a mosque in Makkah. The memo does not explain how the conviction relates to the earlier allegations.

The memo does not specify whether either had access to an interpreter or legal representation during their trials. Neither family had sought legal assistance from the consulate.

It also states that Saudi authorities had not notified either the Bangladesh embassy or consulate, officially or unofficially, of the death sentences or executions.

The consulate has since sent a note verbale to the Makkah branch of the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting copies of the judgments and details of the proceedings. A further report will follow once the judgments are received.

PROTEST IN SAVAR

Meanwhile, labour organisations yesterday formed a human chain in front of the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar to protest the execution of two Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia.

Organised by Jatiya Garments Sramik Unity, the programme demanded timely consular assistance for detained Bangladeshis, close monitoring of death penalty cases, urgent diplomatic intervention, and access to legal aid and interpreters during trials.

The protesters also sought greater transparency, accountability and oversight of Bangladesh missions, a digital system to track cases involving detained expatriates, and stronger coordination between the foreign ministry and diplomatic missions to protect expatriates' rights and security.

Leaders and activists of several labour organisations attended.

Speakers included Textile Garments Workers Federation central president Abul Hossain, Bangladesh Textile Garments Workers Federation Dhaka district president Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh Progressive Garments Workers Federation Ashulia thana president Masud Rana Sultan, and Textile Garments Workers Federation Ashulia thana president Mansur Ali.

The programme was moderated by Jatiya Garments Sramik Unity president Md Faridul Islam.

(Our Tangail and Savar Correspondents contributed to this report)

Dhaka, Tokyo

FROM PAGE 12

Philippines, Vietnam, and Laos to advance security, economic resilience, and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"The visit of Tarique Rahman is expected to further strengthen the 'Strategic Partnership' between Japan and Bangladesh, a key regional partner that shares values and principles such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law, and enhance coordination towards realising the updated 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)'," said the Japanese foreign ministry in its announcement.

At the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae, Tarique will pay an official visit to Japan, said Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam at a press conference yesterday.

The upcoming visit will provide an opportunity to deepen and broaden bilateral ties beyond the existing strategic partnership.

In particular, the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Bangladesh and Japan in February has created new opportunities for expanding trade and investment.

Dhaka and Tokyo would discuss ways to reduce interest rates on Japanese loans, he said.

Bangladesh is discussing around eight instruments with Japan, including memorandums of understanding (MoUs), with three to four expected to be signed during the visit.

Draft agreements on cooperation in agriculture, fisheries, human resource development and skills enhancement, civil aviation, trade, environmental protection, and modernisation of local government are still under discussion.

Asked about Japan's initiative to develop Matarbari as a subregional hub, Siam said Bangladesh's economic development goals are closely linked to the development of port infrastructure.

"The ports should be ready to handle and enhance capacity for our future imports and exports. That is how the Matarbari project has emerged. If the port can handle more after meeting our demands, then we will think about it," he said.

According to the preliminary itinerary, Tarique is scheduled to hold high-level bilateral talks with Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae on October 27, the second day of the visit.

The preliminary itinerary also includes visits to an LNG terminal and a power plant in Futtsu City, Chiba; the headquarters of Uniqlo; and a Toyota factory in Nagoya.

Tarique will be accompanied by his wife, his special assistant for Asia-Pacific employment Md Shakirul Islam Khan, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, relevant advisers, state ministers and government officials.

The delegation will travel on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight.



FORAGING THE MUDFLATS

A Eurasian Curlew forages for crabs, small aquatic animals and earthworms along the shore at Dimer Char in the Sundarbans yesterday. The migratory waterbird, recognised by its brown-and-whitish streaked plumage, long legs and downward-curving bill, visits Bangladesh's coastal mudflats during the colder months, playing an important role in maintaining the balance of wetland and coastal ecosystems.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Govt turns to drones to monitor Turag pollution

Tk 184cr project planned to protect the river



REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is planning to use drones to monitor and curb pollution in rivers around Dhaka, particularly the Turag.

To this end, a Tk 184 crore integrated project for the environmental protection and pollution control of the Turag river will be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) for approval.

The project, titled "Metro Dhaka Water Security and Resilience Program: Integrated Pollution Monitoring and Enforcement System of Turag River ECA", will be implemented by the Department of Environment (DoE) with funding from the World Bank.

The implementation period is scheduled for July 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028.

According to the project proposal, drones will regularly monitor illegal waste dumping and storage along the riverbanks. Authorities will also identify pollution hotspots and finalise a list of industries discharging waste into the river in violation of environmental regulations.

The project will seek to ensure the installation and effective operation of effluent treatment plants (ETPs) at industrial facilities through regular monitoring, at least 100 enforcement operations, notices and fines against unauthorised industrial activities.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

After 14 years, BRT project reaches a dead end

Govt scraps the Gazipur-Airport service after Tk 2,810cr spent, opts for six-lane road instead

SHAMIMA RITA

After 14 years and Tk 2,810 crore already spent, Bangladesh's first dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project has been scrapped before it ever began operations, with the government deciding to convert the Gazipur-Airport corridor into a six-lane road.

Under the plan, BRT stations, lane dividers and other related infrastructure will be dismantled to make way for three lanes of general traffic in each direction. Two existing two-lane overpasses may also be widened to four lanes.

According to a letter issued by the Road Transport and Highways Division on October 19, the decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on October 18.

The letter, signed by Deputy Secretary Taslima Ahmed Poli, said the cabinet also decided to dissolve Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit PLC and transfer its responsibilities to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

The relevant authorities have been instructed to submit an initial progress report within 15 days and provide updates by the third day of each month until the decisions are implemented.

Before formally closing the project, the authorities must consult development partners and resolve any legal and contractual issues, the letter added.

Approved in November 2012, the 20.5 km project was initially scheduled for completion by December 2016 at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore. Repeated delays and revisions later pushed the estimated cost to Tk 4,268.32 crore.

The project was funded by the government, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and France's Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

By December 2024, around 97 percent of the infrastructure work had been completed, while overall physical progress stood at 77.48 percent.

The project expired that month without an extension. Although the dedicated BRT lanes were later opened to general traffic, the service never began as two attempts to procure buses failed.

- 20.5km project approved in 2012 for Tk 2,037.9 crore
- Estimated cost later rose to Tk 4,268.32 crore
- Deadline expired in Dec 2024, with 77.48% overall progress
- Two attempts to procure buses failed
- Six people killed in accidents at the construction site



In July 2025, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) rejected a proposal to raise the project cost to Tk 6,598 crore and extend the deadline to December 2029. Instead, it ordered an investigation into the project's design and feasibility study.

The government later considered four options -- completing the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

JOURNALIST ALIF MURDER

Suspect Opurba on 4-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

A court in Netrokona yesterday placed Opurba, 22, on a four-day remand in connection with the murder of journalist Lutfozzaman Fakir Alif in Durgapur on October 15.

It passed the order after police produced him before it at the end of a previous one-day remand and sought a fresh seven-day remand.

Khandakar Shaker Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station, said Nurul Amin Bhuiyan, judge of the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, granted a four-day remand after the hearing.

Earlier on Sunday, the court had placed Opurba on a one-day remand following a police petition.

Investigation sources said Opurba was arrested after midnight on Saturday in front of the old cinema hall in Durgapur municipal town.

Police claimed Opurba was present at the crime scene during Alif's murder, carrying a bag containing weapons.

The OC said Opurba is the nephew of the prime suspect and alleged shooter in the killing. The suspect is known to be a professional killer, and investigators obtained information indicating that the firearms used in the murder had been kept in Opurba's custody.

According to case documents, Alif was shot dead by criminals around 8:00pm while returning home after having tea at a stall in the Telanjia area of Durgapur upazila.



Scores of people, accompanied by family members, board buses at Gabtoli Bus Stand in the capital yesterday, just in time to head home and spend the Durga Puja holidays with loved ones. This year's extended Puja holidays, including weekends, have given people across the country more time to travel.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

IN BRIEF

President accepts Ishraque's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Division has issued a gazette notification after President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir accepted Ishraque Hossain's resignation as state minister for liberation war affairs.

Following his resignation, the government has 23 state ministers and 27 ministers, including the prime minister. Earlier, two ministers resigned from Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's eight-month-old government: Dipen Dewan, minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs, and Zahir Uddin Swapon, who was in charge of the information ministry.

Ishraque formally announced his resignation at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club on Monday afternoon.

Cabinet Division sources said that after Ishraque submitted his written resignation on Monday evening, it was forwarded to the president through Tarique Rahman, in line with the rules. The Dhaka-6 lawmaker drew criticism on Saturday for brandishing a firearm during an "anti-drug drive" in Gandaria, Dhaka.

5 more die of dengue, 1,366 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



At least five dengue patients died and 1,366 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the deaths, two each were reported in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Barishal division, while one was reported in Rangpur division.

With the latest deaths and cases, the total death toll rose to 357 and the number of cases to 1,15,617. Currently, 5,944 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country.

DC confce from Jan 31 to Feb 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning to hold its first conference of upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) in December this year, while the annual deputy commissioner (DC) conference is scheduled for January 31 to February 3 next year.

The exact date of the UNO conference has yet to be finalised, according to sources at the Prime Minister's Office.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office confirmed the details of the two events, saying Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has consented to inaugurate the DC conference at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium on January 31. The head of the government is also scheduled to inaugurate the UNO conference once the date is fixed.

At the annual DC conference, separate sessions are held for each ministry. A few months before the event, the government seeks proposals from DCs on problems, prospects, development projects and policy matters concerning their respective districts and regional and national issues.

The Cabinet Division then finalises the list of proposals after discussions with the ministries concerned. The proposals are subsequently discussed in the presence of ministers, advisers and secretaries of the relevant ministries.

30 detained in Cambodia return home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty Bangladeshis detained at an immigration centre in Cambodia while trying to return home from alleged cyber scam operations arrived in Dhaka yesterday, more than six weeks after their detention.

They landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 12:30pm on Thai Airways flight TG-321, said Al Amin Nayon, president and co-founder of Anirban Survivor Voice Foundation.

The Criminal Investigation Department conducted forensic tests on their mobile phones and other belongings because they had been held in cyber scam centres, Nayon said.

The returnees were among 32 Bangladeshis detained by Cambodian immigration police at Phnom Penh airport on September 3 while attempting to return home. Brokers had allegedly lured them to Cambodia with promises of lucrative jobs, but many were confined in cyber scam centres and forced to commit online fraud. Some were allegedly tortured when they tried to escape.

The 32 had registered for repatriation after Cambodia offered to waive overstay penalties. However, immigration police

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Appeal for help

CITY DESK

Sufia Begum, 59, has been suffering from left breast cancer for six years. She underwent surgery at Tata Medical Center in Kolkata in March 2020 and has since continued treatment in Bangladesh under clinical oncologist Dr Lt Col SM Rokonuzzaman, according to a press release.



She requires regular chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, medicines and medical tests. Her monthly medication costs Tk 12,000-15,000, while tests and chemotherapy cost Tk 30,000-35,000 per session. She is also suffering from osteoporosis and other complications. A recent fall left her bedridden, delaying her treatment.

After years of treatment, her family has exhausted its savings and fallen into debt. Her husband suffered a stroke last year, further worsening the family's financial hardship. They are now struggling to meet both daily expenses and the cost of her continued treatment.

They therefore urge financially capable individuals to contribute whatever they can towards her treatment.

Aid can be sent to Sufia Begum, Account Number: 0041-0310028904, NCC Bank, Rajshahi Branch and to Sufia's daughter, Zinnat Ara, through bKash (Personal): 01762319001.

CHT minister conveys PM's Durga puja greetings

BSS, *Cox's Bazar*

Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister Sa Ching Prue has conveyed Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Durga Puja greetings to devotees and residents of Cox's Bazar.

He delivered the message while visiting puja mandaps in Cox's Bazar on Monday night.

He also instructed law enforcement agencies to remain alert to ensure the safety of tourists and visitors during "Bijaya Dashami".

He said Durga Puja is being celebrated across the country in a peaceful and solemn atmosphere.

The minister said the largest immersion ceremony (bisarjan) for the idol of Goddess Durga in the country will take place on the beach in Cox's Bazar on Bijaya Dashami.



The college has only 31 teachers against 128 sanctioned posts. PHOTO: STAR

NOAKHALI MEDICAL COLLEGE

Shortage of teacher, poor facilities hamper education

ANWARUL HAIDAR, *Noakhali*

Academic activities at Noakhali Medical College have long been disrupted by an acute shortage of teachers and inadequate infrastructure.

The college has only 31 teachers against 128 sanctioned posts, while its 440 students depend on Noakhali 250-bed General Hospital for clinical training as the institution has yet to establish its own hospital.

According to the principal's office, the Anatomy department has five teachers against 21 posts, Physiology four against 15, Biochemistry three against 14, Pharmacology four against 15, Forensic Medicine three against 15, Pathology four against 15, Microbiology four against 17, and Community Medicine four against 16.

"A major part of medical education is learned at the patient's bedside. Without a hospital or nursing institute on campus, that opportunity has become severely limited for us," said Mushfika Tabassum Khanam, a fourth-year student.

She said travelling to the hospital was particularly difficult for evening ward rounds, when students examine patients, take medical histories and observe doctors at work.

AHM Kefayetullah, another fourth-year student, said the commute left students physically exhausted, affecting their studies at night.

Students also complained about inadequate residential facilities. The campus lacks a boundary wall, canteen, dental unit, prayer halls, recreational facilities and a modern simulation lab. The field becomes waterlogged after rain, while safe drinking water remains scarce.

Established in 2008 with 58 students, the college initially operated from a section of Noakhali General Hospital before moving to its permanent 26-acre campus at Mir Warishpur in Begumganj upazila in August 2013.

Principal Prof Dr Md Saiful Islam acknowledged the problems, saying classes were being managed through temporary postings of officers on special duty arranged by the health ministry.

He said the health secretary was aware of the situation and expressed hope that the problems would be resolved.

Project Director Dr Amjadul Huq said Tk 853.09 crore was allocated under a government project initiated in 2018 to build a 500-bed hospital, nursing institute, morgue, additional student hostels, dormitories and residences for principals and directors.

Construction began in June 2024 under the Public Works Department but was halted shortly afterwards following a directive from the interim government's health adviser, he said.

Dr Huq said the project tenure expired in June this year, and a revised proposal seeking an extension had been submitted to the Planning Commission. Work would resume once the extension was approved.

Health Secretary Md Kamruzzaman said letters had been sent to the department concerned seeking an extension, while the process of recruiting more teachers was underway.

Two babies stolen from Cox's Bazar hospital in 20 days

No arrests made; faulty CCTV cameras hamper probe

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

Two babies have been stolen from Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital within 20 days, raising security concerns and leaving parents anxious.

Seven-month-old Rakib was taken from a paediatric ward on September 19, while a six-day-old newborn was stolen from the Special Care Newborn Unit, a restricted ward, on October 9. No arrests have been made.

In the first incident, an unidentified woman allegedly took Rakib, leaving behind a three-month-old baby, later sent to a child care facility in Chattogram.

Rakib's father, Mohammad Rubel Hossain, said his son was admitted with pneumonia on September 15. On September 19, a woman offered to calm the crying child and took him in her arms. Later, she disappeared with the baby.

Police said both cases were under investigation, with no conclusive evidence linking them.

CCTV footage reportedly showed the woman leaving in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw with two other girls. The family searched in Ukhiya after learning the vehicle had headed towards Sonarpara, but found no trace of Rakib. A general diary was filed on September 20.

In the second incident, a woman allegedly took a newborn from SCANU around 11:25pm on October 9.

Hospital records show the suspect was seen near the breastfeeding room before entering the ward and leaving through the emergency department with the baby.

The child's mother, Rozina Akter, said she had fed and cleaned her son before returning to her room. She began searching around 2:30am after someone enquired about the baby.

"I just want my child back in a healthy condition," she said.

Sub-Inspector Rajib Pal, investigating the second case, said the suspect could not be clearly identified from CCTV footage as she wore a mask and burqa. Most hospital cameras were not working, he added.

Police said both cases were under investigation, with no conclusive evidence linking them.

Hospital Superintendent Dr Mong Ting Nyo said repeated requests for police personnel had not secured the required deployment.

Additional Superintendent of Police Ahidur Rahman said four to five officers were stationed at the hospital's police box. He called for reviewing internal security and considering redeployment of Ansar members.

Resident Medical Officer Dr Shantanu Ghosh said a three-member investigation committee had sought more time to collect statements and examine CCTV footage, as several external cameras were faulty or produced unclear images.

Woman accused of killing cat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A woman has been accused of beating her neighbour's cat to death in Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar.

Shamsul Alam, 54, the cat's owner, filed a written complaint with Chakaria Police Station on Monday. According to the complaint, Shamsul, a resident of Kazirpara in Chakaria municipality, chased his neighbour Firoza Begum's dog on Monday morning when it tried to attack two of his cats.

Enraged, Firoza allegedly beat one of the cats to death with a stick, Shamsul alleged in the complaint.

Shamsul later went to the police station with the cat's body in a cage to file the complaint.

He said he had raised the cats with great care and wanted justice.

Chakaria Police Station Officer-in-Charge Arifur Rahman said killing an animal is a punishable offence. Police would investigate the complaint and take legal action accordingly.

50 vehicles robbed in one day on Cox's Bazar road: victims

Police unable to confirm the number

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Around 50 vehicles were reportedly robbed in two incidents on the Eidgaon-Eidghar-Baishari road in Cox's Bazar on Monday, according to victims.

The incidents took place at Himchhari Dhala in the afternoon, when 10-12 masked men armed with weapons intercepted CNG-run autorickshaws and motorcycles and looted cash, mobile phones and other valuables at gunpoint.

Victims said the robbers took some passengers to a nearby forest, beat them and robbed them of their belongings.

Mohammad Robiul Islam, manager of a private organisation's Eidghar branch, said the robbers stopped his motorcycle while he was travelling from Eidgaon Bazar to Eidghar with a colleague and took Tk 1.2 lakh.

Abdul Hakim, an accountant at another NGO's Eidghar branch, said the robbers intercepted the autorickshaw he was on with two others, took Tk 1.5 lakh, and beat them in a nearby forest.

Jasim Uddin, acting chairman of Eidghar Union, said police arrived after receiving information and launched an operation.

Eidgaon Police Station Officer-in-Charge ATM Shifatul Majdar confirmed the incidents, saying the robbers fled into the forest. Several police teams were searching for them, but no one had been detained as of Monday night.

The officer could not confirm the number of vehicles targeted, but victims estimated it at around 50.

Police and local sources said patrols had been stepped up and teams were searching the surrounding hills.

Locals said robberies, abductions and looting frequently occur along the 17-kilometre road through Ramu and Eidgaon upazilas. Locals usually stop using the road after dusk because of security concerns.

Ishraque had good intentions, but shouldn't display firearm

Says Shafiqur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said BNP lawmaker Ishraque Hossain may have acted with good intentions, but should not have displayed a firearm in public.

"There is no reason to view his actions negatively. However, as a public representative and a state minister, he openly carried a firearm and aimed it at someone. He may have done so with good intentions, but there is no shortage of evil people who could use this as a reference," he said.

Shafiqur was speaking to reporters after attending a reunion of Islami Chhatra Shibir members at GEC Convention Hall in Chattogram.



Members and organisers of the Jatiya Press Club cut a cake to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the organisation in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY

BANGLADESH PETROLEUM CORPORATION
Joy Pahar Estate, Sarson Road, Chawkbazar, Chattogram
Office of Project Director
Modernization and Expansion of Eastern Refinery Limited
E-mail: pderlexpansion@gmail.com

Memo No: 28.25.0000.000.014.01.0001.26/10 Date: 19/10/2026

Notice of Cancellation for REOI and RFP

This is to notify all concerned that the Procurement process for the service named "Selection of an International consulting firm for Rendering Consultancy Services as Project Management Consultant (PMC) for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) works of the "Modernization & Expansion of Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL)" project at North Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh" including the Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) Ref no: ERPLC/M&E/PMC/EOI/01 dated 25 May 2026 and Request for Proposal (RFP) Ref. no: BPC-ERPLC/M&E/PMC/RFP-2026 dated 07 September 2026 has been cancelled as per the ITC clause no- 51.1 of the RFP document.
All concerned are requested to take note of the above.

(Asma Ara Begum)
Project Director,
Modernization and Expansion of Eastern Refinery Limited

GD-2566

Notice of Public Consultations
Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of
Laldia Container Terminal Project

The Project
The Laldia Container Terminal is a major greenfield port infrastructure proposed to be developed under a public-private partnership (PPP) by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and APM Terminals, together with QNS Container Services. The project aims to raise Chattogram Port's container handling capacity by building a new terminal at Laldia Char, which will also strengthening country's port logistics.
Haskoning, in association with the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) and BRTC-BUET, is carrying out the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for this Project, in accordance with the Environment Conservation Rules (ECR) 2023.

Public Consultations:
A public consultation workshop will be held in Chattogram for consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders.
Date: 16th November, 2026
Location: Hotel Saint Martin, 25-33 Sheikh Mujib Road, Agrabad C/A, Chattogram 4100 The consultation meeting will share key environmental and social impacts of the Project and proposed mitigation measures for the construction and operation phases. All concerned and interested stakeholders are invited to take part in the process.
Comments:
Stakeholders are invited to review the ESIA report available on the project website https://www.apmterminals.com/en/laldia/project-information/ESIA-documents and concerned DOE website https://doe.gov.bd for comments. However, comment sheets will be available at the consultation workshop and can be submitted at the venue or sent to the address provided below.

Laldia Container Terminal Limited
Aziz court, Level 20
88-89 Agrabad C/A
Chattogram, Bangladesh
Email: info.Laldia@APMTerminals.com
Phone: +8801322 895603

Department of Environment
Begum Sonia Sultana, Director
Chattogram Metropolitan Office
Poribesh Bhaban, Zakir Hossain Road,
Foy's Lake Area, Khulshi,
Chattogram-4202
Website: http://doemetro.chittagongdiv.gov.bd
Email: ctgmetro@doe.gov.bd
Phone: 02-333379220, 01818540338

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়
সিলেট বন বিভাগ
সিলেট
www.forest.sylhetdiv.gov.bd

বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার-২০২৬ প্রদানের জন্য দরখাস্ত আহ্বান

সিলেট, সুনামগঞ্জ, হবিগঞ্জ ও মৌলভীবাজার জেলার সর্বসাধারণের এবং বিভিন্ন সরকারি, আধাসরকারি, স্বায়ত্তশাসিত ও বেসরকারি সংস্থার/প্রতিষ্ঠানের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, প্রতিবছরের ন্যায় এ বছরও বৃক্ষরোপণে অবদানের স্বীকৃতিস্বরূপ "বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার প্রদানের নীতিমালা (সংশোধিত)-২০২৫" অনুযায়ী "বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার-২০২৬" প্রদান করা হবে। নিম্নবর্ণিত ০৭ (সাত)টি শ্রেণীর প্রতিটি শ্রেণীতে ১ম, ২য় ও ৩য় পুরস্কার প্রদানের জন্য প্রণীত নীতিমালার ভিত্তিতে পুরস্কার প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা রাখা হয়েছে। এতদুদ্দেশ্যে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদনপত্র আগামী ৩০/১১/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে সংশ্লিষ্ট উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা/নিকটবর্তী রেঞ্জ বন কর্মকর্তার নিকট জমা দেয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে। আবেদন পত্রের নির্ধারিত ফরম বিনামূল্যে বিভাগীয় বন কার্যালয়, সিলেট, সহকারী বন সংরক্ষকের কার্যালয়, সিলেট সদর/শ্রীমঙ্গল/হবিগঞ্জ/সুনামগঞ্জ: রেঞ্জ কার্যালয়, এস.এফ.এন.টি.সিএ ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় এবং সকল উপজেলা নার্সারী কেন্দ্র হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

যে ০৭ (সাত)টি শ্রেণিতে পুরস্কার প্রদান করা হবে তা নিম্নরূপ ঃ

(ক) প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়/উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়/এবতেদায়ী মাদ্রাসা/সিনিয়র মাদ্রাসা/কলেজ/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় (খ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/উপজেলা পরিষদ/জেলা পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন/অধিদপ্তর/পরিদপ্তর/সেক্টর কর্পোরেশন/এনজিও/ক্লাব/স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংস্থা (গ) ব্যক্তিগত পর্যায়ে বৃক্ষরোপণ (ঘ) ব্যক্তি মালিকানাধীন নার্সারি (ঙ) ব্যক্তিগত/প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক পর্যায়ে সৃজিত ছাদ বাগান (চ) বন বিভাগ কর্তৃক সৃজিত বাগান (ছ) বৃক্ষ গবেষণা/সংরক্ষণ/উদ্ভাবন।

(মোহাম্মদ আবদুর রহমান)
পরিচিতি নং-১৫২৪৭
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
সিলেট বন বিভাগ, সিলেট
ফোন: ০২-৯৯৬৬৩২৫০৮
e-mail-dfosylhet@yahoo.com

GD-2565

Saudi forces intercept Houthi ballistic missile

Blasts heard in Riyadh; UK to deploy fighter jets to help protect KSA

AGENCIES

Saudi forces yesterday said they had intercepted a Houthi ballistic missile aimed at the kingdom's capital, after authorities issued a danger warning and AFP journalists reported hearing blasts.

The kingdom "intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by the terrorist Houthi militia towards Riyadh", said Turki Al-Malki, a spokesman for the Saudi-led military coalition backing Yemen's government in its war against the Houthis.

Riyadh was shaken by two blasts, according to AFP journalists in the capital.

"A warning has been issued by the National Early Warning Platform in Riyadh City to alert for a potential danger," the Saudi civil defence said in a statement on X.

But the alert was lifted a few minutes later, with the civil defence saying "the danger has passed".

Meanwhile, the UK government announced yesterday that British fighter planes will be deployed to help Saudi Arabia defend itself against increasing attacks from Houthi rebels.

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen warned the Houthi group against using traditional boats to smuggle weapons, missiles and military equipment into the country, citing risks to civilians and regional security, Anadolu reports.

The coalition's Joint Forces Command stressed in a statement that the practice threatened security in Yemen and beyond.



Demonstrators hold placards during a protest against the government's handling of wildfires and calling for an end to corruption, collusion and nepotism, marking the second anniversary of President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka's administration, in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran downs US drone over Hormuz

IRGC claims mines stop two tankers crossing the strait; Qatar reports ongoing US-Iran talks, backs Riyadh amid Houthi strikes

AGENCIES

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said yesterday that it intercepted and destroyed a US MQ-9 drone over the Strait of Hormuz, according to the semi-official Fars news agency.

The Revolutionary Guard said the drone was downed while flying over the strategic waterway. It claimed that the aircraft was the 54th US MQ-9 drone it had destroyed, according to the agency.

Meanwhile, Iranian naval mines halted two tankers attempting to travel the strait via routes considered illegal by Tehran.

"Two violating oil tankers were set ablaze and halted due to the explosion of mines planted by the brave sailors of the IRGC Navy at an illegal crossing point in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz," the Guards said in a statement published on their official Sepah News website.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said that negotiations between Iran and the US are continuing, with both sides engaging in diplomatic efforts despite growing tensions and fears of renewed fighting.

"On the negotiations of the JCPOA, they are ongoing, we are seeing engagement from both parties," Majed al-Ansari said at the Global Security Forum in Doha.

"The fact that we're not hearing about it is a good sign that we're doing our job properly," he said, stressing the importance of confidential negotiations. He added that Doha stands firmly behind Riyadh amid the widening conflict, reports Al Jazeera.

"Qatar is supporting our brothers in Saudi Arabia in defending their sovereignty against this attack," he said.

Pakistan's powerful army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose country has attempted to mediate a peace deal in the Middle East war, arrived in Tehran yesterday.

In a separate development, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has discussed Iran with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during an unannounced visit to Israel on Monday, three Israeli officials said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday said that Russia and Iran have "never" worked so closely, as Moscow seeks to play a mediating role in the Middle East war.

Iranian FM Araghchi says Russia and Iran have never worked so closely as Moscow seeks to mediate in Middle East war

Araghchi hosted his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Iran, in his first visit since the outbreak of the conflict.

"We covered everything from Europe to West Asia, including Lebanon, Palestine, Ukraine and Yemen. Also focused on expansion of economic and nuclear cooperation," Araghchi wrote on X.

IN BRIEF



Trump approval falls to record low of 31pc: poll

REUTERS, *Washington*

President Donald Trump's approval rating fell to a record low as Americans worried about high gasoline prices and appeared ready to punish his Republican Party in the November 3 congressional elections, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that closed on Monday.

Some 31 percent of Americans approve of Trump's performance in office, down a percentage point from two weeks earlier and the lowest level in either of his presidential terms, the four-day poll showed.

Asked which party they would vote for if the congressional elections were held today, some 47 percent of registered voters in the nationwide poll picked Democrats and 35 percent chose Republicans. The 12-point Democratic advantage was the widest over the current election cycle and could bolster Democratic hopes of seizing control of the US House of Representatives and the US Senate.

Much of the drop in support for Republican congressional candidates was due to a larger share of women saying they would pick Democrats.

Albertans vote to remain part of Canada

REUTERS, *Calgary*

Alberta residents voted to remain part of Canada in the province's first-ever referendum on separation, in a much-needed win for Prime Minister Mark Carney as he attempts to unify the country amid a trade war with the US.

CBC News, Canada's government-funded national broadcaster, called the result late Monday after 33 percent of the vote had been counted. At the time of the call, 76 percent of tallied votes were in support of the "remain" side versus 23 percent in favour of the province moving forward with a binding vote on separation. The referendum was nonbinding.

"Albertans made a clear choice. They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other": Canada PM Mark Carney

"Albertans made a clear choice," Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement. "They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other."

"Canada is greater than the sum of its parts," he said. Pollsters and analysts had repeatedly dismissed the possibility of a separatist victory, citing data that showed about one-third of residents in the province supported a future referendum on leaving.



19.2m Afghans facing acute food insecurity by April: UN

AFP, *Geneva*

The number of people facing acute food insecurity in Afghanistan is set to rise to 19.2 million during the winter season between November and April, the United Nations said yesterday.

The food crisis in Afghanistan is projected to affect millions of children in 2027, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said.

Between September and October, 15.9 million people -- or nearly one in three Afghans -- were facing food insecurity at crisis levels or worse, including 3.4 million in emergency conditions, the agency said.

But the outlook is set to deteriorate further. "The number facing acute food insecurity is projected to rise to 19.2 million, of which five million are expected to face emergency levels of hunger," which is "one step away from famine", said OCHA's Afghanistan spokeswoman Olga Cherevko.

The food crisis is not simply about whether the food is available, but also about whether people can afford it, she said.



People wait outside a gas station to fill cooking gas cylinders in the southwestern Yemeni city of Taiz yesterday. The United Nations said more than 250,000 people have been internally displaced in Yemen since the civil war reignited. PHOTO: REUTERS

WESTERN UKRAINE

Russia expands strikes on energy facilities

Six killed; Rubio says interceptors may not have been delivered, but not for political reasons

AGENCIES

Russia has expanded strikes from eastern and central Ukraine to energy facilities in previously untargeted western regions, causing waves of blackouts, energy ministry officials and local authorities said yesterday.

In October, before the start of the cold season, Russia resumed attacks on Ukraine's energy sector, targeting power plants and electricity transmission systems.

"Unfortunately, the enemy continues to deliberately and systematically attack our energy infrastructure," Artem Nekrasov, deputy Ukrainian energy minister, said in a televised statement.

He said Russia struck energy facilities in the central Kirovohrad region, western Zhytomyr, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil and Khmelnytskyi regions and in the southern region of Odesa.

Meanwhile, a Russian drone strike near Kyiv killed three people and wounded four others, Ukrainian prosecutors said yesterday. The attack took place in Chabany, a town located next to the M05 highway linking Ukraine's capital to the southern city of Odesa,



prosecutors added. Another Russian strike killed three civilians in Kramatorsk region.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday acknowledged that a batch of interceptors purchased for Ukraine may not have been delivered, but that this was not because of any political intent.

Intensified Russian attacks in the Black Sea targeting Ukraine's grain exports are worsening a "perfect storm" facing global food supplies, the EU's top diplomat said yesterday. "Six attacks in 10 days by suspected Russian drones marks a dangerous and unacceptable escalation in the Black Sea," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told the European Parliament.

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

Ishraque's resignation a welcome decision

Law must take its course over his armed anti-drug drive

We welcome Ishraque Hossain's resignation as the state minister for Liberation War affairs following widespread criticism of his role in a recent anti-drug operation in Dhaka's Gandaria area. The incident has not only embarrassed the government but also raised serious questions about its commitment to the rule of law. Therefore, while we appreciate the government taking this bold decision, it cannot be the end of the matter. In a media briefing on Monday, Ishraque defended his actions, saying he had committed no mistake. Such a response makes it all the more important that the authorities investigate the incident impartially and take appropriate legal action. As the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has undertaken an investigation, we would like to know what progress has been made and whether the conduct of everyone involved is being examined.

We witnessed in the past that disciplinary action against party figures was often taken in response to public outrage and then quietly reversed once attention subsided. Such reversals undermine the credibility of disciplinary action and may encourage others to believe that they, too, can escape lasting consequences. This should not happen in this case. The BNP must take this incident seriously and ensure that its response sends the unequivocal message: political affiliation or proximity to those in power will not shield anyone from accountability. We would also like to know what action has been taken against Pavel Sikder, former convener of the Dhaka City South unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, who accompanied Ishraque during the drive while allegedly carrying a firearm illegally. Any allegation of illegal possession of a firearm must be investigated, and appropriate action must follow if a violation is proven.

We urge the government to ensure a transparent and impartial investigation and take appropriate legal action against anyone found to have broken the law. The police must demonstrate that they can tackle drug trading effectively, while the government must address institutional failures through proper oversight.

The incident has also raised questions about the effectiveness of the government's anti-drug efforts. If residents have repeatedly complained about drug trading and a public representative believes he must personally join an armed operation to address it, the government must examine whether the responsible agencies are doing their jobs right. The minister has claimed that he raised the matter with the police on numerous occasions, while the police have disputed allegations of inaction. The government must ensure that complaints are acted upon, operations are properly monitored, and the police and Department of Narcotics Control have the resources and capacity to dismantle the drug networks.

Meanwhile, we must also oppose all forms of vigilantism. The fight against drugs must be conducted through lawful operations, professional policing and accountability. Elected representatives can raise public concerns, organise awareness campaigns and press the authorities to act, but they must not take on the role of law enforcement officers.

We urge the government to ensure a transparent and impartial investigation and take appropriate legal action against anyone found to have broken the law. The police must demonstrate that they can tackle drug trading effectively, while the government must address institutional failures through proper oversight. Ishraque's resignation is a necessary first step, but the government must show through its actions that no one is above the law, regardless of rank or political affiliation.

Maintain what's built before building more

Revive Moulvibazar stadium by recruiting manpower, overseeing maintenance

A stadium built at a cost of nearly Tk 5 crore should be buzzing with crowds cheering at a sporting event, not with flies hovering over rubbish piles in a moss-covered pavilion and weed-filled washrooms. Yet that is exactly what the Saifur Rahman Stadium in Moulvibazar has become, 11 years after its inauguration. The main reason behind this, as with so many other public facilities—be it hospital buildings, bridges, or community centres that fall into disrepair—is the lack of proper maintenance.

According to a report by this daily, the 1,800-square-foot stadium, with a one-tier gallery, a District Sports Association (DSA) office, dressing rooms, and a playing field, has turned into an after-hours drug den. Groups gather there after sunset, consuming and trading cannabis, yaba, and Phensedyl. The few who still come to practise or play sports at the stadium now avoid the place after dark due to fear of getting mugged or harassed by the drug users/sellers. As the boundary wall has collapsed in places, grazing animals enter the grounds, feasting on the overrun weeds and grass. Some people, however, still come to practise cricket in a net-enclosed paved area on the southern part of the stadium, but they are discouraged by the unusable toilets and lack of drinking water access. Perhaps what's telling is that the 18,000-capacity stadium has only two temporary staff members for the grounds upkeep.

Sadly, this negligence extends to many other district and upazila stadiums across the country. Investment of public funds in building public service infrastructure is rarely matched by maintenance and staffing. For instance, the National Sports Council reportedly allocated Tk 18 crore this year for stadium repair work around the country, most of which would be spent towards upgrading venues for events, with only a couple of lakhs allocated to the DSAs to cover maintenance and office expenses.

In a country with shrinking open spaces and playgrounds, as well as rising concerns of addiction to screens and drugs among young people, a stadium of such size and potential should have been a solution. Instead, lack of oversight by authorities and a limited maintenance budgets have turned a well-equipped facility into a drug and crime haven. If the government is truly serious about improving the physical and mental wellbeing of our children, it should, before building new venues, invest money and manpower in the upkeep of existing stadiums.

Can BNP keep its own ranks in check?

A CLOSER LOOK



Tasneem Tayeb works for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

As it transpires, BNP lawmaker Ishraque Hossain has resigned as state minister for Liberation War affairs but has no intention of abandoning the anti-drug campaign that brought him into controversy in the first place. On Monday, he said he would continue the campaign as a BNP activist in his constituency. He also declared himself ready to contest the Dhaka South mayoral election if his party nominated him.

His resignation followed the circulation of videos showing him carrying a pistol during an "operation" in Gandaria, accompanied by associates, some of whom were also armed. One was seen kicking a young man, while another was heard threatening to shoot. Ishraque maintains that his firearm was licensed and carried for self-defence. He disputes reports that Prime Minister Tarique Rahman instructed him to resign, saying he sought permission to step down himself. Reportedly, a police investigation into the incident is under way, but no findings have been announced yet.

Less than three weeks earlier, BNP's reserve-seat MP Ferdousy Ahmed resigned from parliament following allegations linking her to the attack and demolition of the Radda MCH-FP Centre in Mirpur. The prime minister instructed her to step down then. She denied involvement in the Radda attack, which saw a large group entering the premises, removing medical equipment and demolishing structures amid a long-standing property dispute. The looting and destruction went ahead in the presence of police. The OC of the local police station was subsequently withdrawn.

As of October 16, police arrested 25 people without identifying who organised the attack. Ferdousy lost her parliamentary seat, although no finding of responsibility against her was publicly announced. Police also did not explain why they failed to prevent the demolition.

So, the ruling party has, by now, seen two prominent politicians leave public office in less than three weeks. The leadership's response was swift, but the incidents have brought renewed attention to the conduct of party members and the supervision they require.

It may be recalled that, in September 2025, Tarique Rahman said more than 7,000 BNP members had faced disciplinary measures over allegations of extortion, corruption and other wrongdoing. Penalties ranged from demotion to expulsion. More have been announced since the party assumed power. But some expulsions have also been reversed. Seven expelled leaders' memberships were restored in October 2025 following appeals. The next month, the party reinstated 43 leaders expelled for contesting the 2023 Sylhet City Corporation election violating the party decision to boycott. Their expulsions were mostly in response to breaches of party instructions—not necessarily criminal wrongdoing.

Parties should be able to reconsider penalties, especially when an earlier decision was unjust or excessive. However, BNP's announcements so far offered little insight into how the appeals were assessed, what evidence was considered, or whether conditions accompanied reinstatement.

Ishraque's confrontation with Dhaka South City Corporation last year offers some context. After an election tribunal, in March 2025, declared him the winner of the 2020 mayoral election, followed by an Election Commission gazette the following month, his supporters occupied Nagar Bhaban in May, demanding his installation. The interim government, however, maintained that the corporation's tenure had expired. The blockade nonetheless continued for weeks, disrupting municipal services. In June, Ishraque held meetings with sanitation inspectors and ward secretaries under banners identifying him as "mayor," although he had not taken oath.

The Gandaria "operation" and Nagar Bhaban siege were not the only incidents where Ishraque's actions embarrassed the BNP. In February, he arrived late at the oath-taking ceremony of newly elected MPs, missing the swearing-in with his party colleagues and having to join the opposition and independent MPs instead. Earlier in October 2023, he was accused of helping a man appear at the party's Naya Paltan office, where the latter addressed the media claiming to be an adviser to then US President Joe Biden.

In Gandaria, Ishraque personally participated in an incident involving live weapons and detentions. A firearm licence does not confer one police powers, and concerns about crime do not override the legal requirements governing arrests and investigations. He says he acted alongside police and local residents. But what authority did he have to lead an armed operation? Under Sections 42 and 59 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, civilians may assist police when called upon or arrest someone in specific circumstances. Neither provision authorises an MP to conduct an armed raid. The 2025 firearms policy also prohibits displaying weapons in a manner likely to cause fear or annoyance.

In the Radda incident, BNP dissolved its Dhaka North City committee and took action against members of the affiliated organisations following the demolition. Investigators are still trying to identify those who directed the attack.

On October 4, journalists and students were attacked at Rajshahi University. *The Daily Star* identified several individuals from video footage, including leaders of the university's Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) unit. Still, the initial police complaint filed by RU authorities named "unidentified" persons. The university subsequently recommended suspending four students, while JCD expelled three members.

Among those identified were Ahsan Habib and Hasibul Islam. Both had been removed from JCD over extortion allegations in October 2024. Their penalties were later withdrawn, and they received positions in the university committee announced in August 2025.

BNP spent years in opposition, relying on local organisers who could mobilise supporters and sustain political networks. Many now operate with their party controlling the government. Political connections can carry considerable weight in dealings with police, universities and local administration. Officials may also face pressure to accommodate individuals who have no formal power to direct them.

BNP's ability to supervise its members cannot be measured solely by the number of sanctions it announces. In June, *The Daily Star* reported that the Prime Minister's Office had begun scrutinising ministers and lawmakers over allegations of corruption, lobbying, administrative interference and abuse of power. Three ministers or state ministers had reportedly received verbal warnings. The PM has warned party members to avoid extortion, land-grabbing and interference in public affairs on more than one occasion. Expulsions, committee dissolutions, and the recent resignations show that the leadership is prepared to impose political consequences.

BNP has organisational bodies empowered to discipline members and review penalties. At Rajshahi University, two JCD leaders were reinstated despite earlier extortion allegations, only to face fresh complaints. Their reinstatement raises legitimate questions about the scrutiny exercised by those responsible for such decisions.

The party may remove members from their positions, but police still have to investigate their wrongdoings. Neither Ishraque's resignation nor the action against Ferdousy Ahmed answers the questions surrounding the Gandaria operation and the Radda attack.

Ishraque has expressed interest in returning to the mayoral office through a fresh election. If BNP considers nominating him, it will have to weigh his political standing against a record that includes a prolonged confrontation over municipal administration and an armed operation now under police investigation.

BNP now faces a bigger challenge. Running a country is far more difficult than managing a political party. With its own leaders repeatedly accused of misconduct and overstepping their authority, how can it expect others to follow rules and regulations?



VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

When did play stop being a part of childhood?



Ruhina Binta A Ghani is a researcher in children's movement behaviours, active play, sleep, and fundamental movement skills, affiliated with Hong Kong Baptist University and BRAC Bangladesh.

RUHINA BINTA A GHANI

A few months ago, while visiting a primary school, I asked a group of children what they liked most about school. I expected answers such as their favourite subject, teacher, or friends. Instead, several children spoke about the few minutes they were allowed to play. One child asked whether their activity session could be made longer because there was "hardly any time to play" after school. Another explained that most afternoons were divided among homework, coaching classes, and screens.

Over the past several years, I have worked with primary school children in both urban and rural communities across Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Khulna, and Noakhali. Through school visits, fieldwork, and research involving hundreds of children and their families, one message has emerged again and again: children enjoy being active, but finding the opportunity to move has become increasingly difficult in Bangladesh.

We often discuss children's education, examination results, and future careers. But far less emphasis is put on their need for movement, sleep, play, and overall development. Yet, these are essential parts of a healthy childhood.

Traditionally, studies in Bangladesh have relied largely on questionnaires asking children or parents to recall how active children were or how much they slept. In several of our studies, we instead used wearable activity monitors that recorded movement and sleep directly. We found that children were moving and sleeping less than we might have assumed from self-reported information alone.

Concerningly, many children are not achieving recommended levels of daily physical activity. Sleep duration is often lower than recommended for healthy growth and development. Recreational screen use is increasing, particularly in urban settings. More than half of the children in our research did not meet any of the recommended movement-health guidelines. However, the most important lesson from our work is that this is not due to children's choices, but the environments they are in.

One of the most striking findings emerged from our research in schools. Nearly nine out of ten children reported that they never participated in physical education classes. During school visits, it was common to observe children sitting during recess or lunch breaks rather than engaging in active play. In many schools, particularly in urban areas, playground space was either limited or unavailable altogether. Parents often told us that they wanted their children to be active, but stated concerns about traffic, safety, academic pressure, mosquito bites, and a lack of suitable places to play. In densely populated neighbourhoods, many children spend most of their time indoors. Several families explained that rooftops, narrow alleys, or small courtyards had become the primary locations for play.

In contrast, children from rural communities generally reported more physical activity, active play, and better motor skill development than children living in major urban centres. This does not necessarily mean rural life is easier. Rather, it suggests that access to open spaces and opportunities for movement matters. We found that children living in communities perceived as safer and more accessible were more likely to engage in active play. In urban communities, even small improvements in safety and access appeared to make difference.

Children who reported positive peer relationships, encouragement from friends, and opportunities to play together were also more likely to participate in active play and demonstrated better movement skills. This reminds us that physical activity is not only about exercise but is also determined by friendship, confidence, belonging, and enjoyment.

Perhaps most importantly, children who engaged in more active play reported fewer emotional difficulties and stronger social behaviours. Longer sleep duration was also associated with better outcomes. These findings challenge the idea that play is merely free time. Play is in fact an important process through which children learn, socialise, build confidence, and develop resilience.

Unfortunately, active play is increasingly competing with academic pressure. During our fieldwork, many parents expressed concern about balancing play with homework and coaching classes. But research consistently shows that movement, sleep, and wellbeing support learning rather than compete with it. This does not mean children should spend less time learning, but only that we need a broader understanding of what helps children thrive.

Schools can help by strengthening physical education, protecting recess time, and recognising movement as an important part of child development. Parents can encourage outdoor play, establish healthy screen-use routines, and prioritise adequate sleep. Local government and urban planners can create safer, more child-friendly neighbourhoods where children have the freedom to walk, play, and explore.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in expanding educational opportunities for children. But healthy childhoods also require safe spaces, supportive friendships, opportunities to play, and time to move. We regularly ask whether our children are studying enough. Perhaps it is time to ask if they are getting enough opportunity to simply be children.

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Saudi executions and the unseen costs of migration



Dr Anas Ansar is senior researcher at Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, University of Freiburg, Germany, and an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at North South University (currently on leave).

■ **ANAS ANSAR**

The recent execution of two Bangladeshi nationals in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, has raised disturbing questions about justice, diplomatic protection, and the treatment of migrant workers. The circumstances surrounding the case, including the judicial proceedings and the extent of consular assistance provided, if any, require greater transparency, particularly as authorities in Bangladesh still remain in the dark about how the events unfolded. The fact that the incident became widely known only after the executions were completed makes questions of accountability and consular protection even more urgent. Beyond its failure to protect its own citizens, Bangladesh has, ironically, resorted to advising migrants to take it as "a lesson" and abide by the host country's laws and regulations.

The public debate should not end with procedural failures on either side, however. It should also confront a question largely absent from Bangladesh's migration discourse: what happens to the personal lives of those who leave home to sustain the country's economy? The right to family life, emotional connection, and intimacy remains one of the least acknowledged dimensions of labour migration.

Arguably, the problem here is not simply the unequal treatment of people in public spaces; it is the unequal recognition of their private lives. Labour migration, at both individual and communal levels, entails the movement of people, their bodies, and their cultures. Embedded within these movements are emotions, feelings, and affective experiences that often go unnoticed or are suppressed under a hegemonic, authoritative and colonial gaze. Migrant workers are subjected to extreme levels of social control. Moving abroad as a guest worker separates spouses, disrupts intimate lives, reorganises relationships, and places emotional well-being under the constraints of employment contracts, immigration rules, and economic necessity. Migrants are often celebrated as remittance warriors and partners in national development, while their loneliness and emotional and intimate needs remain largely invisible.

The controversy surrounding the sanctity of Makkah where the alleged crime was committed has also exposed a broader contradiction. A sacred space is not sustained merely through the regulation of public conduct or the preservation of religious symbols. Its moral significance must also be measured by how human beings are treated within it. Questions about the relationship between religious sanctity, state authority, and public morality are legitimate. But they must not obscure the more fundamental question of whether justice, dignity, and equal protection are extended to migrant workers.

Saudi Arabia is undergoing a highly visible transformation under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. International entertainment, investment in sports, and ambitious urban development projects have become prominent features of its modernisation agenda. Yet this spectacle of global openness sits uneasily alongside longstanding concerns about migrant workers' vulnerability, restrictions on their autonomy, and barriers to effective remedies for abuse. Modernisation cannot be measured only by international investment, celebrity appearances, or architectural ambition. It must also be judged by the dignity and rights afforded to those whose labour sustains it.



FILE PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

'The state cannot claim to value its citizens abroad while treating their private lives as beyond the scope of public responsibility.'

The public debate should not end with procedural failures on either side, however. It should also confront a question largely absent from Bangladesh's migration discourse: what happens to the personal lives of those who leave home to sustain the country's economy? The right to family life, emotional connection, and intimacy remains one of the least acknowledged dimensions of labour migration.

For many Bangladeshi men employed in the Gulf, years of separation from spouses and children are treated as an ordinary price of earning a livelihood. But prolonged separation is not merely an incidental inconvenience. It can strain relationships, intensify loneliness, and affect psychological well-being. Women migrant workers face another set of vulnerabilities, particularly those employed in private households, where isolation, employer control, and limited access to assistance can make abuse difficult to report. The suffering of domestic workers who return home traumatised, injured or even dead demands far greater attention.

Intimacy, in this context, is not merely a private matter. It is shaped by public policy: who can bring a spouse, who can reunite with children, who can leave an abusive workplace, and who can seek help without risking employment or residency.

In many Gulf countries, the migrantisation of justice, sacredness, and law and order reveals how these principles are experienced unevenly across social and economic hierarchies. Even as the ongoing US war on Iran reshapes the region, it is migrant workers who remain on the front lines of its human costs, many of them Bangladeshis whose vulnerabilities rarely, if ever, figure in geopolitical calculations. For migrant workers, particularly those in the lowest tiers of the labour market, access to dignity, protection, and justice is shaped by their precarious status. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is building new urban spaces to accommodate global investors and affluent professionals, projecting an image of openness and modernity. The question, therefore, is not simply how Saudi Arabia is modernising, but for whom this modernity is being built and whose lives remain excluded from its promises.

Intimacy and family life are not private luxuries; they are fundamental dimensions of human dignity that migration regimes routinely turn into matters of privilege. West Germany's experience with guest workers from Turkey, Italy, Spain and Portugal after the Second World War illustrates how the assumption of temporary labour can collide with the enduring social and emotional realities of migration. Family reunification gradually became part of the response to this contradiction, albeit unevenly and amid political contestation. Across the Gulf, however, the intimate lives of low-wage migrant workers remain largely peripheral to policy discussions. The reluctance of governments and civil society to engage with these questions reflects a deeper problem: intimacy becomes politically inconvenient when acknowledging it would require recognising migrants as more than a disposable workforce.

Bangladesh, too, must examine its own complicity in this arrangement. Successive governments have depended on remittances while too often approaching migrant protection through recruitment management, emergency repatriation, and diplomatic appeals after a crisis. The state cannot claim to value its citizens abroad while treating their private lives as beyond the scope of public responsibility.

The execution of the two Bangladeshis demands scrutiny of the justice system and the protection available to citizens abroad. But it should also prompt a wider reckoning. Migrant workers are neither saints whose personal needs disappear at the border nor remittance machines whose sacrifices can be indefinitely normalised. They are people entitled to dignity in both public and private life.

If Bangladesh is serious about protecting its citizens overseas, it must ask not only whether they receive justice when accused of a crime, but also whether they can live with dignity while earning their livelihoods. The right to family and intimacy must become part of that conversation. Anything less leaves the most personal costs of migration outside the boundaries of public concern.

Reform NGO funding to help grassroots organisations survive

Md. Shumon Zihady is doctoral fellow at Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand.

Dr Mokbul Morshed Ahmad is professor at Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand.

■ **MD. SHUMON ZIHADY** *and* **MOKBUL MORSHED AHMAD**

During economic hardship, social crises, and natural disasters, local NGOs and volunteer groups often become part of the first line of response. Yet many of these organisations are now confronting a crisis of their own.

A few months ago, we conducted fieldwork on the financial constraints facing NGOs in Bangladesh as part of our research. This allowed us to visit national and local NGO offices, meet their staff, and speak with them formally and informally. We discussed their projects, prospects, institutional weaknesses and, perhaps most importantly, how they see their future.

What we encountered was unsettling. Financial vulnerability is becoming increasingly visible across the development sector, particularly following the halt of USAID-funded activities. But this raises a more fundamental question. If an organisation is struggling for its own survival, how effectively can it contribute to the long-term wellbeing and resilience of the communities it serves? There is another question that deserves equal attention: are all NGOs bearing the consequences of this crisis in the same way? The answer appears to be no. This is why smaller, locally rooted NGOs need separate consideration.

The problem is not simply that foreign funding is declining, as similar shifts in the funding environment can produce markedly different consequences for different organisations. Donor dependency becomes particularly precarious when an NGO has few alternative sources of income, limited financial reserves, and little room to absorb a funding shock. Smaller organisations often face all three constraints. One local NGO we encountered, for example, reported receiving around 70 percent of its funding from international sources. Recent funding instability had already compelled it to reduce staff.

Large national NGOs are comparatively better positioned. Many have multiple international partnerships, established revenue-generating activities and substantial microcredit operations. Their scale, institutional reputation and visibility also matter. A donor looking for an organisation capable of implementing a large project will naturally be drawn towards institutions with established systems, experienced staff, and a proven record of managing major grants. A small local NGO, meanwhile, may understand the community better, know the local institutions, and possess years of practical experience, but still struggle to reach those who control funding. Limited manpower, modest fundraising capacity, fewer resources to hire consultants, and low institutional visibility all constrain its ability to compete.

The funding crisis, therefore, is not only about how much development finance is available, but also about who can access that money, who remains excluded, and why the disparity is becoming more pronounced. One comment during our fieldwork captured this frustration particularly well: "We know the locality and community better, but we do not know how to satisfy the donor." This indicates that quality of work and proximity to communities do not necessarily translate into access to funding.

The 2011 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan placed considerable emphasis on country ownership and reducing excessive dependence on external assistance. More than a decade later, however, domestic financing avenues for many Bangladeshi NGOs remain narrow. Microcredit and social enterprise are among the few established options. But they bring another dilemma. When an NGO becomes increasingly dependent on lending or commercial activities for survival, the boundary between a development organisation and a business can begin to blur. The concern is not that NGOs should never generate income. The question is how far they can move towards commercial activities without compromising their social mission or eroding their reputation, credibility, and public trust.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding and local philanthropy offer other possibilities, but our field conversations revealed considerable dissatisfaction with both. CSR programmes tend to favour organisations that can provide greater visibility, branding, and media exposure. A small NGO working with vulnerable, remote communities in coastal Bagerhat or rural Sylhet may create meaningful and enduring change without being able to offer any of these.

Bangladesh has a deep, socially embedded tradition of giving for both religious and secular purposes. But much of this charity remains personal, family-based, direct, and informal. Existing research suggests that local donations account for less than one percent of NGO funding. The resources exist within society, but only a fraction of them find their way into organised local development initiatives. This disconnect is pushing NGOs to experiment. Some are seeking collaborative projects and government funding. Others are developing social enterprises or other revenue-generating activities. A few are even considering commercial bank loans to establish or expand microcredit operations. That creates an unusual situation: an organisation established for social welfare borrows commercially and then lends that money to its clients at a higher interest rate to sustain itself.

There is another looming concern. When Bangladesh graduates from the LDC category, access to some forms of international development assistance may gradually become more constrained as donor priorities would shift towards poorer and more vulnerable countries. The impact may not be immediate, nor will all funding necessarily decline. But for smaller NGOs already struggling with a fragile funding base, even a modest contraction could deepen their vulnerability. These are organisations that emerged from within communities and have spent years working with persons with disabilities, disadvantaged children, poor households, widows, and communities vulnerable to environmental shocks. Some are now curtailing programmes, closing offices, and letting staff go. Organisations that once spoke about expanding their work are increasingly worrying about survival alone.

Thousands of stories of social transformation began with small groups of people working within their own communities, often with limited resources and even less visibility. The task now is not simply to protect the brands of development, but to enable community organisations to emerge as credible, resilient, and enduring institutions in their own right.



Students attend class in a floating school on a boat run by the NGO Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha in the Bhangura area of Pabna, Bangladesh, on September 25, 2025. FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

CHIRANJIT BISWAS wins Best Male Actor at Tasveer Film Festival for 'Delupi'

Bangladeshi actor Chiranjit Biswas has won the Best Male Actor award at the Seattle-based Tasveer Film Festival for his performance in ***Delupi***.

Director Mohammad Touqir Islam recently accepted the award on the actor's behalf at the closing ceremony, according to a press release.

Delupi was the only Bangladeshi film at the festival's 21st edition. Tasveer is an Oscar-qualifying South Asian



festival.

The film will also compete at the Virginia Film Festival and London Bridge Film Festival on October 24.

Produced by Footprint Film Production, the film draws on a flood embankment collapse in Khulna and Bangladesh's political turmoil in 2024.

Released locally in 2025, ***Delupi*** has screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Karawan Film Fest in Italy.



Nine countries for Aparna Ghose this Puja

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

For Aparna Ghose, Durga Puja has always been a time of cherished memories, family gatherings and celebrations back home. Although this year's festivities have taken her far from Bangladesh, the actress is making new memories as she travels across Europe with her husband while reminiscing about the Puja celebrations of her childhood.

The two-time National Film Award-winning actress, who currently lives in Japan with her husband, is spending this year's Puja holidays exploring Europe. The couple plans to visit nine countries and has already travelled to Switzerland, Italy and France.

Aparna, who began her acting career in theatre, gained popularity through numerous television dramas. She received her first National Film Award for ***Mrittika Maya*** and later won another National Film Award for ***Gondi***.

Speaking about celebrating Puja away from Bangladesh, Aparna said, "To tell the truth, nowhere in the world can offer the same Puja celebrations that we experience back home. The feeling is simply different. Abroad, I don't experience the same emotions that I associate with Puja in Bangladesh."

She also spoke about how the festival brings back memories of her late mother.

"Whenever Puja approaches, I deeply miss the days I spent celebrating it back home. Puja meant new clothes and delicious food. My mother's cooking was always special. She is no longer with us, and although I miss her every day, I miss her even more during Puja," she shared.

Recalling her childhood in Chattogram, Aparna said she spent her early years and university life in the city, where she made countless memories.

"All my memories of Puja are filled with happiness. Puja meant celebration, spending time with relatives and friends, and enjoying every moment together. Those were beautiful days," she recalled.

This year, however, the actress is making new memories with her husband as they travel across Europe.

"I'm really enjoying the Puja holidays. My husband and I are having a wonderful time travelling around Europe. We plan to visit nine countries," she said.

For Aparna, travelling offers more than just the opportunity to explore new destinations.

"There's a different kind of joy in travelling. It brings a wonderful sense of peace. You get to see, discover and learn so many things. I'm enjoying every moment of it," she added.

As the conversation continued, Aparna grew nostalgic about the Puja celebrations of her younger days.

"I'll never get back those golden days of celebrating Puja as a child. We had so much fun! Everything felt so wonderful. There was something truly special about Sharadiya Durga Puja," she reminisced.

Despite being away from home, the actress extended her wishes to everyone celebrating the festival in Bangladesh.

"I wish everyone a happy Puja. I hope the celebrations take place in a beautiful and peaceful environment across the country. May everyone's life be filled with happiness, and may people celebrate together in harmony and joy. That's what I wish for this Puja," she said.

The actress also shared that she often thinks about Bangladesh, her loved ones and her former colleagues from the entertainment industry.

Speaking about her life in Japan, Aparna said, "I'm living here with my husband and would love everyone's blessings. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers. I'm currently teaching at a school here, and I'm having a good time. Spending time with the children at school is a wonderful experience."

EVENTS

'Indian Ocean Cultural Exchange'



Alliance Française de Dhaka hosts an enlightening evening with historian Sahara Cassim, exploring the rich tapestry of Indian Ocean heritage. The talk examines how migration and trade shaped Réunion Island through the fascinating histories of the Zarab and Karane communities, uncovering deep cross-cultural ties and shared narratives across the subcontinent.

Date: Thursday | October 22, 2026
Time: 6:00pm onwards
Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

BTV to air special Durga Puja programme on Bijoya Dashami



Bangladesh Television (BTV) will air a special programme, ***Anjali Laho, Anjali***, to mark Durga Puja. Combining drama, dance and music, the programme will present the mythological story of Goddess Durga, from her arrival to the slaying of Mahishasura.

Produced by Yasmin Akter, the programme will be broadcast today, Bijoya Dashami, at 10:00pm. Jaya Saha and Abhijit will host the programme.

The programme celebrates the spirit of Sharadiya Durga Puja, highlighting the glory of Goddess Durga and the triumph of good over evil. Adhara Riya and Ratan Saha portray Goddess Durga and Mahishasura, respectively.

NEWS

Website names

FROM PAGE 12

resort proprietor Md Tanvir Sultan Mia, chief manager Said Ahmed, manager Mohammad Saeed and assistant manager Zahid Hossain Suman. Suman has been arrested.

Sub-Inspector Ashish Sutradhar filed the case with Ukhiya Police Station on the day of the incident.

Asked about the ownership discrepancy, Officer-in-Charge Atikur Rahman said, "Initially, we found one person's name; now another name, Neaz Morshed, is emerging. We would include more names in the case if more information came to light."

Police are trying to arrest the other accused, he said, adding that Neaz's whereabouts remain unknown. Police have also sought a seven-day remand for Suman, hoping his interrogation will yield further information.

The OC said the fire destroyed the resort's documents, making it difficult to collect records, including its trade licence. Police are trying to obtain documents from various sources, including the union parishad.

On Saturday morning, the fire broke out at the wooden resort on Patuartek Beach. According to the Fire Service, the resort had a restaurant on the ground floor and guest accommodation on the two floors above. It lacked fire safety measures and was declared "risky" by the Fire Service in June.

84 held in raid at add'l DIG's Purbachal house

FROM PAGE 12

received 70 percent of the earnings from the parties, while he took the rest, according to DB. The property was available for bookings through Airbnb, and "DJ parties" were regularly organised for those who booked it.

The arrestees have been sent for summary trial, Elias said.

Meanwhile, following the incident, Jahir, an officer from the 24th police batch, has been attached to the Police Headquarters.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Jahir said that his house had facilities for hosting birthday parties and family gatherings.

They take bookings through Airbnb, but drugs and "DJ parties" are prohibited under their rules. Those who violated the restrictions were blacklisted and fined, he said.

Regarding Monday night's incident, Jahir said the property had been rented out for a birthday party, but the guests brought drugs, which were recovered during the DB raid.

"What is our crime here? We rented out the property. Our guidelines explicitly prohibit drugs and DJ parties. Those found with drugs committed criminal offences," he said, while dismissing allegations that such parties were organised every day.

Every month, two to three parties were held at the venue, Jahir added.

Meanwhile, Opposition Leader and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has expressed concern over the country's deteriorating law and order situation following the recovery of drugs and arrests.

The involvement of a property belonging to a senior police official in such an incident has created concern and fear among the public, he said in a Facebook post.

The incident itself reflected the extent of the deterioration in law and order across the country.

Extortion, snatching, looting, robbery and other criminal and anti-social activities had reached alarming levels, he said.

Reserve forest cleared to make room for farming

FROM PAGE 12

The Forest Department has filed two cases and a general diary (GD) with police over the destruction.

Yet, work has continued despite objections from forest officials, who allege obstruction and threats.

The problem arose after the district administration last year leased out 30 acres inside the reserved forest for two years.

The Forest Department has twice asked the district administration to cancel the lease, arguing that the land lies within a protected forest area.

According to Forest Department sources, 415 acres at Char Signboard were declared a reserved forest on April 4, 2010. Mangrove species were planted there, including jhau trees, across around 25 acres in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Amir Hossain, a forest officer of Rangabali Range, said that the leaseholders, Arif Mir and Manik Molla, cut trees from a jhau plantation to prepare the land for watermelon farming.

Although the two cases are pending with court, work on the embankment began on October 17, allegedly under Arif Mir's direction, he said.

"After receiving reports that 200-300 chaila, keora, and jhau trees had been uprooted, forest officials tried to stop the work but failed," he said.

The department lodged a GD with Rangabali Police Station on October 17, naming three people, including Arif and Manik.

Arif Mir denied attempting to grab forest land. "We have taken out a lease of government land," he said. He refused to produce the lease document or disclose how much he had paid.

This correspondent obtained a document issued to 25 farmers by the Rangabali upazila land office on October 13, 2025, bearing the signature of a former upazila nirbahi officer (UNO). The document "allows" farming for one season or one year and states that the document cannot be used as an official government document in court.

Rangabali UNO Nazmul Hasan said no such permission had been granted since he took office.

"I do not know how the land was leased out. However, an initiative has been taken to identify forest land and khas land in consultation with the forest department and the leaseholders," he said, adding that action would be taken if anyone had cut trees.

In a letter dated October 15, Divisional Forest Officer Mohammad Zahidur Rahman Mia asked the deputy commissioner to cancel the lease and warned that it could threaten the forest, wildlife, biodiversity and surrounding mangrove ecosystem.

Abdul Qaiyum, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Patuakhali, said the administration was examining the Forest Department's letter.

"We are verifying the information and will take action in accordance with the rules. We will also investigate whether there were any irregularities in granting permission for cultivation in the past," he said.

Police struggle to act on list of 545 extortionists

FROM PAGE 12

the Awami League and two former police members.

According to the DMP media wing, 41 individuals from the list have been arrested until October 8. Among them was Mizanur Rahman Swapan, president of BNP's ward-28 in Dhaka north.

On October 5, the Special Response Battalion (SRB), formerly known as Rab, held Swapan and handed him over to the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

The following day, he was granted bail after police produced him before a court. He was shown arrested in a case filed over demanding extortion from a doctor.

SRB sources, however, said Swapan was arrested over allegations of collecting extortion from footpath vendors.

Talking to this correspondent, Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said SRB had not handed Swapan over in connection with any case. As a result, Swapan was arrested as a suspect in an old extortion case.

An official of the Tejgaon division said SRB recently handed over a BNP leader from the Khilkhet area whose name was on the list.

"We were in a difficult situation as we could not decide on the next course of action," he said. "He was later arrested in a case filed over extortion in the Karwan Bazar area. However, he secured bail within two days."

"If a listed extortionist secures bail within two or three days, then making a list or arresting them will not change the situation," he said.

Another DB officer, seeking anonymity, said police could not simply arrest anyone without a specific complaint or case.

"If we arrest someone based only on the list, under which case would we show them arrested? We need a clear guideline on this.

"As we are yet to receive any clear guideline, we are now proceeding slowly," he said.

Several police officials said the crackdown could not be carried out effectively by police alone, as field-level officers fear repercussions for taking action against politically connected persons.

An additional deputy commissioner of the DMP said listed extortionists have links with the ruling BNP.

"Whenever field-level officers were instructed to arrest them, they were loath to carry out the orders, saying that the individuals have connections with MPs or ministers and could take revenge on them later."

"It would be better if the crackdown were carried out through a joint drive led by the SRB or the army."

A deputy commissioner of DB said police recently traced the whereabouts of a leader of an associate organisation of the BNP.

However, after hearing that he has connections with a minister, field-level officers tried to avoid the drive to detain him, the DB official said, adding that, "A joint drive would be the best option, as it would ensure that police are not solely responsible for such arrests."

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said Prime Minister Tarique Rahman is committed to ensuring safety and security of the people and fulfilling their expectations.

Those who want to undermine that commitment, whether they are from our party or outside it, should not be spared by the administration. There is no restriction, either from the party or the government, on arresting those involved in crimes, no matter how influential they are, he said.

"Where our leader Tarique Rahman has forced a sitting BNP MP to resign as soon as allegations were raised against him, and where the BNP has dissolved a metropolitan unit committee as well as its affiliated organisations, including Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal, does that not send a message to the law enforcement agencies?"

Contacted, Manzur Morshed, senior home ministry secretary, said joint drives were already underway, with different law enforcement agencies carrying out their respective duties.

Regarding possible repercussions for taking action against politically influential individuals, he said political affiliation should not shield wrongdoers. "Police will take action in accordance with the law."

Patuakhali correspondent of 22 yrs dies

FROM PAGE 12

while riding his motorbike from his village home in Auliapur to his residence in the Banani Mor area last morning.

Around 8:30am, he stopped near the Molla bus stand after experiencing pain, before collapsing on the road.

Locals and family members rushed him to the hospital, where he later died, said Shankar Das, a member of the Patuakhali Press Club.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Auliapur Sabina Akter High School field at 10:00am today. He will then be buried in the family graveyard, Shankar added.

Colleagues broke down in tears when Sohrab's body was brought to the Patuakhali Press Club around 10:00pm.

Expressing profound grief, members of the press club said the club "was Sohrab Bhai's life".

The Barishal Reporters' Unity also expressed grief over his death.

Sohrab joined The Daily Star on January 1, 2004.

A former secretary of the Patuakhali Press Club, he was its vice-president at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter and several relatives.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam expressed deep sorrow at Sohrab's death, recalling his more than two decades of dedicated service to the newspaper and his commitment to reporting on the lives and struggles of coastal communities.

He extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

During his stint at The Daily Star, Sohrab reported extensively on coastal livelihoods, environmental issues, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure and development projects.

His reports exposed alleged bribery in land acquisition for the Patuakhali EPZ, irregularities in road construction, doctor shortages at government hospitals and bridges that remained unusable for years.

He also reported on the unexplained deaths of 140 dolphins along Kuakata beach, as well as the struggles of fishing communities and coastal erosion.

More recently, Sohrab contributed to an investigative report on the underutilisation of Payra Port despite massive public investment.

He received The Daily Star's Best District Reporter-2023 award in recognition of his work.

Beyond journalism, Sohrab was active in professional organisations and social welfare initiatives.

He served as joint secretary of the Patuakhali Press Club in 2010 and general secretary in the mid-2010s. He was elected vice-president multiple times and also served as acting president.

He was also general secretary of the Prof AKM Shahidul Islam Trust, an organisation supporting underprivileged students and families.

Wild West Wing? Turmoil revives memories of Trump 1.0

AFP, *Washington*

After a relatively disciplined start to Donald Trump's second term, the White House is grappling with signs of turmoil that have revived memories of his first chaotic presidency.

From the extraordinary departure of his new press secretary after five days to questions about the future of his chief of staff, there have been a series of upheavals in recent weeks.

The ructions come at the worst possible time for Trump, with many Republicans fearing that the president's dismal polling will drag on their chances in next month's midterm elections.

The White House strongly denies there is infighting in what US media called the "Wild Wild West Wing" -- with the fiercest pushback reserved for reports that Trump was looking to replace Susie Wiles, his ultra-loyal chief of staff.

"No one is distracted by FAKE NEWS. This team is strong, united, and focused on President Donald J. Trump, delivering his America First agenda, and winning the midterms," White House Spokesperson Danielle Alvarez said in a statement to AFP.



Traffic police take seized illegally operated battery-run autorickshaws to a dumping ground. The photo was taken at the capital's Asad Gate yesterday. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Nato to send 'additional assets' to Black Sea after drone attacks

AFP, *Brussels*

Nato yesterday said it will deploy "additional assets" to the Black Sea after a string of drone strikes off Romania and Bulgaria in the latest spillover from Russia's war on Ukraine.

"Nato will be sending additional assets to the region, including support for surveillance, reconnaissance, and forensics," Nato spokeswoman Allison Hart posted online after a meeting of alliance ambassadors in Brussels.

"We will continue to stand united and ensure that we are ready and able to address any threat and to keep our one billion people safe," she added.

The announcement from Nato came after Bulgaria's Prime Minister Rumen Radev said that a US military plane had started to patrol the Black Sea following a plea for help after recent drone attacks.

"An American P-8 Poseidon... has begun patrolling the Black Sea to conduct reconnaissance missions and detect any activity that could pose a risk," said Radev.

He said some Nato countries were quick to answer his call for help after the attacks and that Sofia expects "further assistance".

The spate of strikes on ships in the waters off Nato and EU members Bulgaria and Romania have left more than a score of sailors missing and stirred condemnation in Europe.

'Helper drove as driver slept'

FROM PAGE 1

Md Alauddin, officer-in-charge of Bonpara Highway Police Station, said police were investigating the allegation that the helper was driving.

Md Abdus Salam, from Moktarpur in Madaripur, said he had fallen asleep after the bus stopped at a restaurant.

"I suddenly woke up to find my face covered in blood. Without thinking, I jumped out of the bus and lost consciousness. The next thing I knew, I was lying in a hospital bed," he said at Patwari General Hospital.

Alamgir Matbor, a Shariatpur resident who suffered minor injuries, said, "I was in the back. I witnessed how hard people were fighting to survive. I can still see the horror when I close my eyes."

Locals rushed to the scene before police and firefighters joined the rescue operation.

"We were asleep when we suddenly woke up to a loud crash, shouts and crying. When we opened our doors, we saw blood on the road and people shouting inside the vehicles," said Maseka Begum, a local.

Another eyewitness, Nurunnahar Begum, said locals initially struggled to pull victims from the mangled vehicles before police and firefighters rescued them.

The injured were taken to Baraigram Upazila Health Complex, Natore General Hospital and Patwari Hospital in Bonpara. Those critically injured were transferred to Rajshahi and Bogura.

Among the victims were Himesh Jomadar, 35, and his wife, Bobby, from Faridpur Sadar upazila. They were travelling to Chapainawabganj to visit family for Durga Puja.

Himesh died, while Bobby remained in critical condition at Natore General Hospital.

"Himesh took leave from work to visit his in-laws during puja, but the crash took him before he could reach," said his cousin Pushpa Rani.

Pubali Bank officer Rubina Akter and her husband, Shahidul Islam, a BRAC Bank employee, were travelling from Mirzaganj in Patuakhali to Rajshahi with their two children for the holidays.

Shahidul and their daughter, Tasfia Khatun, died at the scene. Rubina and their 10-year-old son, Labib, were receiving treatment at Natore General Hospital.

Abdus Samad, 70, an onion trader from Jajira in Shariatpur, was travelling with 11 other traders from his area to buy onion seeds at Baneshwar haat. Five of them died.

"My father was supposed to return in the afternoon after buying the seeds. Instead, he is returning home in an ambulance," said his son, Md Badsha Fakir, at Bonpara Highway Police Station.

Relatives alleged that much of the Tk 20 lakh to Tk 30 lakh the traders were carrying to buy seeds went missing after the crash.

"My father had over Tk 4 lakh in cash, which is unaccounted for," Badsha said.

Several other victims also reported losing cash and mobile phones.

Asked about the missing belongings, SP Shariful said, "We reached the spot as quickly as possible, and the focus was on rescuing the victims. Investigation will reveal what happened before we reached there."

The other deceased were identified as Md Sohel Rana, 40, and Md Anowar Haque, 30, of Rajshahi; Md Jewel Matbor, 40, Sohag, 30, Shah Lal, 46, and Md Shahin, 32, of Shariatpur; Md Abu Kalam, 56, of Jhenaidah; and Russell, 33, of Naogaon.

Survivors identified Sohel Rana as the bus helper they suspected was driving at the time of the crash.

The Natore district administration has formed a seven-member committee to investigate the crash.

Relief for errant bank owners?

FROM PAGE 1

Theatrics aside, that session marked something serious: oligarchic capture written into law. The rot, however, long predated the 2023 amendment. For years, conglomerates had treated commercial banks as personal balance sheets, seeding boards with spouses, children and extended relatives and draining assets along the way. Insider lending and bad loans hollowed out bank after bank, until some could no longer serve ordinary customers. Depositors showed up at the counter and were turned away.

The numbers show how deeply the system was compromised. Directors of eight private banks borrowed heavily from one another through reciprocal lending. By the end of 2023, loans involving the directors of the eight banks totalled Tk 25,000 crore, according to financial reports analysed by The Daily Star. Four of those banks also lent around Tk 20,000 crore to relatives of their chairmen or directors.

Tenure also matters because a board is supposed to be the bank's conscience, the place where management is questioned, and risky loans are challenged. Keep the same directors in place for too long, and that scrutiny fades: loans to friendly companies get waved through, and warning signs get filed away.

THE INTERIM FIX

When an interim government took over after the 2024 political upheaval, the central bank set out to break that cycle. The first job was firefighting. To stop the rot from spreading, the authorities merged five failing private lenders into a new entity, Sammilito Islami Bank, backed by a Tk 20,000 crore capital injection from the national budget. The bill for a crisis cooked up in private boardrooms landed, as usual, on taxpayers.

The second job was finding out how deep the hole went. Asset quality reviews dragged bad loans out of the shadows, and the numbers were sobering. According to a September 15 report by Moody's Ratings, non-performing loans across the system now stand at around 32.8 percent. In other words, roughly one taka in every three lent out by Bangladeshi banks is not being repaid as promised.

The third job was prevention, and here the interim reforms showed real ambition. Bangladesh Bank drafted an overhaul of the Bank Company Act modelled on international corporate governance standards and aimed squarely at the machinery of board collusion. At its heart was a plan to curb family control: the number of relatives allowed on a board would be reduced from three to two, and the consecutive tenure cap would drop from twelve years to six.

The interim administration then went after the make-up of boards themselves. Independent directors would fill half the seats on a slimmed-down board of 15, putting people with no stake in the owners' other businesses in a position to ask tough questions. That is the difference between independence as decoration and independence as a genuine safeguard.

To stop families from simply shuffling seats to relatives, the interim draft also broadened the legal definition of "family" to cover in-laws, brothers-in-law and mothers-in-law. That added teeth to the rules. Under a cross-default rule, a director would lose their seat if any company linked to them defaulted on a loan, and only full repayment, not rescheduling, would win it back.

THE RETREAT

Now the Bangladesh Association of Banks, the influential lobby of bank owners, has pushed for a reversal. Its arguments are familiar. Capping family directorships would upset established ownership structures. Shorter tenures would strip boards of hard-won experience. And handing half the board to independent directors would cost shareholders control, trading growth and profitability for box-ticking compliance. The Financial Institutions Division appears to have been largely persuaded, as minutes of a September 20 meeting on the reforms suggest.

The owners' concern about control is understandable, but a bank is not an ordinary company. It runs largely on other people's money, and its shareholders' stake is typically a small fraction of the deposits it holds. That is precisely why regulators everywhere set limits on owners.

The timing could hardly be worse. Moody's Ratings estimates that bringing banks back up to the required capital adequacy level will cost around 10 percent of GDP, spread over several years. Earlier this month, Bangladesh Bank Governor Mostaqur Rahman put a number on the pain: the banking sector will need Tk 60,000 crore a year from the national budget for the next five to eight years. For a government with very little fiscal room, that is a heavy load, and it comes with a hidden sting. The state is leaning more and more on domestic banks to finance itself, and every taka it borrows from them is a taka not lent to private businesses. Bad governance at the top of a few banks ends up squeezing credit for the entire economy.

There is one bright spot in the Moody's assessment. Liquidity has held up, with deposits across the system growing. Savers, it seems, have not given up on the banking system. The sector's troubles lie mainly in the solvency of some lenders rather than in overall liquidity, which is another way of saying the problem sits in the loan book, not in a shortage of cash. And loan books are shaped in the boardroom.

There is also a question of credibility. Investors and foreign lenders, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, all watch how Bangladesh handles moments like this one. A reform announced with fanfare and then hollowed out sends all of them the wrong message.

Cosmetic fixes will not do, and retreating from deep reform is a gamble Bangladesh can ill afford.

30 detained in Cambodia return home

FROM PAGE 3

detained them over irregular immigration status and other complications. Two were later released, while the remaining 30 were held at an immigration detention centre until Friday, following prolonged negotiations involving the Bangladesh Embassy in Thailand and appeals by the foundation.

Zahir Imam, the embassy's first secretary (labour), earlier told The Daily Star that the detainees were released following repeated requests from the mission. They bought their own air tickets, he said.

The foundation estimates that more than 2,000 Bangladeshis remain stranded in Cambodia, including around 1,800 facing uncertainty over an October 31 deadline concerning overstay penalties.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 15,963 Bangladeshis obtained employment clearances for Cambodia between January 1, 2025, and September 30, 2026.

After 14 years, BRT project

FROM PAGE 3

BRT, introducing route-franchised buses, converting the corridor into a toll expressway, or turning it into a conventional highway. The cabinet eventually opted for the last option.

A review team from BUET also recommended abandoning the BRT service, citing design flaws and limited capacity. It suggested using the existing infrastructure for general traffic instead of investing further in the project.

In October 2025, the interim government also decided against launching the BRT service on the Dhaka-Gazipur route, citing the additional time and funding required.

Sheik Moinuddin, special assistant to the former chief adviser on the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges during the interim government, announced the decision during an exchange of views with members of Reporters for Rail and Road on October 11.

The latest decision has drawn criticism from planners and civic groups.

The Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) yesterday called the decision a "black day" for sustainable and inclusive public transport and demanded its withdrawal.

BIP said the move contradicted recommendations in the Gazipur Transport Master Plan (GTMP) and the Revised Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP) for Dhaka, and favoured private car users and the construction sector.

It also said the decision failed to address the transport needs of residents of Gazipur and Uttara, who have faced disruption during the 14 years of construction.

In a separate statement, Gazipur Heritage and Development warned that dismantling the nearly completed infrastructure would waste public money and increase commuters' suffering. The group called for a review of the decision.

Meanwhile, at least six people have been killed in accidents at the construction site. In July 2022, a construction worker died after a crane fell at a BRT construction site in Gazipur. Five men were killed in Uttara when a crane dropped a heavy girder onto a car.

PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 21

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-50	12-45	4-00	5-36	7-15
JAMAAT	5-25	1-15	4-15	5-39	7-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)
Road Division, Bogura.
Phone/Fax: 051-66304
✉ eebog@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No.35.01.1000.405.16.100.26-1926 Date: 19/10/2026

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer (RHD), Road Division, Bogura for the procurement of:

Tender ID & Package No.	Package Description	Publishing Date, Closing Date
Tender ID No : 1357586, e-GP-59/EE/BRD/OTM/2026-2027	Construction Footpath cum Pipe Drain at 4th (P) Km (PTI Mor) of Bogra (Banani)-Matidali National Highways (N-514) under Road Division, Bogura during the year 2026-2027.	19-Oct-2026 10:00:00 , 29-Oct-2026 13:00:00
Tender ID No: 1357591, e-GP-64/EE/BRD/OTM/2026-2027	Re-Construction of Cross Drain at Ch. 11+750 Km of Sultangonj(Lichutola)-Madla-Bagbari(kodomtoli)-Gabtoli(Panchmile)(Z-5040) under Road Division Bogura during the year 2026-2027	19-Oct-2026 10:00:00 29-Oct-2026 13:00:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded are from as stated above on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for pursue.

e-Tenders will be accepted only up to as above date and time. Accepted tender will be opened online immediately after as stated above date and time.

(Md Rasedul Haque)
Identity No: 602322
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD
Road Division, Bogura.

GD-2567

Govt turns to drones to monitor Turag pollution

FROM PAGE 3

Other key activities include ensuring the effectiveness of ETPs at 173 identified factories along the Turag river, establishing a real-time online system to monitor water quality at industrial facilities, and cleaning the riverbed through vessel patrols.

Water samples will be collected and analysed at least 36 times during the project period.

The project will also upgrade the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change's 333-4 helpline into an integrated grievance management system. It will assess carbon emission reductions and potential areas for carbon trading.

Industries adopting environmentally friendly practices will be encouraged and awarded a "Green Star Rating".

The project's goal is to reduce solid waste and wastewater pollution in rivers, canals and lakes across the Dhaka metropolitan area and improve stormwater management to make the city more liveable and sustainable.

The proposal notes that the Turag, an important tributary of the Bangshi river, has historically supplied water for agriculture, fisheries and domestic use. However, rapid urbanisation and unplanned industrialisation have severely polluted and encroached on the river, threatening aquatic life and the wider ecosystem.

An official involved in the project said it aims to strengthen the DoE's capacity to monitor and enforce environmental regulations in ecologically critical rivers, conduct regular enforcement operations to prevent pollution, establish real-time monitoring to prevent untreated wastewater discharge into the Turag, and improve long-term water quality monitoring through extensive sampling, analysis and reporting.

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বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০৩/রাজস্ব তারিখ-১৯/১০/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ

আগর বৃক্ষ বিক্রয়ের জন্য ক্রেতার তালিকাভুক্তি হওয়ার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারনের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, অত্র সিলেট বন বিভাগের অধীন বিভিন্ন রেঞ্জের আওতায় সৃজিত আগর বৃক্ষ বিক্রয়ের জন্য প্রকৃত আগর ব্যবসায়ী, আগর ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান ও আগর ফ্যাক্টরী মালিকগনের নিকট হইতে সীল টেন্ডার/প্রকাশ্য নীলামের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয়ের জন্য আগর ক্রেতার তালিকাভুক্ত করা হইতেছে। আগরক্রেতা হিসাবে তালিকাভুক্তি হইতে হইলে নির্ধারিত ফরমের মাধ্যমে তালিকাভুক্তি ফি বাবদ রাজস্ব ১,০০০/-(এক হাজার) টাকা, তালিকাভুক্তি ফি'র উপর ১৫% হারে ভ্যাট বাবদ ১৫০/-(একশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকাসহ মোট ১,১৫০/-(এক হাজার একশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা বন বিভাগীয় রশিদ/চালান মূলে জমা প্রদান করতঃ রশিদ/চালান ও নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্রাদিসহ তালিকাভুক্তি হওয়ার জন্য নির্ধারিত ফরম অত্র দপ্তর হইতে সংগ্রহ পূর্বক আবেদনপত্র বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, সিলেট বন বিভাগ, সিলেট এর বরাবরে জমা প্রদান করিতে হইবে। অত্র দপ্তর হইতে আগর ক্রেতার তালিকাভুক্তি গ্রহণ ব্যতীত কেহ আগর গাছ বিক্রয়ের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহন করিতে পারিবেন না।

প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র/তথ্যাবলী ঃ

* জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেনীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত।
* সদ্যতোলা ছবি ০৩(তিন) কপি ১ম শ্রেনীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত।
* পৌরসভা/ইউ.পি চেয়ারম্যান/অনলাইনে প্রাপ্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্রের মূলকপি।
* পৌরসভা/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্সের ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেনীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত।
* উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত আগর ব্যবসায় সম্পৃক্ততার প্রত্যয়নপত্র।
* হালানাগাদ আয়কর (TIN) ও ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদের সত্যায়িত আলোকছাপ।
* যেকোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত আর্থিক সচ্ছলতার স্বপক্ষে হালনাগাদ লেনদেনের Bank Statement.

স্বাক্ষরিতঃ
(মোহাম্মদ আবদুর রহমান)
পরিচিতি নং- ১৩২৪৭
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
সিলেট বন বিভাগ, সিলেট
ই-মেইল ঃ-dfosylhet@yahoo.com

GD-2566



জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী





بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

রাষ্ট্রপতি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ
বঙ্গভবন, ঢাকা।
০৫ কার্তিক ১৪৩৩
২১ অক্টোবর ২০২৬

বাণী

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে আমি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সকল শিক্ষক, শিক্ষার্থী, অভিভাবক এবং অধিভুক্ত কলেজ ও শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংশ্লিষ্ট সবাইকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

দেশের উচ্চশিক্ষার প্রসার ও মানবসম্পদ উন্নয়নে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে আসছে। শিক্ষার্থী ও অধিভুক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংখ্যার নিরিখে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শুধু দেশের নয়, বিশ্বের অন্যতম বৃহৎ উচ্চশিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান। সারা দেশে বিস্তৃত অধিভুক্ত কলেজ ও শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে বিপুল সংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থীর উচ্চশিক্ষার সুযোগ সৃষ্টি করে প্রতিষ্ঠানটি দেশের শিক্ষা ও আর্থ-সামাজিক অগ্রগতিতে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ অবদান রাখছে।

পরিবর্তনশীল বিশ্বে উচ্চশিক্ষাকে হতে হবে যুগোপযোগী, প্রযুক্তিনির্ভর ও কর্মমুখী। এর পাশাপাশি শিক্ষার্থীদের সৃজনশীলতা, নৈতিকতা ও মানবিক মূল্যবোধের বিকাশও জরুরি, যাতে তারা আগামী দিনে যোগ্য ও সুনাগরিক হিসেবে গড়ে উঠতে পারে। এ লক্ষ্যে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় দক্ষতাভিত্তিক কোর্স-কারিকুলাম প্রণয়ন ও বাস্তবায়নে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে জেনে আমি আনন্দিত।

বিশ্বায়ন ও চতুর্থ শিল্পবিপ্লবের এই যুগে শুধু সনদ অর্জন নয়, শিক্ষার্থী যাতে অর্জিত জ্ঞান বাস্তব জীবনে প্রয়োগ করে কর্মজীবনে সফল হতে পারে, তা নিশ্চিত করা জরুরি। এ লক্ষ্যে কারিগরি, প্রকৌশল, ডিজিটাল প্রযুক্তিভিত্তিক শিক্ষার সম্প্রসারণ এবং দেশ-বিদেশের কর্মসংস্থানের চাহিদা অনুযায়ী ব্যবহারিক প্রশিক্ষণের সুযোগ বাড়াতে হবে। আমাদের শিক্ষার্থীদের আধুনিক তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি, গবেষণা, কারিগরি এবং বাস্তবমুখী দক্ষতায় প্রশিক্ষিত করে তুলতে পারলে তারা কেবল দেশের উন্নয়নই নয়, বিশ্বমঞ্চেও বাংলাদেশের মুখ উজ্জ্বল করতে সক্ষম হবে।

আমি আশা করি, জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রশাসনিক স্বচ্ছতা, ডিজিটাল ব্যবস্থাপনা, সেশনজটমুক্ত শিক্ষাবর্ষ ও আধুনিক পাঠদান পদ্ধতি বজায় রেখে প্রতিষ্ঠানটিকে একটি গতিশীল শিক্ষাকেন্দ্রে পরিণত করতে তাদের প্রচেষ্টা অব্যাহত রাখবে।

আমি জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সার্বিক সাফল্য, অগ্রগতি ও কল্যাণ কামনা করি।

মির্জা ফখরুল ইসলাম আলমগীর



ড. আ ন ম এহছানুল হক মিলন এমপি
মন্ত্রী
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
প্রাথমিক ও গণশিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাণী

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠা বার্ষিকীতে শিক্ষার্থী, শিক্ষক, অভিভাবকসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সবাইকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

১৯৯২ সালে তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়ার দূরদর্শী নেতৃত্বে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়। দীর্ঘ তিন দশকের পথ পরিক্রমায় প্রতিষ্ঠানটির কলেবর বৃদ্ধি হলেও শিক্ষার গুণগত মানোন্নয়নের অভিযাত্রা এখনো শেষ হয়নি। বিগত ১৭ বছরে প্রতিষ্ঠানটির শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম ব্যবস্থাপনায় যে সমস্যাসংকুল পরিস্থিতি সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল সেটি কাটিয়ে উঠে উচ্চশিক্ষাকে যুগোপযোগী, প্রযুক্তিনির্ভর ও কর্মমুখী করে গড়ে তোলার লক্ষ্যে প্রতিষ্ঠানটি বেশ কিছু কর্মসূচি হাতে নিয়েছে। বিশেষ করে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের চলমান শিক্ষাকার্যক্রমে আইসিটি ও ইংরেজি বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়েছে। একই সঙ্গে তৃতীয় ভাষা শিক্ষার যে উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে সেটি সত্যিই প্রশংসনীয়।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তারেক রহমান দেশের টেকসই উন্নয়নে শিক্ষাকে সর্বোচ্চ গুরুত্ব দিয়েছেন। জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় সকলের সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টা, দায়িত্বশীল নেতৃত্ব ও দূরপ্রসারী সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে জ্ঞানভিত্তিক ও আত্মনির্ভরশীল বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে কার্যকর ভূমিকা রাখবে বলে আমি বিশ্বাস করি। বর্তমান পরিবর্তনশীল বিশ্বের সাথে তাল মেলাতে এবং চতুর্থ শিল্পবিপ্লবের চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবিলায় উচ্চশিক্ষাকে কেবল সনদমুখী না রেখে দক্ষতা মুখী করা অত্যন্ত জরুরি। এ লক্ষ্যে সরকার জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষাক্রম আধুনিকীকরণ, আইসিটি নির্ভর শিক্ষা প্রদান, গবেষণা বৃদ্ধি এবং সেশনজট নিরসনে আন্তরিকভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। সাধারণ শিক্ষার পাশাপাশি কারিগরি ও প্রযুক্তিগত দক্ষতার সমন্বয় ঘটিয়ে আমাদের যুবসমাজকে বিশ্বমানের মানবসম্পদে রূপান্তর করাই আমাদের মূল লক্ষ্য।

আমি বিশ্বাস করি, জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত কলেজসমূহে কর্মসংস্থানমুখী গুণগত মানের শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে আগামীর বাংলাদেশ গঠনে কার্যকর ভূমিকা পালনে সক্ষম হবে।

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীতে এ প্রতিষ্ঠানের অব্যাহত অগ্রগতি ও সাফল্য কামনা করি।

ড. আ ন ম এহছানুল হক মিলন



প্রফেসর ড. এ এস এম আমানুল্লাহ
ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর
জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

বাণী

শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য কেবল জ্ঞানার্জন নয়, অর্জিত জ্ঞানকে মানুষের মুক্তি, সামাজিক অগ্রগতি, অর্থনৈতিক এবং রাষ্ট্রের সমৃদ্ধিতে সফলভাবে প্রয়োগ করার মধ্যেই এর প্রকৃত স্বার্থকতা নিহিত। আর উচ্চশিক্ষার লক্ষ্য হলো- সেই জ্ঞানকে সৃজনশীলতা, গবেষণা, উদ্ভাবন ও মানবিক মূল্যবোধের সমন্বয়ে এমন এক রূপান্তরকামী শক্তিতে পরিণত করা-যা মানুষকে আত্মনির্ভর, সমাজকে প্রগতিশীল এবং রাষ্ট্রকে বিশ্ব পরিসরে মর্যাদার আসনে সমাসীন করতে পারে। রাষ্ট্রীয় পর্যায়ের সেই প্রত্যয়কে ধারণ করে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় উচ্চশিক্ষার সম্প্রসারণ থেকে শিক্ষার গুণগত মানের উৎকর্ষ সাধনে এক নতুন অভিযাত্রায় অগ্রসর হচ্ছে।

আমরা মনে করি, জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ভবিষ্যৎ কেবল সংখ্যাগত সম্প্রসারণে নয়, বরং প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সুশাসন ও জবাবদিহিতা নিশ্চিতকরণ, উচ্চশিক্ষার কাঙ্ক্ষিত বিশ্বমান অর্জন, গবেষণা ও উদ্ভাবনী কর্মকাণ্ডে ঈর্ষণীয় অবস্থান তৈরির মধ্য দিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক গ্রহণযোগ্যতায় নির্ধারিত হবে।

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বর্তমান প্রশাসন সরকারের রাজনৈতিক অঙ্গীকারের আলোকে এ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়টিকে আমূল সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে এমনভাবে গড়ে তুলতে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ- যেখানে প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলের একজন শিক্ষার্থীও বিশ্বমানের জ্ঞান ও দক্ষতা অর্জনের সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত না হয়। এ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ও অধিভুক্ত প্রতিটি শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হবে শিক্ষার্থীদের আনন্দঘন পরিবেশে জ্ঞানচর্চা ও মানবিক মূল্যবোধ বিকাশের প্রাণকেন্দ্র।

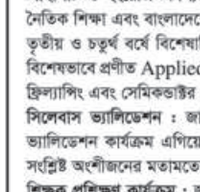
১৯৯২ সালের ২১ অক্টোবর তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রী দেশনেত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়ার বিচক্ষণ ও দূরদর্শী নেতৃত্বে মহান জাতীয় সংসদে গৃহীত ৩৭ নং আইনের মাধ্যমে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় দেশের বৃহত্তম উচ্চশিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়। উচ্চশিক্ষাকে নগরকেন্দ্রীক সীমাবদ্ধতা থেকে মুক্ত করে দেশের প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলের সাধারণ মানুষের দোরগোড়ায় পৌঁছে দেয়াই ছিল এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠার মূল উদ্দেশ্য। প্রতিষ্ঠার ৩৪ বছরে নানা চড়াই উৎরাই পেরিয়ে প্রতিষ্ঠানটি দেশব্যাপী ২৩১৮টি অধিভুক্ত কলেজ ও শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠান, প্রায় ৪০ লক্ষ শিক্ষার্থী এবং লক্ষাধিক শিক্ষককের সমন্বয়ে এক মহিরুহে পরিণত হয়েছে। সেই অর্থে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অগ্রযাত্রা বাংলাদেশের জাতীয় অগ্রযাত্রার সমর্থক।

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তারেক রহমান এমপির দিকনির্দেশনার আলোকে দক্ষতানির্ভর শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম প্রবর্তন, যুগোপযোগী পাঠ্যক্রম-পাঠ্যসূচি প্রণয়ন, তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি ও ইংরেজি শিক্ষাকে সিলেবাসে অবশ্যপাঠ্যকরণ করা হয়েছে। সেই উদ্দেশ্যকে সফলভাবে বাস্তবায়নের লক্ষ্যে অধিভুক্ত সকল কলেজের শিক্ষককে আইসিটি প্রশিক্ষণের আওতায় নিয়ে আসার উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে। ইতোমধ্যে কোর ট্রেইনার, মাস্টার ট্রেইনারসহ সাড়ে ৩ হাজার শিক্ষকের প্রশিক্ষণ শেষ হয়েছে। শিক্ষার্থীদের দেশে-বিদেশে কর্মসংস্থানের উপযোগী করে গড়ে তুলতে ইংরেজির পাশাপাশি তৃতীয় ভাষা শিক্ষা গ্রহণের সুযোগ সম্প্রসারণে প্রতিষ্ঠা করা হয়েছে মাল্টি ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ লার্নিং ইনস্টিটিউট।

২০২৪ এর গণঅভ্যুত্থানের পর বর্তমান প্রশাসনের উদ্যোগে সারাদেশে দুই সহস্রাধিক শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অবনতিশীল পরিস্থিতি থেকে উত্তরণ করে শিক্ষার্থী, শিক্ষককে ক্লাসরুমে ফিরিয়ে আনা, কলেজ পরিচালনা পর্ষদ পুনর্গঠন, ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পুনঃপ্রবর্তন, সর্বনিম্ন ২৪ কর্মদিবস থেকে ৪৭ কর্মদিবসের মধ্যে ফলাফল প্রকাশ করে সেশনজট উল্লেখযোগ্য পরিমাণে নিরসন করা সম্ভব হয়েছে।

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীর এই ক্ষণে বর্তমান গণতান্ত্রিক সরকার, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ইউজিসি, অধিভুক্ত সকল কলেজের সম্মানিত অধ্যক্ষবৃন্দ, শিক্ষক-শিক্ষার্থী ও পরিচালনা পর্ষদের সভাপতি, শিক্ষাবিদ, বুদ্ধিজীবী, গণমাধ্যমসহ শিক্ষাসংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পক্ষ থেকে জানাই প্রাণঢালা শুভেচ্ছা, অভিনন্দন ও কৃতজ্ঞতা।

প্রফেসর ড. এ এস এম আমানুল্লাহ



৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীতে
জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রথম চ্যান্সেলর
মরহুমা বেগম খালেদা জিয়ার
প্রতি বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা

এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

বাংলাদেশের উচ্চশিক্ষার বৃহত্তম প্রতিষ্ঠান জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ৩৪তম প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীতে পদার্পণ করছে এক নতুন প্রত্যয়, সুদূরপ্রসারী কর্মপরিকল্পনা এবং প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক রূপান্তরের অঙ্গীকার নিয়ে। ১৯৯২ সালের ২০ অক্টোবর মহান জাতীয় সংসদে ৩৭ নম্বর আইন পাস এবং পরদিন গেজেট প্রজ্ঞাপনের মাধ্যমে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠা বাংলাদেশের উচ্চশিক্ষার ইতিহাসে এক যুগান্তকারী ঘটনা। তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রী, আপসহীন দেশনেত্রী বেগম খালেদা জিয়ার নেতৃত্বে দেশের সাধারণ মানুষের জন্য উচ্চশিক্ষার সুযোগ সম্প্রসারণ, বিদ্যমান বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলোর ওপর ক্রমবর্ধমান চাপ হ্রাস এবং জেলা-উপজেলা পর্যায়ে কলেজশিক্ষার সমন্বিত ব্যবস্থাপনা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়।

বর্তমানে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধীনে ২৩১৮টি কলেজ ও শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রায় ৪০ লাখ শিক্ষার্থী অধ্যয়ন করছে। দেশের উচ্চশিক্ষার প্রায় ৭০ শতাংশ এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আওতায় পরিচালিত হয়। বর্তমানে এক কোটিরও বেশি স্নাতক ডিগ্রিধারী দেশে-বিদেশে শিক্ষা, প্রশাসন, ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য, শিল্প, প্রযুক্তি ও সামাজিক উন্নয়নের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে অবদান রেখে চলেছেন।

ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর প্রফেসর ড. এ এস এম আমানুল্লাহর নেতৃত্বে বর্তমান প্রশাসন পাঠ্যক্রম, পাঠ্যসূচি, কলেজ ব্যবস্থাপনা, পরীক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনা, শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণ, আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতা, ডিজিটাল অবকাঠামো এবং শিক্ষার্থীকল্যাণ কার্যক্রমকে একটি সমন্বিত উন্নয়ন কাঠামোর আওতায় নিয়ে আসার কার্যক্রম হাতে নিয়েছে। বর্তমান গণতান্ত্রিক সরকারের শিক্ষা, দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন, যুব কর্মসংস্থান, প্রযুক্তি সম্প্রসারণ ও মানবসম্পদ বিকাশের নীতিগত অগ্রাধিকারের সঙ্গে সামঞ্জস্য রেখে এসব কর্মপরিকল্পনা প্রণীত হচ্ছে।

প্রশাসনিক বিকেন্দ্রীকরণ : শিক্ষা কিংবা প্রশাসনিক কার্যক্রম সুষ্ঠু ও জবাবদিহিমূলক করতে বিকেন্দ্রীকরণের বিকল্প নেই। সেই লক্ষ্যে শিক্ষক ও শিক্ষার্থীদের দোরগোড়ায় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সেবা পৌঁছে দিতে সারাদেশে এ পর্যন্ত ১২টি আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র প্রতিষ্ঠা করা হয়েছে।

কারিকুলাম ও সিলেবাস সংস্কার : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের একাডেমিক সংস্কারের ক্ষেত্রে অন্যতম উদ্যোগ হলো প্রচলিত পাঠ্যক্রমকে যুগোপযোগী ও দক্ষতাভিত্তিক শিক্ষাক্রমে রূপান্তর। শিক্ষাক্রমকে শ্রমবাজারের বর্তমান ও ভবিষ্যৎ চাহিদার সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করার কার্যক্রম হাতে নেয়া হয়েছে। এরই অংশ হিসেবে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৩২টি বিষয়ের ৪ হাজার ২০০টি কোর্সের সংস্কার চলছে। ইতোমধ্যে ৫৫০টি কোর্সের সংস্কার কাজ শেষ হয়েছে।

আইসিটি ও ইংরেজি অবশ্যপাঠ্য : নতুন শিক্ষাক্রম কাঠামোয় প্রথম বর্ষে বাধ্যতামূলক তথ্য ও যোগাযোগপ্রযুক্তি, নৈতিক শিক্ষা এবং বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাস ও পরিচয়; দ্বিতীয় বর্ষে প্রায়োগিক তথ্য ও যোগাযোগপ্রযুক্তি এবং ইংরেজি; তৃতীয় ও চতুর্থ বর্ষে বিশেষায়িত কর্মমুখী কোর্স ও যোগাযোগভিত্তিক ইংরেজি শিক্ষার ওপর গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে। বিশেষভাবে প্রণীত Applied ICT Course-এ কৃত্রিম বুদ্ধিমত্তা, সাইবার সিকিউরিটি, আউটসোর্সিং, ডেটা প্রসেসিং, ফ্রিল্যান্সিং এবং সেমিকন্ডাক্টর প্রযুক্তি সম্পর্কে প্রাথমিক ও প্রায়োগিক জ্ঞান অর্জনের সুযোগ রাখা হয়েছে।

সিলেবাস ভ্যালিডেশন : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অনার্স পর্যায়ের বিভিন্ন বিষয়ের সিলেবাস সংস্কার ও কারিকুলাম ভ্যালিডেশন কার্যক্রম এগিয়ে নিচ্ছে। দেশের বিভিন্ন পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অভিজ্ঞ শিক্ষাবিদ, বিষয়বিশেষজ্ঞ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট অংশীজনের মতামতের ভিত্তিতে পাঠ্যক্রমকে আরও বাস্তবসম্মত করার উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে।

শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণ কার্যক্রম : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় দেশব্যাপী শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণের ব্যাপক কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করেছে। ICT বিষয়কে অগ্রাধিকার দিয়ে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অধিভুক্ত কলেজসমূহের ১২,০০০ শিক্ষককে প্রশিক্ষণের আওতায় আনা হচ্ছে। ইতোমধ্যে ৩৫০০ জন শিক্ষকের ICT প্রশিক্ষণ সম্পন্ন হয়েছে। এই কার্যক্রমে এনএসডিএ, এটুআই, আইসিটি ডিভিশন ও ইউনিসেফ বাংলাদেশ কারিগরি সহযোগিতা দিচ্ছে।

ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর অ্যাওয়ার্ড প্রদান : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে সেরা ফলাফল অর্জনকারী ৫৭ জন মেধাবী শিক্ষার্থীকে 'ভাইস চ্যান্সেলর অ্যাওয়ার্ড' এবং বিশেষ চাহিদাসম্পন্ন, আর্থিকভাবে অসচ্ছল, প্রান্তিক, সুবিধাবঞ্চিতসহ ২ হাজার ৯৮৭ জন শিক্ষার্থীকে শিক্ষাবৃত্তি প্রদান করা হয়েছে।

তৃতীয় ভাষা শিক্ষা গ্রহণের উদ্যোগ : বাংলাদেশের বিপুল তরুণ জনগোষ্ঠীকে আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রমবাজারে অধিকতর প্রতিযোগিতামূলক অবস্থানে নিয়ে যেতে বাংলা ও ইংরেজির পাশাপাশি ম্যান্ডারিন, জাপানি, কোরীয়, আরবি, ইতালীয়, স্প্যানিশ ও ফরাসি ভাষা শিক্ষার সুযোগ সম্প্রসারণের উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে। এ উদ্দেশ্যে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে Multi Language Learning Institute প্রতিষ্ঠা করা হয়েছে এবং অধিভুক্ত কলেজগুলোতে ল্যাঙ্গুয়েজ ক্লাব গঠনের কার্যক্রম পুরোদমে চলছে।

লার্নিং উইথ হ্যাপিনেস কর্মসূচি : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উন্নয়ন-দর্শনে শিক্ষা শুধু কর্মসংস্থানের প্রস্তুতি নয়; এটি সুস্থ, সংবেদনশীল, নৈতিক ও সামাজিকভাবে দায়িত্বশীল মানুষ গড়ে তোলার প্রক্রিয়া। এ উপলব্ধি থেকেই 'Learning with Happiness' কর্মসূচির আওতায় শিক্ষার্থীদের মানসিক সুস্থতা, সাংস্কৃতিক বিকাশ, খেলাধুলা, সৃজনশীলতা ও সামাজিক অংশগ্রহণ বৃদ্ধির উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে।

'ওয়ান স্টুডেন্ট ওয়ান ট্রি' কর্মসূচি : পরিবেশ উন্নয়ন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মোকাবিলায় শিক্ষার্থীদের সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ নিশ্চিত করতে 'One Student One Tree' কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ৪০ লক্ষ শিক্ষার্থীর হাতে প্রতিবছর একটি করে বৃক্ষরোপণের লক্ষ্যকে সামনে রেখে অধিভুক্ত কলেজগুলোতে বৃক্ষরোপণ কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়েছে। ইতোমধ্যে সারাদেশের দুই শতাধিক কলেজে বৃক্ষরোপণ করা হয়েছে।

গ্রিন এনার্জি ও গ্রিন ক্যাম্পাস : 'Green Campus' ও 'Green Energy' উদ্যোগের মাধ্যমে পরিবেশবান্ধব শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠান গড়ে তোলার পরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে। অধিভুক্ত প্রতিটি শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ছাদে সোলার প্যানেল স্থাপন করে প্রায় ১,০০০ মেগাওয়াট গ্রিন এনার্জি বা পরিবেশবান্ধব বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন করার পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে।

দেশি-বিদেশি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ও সংস্থার সঙ্গে সমঝোতা চুক্তি : বিশ্বমানের শিক্ষা নিশ্চিত করতে আন্তর্জাতিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠান, পেশাগত সংস্থা এবং শিল্পপ্রতিষ্ঠানের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা অপরিহার্য। এ লক্ষ্যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের জনস হপকিনস ইউনিভার্সিটি, যুক্তরাজ্যের স্যালফোর্ড ইউনিভার্সিটি, ইউনিভার্সিটি অব নিউ হ্যাভেন, চীনের হোপ এডুকেশন, অক্সফোর্ড একিউএ, ইউনিসেফ বাংলাদেশ, এটুআই, এসিসিএ, এনএসডিএ, ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ইউনিভার্সিটি অব মালয়েশিয়া, থাইল্যান্ডের সিনাওয়াত্রা ইউনিভার্সিটি, ইএটিএল ইনোভেশন হাবসহ ১৫০টিরও বেশি দেশি-বিদেশি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, গবেষণা সংস্থা ও শিল্পপ্রতিষ্ঠানের সঙ্গে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এমওইউ স্বাক্ষর করেছে।

সমীক্ষা কার্যক্রম : ইউনিসেফের সহযোগিতায় এবং সরকারের নীতিগত দিকনির্দেশনার আলোকে Feasibility Study to Assess the Future Readiness and Responsiveness of Bangladesh's Higher Education System শীর্ষক গবেষণামূলক সমীক্ষা পরিচালনার উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে। এর উদ্দেশ্য বাংলাদেশের উচ্চশিক্ষা কতখানি ভবিষ্যৎ শ্রমবাজারের চাহিদা পূরণে সক্ষম, কোন কোন খাতে দক্ষতার ঘাটতি রয়েছে এবং স্বল্প ও দীর্ঘমেয়াদে কী ধরনের কর্মমুখী কোর্স প্রয়োজন, তা নিরূপণ করা।

মাইক্রো-লার্নিং ও মাইক্রো-ক্রেডেনশিয়াল কোর্স : সমসাময়িক শিক্ষাভাবনায় Micro-Credentials ও Stackable Learning Pathway ক্রমেই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে উঠছে। তাই জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বর্তমান শিক্ষার্থী এবং বিভিন্ন কারণে শিক্ষাজীবন থেকে ঝরে পড়া তরুণদের জন্য ১০ থেকে ১২ ক্রেডিটের মাইক্রো-লার্নিং ও মাইক্রো-ক্রেডেনশিয়াল কোর্স চালুর উদ্যোগ নিয়েছে।

পেপারলেস অফিস ব্যবস্থাপনা : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দাফতরিক কার্যক্রম গতিশীল ও পরিবেশবান্ধব করার লক্ষ্যে পেপারলেস অফিস ব্যবস্থাপনার কাজ শুরু হয়েছে। পুরনো নথি আর্কাইভে নেওয়ার পাশাপাশি ডি-নথির ব্যবহারও বাড়ানো হচ্ছে।

ক্যারিয়ার সেন্টার প্রতিষ্ঠা : শিক্ষার্থীদের কর্মসংস্থান সহায়তাকে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কাঠামোর আওতায় আনতে অধিভুক্ত কলেজগুলোতে Career Center প্রতিষ্ঠার উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে। এসব কেন্দ্রের মাধ্যমে ক্যারিয়ার কাউন্সেলিং, চাকরির সাক্ষাৎকার প্রস্তুতি, জীবনবৃত্তান্ত প্রণয়ন, ইন্টার্নশিপ সহায়তা, উদ্যোক্তা প্রশিক্ষণ এবং ফ্রিল্যান্সিং দক্ষতা উন্নয়নের সুযোগ সম্প্রসারণের পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে।

ডিজিটাল অবকাঠামো ও অনলাইন এডুকেশন : জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শিক্ষার্থীদের ইন্টারনেট সুবিধা সম্প্রসারণ, প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক ই-মেইল আইডি প্রদান, স্মার্ট ক্লাসরুম স্থাপন, কম্পিউটার ল্যাব উন্নয়ন এবং অনলাইন লার্নিং প্ল্যাটফর্ম তৈরির উদ্যোগ নিয়েছে। এই কর্মসূচিগুলোর উদ্দেশ্য শুধু শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রযুক্তি স্থাপন নয়; বরং প্রযুক্তিকে পাঠদান, মূল্যায়ন, গবেষণা ও প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থাপনার অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংশে পরিণত করা।

পরীক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনা ও ফল প্রকাশে অগ্রগতি : বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের লক্ষ লক্ষ শিক্ষার্থীর পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ, উত্তরপত্র মূল্যায়ন, ফলাফল প্রস্তুত এবং সনদ প্রদান অত্যন্ত জটিল ও সময়সাপেক্ষ কার্যক্রম। এই জটিলতা নিরসনে এক্সামিনেশন ম্যানেজমেন্ট সিস্টেম (ইএমএস) সফটওয়্যার চালু করা হয়েছে। এর ফলে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিভিন্ন বর্ষের পরীক্ষার ফলাফল ২৪ থেকে ৪৭ কর্মদিবসের মধ্যে প্রকাশ করা সম্ভব হয়েছে। এই সময়কে আরও কমিয়ে আনার লক্ষ্যে যুক্তরাজ্যের AQA Global-এর সঙ্গে যৌথ সহযোগিতার উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে।

ন্যাশনাল এক্সাম সেন্টার প্রতিষ্ঠা : পরীক্ষার কারণে কলেজের নিয়মিত শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম ব্যাহত হওয়ার সমস্যাও দীর্ঘদিনের। জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধীনে সারা বছর বিপুলসংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থীর পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হওয়ায় অনেক কলেজে নিয়মিত শ্রেণিপাঠ পরিচালনা বাধাগ্রস্ত হয়। এ সমস্যা সমাধানে প্রাথমিকভাবে ৩০০টি এবং পর্যায়ক্রমে দেশের ৫০০টি উপজেলায় স্বতন্ত্র National Exam Center প্রতিষ্ঠার উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে।

সেশনজট নিরসনের উদ্যোগ : সেশনজট নিরসনে একাডেমিক ক্যালেন্ডার অনুসরণ, পরীক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনার দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধি, মূল্যায়ন প্রক্রিয়ার আধুনিকায়ন এবং প্রশাসনিক সমন্বয় জোরদারের উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে। ২০২৭ সালের ডিসেম্বরের মধ্যে সেশনজটকে শূন্যের কোঠায় নিয়ে আসার লক্ষ্য নির্ধারণ করা হয়েছে।

পাঠ্যপুস্তক প্রণয়নে সমঝোতা স্মারক স্বাক্ষর : শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য মানসম্মত মৌলিক পাঠ্যবই প্রণয়ন, গবেষণালব্ধ, একাডেমিক ও অনুবাদধর্মী প্রকাশনা কার্যক্রম জোরদার করতে বাংলা একাডেমি, প্রেস ইনস্টিটিউট বাংলাদেশ (পিআইবি) ও দি ইউনিভার্সিটি প্রেস লিমিটেড (ইউপিএল)-এর সঙ্গে পৃথক সমঝোতা স্মারক স্বাক্ষর করেছে জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

কলেজ মনিটরিং: সারাদেশে জেলাভিত্তিক কলেজ মনিটরিং কমিটি গঠনের উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে। কলেজ মনিটরিং ব্যবস্থাকে শুধু নিয়মতান্ত্রিক পরিদর্শনের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ না রেখে ডিজিটাল প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহার করে পাঠদানের মান, শিক্ষক উপস্থিতি, শিক্ষার্থীদের অংশগ্রহণ, গবেষণা কার্যক্রম, অবকাঠামো, আর্থিক ব্যবস্থাপনা এবং প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সুশাসন নিশ্চিত করার জন্য ব্যাপক পরিকল্পনা হাতে নেয়া হয়েছে।

অনার্স ভর্তি পরীক্ষা চালু : অনার্স প্রথম বর্ষে গুণগত মানোত্তীর্ণ শিক্ষার্থী নির্বাচনের লক্ষ্যে সারাদেশে অধিভুক্ত কলেজ ও শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে ভর্তি পরীক্ষা পুনঃপ্রবর্তন করা হয়েছে। এই উদ্যোগ শিক্ষার্থী নির্বাচনে একটি সুশৃঙ্খল ও প্রতিযোগিতামূলক ব্যবস্থার অংশ।

চাকরিচ্যুত কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের পুনর্বহাল : ফ্যাসিস্ট শাসনামলে ২০১১

DHAKA WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2026, KARTIK 5, 1433 BS

SPORT



"I do believe that primarily the national team should be coached by a national representative. I'm grateful for the opportunity, but there will be some development in terms of the coaching, and you can see by our staff.

England's red-ball coach **Stephen Fleming**

'Ronaldo let Man United down'

REUTERS

Former Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag has blamed Cristiano Ronaldo's lack of fitness and preparation for the forward's struggles during his second stint at Old Trafford, saying the Portugal international "let the team down".

Ronaldo, who won three Premier League titles under Alex Ferguson before leaving for Real Madrid in 2009, returned to United in 2021. However, he struggled under Ten Hag, scoring once in 10 league appearances in the 2022-23 season before leaving the club in November 2022.

"He let the team down, and he let me down, because we planned with him," Ten Hag told The Athletic in an interview published on Tuesday.

Ronaldo has recently been handed a 30-day suspension for



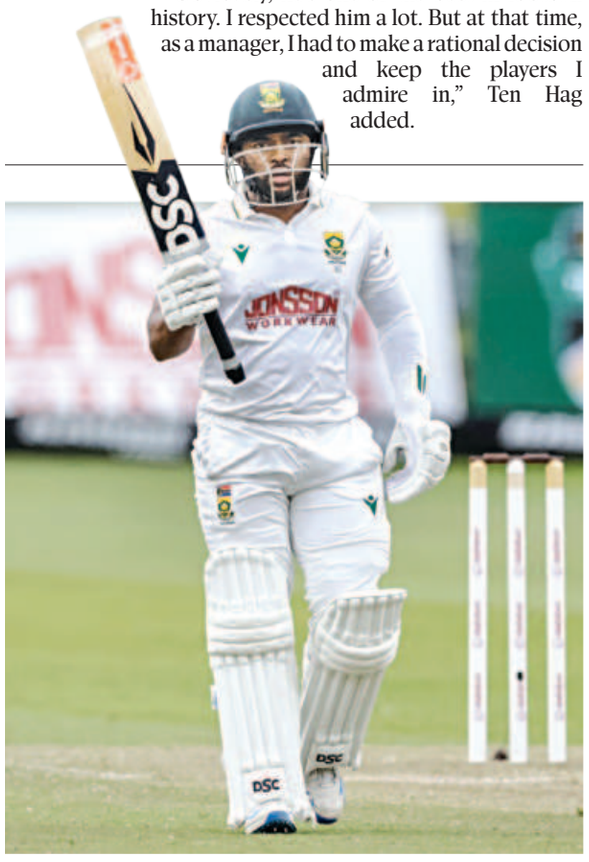
leaving the Portuguese national team camp earlier this month during the Nations League due to a fallout with Portugal coach Jorge Jesus. He will also have to pay a fine of 255 euros ($286).

Ten Hag, who guided United to a third-place league finish in 2022-23 before being sacked in 2024, said he had repeatedly confronted Ronaldo over his performances.

"Many times I say, 'Ronnie, everyone wants to work for you to bring you in the right position, but if you can't bring yourself in the box, you can't score.' He was not capable to do this," Ten Hag said.

He rejected suggestions that he had expected Ronaldo to press relentlessly, arguing that the forward struggled because he had not prepared himself properly.

"Obviously, he's one of the best in football history. I respected him a lot. But at that time, as a manager, I had to make a rational decision and keep the players I admire in," Ten Hag added.



South Africa's Temba Bavuma celebrates reaching 150 on the third day of the second Test against Australia at St George's Park in Gqeberha yesterday. Bavuma's fifth Test century, his first against Australia, and innings-saving partnerships with Marco Jansen and Simon Harmer helped the hosts recover from trouble and into a commanding position. PHOTO: AFP

Tigers' tricky equation for final



Bangladesh face an uphill task to keep their UAE ODI Tri-Series final hopes alive after a crushing 99-run defeat in their tournament opener. Heading into today's must-win clash against Afghanistan at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium, simply securing a victory will not be enough for the Tigers. Locked in a net run rate battle with Zimbabwe for the apparent second spot in Friday's final, Bangladesh must hit specific mathematical targets to advance.

IF BANGLADESH BAT FIRST

- If Bangladesh score 235 or less, they must win by 41 runs to move ahead on NRR.
- If Bangladesh score 236 or more, a 40-run win is enough (as Bangladesh would edge out Zimbabwe on higher overall tournament scoring rate).

IF BANGLADESH BAT SECOND

- Chasing 201 (if AFG score 200): Must win inside 40.3 overs (or 41.1 overs if finishing with a boundary when scores are level).
- Chasing 251 (if AFG score 250): Must win inside 41.3 overs (or 42.1 overs if finishing with a boundary when scores are level).
- Chasing 301 (if AFG score 300): Must win inside 42.2 overs (or 43.0 overs if finishing with a boundary when scores are level).
- Boasting a massive +3.160 NRR, Afghanistan will reach Friday's final unless they suffer a massive defeat (losing by 129+ runs or inside ~16.5 overs), which would put Bangladesh and Zimbabwe through. Conversely, Zimbabwe advances alongside Afghanistan if the Afghans win, or if Bangladesh wins by less than the required 41-run or ~41-over margin.

"If we don't think about 300-350 and instead break it down into smaller targets and play towards them, then I think it will be easier. So we have to set our mentality this way.

Tanzid Tamim on the mentality batters need for chasing big totals

Bayern, Arsenal set for early title test

AGENCIES

Bayern Munich and Arsenal face an early test of their Champions League title credentials when they meet at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday, with the hosts having to cope without in-form winger Michael Olise.

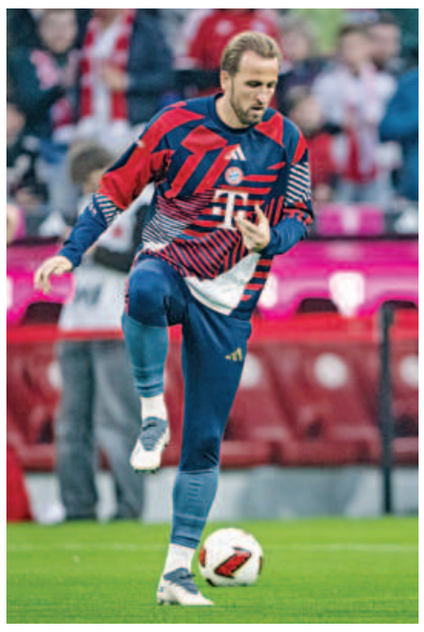
Bayern bounced back from a frustrating run with a 6-1 demolition of RB Leipzig in the Bundesliga on Saturday, with Luis Diaz scoring a hattrick. However, Olise will miss the Arsenal clash after being sent off in Bayern's 3-3 draw against Viking last week.

The French winger has scored nine goals and provided five assists in 10 appearances across all competitions this season. With Jamal Musiala struggling with injury and illness, and Serge Gnabry and Lennart Karl yet to hit their best form, his absence will place greater responsibility on Harry Kane.

The England captain, who has nine goals and six assists in 10 games this season, acknowledged that Bayern would miss Olise but urged his teammates to "step up". Bayern, however, will still have enough firepower, with Diaz firing in recent games.

Arsenal, meanwhile, have won 10 of their 11 matches across all competitions this season.

The two sides are familiar foes, having





met in the 2023-24 Champions League quarterfinals, when Bayern progressed by an aggregate goal. Arsenal gained revenge with a 3-1 victory in the league phase at the Emirates Stadium last November, handing Vincent Kompany's side one of their most damaging European defeats under the Belgian coach.

Bayern have historically dominated the fixture, winning five of their seven Champions League home meetings with Arsenal, drawing one and losing one.

Kane, who has scored 15 goals in 22 career appearances against the Gunners, is relishing another encounter with the London club.

"We're testing ourselves against one of the best, we're here at home, the energy, the fans, it's going to be a special night," he said.

Elsewhere, Real Madrid will aim for a third consecutive Champions League win when they host RB Leipzig, hoping to carry their momentum into next week's first El Clasico of the season against Barcelona.

Jose Mourinho's side head into the match after a 4-1 LaLiga victory over Sevilla, with summer signing Yan Diomande scoring and providing an assist. The 19-year-old is gradually settling in after arriving from Leipzig, and Mourinho was encouraged by his progress.

Although Mourinho has already said he would start Vinicius Junior against Leipzig, Diomande, who played in place of the suspended Brazilian against Sevilla, will want to grab any opportunity against his former club.



West Indies pacers Kemar Roach (L) and Jayden Seales share a moment during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Having arrived in the country last Sunday, the visitors trained for the first time yesterday ahead of their two-match Test series against Bangladesh, which begins in Mirpur on October 28. The Windies will hope their pacers can make an impact against the Tigers, especially in the second Test, starting in Sylhet on November 5, where fast bowlers usually find better purchase. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
UAE ODI Tri-Series
Afghanistan vs Bangladesh
Live from 5:30 pm
LaLiga
Levante VS Athletic Club
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

SONY SPORTS 1, 2, 5
UEFA Champions League
Live from 10:45 pm
Lille vs Galatasaray
Como vs Man Utd
Live from 01:00 am (Thursday)
Bayern Munich vs Arsenal
Real Madrid vs Leipzig
Inter Milan vs Shakhtar

SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh set up IHF Nations Trophy final against India

Bangladesh beat Maldives 33-20 to set up a final clash against India in the Begum Khaleda Zia IHF Nations Trophy at Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Stadium in Paltan on Tuesday. Bangladesh will face India in Thursday's final, scheduled for a 3:00pm start. Maldives will take on Nepal in Wednesday's third-place playoff at 2:00pm.

Robson, Emeka keep Kings perfect in Fed Cup

Four days after beating City Club 3-0 in the Bangladesh Football League (BFL), defending champions Bashundhara Kings defeated the newcomers 2-0 in a Group B fixture of the Federation Cup at Shaheed Miraz-Topon Stadium in Manikganj on Tuesday. Robson Robinho and Emeka Ogbugh, two of the three goalscorers in Saturday's league match, were on the scoresheet again as Kings stayed top of the group with two wins from two matches.

Fortis lose to Goa 2-1

Fortis FC suffered a 2-1 defeat in their second Group H fixture of the AFC Challenge League against FC Goa in Hawally, Kuwait on Tuesday. Substitute Rafael Tudu equalised for Fortis in the 78th minute after Goa had taken a sixth-minute lead through Jorge Ortiz before Chiki scored the winning goal for the Indian side in the 85th minute. Two defeats in two matches means Fortis are all but out of reckoning for a place in the next round.

Nayeem hits double ton as batters dominate in NCL

Batters dominated the third day of the third round of the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL) 2026-27 yesterday, with Nayeem Ahmed scoring a maiden first-class double ton and Zawad Abrar scoring the fastest first-class half-century. Host Rajshahi's Nayeem converted his overnight score of 176 not out into a double century against Barishal, becoming the first batter to reach the milestone this season. Meanwhile, Barishal opener Zawad Abrar hit a 22-ball fifty.

***Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.*





Dhaka, Tokyo look to elevate partnership

Tarique to visit Japan on October 26-29

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Japan are set to elevate their existing strategic partnership during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's visit to Tokyo from October 26 to 29, with the commitment expected to be reflected in a joint statement.

Talks are ongoing about elevating the strategic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP), The Daily Star has learnt from foreign ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Dhaka and Tokyo would discuss ways to reduce interest rates on Japanese loans.

Foreign Secretary **Asad Alam Siam**

"The terminology is yet to be set at this moment -- 2-3 terms are on the table," said one of the officials.

A CSP represents a higher and broader tier in Japan's diplomatic framework than a standard Strategic Partnership and encompasses a deeply multi-layered, expansive network of cooperation across almost all sectors.

At present, Japan maintains CSPs with ASEAN, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A worker carries a bundle of freshly dyed fabrics as he walks past rows of colourful cloths hung out to dry in Banti village of Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila. Around 500 families in the village depend on traditional hand-batik printing for their livelihoods, producing cotton fabrics used to make dresses, bedcovers and scarves. Inset, workers print colourful patterns onto fabric by hand. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTOS: **ANISUR RAHMAN**



Sohrab Hossain

Star Patuakhali correspondent of 22 yrs dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Sohrab Hossain, who served as The Daily Star's Patuakhali correspondent for more than 22 years, died at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital yesterday.

He was 55.

He died around 7:10pm, with the hospital's death certificate listing cardiac arrest as the cause of death.

Citing family members, The Daily Star's Barishal Correspondent Susanta Ghosh said Sohrab fell ill

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

HIS LAST BYLINE

Reserve forest cleared to make room for farming

Rangabali forest being destroyed after dist admin leased out the land



SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Some 200-300 trees have been chopped down in a reserved forest at Char Signboard in Patuakhali's Rangabali to make way for watermelon cultivation.

Forest officials say an excavator is also being used to build an embankment there.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Police struggle to act on list of 545 extortionists

Many suspects have links to ruling party

TOUSIF KAIUM

The government has prepared a list of 545 suspected extortionists operating across the capital and instructed the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to take action against them.

However, police have yet to launch a fully-fledged crackdown, as officials struggle to determine how to proceed after detaining suspects and field-level officers hesitate to act against those with political connections for fear of repercussions.

"Whenever field-level officers were instructed to arrest them, they were loath to carry out the orders, saying that the individuals have connections with MPs or ministers and could take revenge on them later."

An additional deputy commissioner of the DMP

The list was made based on information collected by different intelligence agencies, according to home ministry sources.

It is the second such list after the BNP came to power. Earlier, the DMP prepared a list of more than 1,200 suspected extortionists, a large number of whom were affiliated with the BNP.

Joint Commissioner (Crime) Md Faruk Hossain told The Daily Star that the latest list was prepared after verifying the previous list and collecting fresh information from the field.

"Several individuals have already been arrested from the list."

The development comes amid a series of incidents involving extortion and land grabbing in the capital, triggering growing criticism of the law-and- order situation.

According to the latest list, Tejgaon division has the highest number of listed extortionists at 155, followed by Gulshan with 85, Uttara 72, Lalbagh 71, Mirpur 66, Ramna 50, Wari 24, and Motijheel 22.

This newspaper obtained the names of 215 from the list. At least 75 of them were identified as having links to the BNP or its affiliated organisations.

Another 134 have no political or organisational identity. The remaining six included two individuals connected with

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

84 held in raid at add'l DIG's Purbachal house

Alcohol, yaba, cannabis seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Abdullah Al Jahir

The Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 84 people, including 26 women, during a raid on a house in Police Housing in Dhaka's Purbachal on Monday night.

Alcohol, yaba and cannabis were seized from the house that belonged to Abdullah Al Jahir, an additional deputy inspector general of police.

Jahir had rented out the house, where drug use and illegal "DJ parties" had allegedly been going on for a long time, prompting police to conduct the raid, Shafiqul Islam, additional commissioner (detective) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

Parties and drug consumption were regularly reported at the property in Police Housing-1, said Elias Kabir, deputy commissioner of DB's Uttara division that conducted the raid.

Jahir was the primary organiser of the parties and a man named Mahbub Alam acted as the co-organiser, according to Elias.

Mahbub told investigators that Jahir

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Dema, daughter of Palestinian couple Akram Yassin and Dina Abu Baker, who were killed in an Israeli strike, mourns at their funeral in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

TUPTUP RESORT FIRE

Website names two owners, case names one



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Questions have arisen over the ownership of TupTup Resto and Resort in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, where 10 tourists died in a fire, following discrepancies between the resort's website and the case statement.

While the case statement names only Tanvir Mia as the owner, the resort's website also identifies Neaz Morshed as a proprietor. A message on the site welcomes guests on both their behalf and outlines their ambition to establish hospitality of international standards in Bangladesh.

The case accuses four named and 19 unidentified individuals of causing deaths and serious injuries through negligence. The named accused are

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1