DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2026



"Iran is not able to do much now. And we could, if we wanted to, just take all of the oil. We could take the whole country."
DONALD TRUMP

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A system short of healing hands

With only 15 health workers per 10,000 people, Bangladesh remains far below WHO benchmark of 44.5

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A severe shortage of health workers is putting Bangladesh's healthcare system under growing strain, with only around 15 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 10,000 people, far below the World Health Organisation's benchmark of 44.5.

Given the current pace of training and recruitment of health workers, the density is projected to reach 31.77 by 2030, leaving a gap of nearly 13 health workers per 10,000 people, according to the latest data from the health ministry.

Experts said hospitals function best when they have doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals, such as laboratory and imaging technologists, in an appropriate balance.

The recommended ratio is one doctor to three nurses and midwives, and five allied health professionals.

However, Bangladesh has less than one nurse or midwife for every doctor and fewer than two allied health workers.

This gap is hampering the functioning of healthcare facilities, even though the number of health professionals has increased over the past few years.

The latest data show that the growth has failed to keep pace with rising demand and remains uneven across different categories of health workers.

Experts said the shortage is being felt more acutely as Bangladesh faces a growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases, which often require long-term treatment.

At the same time, the health system must meet maternal and child health needs and tackle communicable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis, while dengue continues to drive thousands of patients to hospitals every year,

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Bangladesh has fewer than one nurse or midwife per doctor against global standard of three

Number of allied health professionals, such as lab technologists, now two per doctor against global benchmark of five

Density of health workers per 10,000 people in Bangladesh is projected to reach 31.77 per 10,000 people by 2030

SOURCE: HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH (HRH) DATA SHEET 2025

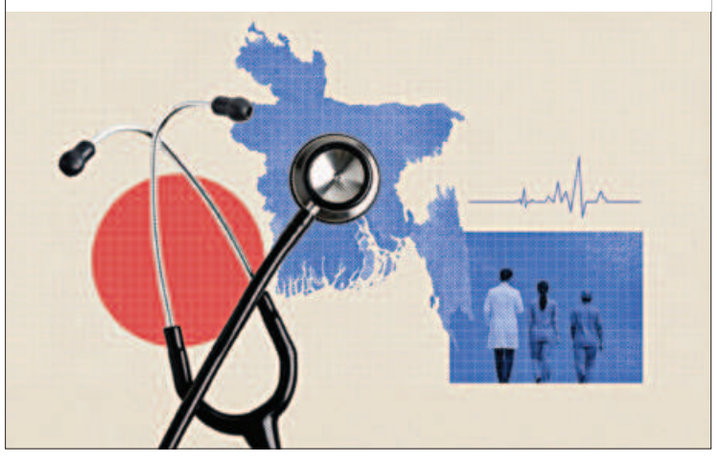




PHOTO: AFP

A police officer beats a protester with a baton during a demonstration in favor of purchasing power, the protection of public services, and fiscal and social justice, in Marseille, southeastern France yesterday as part of a nationwide call for mobilisation bringing together former members of the Yellow Vest movement, labor unions, high school and university students.

1,000 HELD AS FRANCE ERUPTS IN PROTESTS, VIOLENCE AGAIN -- PAGE 12

PHP flaw trickles down to service disruptions

Bank, govt websites taken down out of precaution in Bangladesh

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Disruptions in digital services in Bangladesh have been reported after a critical security flaw in PHP, one of the world's most widely used web programming languages, prompted some banks and government agencies to take their websites offline as a precaution.

Industry insiders said the full extent of the service disruption would become apparent today, as offices reopen after the five-day Durga Puja holiday.

Bangladesh Bank has kept its website down since Thursday, while Agrani, Janata and Bengal Commercial banks' websites were offline as of 5:00pm yesterday.

IFIC, Standard Islami and SBAC's sites were back online apparently after their systems were patched.

The land ministry also suspended its digital land services (land.gov.bd). It had announced that

Industry insiders said the full extent of the service disruption would become apparent today, as offices reopen after a five-day public holiday for Durga Puja.

the work on its systems was to run for 36 hours, from midnight on Thursday to noon on Saturday, during which no land-related digital services could be availed.

A notice on the portal says the work follows the urgent cyber alert issued by BGD e-GOV CIRT, the government's cyber security agency, on October 22.

It asked people not to make any payments after 11:45pm on Thursday. The notice was still on the portal on Saturday evening, after the stated

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Dhaka, Tokyo likely to ink $2b loan deals

PM leaves for Japan tomorrow

TASNIM MOSHIN



Bangladesh and Japan are expected to sign memorandums of understanding (MoU) on around $2 billion in loans and financial support during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's official visit to Tokyo, officials in Dhaka and Tokyo said.

The proposed package is expected to include budgetary support, infrastructure development, and cooperation in energy and maritime security. The two countries are likely to sign five to eight instruments.

Around $300 million of the proposed amount is expected to be allocated for budgetary support, a diplomatic source said.

Tarique is scheduled to visit Japan from October 26 to 29, with a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi slated for October 27.

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Temporary shops and eateries occupy sections of the main walkway at Patenga Sea Beach in Chattogram, obstructing visitors' movement and diminishing the beach's scenic appeal. Despite a recent joint eviction drive by the local administration and the Chattogram Development Authority, illegal structures have returned to several areas. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Sexual assaults on madrasa children spark outrage

Minister pledges action after 6 incidents in 2 weeks

STAR REPORT

Allegations of rape, attempted rape, and sexual abuse of children at six madrasas in just 16 days have sparked public outrage.

There have been protests, assaults on accused teachers, vandalism, and arson.

The incidents, reported between October 8 and 23 in Gazipur, Dhaka's Savar, Kushtia and Pabna, involved boys and girls as young as seven. Several were allegedly threatened into silence.

Rights groups have raised concerns over madrasa students' safety, warning that protests alone cannot ensure their protection. They called for stronger and coordinated monitoring and anti-sexual harassment panels at every institution.

The incidents are disturbing.

In Gazipur's Gacha, teacher Md Oliullah Islam, 23, allegedly raped an eight-year-old residential student at Darul Hedayah Qawmi Madrasa on three consecutive nights (October 10, 11 and 12) and threatened him into silence.

The boy told his mother on October 13, prompting her to file a case. Police arrested Oliullah and governing body member Mohammad Mizan, 38, on October 22. Both were sent to jail the

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HSC, equivalent exam results likely on Oct 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations will be published on October 29.

The Bangladesh Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee announced the date in a notice issued yesterday.

The notice, signed by committee president Prof Syed Akhtaruzzaman, also chairman of the Dhaka Education Board, said further details about the publication of the results would be announced through a press release on October 26.

This year's examinations began on July 2, with 12,70,583 candidates registered under 11 education boards.

The written examinations ended on August 8 under most boards. However, flooding delayed several written examinations under the Chattogram Education Board, where the postponed tests continued until September 9.



Workers lay rail lines on the Dhaka-Tongi rail corridor as construction of the third and fourth lines progresses on one of the country's busiest rail links. The long-delayed project, connecting the capital with much of the national rail network, had reached 55% completion by September. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Saudi oil sites, Aden base attacked after deadly strikes, say Houthis

AFP, *Riyadh*

Yemen's Houthis launched fresh attacks on Saudi Arabia and the seat of Yemen's internationally recognised government yesterday after blaming the kingdom for strikes that the Iran-backed group said killed 17 people.

Saudi Arabia and the government it backs in Yemen have come under sustained attack in recent weeks from the Houthis as a years-long truce broke down in the summer, shifting the focus of the wider US-Iran war that erupted in February.

Over the past 24 hours, the Yemeni fighters said they targeted three Saudi airports, including the international airport in the capital, Riyadh; energy installations; a pipeline; and an air base.

Military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group launched missiles at "King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, the capital of the Saudi enemy, in two phases", the airports in Dammam in the east and Najran in the south.

The group also launched attacks on the southern Khamis Mushait air base as well as "crude oil pumping stations and the crude oil pipeline from east to west".

The Saudi civil defence agency said it had also responded to falling debris in the Mecca and Medina regions yesterday after intercepting two Houthi missiles. The Houthis denied targeting the cities, the two holiest in Islam, calling the Saudi claim a "huge lie".

The Houthis also fired at the southern Yemeni city of Aden, the interim seat of the Saudi-backed government, saying they targeted a naval base and military camp overseen by Saudi forces.

Thousands protest crackdown on media in Turkey

AFP, *Istanbul*

Thousands rallied in Istanbul and Ankara yesterday against what they described as growing pressure on journalists in Turkey, including arrests, media shutdowns and the appointment of state administrators.

Press freedom has been increasingly constrained in Turkey since a failed coup attempt in 2016, with sweeping prosecutions, digital censorship and accusations by the authorities that journalists are spreading fake news.

"Enough!" shouted marchers in the crowds, composed mainly of journalists, rights activists and opposition party representatives. "We can no longer breathe!"

On the Asian side of Istanbul, protesters held up photos of jailed journalists, chanting, "We will not be silenced. Enough is enough!" and "We will not bow to pressure".

Police put their number at at least 3,000.

In Ankara, at least 3,000 protesters gathered, according to a police count.

Recent weeks have seen what rights advocates say is mounting pressure on independent journalism.



PHOTO: **AFP**

The authorities have jailed 11 journalists in the past two months and shut down several media outlets, according to the Turkish Journalists' Union.

And earlier this month, police raided Turkey's most-watched news channel, Halk TV, halting broadcasts and installing a government-appointed administrator.

The move was the latest against media outlets seen as critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government.

It followed the closure of the website and social media accounts belonging to leading digital news outlet T24 over what authorities described as "LGBT propaganda".

Dhaka, Tokyo likely to ink $2b loan deals

FROM PAGE 1

"During the upcoming visit, Japan is likely to push for regional connectivity, with a focus on the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI), under its vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," an official said.

Tokyo is also expected to arrange 1 trillion yen, equivalent to around $6.36 billion, separately in private-sector investment in Bangladesh over the next five years, the official added.

Under Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA) programme, Tokyo is likely to provide a 35-foot vessel to the Bangladesh Coast Guard, the official said.

Earlier this year, Japan handed over five patrol boats to the Bangladesh Navy under the programme, Bangladesh's first OSA project, as part of efforts to strengthen security cooperation.

Japan's largest power generation company, JERA, is also expected to help develop energy reserve infrastructure under MIDI.

"The plans are aimed at realising the FOIP and countering Chinese influence in Bangladesh," the official said.

The visit is also expected to provide an opportunity for the two countries to elevate their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP) and expand cooperation in infrastructure, energy, regional connectivity and investment.

A diplomatic source said Japan had been a longstanding development partner of Bangladesh, providing official development assistance and supporting major infrastructure projects.

"We are working on two to three titles for the elevation of the relationship [to CSP], which is yet to be decided," the source said.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam, speaking after an event at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday, said Japan had remained one of Bangladesh's major trade and development partners for many years.

She described the prime minister's upcoming visit as highly significant and said a number of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) could be signed in areas including infrastructure, energy, technology, garments, education and health.

She also expressed hope that the visit would help attract fresh Japanese investment.

According to sources in Dhaka and Tokyo, the instruments are likely to be MoUs and memorandums of cooperation (MoCs) covering loans and financial support, infrastructure development, agriculture, civil aviation, business climate development, development at the upazila level, OSA for the Bangladesh Coast Guard, and energy.

CONNECTIVITY PUSH

At the summit, Japan is expected to push for shared prosperity through its Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative as it seeks to advance regional connectivity.

- Tarique-Takaichi summit slated for Oct 27
- Five to eight instruments likely to be signed
- $300m expected as budgetary support
- Japan likely to push for regional connectivity
- JERA to help build energy reserve infrastructure
- Coast Guard to get 35-foot vessel

Japan launched BIG-B in 2014 to promote industrial development and connectivity around the Bay of Bengal, initially focusing on the Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar corridor.

In 2023, it proposed a broader Bay of Bengal-Northeast India Industrial Value Chain Initiative to strengthen economic links between Bangladesh and northeastern India.

Built around three pillars of industry and trade, energy, and transportation, BIG-B aims to encourage Japanese investment, support industrialisation and improve connectivity by linking production centres with regional and global markets through infrastructure, including the Matarbari deep-sea port.

An official familiar with the developments, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Japan had renewed its vision for the region under the FOIP initiative. Tokyo recently elevated its relationship with ASEAN to a CSP and has actively upgraded bilateral ties with Southeast Asian countries, the official said.

"When the discussion comes to the topic of BIG-B, Japan does not consider India alone, but also other Southeast Asian nations. Connectivity through Matarbari is essential to Japan's FOIP vision, and the deep-sea port is being developed not only for bilateral use but also to connect Bangladesh with regional and global supply chains. And on that matter, India is an important partner as Japan has investment and plans in India's northeast," the official said.

PM'S ITINERARY

According to sources in Dhaka and Tokyo, Tarique is scheduled to arrive in Japan on October 26.

Upon arrival, he is expected to meet the president of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League (JBPFL) and the chairman of the Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation (JBCCEC) separately, and later call on the president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In the evening, he will attend a dinner hosted by the honorary chairman of the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

On the second day, he will visit the Japanese prime minister's office for the summit and a luncheon with Takaichi.

He will then travel to Futtsu city in Chiba to visit JERA's LNG terminal and power plant, before visiting a Nippon Express logistics hub in Ichikawa city and returning to his residence.

On the third day, Tarique will call on the governor of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

He will also visit the UNIQLO Ariake office and meet its president and board members, followed by a meeting with the president of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

He is also scheduled to meet representatives of prominent Japanese companies, including Mitsui & Co, Sumitomo Corp, and JERA.

Tarique will attend the Bangladesh-Japan Economic Forum at JETRO, where MoUs on education and human resource development are expected to be signed.

On the final day, the prime minister will visit a Toyota factory before departing for Dhaka.

A system short of healing hands

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they said.

Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of disease control at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said, "If we have a large population with a high burden of disease, the demand for healthcare workers will naturally be very high. Quality services cannot be ensured if we do not have enough healthcare providers."

Referring to overcrowding at hospitals, he said wards designed for around 24 patients sometimes have 48 or more, while nursing staff remain scarce. A doctor at upazila health complex often has to see 100-150 outpatients a day, leaving them with barely a couple of minutes for each patient.

The crisis is even more acute in terms of specialists, with patients often waiting for days or even weeks for appointments. Some specialists see hundreds of patients and work late into the night.

"All these things are not conducive to providing standard health services."

Referring to the government plan to appoint 5,000 doctors, he said the recruitment approach has largely been ad hoc.

"You have to make plans for nurses, allied health professionals, support staff, equipment, beds, and the space required for them to work.

"Unless the entire package is planned and implemented together, simply increasing the number of doctors or beds will not bring the expected improvement in healthcare."

WHAT DO THE LATEST DATA SHOW?

As of 2025, Bangladesh had 1,41,700 registered MBBS graduates and 1,16,194 available for service -- both figures representing an increase of about 51 percent from 2019.

The number of registered nurses also nearly doubled to 1,07,047 over the same period.

The combined density of doctors, nurses, and midwives also rose to 15.16 per 10,000 people last year from 8.3 in 2019, according to the health ministry's Human Resources for Health (HRH) Data Sheet 2025.

Despite the growth, the health workforce remains far below the WHO's indicative threshold of 44.5 set under its 2016 Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030.

HEALTH WORKFORCE RATIO UNEVEN

In Bangladesh, the staffing ratio across government health agencies remains uneven, underscoring a gap in coordination among them in recruiting health workers.

Last year, the DGHS, which employs the largest number of doctors, had 38,255 sanctioned posts for doctors, compared with 50,825 positions for nurses and midwives under the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM) -- a ratio far below the recommended one doctor-to-three nurses ratio.

Other agencies, including the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), also appoint doctors and other health workers.

Asaduzzaman Jewel, general secretary of Bangladesh Nurses Association, said that in the past, recruitment largely focused on doctors whenever staff shortages arose, ignoring the need to maintain a balanced ratio of doctors, nurses and other health professionals.

"We have long been demanding a coordinated recruitment process, but successive governments have paid little attention to these demands."

The current government is no different, he said, adding that while it has moved to recruit 5,000 doctors, no such initiative has been taken to recruit nurses.

The persistent shortage has left nurses in public hospitals overstretched, making it difficult for them to provide quality care. Patients, however, often hold nurses responsible for problems that stem from broader systemic and management failures, he said.

"This creates a misconception about nurses and eventually demotivates them. They become frustrated and lose interest in their work."

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY?

DGHS Director General Prof Pravath Chandra Biswas said the government has already initiated the process of creating around one lakh additional posts for health workers to strengthen primary healthcare.

District health authorities have been instructed to expedite recruitment for vacant posts, he said, adding that most district health facilities are expected to see significant progress within the next three to six months.

According to the HRH 2025 data, 4,308 doctor posts and 1,653 nurse posts remained vacant. However, data from August this year show that both the number of sanctioned posts and vacancies had increased, with 9,990 doctor posts and 4,870 nurse posts remaining vacant.

Biswas said the recruitment of 5,000 doctors is expected to be completed by early next year. The DGHS will then assess the need for further recruitment, taking into account staffing requirements at upazila health complexes slated for expansion to 151 beds each.

Meanwhile, the process of creating 2,500 posts for medical technologists under the DGHS and other health agencies has already begun.

"We will continue the recruitment drive to meet the target," he added.

When contacted, DGNM Director General Dil Afroza said a phased approach is being followed to create posts and recruit health workers to address staff shortages.

"We cannot do everything at once. We have to build our capacity gradually. Nurses need to be trained before the creation of posts and deployment."

Referring to Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain's recent statement, she said the authorities are committed to recruiting around 25,000 midwives for public healthcare facilities within the next few years.

She also said that recruitment was underway to fill vacant posts, and that DGNM had already sent a proposal to the ministry to create 15,000 posts for nurses.

PHP flaw trickles down to service disruptions

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deadline.

BGD e-GOV CIRT's alert asked organisations to identify where PHP is used on their servers, check whether the versions they run are vulnerable and take the necessary security measures.

PHP is a programming language used for building websites and web applications, including many sites that run on WordPress.

The reported security flaw, known as "PHP2Shell", could allow hackers to take control of vulnerable websites.

The flaw involves two security vulnerabilities that can let attackers remotely run malicious code. Researchers have also warned that attackers may be able to access sensitive information stored in a website's memory, including passwords, authentication tokens and API keys.

Security researchers at Wiz estimate that the vulnerabilities could affect around 70 percent of websites across the globe.

The key protection is to install the security updates released by PHP and check that the website's server is running a patched version. Website operators should also review their systems for signs of unauthorised access.

PHP released emergency fixes on October 21. However, a related vulnerability was reported on October 23 and also affects these patched versions. The PHP team is expected to address it in a subsequent regular release.

The vulnerabilities, which emerged on Wednesday, caused governments and companies to pull their websites off the internet and patch them before being potentially attacked.

In the UK, 32 government services had been taken offline, the cybersecurity minister, Liz Lloyd, told parliament. Dutch, French, Danish, and Finnish governments also took sites offline.

So far, there have not been any breaches.

The vulnerability lies in PHP itself, not in website code, leaving even well-coded websites at risk, said Tanvir Hassan Zoha, associate professor at the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Forensics at Daffodil International University.

Bangladesh has no published data on how many government websites run on PHP.

Based on global trends and the widespread use of PHP-based tools, Zoha estimated that between 60 and 85 percent websites could be vulnerable.

He recommended that authorities immediately compile a list of PHP versions running on government servers, prioritising those exposed to the internet, and update them with patched versions.

"Some systems in Bangladesh are so old that you cannot update the server," said Atiqul Islam Khan Shawon, chief executive officer of SoftBD, adding that about 5 percent will have a problem.

Using a news website as an example, he said systems built five or 10 years ago may face trouble because it is uncertain whether they will keep working after the version is updated.

But for those that are regularly updated, there will be no challenge, he said.

Asked how many websites in Bangladesh use PHP, he said, "You can say more than 70 percent -- the e-commerce sites mostly use PHP."

As PHP 8.1 and older versions no longer receive official updates, the authorities may need to use patched packages provided by Linux distributions or migrate to newer versions, according to Zoha.

Until the updates are completed, firewalls should be used as a temporary safeguard, while websites that cannot be secured should be taken offline.

The authorities should also review server logs from recent days for suspicious requests, and the Bangladesh Government's e-Government Computer Incident Response Team (BGD e-GOV CIRT) should issue coordinated instructions with clear deadlines, said Zoha, also an additional attorney general.

Muhammad Anwar Uddin, project director at Aspire to Innovate (a2i), which has built and runs thousands of government websites, said they had not experienced any cyberattacks related to the PHP vulnerability.

"We received the alert early, and our technical team was fully alert," he said, adding that the team was working on the necessary updates and had almost completed the process.

Without proper maintenance and regular patching, these systems develop vulnerabilities, said an ICT expert who previously worked at a2i.

The government spends heavily on visible items such as capacity development and training, while the invisible work of securing infrastructure gets little long-term budget or attention.

Efforts to fix systems typically begin only after a major data leak or cyber attack, he said, while calling for security to be built into every stage of a system, from design through operation, and for software and servers to be patched regularly.

"Alongside strong laws, we need updated infrastructure and the capacity to respond quickly. An outdated server does not wait for the law," said Zoha, also a prosecutor at the International Crimes Tribunal.

Shawon's main advice is to keeping the websites up-to-date with proper maintenance.

"Many treat it as a one-time purchase and do not keep the upgrades going with the IT firm. Continuous upgrades are important. Then there is no problem," he said.

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KEEPING RICKSHAW ART ALIVE

With a brush in hand and a lifetime of stories in colour, Mohammad Hanif Pappu breathes life into another rickshaw painting at his workshop in Hossaini Dalan, Old Dhaka. His artistic journey began at the age of six or seven, and nearly six decades later, his passion remains undimmed. Since 1976, he has woven the colours, faces and stories into the vibrant, intricate designs that adorn Dhaka's rickshaws. Rickshaw Painting was officially inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2023.

PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**



Climate finance must come as grants, not loans

Speakers tell dialogue

$90b needed in int'l support | Greater access to Loss and Damage Fund sought | Youth-led climate action needs stronger support | Bangladesh to prioritise climate justice at COP31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should prioritise climate justice, secure grant-based financing and strengthen youth-led climate initiatives at the upcoming COP31 climate summit, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

They urged developed countries to honour their climate finance commitments, saying Bangladesh contributes less than 0.5 percent of global carbon emissions but remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The speakers also called for greater access to the Loss and Damage Fund to address climate risks and reduce dependence on volatile global fossil fuel markets.

The remarks came at a programme titled "National Position Paper Unveiling and Dialogue", organised by ActionAid at CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka ahead of the 31st UN Climate Change Conference (COP31), scheduled for November 9-20.

Speaking as chief guest, State Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Journalist Shafiqur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighter Muhammad Shafiqur Rahman, a former lawmaker from Chandpur-4 and former president of the Jatiya Press Club, died at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday. He was 77.

He breathed his last around 3:00pm at United Hospital after suffering a heart attack at his Banani residence.

He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

Journalist organisations, including Jatiya Press Club,

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Stranded at home, migrants fear losing Saudi jobs



Migrant workers wait at Dhaka airport. PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

For Al-Amin, a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia's Dammam, seven days have passed since his leave expired, but he remains stranded in Bangladesh, uncertain when he can return to work.

He was scheduled to fly back on October 15, but his journey was cancelled. He secured another confirmed booking on Friday, only for that flight to be cancelled as well.

"The departure board showed that Check-in started for Dammam, but upon entering the airport, I came to know it was cancelled. My ordeal continues," he said.

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IN FOCUS

'We must keep returning to Abul Maksud's work'

Say speakers at Star Itihas Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Late writer, journalist and researcher Syed Abul Maksud was a man of conviction who challenged conventional wisdom, pursued historical truth and stood against injustice, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said his meticulous research, reliance on historical evidence and objective assessment of historical figures reflected his commitment to truth, even when it meant confronting uncomfortable realities.

The remarks came at the 34th session of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Syed Abul Maksud: Reading History, Standing by Conscience", held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Writer Ahmad Mostofa Kamal said Maksud was better remembered for his symbolic protests, during which he wore burial shrouds, than for his contributions as a poet and researcher.

He said Maksud's poetry and research, including his work on Syed Waliullah, demonstrated a deep understanding of Bangladesh's history, society, philosophy and political evolution.

"We should remember that Syed Abul Maksud was a deeply committed researcher, one whose



PHOTO: **STAR**

Participants at the 34th session of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Syed Abul Maksud: Reading History, Standing by Conscience", at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

equal is not easily found," he said, calling for further research into Maksud's contributions.

Academic and researcher Mizanur Rahman said Maksud remained steadfast in his pursuit of truth, as reflected in his books on politician Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani.

Rather than merely praising or criticising Bhashani, Maksud examined both his strengths and limitations, while preserving valuable historical evidence through his collection of letters and other primary sources.

Mizanur said Maksud's accessible writing encouraged readers to reassess Bangladesh's history and national identity.

"We must keep returning to Syed Abul Maksud's work," he added.

Discussing Maksud's book "Dhakar Buddhadeb Basu", Md Shamim Mondol, head of the Department of English at Green University of Bangladesh, said it uncovered little-known aspects of Buddhadeb Basu's life in Dhaka.

Syed Nasif Maksud, son of Syed Abul Maksud, also spoke at the event.

Syed Abul Maksud's wife, Sultana Maksud, journalist Samsuddoza Sajen, along with poets, writers, students and professionals from various fields, attended the discussion.

The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz moderated the discussion.

Islamic leaders want peaceful Ijtema

Place two demands before govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

A section of Islamic leaders yesterday placed two demands before the government to ensure the smooth and peaceful holding of Bishwa Ijtema next year.

The demands are: not to allow followers of Maulana Saad to use the Ijtema grounds in Tongi, and expediting investigations into murder cases filed over incidents in Tongi in 2018 and 2024 and submitting charge sheets.

They made the demands at a consultative meeting at the Ijtema grounds in Tongi, said a press release sent by Habibullah Rayhan, media coordinator of Tablighi Jamaat Bangladesh's Shura-e-Nizam.

The meeting was convened by Muhibullah Babunagari, ameer of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh.

At a press briefing after the meeting, speakers said the government had contacted Babunagari to seek his opinion on allowing Saad's followers to use the Tongi Ijtema grounds for three days during

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Trawlers lie anchored at New Fishery Ghat in Chattogram city following the start of a 22-day ban on hilsa fishing to protect the fish during the breeding season. The usually bustling harbour has fallen silent, with rows of idle trawlers lining the shore. PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

Home minister busy with every ministry but his own

Alleges Shafiqur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman yesterday criticised Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed for allegedly interfering in other ministries' affairs while failing to maintain law and order.

"Fortunately, we got such a home minister. He serves in all ministries. He neither controlled drugs nor weapons, nor was he able to restore law and order in the country," he told reporters at Moulvibazar Circuit House yesterday morning.

Shafiqur was on his first organisational visit to his home district of Moulvibazar since the national elections.

He said the home ministry was among the most sensitive and critical ministries, and its effective functioning was essential to maintaining law and order.

However, he alleged that Salahuddin had failed to manage his own ministry and was interfering in education, health and local government affairs, which he described as contrary to good governance.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Shots fired at singer Asif's car in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants opened fire at the private car of singer Asif Akbar in Dhaka's Moghbazar early yesterday.

Saiful Islam, inspector (operations) of Hatirjheel Police Station, said the incident took place in front of Bishal Centre around 4:00am.

Asif, who has a private office in Moghbazar, had parked his car in front of the centre. He was not inside the vehicle when the shooting took place, the police official said.

Asif informed police about the incident around 5:00am, Saiful said.

Police visited the scene following the report. No casualties were reported.

Saiful said investigators could not collect CCTV footage immediately as the shops at the market were closed.

Police say they will collect the footage after the shops open and take further action based on their findings, he added.

CWASA plans 90,000 smart meters by 2030

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Chattogram WASA plans to install 90,000 automatic meter reading (AMR) meters by December 2030 to curb water losses, prevent billing irregularities and improve revenue collection.

The initiative, part of the World Bank-funded Chattogram Water Supply Improvement Project, aims to reduce non-revenue water (NRW) to 10 percent.

Around Tk 100 crore of the Tk 3,921 crore project has been allocated for installing the meters.

Under the existing system, inspectors manually collect readings from individual connections and enter them into software. With AMR meters, sensors will automatically record readings and transfer the data to the software when inspectors visit connection areas once a month.

"The system would prevent consumers and meter inspectors from manipulating readings, and help prevent water theft and reduce the NRW rate," said Rezaul Ahsan Chowdhury, project director and executive engineer of CWASA.

He said the automated system would prevent inspectors from entering arbitrary readings.

NRW refers to water that generates no revenue because of pipeline leaks, unauthorised consumption, metering and billing problems, theft and other operational irregularities.

According to CWASA data, the average NRW rate stood at 22.33 percent in the first six months of 2026, down from 30 percent in the 2023-24 fiscal year, when estimated revenue losses exceeded Tk 100 crore.

Abdur Rahim, a building owner in Khulshi-1, said water meters remained manual, unlike modernised gas and electricity meters.

"Automatic meters would benefit both consumers and CWASA. For instance, a meter inspector might issue an average bill without visiting, or record a higher reading than the actual consumption. That would be a form of harassment for me. An automated system would eliminate such problems," he said.

As of June 2026, CWASA had 1,06,339 registered water connections across a 965-kilometre pipeline network and produced an average of 479 million litres of water daily.

Project officials said CWASA would initially bear the cost of the meters, but a final decision had yet to be made on whether customers would eventually be charged.

Salim Md Jane Alam, managing director of CWASA, said construction work under the project would begin soon.

Several international companies have participated in the tender, and their bids are being evaluated before contractors are appointed, he added.



- Tk 100cr allocated for meter installation
- Water losses targeted to fall to 10%
- Automated readings to curb billing irregularities
- Decision on customer charges still pending

Half-day blockade in Rangamati, Khagrachhari

STAR REPORT

A half-day blockade of roads and waterways in Rangamati and Khagrachhari yesterday disrupted transport services as protesters demonstrated against alleged attacks, baton charges and vandalism during Thursday's blockade at Ujo Bazar in Sajek, Rangamati.

Called by the Chhatra Janata Sangram Parishad, the blockade began in the morning and ended at noon.

In Rangamati, protesters blocked the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road with logs and set fires at Sapchhari Khamar Para and Kutukchhari Dharmaghar. They also brought out a procession from Kutukchhari Half Bazar to Dharmaghar.

Vehicular movement on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road remained suspended throughout the morning, while traffic continued on the Rangamati-Chattogram road despite the blockade in Betbunia.

Md Yusuf, joint general secretary of the Rangamati-Chattogram Bus-Minibus Workers Union, said bus services on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari route resumed after noon, although passenger numbers were low.

In Khagrachhari, no long-distance buses departed, although some auto-rickshaws operated in the town.

Protesters burnt tyres at Chengi Bridge, Swonirbhar and Jorabridge in Guimara, while felled trees blocked the Chattogram-Khagrachhari road at Sapmara.

Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station OC Md Kay Kislu said police escorted overnight buses from Dhaka into town. Some vehicles stranded in Ramgarh were instructed to enter Khagrachhari after noon.

[Our correspondents from Rangamati and Khagrachhari contributed to this report]



FILE PHOTO

CUET stalemate drags on over VC row

ARUN BIKASH DEY

As universities reopen after the Durga Puja holidays today, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) remains mired in a month-long deadlock, with no indication of when academic activities will resume.

Classes, examinations and practical sessions have remained suspended for over a month as students, teachers and staff demand the reinstatement of former vice-chancellor Prof Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem and removal of newly appointed VC Prof Sheikh Shariful Alam.

Protesting students have announced that their all-out shutdown will resume after the holidays.

Although the University Grants Commission has formed a six-member advisory committee to resolve the crisis, teachers and students have questioned its effectiveness, pointing out that it includes no CUET representative.

Samiun Basir, joint general secretary of the CUET Teachers' Association, said, "There is no one from CUET in the committee formed to solve the stalemate."

Protesting student Ahnaf Shahriar Arnob said demonstrations would continue until their demands were met.

The UGC formed the committee on Monday following directives from the education ministry.

The committee held its first virtual meeting on Thursday, said Prof Dr Yousuf Elahi Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and a committee member.

Another member, Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Professor Al Forkan, said the committee would soon meet all parties to facilitate the resumption of academic activities.

The crisis began after Prof Sayem was removed as CUET VC on September 21 and Prof Shariful of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology was appointed in his place.

Students launched a shutdown on September 22, while teachers, officers and employees joined through work abstentions and non-cooperation programmes.

Following a ministry directive on October 18, the UGC formed the advisory committee on October 19, naming UGC member Professor Dr Abdullah-Al-Mamun convener and Additional Director Dr Md Mohibul Ahsan member secretary.

Prof Mamun said, "We will start working to resolve the CUET deadlock very swiftly. It will not take much time."

'An internal matter of foreign ministry'

Shama Obaed on keeping envoy in Dhaka during PM's Japan visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decision to bring Bangladesh's Ambassador to Japan Md Daud Ali back to Dhaka during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's upcoming visit to Japan is an internal matter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said State Minister Shama Obaed Islam yesterday.

She was talking to reporters after an event at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

It emerged two days ago that Ambassador Daud Ali had been asked to remain in Dhaka ahead of the visit and would not be in Tokyo during the PM's Japan visit, scheduled for October 26-29.

"It is absolutely an internal matter of the ministry. This is neither a national nor an international issue," Shama said.

Highlighting Dhaka-Tokyo ties, she said Japan had remained Bangladesh's top trade and development partner for many years.

On the PM's upcoming visit, Shama said a number of memorandums of understanding could be signed in areas including infrastructure, energy, technology, garments, education and health.

10 killed, 23 hurt in road crashes in four districts

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and 23 others injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday and on Friday night.

In Munshiganj, three people were killed and at least 16 injured as a bus of Darshana Paribahan plunged into a ditch beside Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Hasara, Srinagar upazila while attempting to overtake a covered van early yesterday, said police and fire service.

The deceased are bus supervisor Rokunuzzaman Ranju, 57; helper Chanchal Biswas, 23; and passenger Salauddin Ahmed Sakib, 32.

Muhammad Shafiqul Islam, deputy assistant director of Munshiganj fire service, said the bodies were handed over to Hasara Highway Police.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Srinagar Upazila Health Complex and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Jashore, three youths were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles in the Natunhat Bazar area yesterday.

Siam Hossain, 18, Joy, 18, and Omar Ali, 17, died on the spot, said Kazi Babul Hossain, inspector (investigation) at Jashore Kotwali Police Station.

Rohan, 19, and Rifat, 17, were taken to Jashore General Hospital.

In Gazipur's Tongi, a man and his son were killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle while standing beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Kutumbari Hotel in the Gazipura area yesterday.

Tapan Chandra Das, 50, and his son Likhan Chandra Das, 20, were from Kaibartapara in Sherpur's Dewanganj, said Nureja Akter, duty officer at Tongi East Police Station.

In Chattogram's Satkania, a man and his two-year-old daughter were killed and five others injured as a passenger bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw near Jafar Ahmad Degree College on Friday night.



The deceased were identified as Delwar, 30, and his daughter Jannat, 2, of Malihabad area, said Dohazari Highway Police Station OC Md Nurul Absar.

The victims were in the three-wheeler, he said.

Following the accident, locals set the bus on fire and blocked the highway, disrupting traffic from 8:00pm to 9:30pm.

When a patrol vehicle from Satkania Police Station went to the spot, people vandalised it, leaving a policeman injured, OC Nurul said.

A unit of the Satkania fire service later brought the fire under control.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office of the Commandant
BCG Base Agrajatra, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali-8600

INVITATION FOR TENDER

BCG Base Agrajatra e-GP Invitation no. 44.08.7895.453.22.256.26.16 Date: 19 OCTOBER 2026

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

Ser	Tender ID	Package Name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last Selling	Closing and Opening
1.	1358358	Repair and maintenance of existing vehicles in the MT pool of Bangladesh Coast Guard Base Agrajatra specifically: Dhaka Metro Gha 13-7430, Patuakhali Sa 11-0006, Bhola Gha 11-0044, Patuakhali A 11-0007, Patuakhali Gha 11-0051, Dhaka Metro Chha 71-0874, Dhaka Metro Cha 56-2065, Dhaka Metro Cha 56-6338, Dhaka Metro 10-4916, Dhaka Metro A 11-4835, Dhaka Metro Ga 26-9161, and Dhaka Metro Tha 13-4894.	OTM	22/10/2026 10:00 AM	01/11/2026 15:00 AM	02/11/2026 10:00 AM

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 (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.
Documents can be downloaded till deadline of Tender/Application/Proposal submission.

KANIZ AZAD
Lt Commander BN
For Commandant

GD-2571

5 more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died and 1,898 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the deaths, two were reported in Chattogram division, and one each in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Khulna and Rajshahi divisions.

With the latest deaths and cases, the death toll this year has risen to 376, while the total number of cases has reached 1,21,699.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Architecture
Ministry of Housing & Public Works
Sthapatya Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
www.architecture.gov.bd
Phone No- 02-223350954.

Memo No-General- 1506 /Arch Date:19-10-2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concern that the following tender have Published through e-GP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No	Name of Works	Publishing Date & Time	Last selling Date &Time	Closing Date &Time
01	1357898	DOA/egp/26-27/04	Procurement Of Software from Software and Database Maintenance Department of Architecture	25-Oct-2026 08:00	12-Nov-2026 09:00	12-Nov-2026 12:10
02	1358366	DOA/egp/26-27/05	Computer & Computer Accessories Department of Architecture	25-Oct-2026 08:50	12-Nov-2026 09:50	12-Nov-2026 11:50

The interested persons/firms/suppliers may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get details of the tender.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registaration in the National e-GP portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/) *is required.* Further information and guideline are available at the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

19.10.26
(S.M. Anisul Haque)
Executive Architect
circle-co-ordination
Sthapatya Bhaban
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Phone No- 02-223350954.

GD-2572

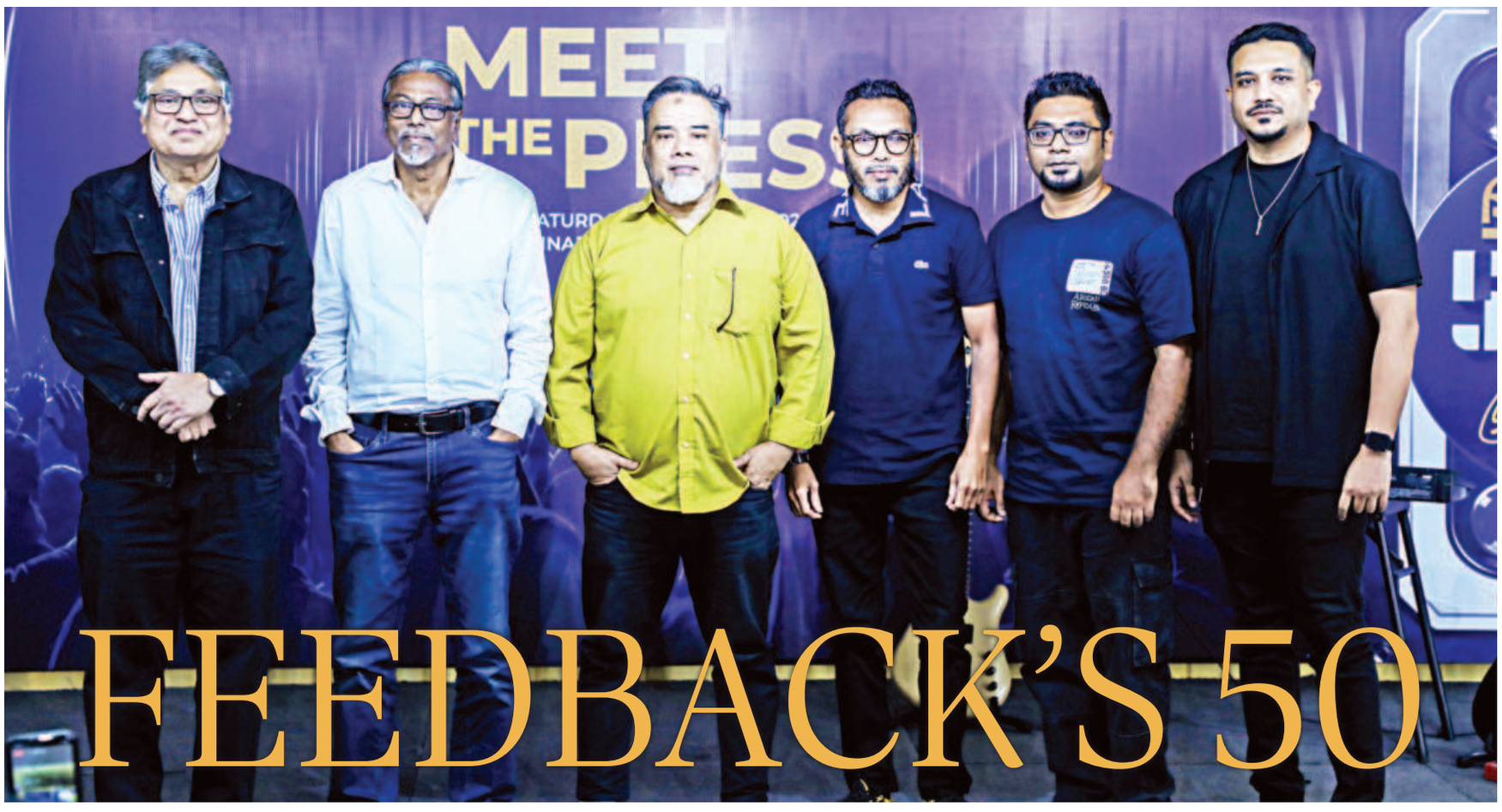


PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

FEEDBACK'S 50

Bangladesh to witness legendary band's grand celebration

NAVEEN ISLAM TOREE

"For a band to remain in listeners' hearts for five decades is truly a cause for joy. This journey belongs to more than just us; it has involved countless members, lyricists, composers and, above all, our millions of fans and listeners," said Foad Nasser Babu, a veteran who has woven magic with his ephemeral keyboard riffs for 50 years, before the press conference at The Daily Star's A S Mahmud Hall.

Feedback, a cornerstone of Bangladesh's band music scene, will soon celebrate its five-decade journey with a series of special concerts and attractions under the banner ***Feedback: 50 Not Out***.

Founded in October 1977, Feedback has entered its 50th year, marking the occasion with a year-long programme featuring fresh renditions of popular songs, new releases and concerts across Bangladesh.

"We will start with Chattogram because we feel like we have more fans there," continued Babu, outlining the plans for the year-long celebration.

"We want to bring our old members and the people who have been part of this journey together and make the occasion memorable," he said.

"Feedback is not out. We plan to go on for a long time. There is no retirement in this profession," said Labu Rahman. Labu's energising guitar playing has been a hallmark of the band, and he has also been an inspiration for generations of guitarists who went on to become famous.

The occasion also brought together musicians who have shared different chapters of Bangladesh's band music history with Feedback.

Recalling the early days of the country's band music scene, Miles frontman Hamin Ahmed said, "The two bands started their journey from Hotel InterContinental. There was a sense of brotherhood in sharing the same amplifier. Feedback was the first band that came to our minds when Miles was looking to release Bangla songs."

The host, Hasibul Hossain Upal, also highlighted the musical contributions of Miles and Feedback, pointing to the quality of their musicianship and arrangements.

The programme also included tributes to Feedback's first guitarist, Selim Haider, whose contribution to the band's history was remembered.

Pilu Khan of Renaissance praised the musicians and their character, saying, "All the best musicians seemed to be in one band, and that was Feedback back in the 1970s. They are not only fine musicians, but the finest human beings."

Sayed Hasan Tipu of Obscure recalled how Feedback had helped younger musicians find their footing in the industry.

"When we first came here, we didn't know anything. We learned our basics from them. Feedback acted like a guardian to Obscure," he said.

Since the mid-1980s, Feedback has developed a distinctive sound blending folk, pop and modern rock, helping shape the evolution of Bangladesh's band music scene. Over the years, musicians including Maqsoodul Haque, Pearo Khan and Labu Rahman have contributed to the band's musical journey.

The group's repertoire includes songs such as ***Melay Jaire***, ***Ei Din Chirodin Robe***, ***Ek Jhak Projapoti***, ***Jhau Boney***, ***Udashi***, ***Moushumi***, ***Chithi***, ***Sukhi Manusher Bhire*** and ***Geetikobita***. Among them, ***Melay Jaire*** has become closely associated with Bengali New Year celebrations and is widely regarded as an unofficial anthem of the occasion.

As Feedback approaches its golden jubilee, ***50 Not Out*** is intended to celebrate not only the band's musical achievements but also its enduring connection with generations of listeners. With new music, concerts and a reunion of former members in the works, the band is looking to honour its past while continuing its musical journey.

EVENTS

'Chitrangada'



Swapnadal presents ***Chitrangada***, Rabindranath Tagore's poetic drama based on a story from the ***Mahabharata***. The play follows Chitrangada, a warrior princess of Manipur who falls in love with Arjuna and struggles with questions of beauty, identity and self-worth. Seeking his affection, she wishes to transform herself into a conventionally beautiful woman, but eventually comes to realise the importance of being loved for who she truly is. Directed by Zahid Repon, the acclaimed production was staged at the 23rd Bharat Rang Mahotsav 2024, organised by India's National School of Drama.

Date: Wednesday | October 28
Time: 7:00 pm
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

Who will be the **next James Bond?**



The search for the next James Bond is nearing its final stage, with a select group of actors reportedly set to screen-test for the role of 007 in London this weekend.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Callum Turner, recently seen in ***One Night Only*** and ***Slow Horses*** actor Jack Lowden are among the contenders. The auditions could begin as early as Friday, with at least three and possibly five actors involved.

Jack O'Connell and Jacob Elordi are reportedly out of the running.

The tests will reportedly assess stunts, camera presence and dialogue. Denis Villeneuve will direct the next Bond film for Amazon MGM Studios, with Amy Pascal and David Heyman producing.

NEWS

Jubo Dal leader, grocery shop owner shot

FROM PAGE 12

Terokhada Police Station.

According to a press release issued by district police, Ramim was sitting in a van in front of a house near Khan Bricks in Parhaji village, along the Sener Bazar-Madhupur Road. At that time, unidentified assailants on a motorcycle fired at him from behind and fled the scene. A bullet hit his rib cage.

Meanwhile, in the district town, grocery shop owner Dhananjay Kundu, alias Akash Kundu, 45, of the Gachhtala Temple area, was shot on Dakshin Tutpara Cross Road around 6:45pm, said Khulna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge of Lokmon Hossain.

Quoting witnesses, the OC said the assailants arrived on a motorcycle, fired a single shot at Akash and fled the scene. Akash sustained a gunshot wound to his abdomen.

Both of them were rescued by locals and taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

The identities of the attackers and the motive behind the shootings were not immediately known, police said.

Security was beefed up following the shooting.

The incidents took place on the same day the inspector general of police was on an official visit in the district. IGP Ali Hossain Fakir visited Khulna Police Lines and met police personnel and representatives of different policing committees.

The shootings come amid growing concerns over law and order in Khulna.

According to district police data, 35 murders were reported in Khulna district between January and the first week of October this year. Police had solved 25 of the cases, while the remaining 10 were yet to be solved, Khulna Superintendent of Police Sarker Omar Faroque said earlier.

Meanwhile, Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) recorded 33 murders in the city between January and September. Police claimed to have solved 31 of the cases.

According to a police list, at least 10 major criminal gangs are active in Khulna city. Clashes, retaliatory attacks, and killings have occurred among these groups over territorial control and revenge.

A joint force has launched a special operation in four upazilas to improve law and order, with a focus on curbing drug-related crimes and recovering illegal firearms.

The operation began on October 6 in Rupsha, Dighalia, Terokhada, and Batiaghata upazilas, involving the Special Response Battalion (formerly RAB), KMP, and district police.

"Most of the targeted killings in Khulna are linked to drug-related activities," the SP told The Daily Star.

Dual system proposed

FROM PAGE 12

In the July charter, most political parties agreed during talks held by the National Consensus Commission that the upper house should be based on the percentage of votes in the lower house election.

The ruling BNP, however, supports forming the chamber based on the percentage of seats in the lower house.

Chaired by committee head and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, the committee held a six-and-a-half-hour meeting yesterday at the Cabinet Room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Committee members, along with invited constitutional experts, senior Supreme Court advocates and law professors from various universities, took part, according to the parliament secretariat. Of the 60 people invited, 44 attended.

Sources from the meeting said a law teacher from a public university put forward the mixed-system proposal, and several participants supported it.

Another academic, from a private university, termed it acceptable and suggested forming an election-time caretaker government headed by the Speaker of the upper house.

If this is adopted, he said, the post of vice-president could be created in the constitution, with the upper house Speaker serving as ex-officio vice-president.

Advisers to the caretaker government would be nominated from the upper house on the recommendations of both the government and the opposition.

He also proposed setting the term of the lower house at four years and that of the upper house at six, which, meeting sources said, would ensure that an elected parliament remains in place even after the government's term expires.

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Salahuddin said detailed discussions were held on the structure, process and jurisdiction of the caretaker government system.

Some participants proposed that if an upper house is established through a constitutional amendment, an election-time caretaker government could be formed under the leadership of its Speaker, based on the views of the government and the opposition, he said.

Noting that "such a proposal can be considered", Salahuddin said, "Many opined that there could be a provision where, besides the Speaker, other advisers are appointed with the consensus of the government and the opposition. This can be considered also."

He said there was no scope to make an immediate decision.

"Everyone discussed in detail and shared their views. Among the meetings held so far, today's discussion was the most fruitful. We have one or two more meetings left. We have already started compilation work, with no time constraint for submitting the report," he said.

Among the key issues discussed were the constitutional basic structure theory and judicial review of administrative action, legislative action and constitutional amendments.

Speakers shared their opinions on the Supreme Court's power of judicial review and constitutional interpretation, Salahuddin said. Participants cited examples from different countries regarding the judiciary's jurisdiction in these matters.

Apart from this, almost everyone agreed that under article 70, members of parliament would be free to vote independently on all issues except four: constitutional amendments, money bills, confidence votes and national security, the committee chief said.

Meeting sources said some favoured allowing one person to hold the positions of PM and party chief simultaneously.

Under article 76 of the constitution, a parliamentary committee can summon anyone on any matter but cannot compel that person to appear. Although there is scope to enact legislation on this, no government has done so.

In response to a proposal on the matter, Salahuddin indicated plans to formulate a law.

1,000 held

FROM PAGE 12

activists and criminal gangs of seeking to foment trouble.

PARIS IN LOCKDOWN

Authorities deployed 70,000 police officers and gendarmes, 10,000 more than a week earlier, after conceding they had underestimated the scale of the unrest on October 17.

Nunez told reporters the violence was less intense than a week ago, when looters and vandals went on the rampage. "What changed was anticipation," he said.

He also said far-right activists had sought confrontations with leftist groups in the southern cities of Nice and Montpellier, opening a potential new front in the disturbances.

Much of central Paris took on the appearance of a city under lockdown, with shopkeepers boarding up storefronts, museums closing their doors and more than 20 metro stations shut.

Business groups urged retailers to remain closed after thousands of shops and businesses were damaged or looted across France last weekend.

"There are hardly any customers, so it's not really worth staying open," said Oskar, manager of a Kiton boutique in Paris.

Several of the capital's best-known cultural institutions, including the Louvre, the Musee d'Orsay and the Paris Opera, closed for the day as a precaution, leaving tourists frustrated.

"Everything's boarded up and we're not quite sure where we should be," said Xavier Dolliole, a tourist from the US city of New Orleans.

PROTESTS RIPPLE ACROSS EUROPE

The nationwide disorder began with small student demonstrations in suburban Paris last month to denounce school conditions. It swiftly broadened into a wider protest against the government's economic policies and inspired demonstrations in neighbouring countries.

On Saturday Belgian police used tear gas and pepper spray as they clashed in Brussels with anti-government demonstrators, with protests also taking place in a number of Italian cities for a second weekend and in Albania.

Hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon, who joined the Paris rally, predicted the protests would continue until President Emmanuel Macron, whose mandate expires next year, addressed the social malaise in France, one of the world's richest nations.

"Given the current situation, I think he will come to understand that this will happen again every week. There is still time for (Macron) to give in. After that, the only thing left to him will be the exit door," Melenchon told reporters.

FAR-RIGHT PARTY HOLDS CONGRESS

Many demonstrators accused the government of overreacting to last week's turmoil, as soldiers were dispatched to patrol the Champs-Elysees, a grand boulevard lined with luxury shops and restaurants.

"We shed tears for shops, not for the people who are being impoverished all year round," said Clara Lebbadi, a 22-year-old arts student.

"My friend and I almost didn't come because we were scared, but we came precisely because it's important not to let repression win," she added.

2,200 Palestinians

FROM PAGE 12

in the city's al-Jalda and Ein Deir Bahha neighbourhoods, as Israeli forces continue military operation in the occupied West Bank.

He also said the Israeli operations were motivated by parliamentary elections on Tuesday when Netanyahu's right-wing coalition may lose his majority, opinion polls show.

"Netanyahu and the radical ministers in his government are trying to win as many votes as possible from the settlers," Al-Jabari said.

The non-governmental organisation the Palestinian Prisoners' Club said Israeli forces had arrested around 70 Palestinians on Friday and Saturday. Israeli officials have not commented on any arrests.

Al-Jabari said the military had demolished shops, factories, homes, and roads in Hebron and that the response was disproportionate and unjustified.

Residents in Hebron told Reuters that the military expelled many people with no connection to the Palestinian attackers.

"We are calling on officials to stand by us because we are not involved in any of this. There are children. We are isolated; we don't do anything. This is all arbitrary," said Majdi Nasser, one of those driven from his home.

Residents told Reuters they saw Israeli soldiers marking homes with a black X after their Palestinian occupants had been forced to leave. It was not immediately clear what the X mark meant.



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

Govt must stand by citizens in foreign jails

Too many of them are being left to fend for themselves

A remittance economy rests on a bargain. Millions of workers leave home, endure hard conditions, and send back the money that keeps households fed and the country's balance of payments steady. In return, the government is expected to stand by the workers if things go wrong. For more than 15,000 Bangladeshis now in prisons abroad, however, that bargain seems to be unravelling.

The testimony of families as reported by this newspaper suggests a consular service that too often fails them. A woman from Rajbari learned of her husband's imprisonment in Thailand—and that he had been trafficked and tortured—not from Bangladesh's embassy but from fellow detainees who had returned home. Two months after she petitioned the foreign ministry, she says she has heard nothing back. Three brothers from Sylhet, jailed for nine months in Riyadh over a protest they say they knew nothing about, report that the Bangladesh mission engaged with them only after demonstrations at home made their case politically awkward.

Most troubling is the recent execution of two detainees in Saudi Arabia, home to roughly half of Bangladesh's overseas prisoners. The consulate in Jeddah had reportedly found their names on a prisoner list two weeks earlier, apparently without knowing they faced death sentences. It says Riyadh did not inform it, and that the families had not sought legal help. Both may be true, but neither is an adequate answer.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam's invitation to aggrieved families to email her personally is, while well-meant, itself an admission that the institutional channels are not working.

The least a mission receiving such a list, in a jurisdiction that applies capital punishment, could do is check for possible death sentences and seek legal assistance for those at risk.

Overall, the pattern described by these families is of a consular service that barely functions in a way needed by our citizens abroad. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam's invitation to aggrieved families to email her personally is, while well-meant, itself an admission that the institutional channels are not working.

Against this backdrop, three reforms are essential. First, the planned prisoner database should be built quickly and properly. Recording identity documents, charges and sentence lengths, with alerts ahead of release dates, is basic administration. It should also flag every detainee facing a capital charge for immediate legal review. Second, legal aid must be considered as appropriate. As a BRAC official rightly argues, someone held for an expired visa and someone facing a murder charge need very different kinds of support. Missions in high-caseload countries need retained lawyers and dedicated welfare staff, not just labour attachés. Dhaka should also press host governments, Saudi Arabia above all, for timely notification of arrests and sentences. Third, the government must confront the conditions that put workers in jail in the first place and take preventive actions.

These measures are paramount considering the fact that Bangladesh depends on its overseas workers more than most countries do. It must take proper steps to ensure that they are safe and have the legal support they require on foreign soils.

Ensure transparency in BR online ticketing

Probe allegations against Shohoz, prevent ticketing irregularities

The allegations against Shohoz-Synesis-Vincen JV—the online ticketing contractor for Bangladesh Railway (BR) since 2022—of using bots to "secure" train tickets as soon as online sales opened and reselling them at higher prices are deeply disconcerting. Reportedly, the state rail authority sought an explanation from the company regarding these allegations, which Shohoz has already submitted and is currently being examined, alongside the possibility of Shohoz's involvement in ticket black marketing. As the company's five-year contract with BR is nearing its end in January 2027, the railway is taking over administrative controls at some stations and preparing to invite tenders for a new ticketing agency.

It has been alleged that bots operating through an unauthorised website are holding large numbers of tickets for resale at inflated prices, putting into question Shohoz's fulfilment of its contractual security obligations. BR's own audit has flagged security weaknesses, identified around 169 suspicious administrator accounts, and found that the administrator dashboard allowed tickets to be held several days before sales opened. The audit suspects black marketing of train tickets via collusion between Shohoz representatives and railway booking assistants using administrator accounts operated by the contracted company's employees. According to our report, an audit covering fiscal years 2021-2026 alleged a shortfall in deposits to the government treasury against revenue from online ticket sales, citing a staggering Tk 1.4 crore in fines that had not been recovered from Shohoz. Besides these major issues, the contractor had previously been warned and fined several times over slow servers, outages, and other system flaws. These fines were recovered from payments BR owed to Shohoz.

It should be noted that Shohoz's role as a contractor for the national railway has seen controversies in the past as well. In its first year after being appointed, Shohoz was fined at least twice, for Tk 4.15 lakh in total, by the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) over allegations of mismanagement in selling tickets. Both times, Shohoz's writ petitions to the High Court succeeded in having the fines suspended.We hope the recent audit will finally lead to accountability.

The allegations discovered from the railway authority's audits must be investigated thoroughly. Both Shohoz as well as any colluders within BR must be held to account for obstructing the right of citizens to proper train ticketing services. Any security issues within the online system itself must be resolved. Sending out a tender for a new contractor come 2027 must not translate to any offenders being allowed to slip through without accountability.

Patients' need, not political clout, should guide hospital expansion



Dr Syed Abdul Hamid is professor at the Institute of Health Economics of the University of Dhaka, and convener of Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh.

SYED ABDUL HAMID

When patients are forced to lie on hospital floors for lack of beds, allocating public funds to hospitals should be guided by one principle: patients' medical need, not political influence. Recent data on health facilities expansion shows that hospitals located in places linked to ministers and state ministers have received an overwhelming share of additional beds while other overcrowded hospitals remain neglected. Public healthcare is a national responsibility, not a political reward. No constituency should receive preferential treatment simply because its representative holds power.

According to a recent report in The Daily Star, between February 17 and September 22, 2026, the government added 2,879 beds in 19 public hospitals, including several medical college hospitals and two specialised hospitals. Of these, 2,688 beds, or approximately 93 percent, were allocated to hospitals in districts or constituencies associated with ministers and state ministers. Only 191 beds were approved for five hospitals outside these areas. Meanwhile, several hospitals experiencing severe pressure on their existing capacity received no comparable expansion.

These figures do not necessarily prove that political considerations determined every decision. Hospitals in politically influential constituencies also have genuine needs. However, such a concentration of investment demands a clear explanation, particularly when hospitals elsewhere face more severe overcrowding. The fundamental question is simple: are we expanding hospitals to serve patients, or allocating healthcare infrastructure according to political influence?

Our public hospitals are under enormous pressure. A shortage of hospital beds is a chronic problem. Healthcare professionals struggle with excessive workloads, while diagnostic facilities, essential medicines and functioning equipment remain inadequate in many facilities. Expanding hospital capacity is undoubtedly necessary, but where and how that capacity is expanded matter as much as the decision itself.

The concentration of hospital expansion in politically influential areas raises a more fundamental question about the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives. A Member of Parliament (MP) represents a particular constituency and is expected to raise its concerns and advocate for its development. A minister, however, holds a position in the national government and has responsibilities that extend beyond the constituency from which they were elected. So ministers are duty-bound to consider the needs of the entire country and ensure that public resources are allocated according to national priorities.

When ministers appear to prioritise hospitals in their own constituencies over facilities elsewhere with equally urgent or greater needs, it raises concerns about whether they are fulfilling their national responsibilities or continuing to act primarily as constituency representatives.

A minister must think and act as a minister, not merely as an MP. Public leadership requires looking beyond local interests and making decisions in the interests of the entire population. A minister's responsibility is not to secure the largest possible share of public investment for their own constituency, but to ensure that resources reach the people and places where they can generate the greatest public benefit.

This distinction is particularly important in healthcare, where inequitable investment can have direct consequences for people's lives. Citizens should not have to depend on the political influence of their representatives to access essential healthcare services.

In this connection, another fundamental misconception is that increasing the number of sanctioned beds automatically improves healthcare. A bed becomes useful only when supported by adequate doctors, nurses, medical technologists, support staff, medicines, diagnostic services, and functioning equipment. Constructing additional wards without these complementary resources may increase nominal capacity without improving actual service delivery.

Hospital expansion must, therefore, be based on a comprehensive assessment of existing capacity and future demand. Bangladesh urgently needs a transparent, evidence-based mechanism for prioritising healthcare investment.

First, the government should establish standard criteria for assessing hospital expansion proposals. These should include bed occupancy rates, inpatient, and outpatient volumes, population projections, disease burden, travel time to appropriate facilities, referral patterns, and workforce availability.

Second, every major proposal should undergo an assessment of both capital and recurrent costs. The government must consider not only construction expenditure but also the long-term costs of staffing, medicines procurement, equipment, utilities, and maintenance.

Third, the rationale for approving major projects should be publicly disclosed. Citizens should understand why one hospital receives priority over another and what evidence supports the decision. Where a less overcrowded hospital is prioritised over a more congested facility, the government should explain the reasons.

Fourth, an independent technical body should review major expansion proposals before approval. Periodic evaluations should establish whether investments have reduced overcrowding, improved service availability, and generated better health outcomes.

Finally, equity must be an explicit consideration. Remote, disadvantaged, and historically underserved communities may require additional investment even when their hospitals report lower occupancy rates, because geographical barriers and limited access can suppress demand. Investment decisions must balance efficiency with fairness.

These measures would not prevent ministers and MPs from identifying and advocating for local healthcare needs. Rather, they would ensure that every proposal is assessed against the same transparent criteria, regardless of the political importance of the constituency concerned.

The challenge facing Bangladesh is not simply a shortage of hospital beds. It is also the need to allocate scarce public resources efficiently, fairly and transparently. When investment decisions appear to favour locations connected to influential politicians from the ruling party, public confidence suffers, while underserved communities continue to face overcrowding, delayed treatment and unnecessary travel.

Ultimately, the success of health policy should not be measured by the number of beds approved or hospital buildings constructed. It should be measured by whether people receive timely, affordable and quality healthcare, regardless of where they live or whom they elect. In a fair health system, the urgency of patients' needs, not political power, must determine the priority for public investment.



FILE PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

Chronic bed shortages in public hospitals across the country force many patients to receive treatment on the floor.

The 'time tax' we have to pay every day



Professor Dr Md Bakhtiar Uddin is head of the Department of Economics at Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University in Trishal, Mymensingh. He can be reached at bakhtiareco@gmail.com.

MD BAKHTIAR UDDIN

When a citizen visits a government office to obtain a simple service, the direct fee may be small, but the person may lose half a day in the process. The opportunity cost of time is not readily discernible. But the time lost still has an economic value. This is what may be described as the time tax—the hidden cost of the time and mental energy people spend filling out paperwork, waiting in queues, and navigating complex bureaucracy simply to access basic services, receive government benefits, or exercise their rights.

People stand in long queues and spend substantial amounts of time obtaining services from government offices. Some of the most time-consuming services are associated with obtaining passports, permits/licences for businesses or vehicles, land documents, resolving tax issues, accessing low-cost healthcare, to name just a few.

Moreover, a wealthy person can reduce the opportunity cost of time by hiring an agent or intermediary, while some people may resort to informal payments to speed up a service. A poor person, however, usually has fewer options. The relative loss of time can therefore be much greater for poorer citizens. For a low-income household, the forgone wages of days spent in queues are far more consequential than it would be for a richer household.

Bangladesh has, to some extent, recognised the importance of reducing this burden. The country's digital reforms have used Time, Cost and Visit (TCV) as measures of improvement in public service delivery. A World Bank document reports that Bangladesh's service delivery initiatives have measured reductions in the time, cost and number of visits required to obtain services, with substantial aggregate reductions attributed to digitisation.

But despite digitisation and innovation in public-service delivery, some sectors remain mired in delays and administrative hassles. According to the World Bank's Bangladesh Development Update published in April this year, senior managers in Bangladesh spend an average of 13 percent of their time dealing with government regulations, higher than in any comparable country in the region. This national average, however, masks substantially heavier burdens in some parts of the country. In Chattogram, managers spend about 40 percent of their time dealing with regulatory compliance, while in Barishal, the figure rises to 60 percent, leaving little room for productive management and strategic decision-making.

The burden is also unevenly distributed across firms. As per the report, frontier firms—defined in the report as the most productive companies in the formal sector—"spend around five percentage points less time dealing with regulators and face fewer tax inspections than non-frontier firms." Regulatory delays further compound these challenges. Obtaining an operating licence takes an average of 28 days, while construction permits and import licences each take about 49 days—nearly twice as long as in China or India, per the report. These regulatory burdens have tangible economic consequences: firms facing heavier regulatory demands are 19 percent less likely to invest.

The concept of time tax can be extended beyond government offices to another major source of lost time: traffic congestion. For millions of Bangladeshis, commuting has become an everyday tax on their time. A 2018 study estimated that around five million work hours are lost annually in Dhaka because of persistent traffic congestion, with an associated economic loss of an average of Tk 37,000 crore. Direct and indirect losses can be 6-10 percent of national GDP.

Time tax also has an important relationship with bribery. When bureaucratic procedures impose substantial costs in time, an unofficial payment may become, from the individual's perspective, a way of escaping queues, delays and uncertainty. This creates a troubling incentive structure. If a person believes that paying a bribe can expedite a task that takes several weeks, the time tax itself can create a demand for speed money.

Besides, when entrepreneurs and firms spend substantial time obtaining licences, complying with regulations, or dealing with government agencies, that time becomes part of the cost of production. Firms may respond by reducing investment, delaying expansion or passing some of the additional costs on to consumers through higher prices. Ultimately, consumers may bear part of the burden through reduced purchasing power and lower welfare.

What, then, can be done? First, every major public service should publish a small set of measurable indicators: average processing time, average citizen waiting time, number of visits required, number of documents required, and number of physical interactions. This would make the time tax visible and allow citizens and policymakers to compare services and institutions.

Second, digitalisation should not simply transfer an inefficient paper-based procedure to an online platform. The underlying process itself should also be simplified. If a citizen has to upload the same information repeatedly, visit an office for physical verification, and then wait for several approvals, an online interface alone cannot eliminate the time tax.

Third, traffic congestion needs to be treated as a time-tax problem as well as a transport problem. Several measures have already been taken to ease congestion in Dhaka and Chattogram, but rapid urbanisation means that other divisional and major cities are increasingly facing similar problems. These cities also deserve greater policy attention. Finally, existing roads must be effectively used, as poor planning, roadside markets, illegal parking, and weak enforcement limit expanded highway capacity.

Time is one of the few economic resources that cannot be produced, imported or recovered once it is lost. Bangladesh has traditionally measured the cost of government services in terms of money. It is time that we also measure them in terms of hours lost. A tax collected in money appears in the government's accounts. A tax collected in time does not. But it is no less real for citizens, businesses and the economy.

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Police and media have no right to shame detainees



Arafat Rahaman is a journalist at The Daily Star. He covers education and writes on governance, rights, and public accountability. He can be reached at arafat.mcj@yahoo.com.

■ ARAFAT RAHAMAN



FILE VISUAL: **STAR**

A police outpost stood barely 30 yards from a house in Purbachal where "drug parties" had apparently been held for nearly a year. The house belonged to a senior police officer. When detectives finally raided it early Tuesday, October 20, 85 people—26 women and 59 men—were detained and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

Thanks to the broadcast of the raid and the disclosure of the backgrounds of these otherwise affluent detainees by a section of the media, the episode has since generated considerable curiosity on social media. Ideally, the questions following such a raid should have concerned the police and the alleged offences: what the police knew, why the gatherings and DJ parties went unchecked for so long if they were being held illegally, and what evidence justified the sentences imposed. Some of the media coverage, however, turned elsewhere: Who were their fathers? Where did they study, work, or live? These personal details along with the footage, supplied by the officers themselves, established nothing about the alleged offences. Yet, such public exposure and shaming of people caught in police operations have become routine, both among law enforcers and in sections of the media, despite repeated High Court directives against parading detainees before cameras.

The Daily Star found that residents often saw cars outside the Purbachal property and heard loud music late at night. Local police acknowledged knowing about the gatherings but denied prior knowledge of drug-related activities. Officers of the Detective Branch (DB), however, alleged that 20 to 22 parties were held monthly, accusing the property's owner, Additional DIG Abdullah Al Jahir, of obtaining profits from them. Jahir, however, disputed the allegations, saying he had rented out the premises for private functions and prohibited drugs.

DB's limited seizure list, however, raised questions about the police accounts of widespread drug consumption, especially given that the nearly three-hour raid led to the detention of 85 people. Among the items recovered were one yaba tablet, some bottles of liquor, and a small quantity of a substance described as "kush". When asked, investigators claimed the participants had already consumed drugs before the arrival of officers. That explanation warrants scrutiny alongside the evidence and procedures underpinning the summary proceedings. Limited physical recovery alone does not establish that the sentences were unjustified, but how each sentence was reached, why "unlawful" gatherings went unchecked for so long, or whether the police followed due process during the raid are matters of public interest.

The test for the media, meanwhile, is straightforward. Did the coverage establish what evidence supported the sentences, how the premises were supervised, and whether anyone received preferential treatment? These questions need documents and verification, not pictures or videos sensationalising the raid. Yes, naming someone convicted of an offence can serve the public interest. A person's identity, family connections, or place of employment may help verify information or uncover a wider network of wrongdoing. But these details do not deserve publication merely because they are readily available. If a relative of the detainees participated in wrongdoing or an employer helped conceal it, that is a story worth investigating. Without such evidence, why should their identities enter a crime report?

A person's identity, family connections, or place of employment may help verify information or uncover a wider network of wrongdoing. But these details do not deserve publication merely because they are readily available. If a relative of the detainees participated in wrongdoing or an employer helped conceal it, that is a story worth investigating. Without such evidence, why should their identities enter a crime report?

For police, their responsibility begins before anything reaches a newsroom. Officers control a scene, determine who can enter, and have custody of those detained. This puts them in a position of power, making it particularly important that they ensure the dignity and privacy of detainees. Journalists can observe police operations, but no one should be compelled to uncover their face for a camera. Unfortunately, this distinction was also disregarded during an August raid at a residential hotel in Abdullahpur, where video footage showed female officers trying to uncover detained women's faces. One woman was crying, and an officer was seen threatening violence if the women kept their faces covered.

The practice extends beyond cameras brought by journalists, however. A September investigation by *Prothom Alo* identified 107 Facebook accounts run by police officers. Videos posted there, showing encounters with members of the public, attracted large audiences. But under Article 10.12 of the Bangladesh Police Social Media Use Guidelines 2025, officers cannot post photographs or videos of their operations without prior approval. Police Headquarters, in the same report, acknowledged violations and said action had been taken against some officers. It remains unclear how consistently such violations are detected and addressed, particularly when they attract little public attention.

In 2012, the High Court directed law enforcers not to expose arrested or detained people before the media, describing such conduct as illegal and unconstitutional. In 2015, it asked the police chief to stop presenting accused persons before cameras prior to their court appearances. A 2019 ruling called for regulations governing the presentation of detainees and the disclosure of information while investigations are under way. The constitution also points in the same direction: Article 31 protects people against actions detrimental to their reputation except in accordance with law, while Article 39 guarantees freedom of the press, subject to restrictions provided by law. Importantly, these interventions concern the treatment and exposure of detainees by law enforcers; they do not amount to a ban on reporting arrests, investigations, etc.

In fact, filming police operations can sometimes be essential. Video evidence can expose an unlawful search, an assault, or a misleading official account. Where influence has been used to obstruct justice, identifying those responsible can be essential to accountability. The question here is not whether cameras should be present at a crime scene, but what they record, who controls access to the footage, and what editors choose to publish. The Society of Professional Journalists' code makes it clear that journalists' ethical responsibilities go beyond what they can legally obtain and broadcast. Producers choose the footage, digital editors select the clips and thumbnails, and news editors decide whether to name relatives or employers. Each has a responsibility to ask whether a certain detail advances the public's understanding or merely satisfies curiosity.

That said, failings along that line must not become a pretext for giving the state new powers over journalism. Such powers could just as easily be used to suppress footage exposing official abuse. The answer lies instead in enforcing professional standards within news platforms, explaining difficult editorial decisions, and correcting errors across videos and social media posts, not just in written articles. Police Headquarters should also publish clear procedures governing camera access during raids but, at the same time, take responsibility for how they investigate and discipline officers who violate existing instructions.

The questions raised by the Purbachal raid remain, and the police must answer them. As for journalists, they must think what purpose their disclosure of detainees' faces and personal details—especially those of women—served. Did these help uncover wrongdoing, or did they simply turn people in police custody into objects of public humiliation? If they added nothing to the public's understanding of the alleged offences, why were they necessary? We cannot demand accountability from the police while refusing to account for our own editorial decisions.

A trillion-dollar economy sounds good, but it must benefit the people



Abu Afsarul Haider is an entrepreneur. He can be reached at afsarulhaider@gmail.com.

■ ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

A few months ago, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said that the BNP-led government is working to transform Bangladesh into a trillion-dollar economy by 2034. Bangladeshis have heard ambitious promises before. During the Awami League government's tenure, Sheikh Hasina also spoke of making Bangladesh a trillion-dollar economy and a fully developed Smart Bangladesh by 2041. As a matter of fact, Bangladesh became a lower-middle-income country in 2015. The question, therefore, is not simply how large Bangladesh's economy becomes, but how much that growth improves the lives of ordinary people.

During the Awami League period, Bangladesh recorded impressive GDP growth. But this did not create enough decent jobs for a young and growing population. Between 2013 and 2017, GDP grew by an average of 6.6 percent a year, while employment grew by only about 0.9 percent a year. Economists described this as "jobless growth". Employment elasticity also declined from 0.54 during 1995-2000 to 0.25 during 2010-2018, showing how slowly job creation responded to economic growth.

The benefits of growth were also unevenly shared. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016, the income share of the richest 5 percent rose from 24.61 percent in 2010 to 27.89 percent in 2016. During the same period, the share of the poorest 5 percent fell sharply from 0.78 percent to just 0.23 percent. This is why many ordinary people feel disconnected from politicians' celebration of GDP growth or rising per capita income. For an ordinary citizen struggling to pay rent, buy food, send their children to school, or deal with expensive medical costs, a higher GDP figure means little unless it visibly improves their quality of life.

A 2025 survey by the Power and Participation Research Centre estimated that 27.93 percent of the population was living below the upper poverty line, while 9.35 percent was living in extreme poverty. The situation is also being made worse by high living costs and pressure on household incomes.

Food security remains another serious concern. The 2026 Global Hunger Index found that 8.2 percent of Bangladesh's population was undernourished, while 24 percent of children under five were stunted. Unicef has also reported that two in every three children under five in Bangladesh face child food poverty. More recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization reported that about 1.81 crore people are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity between September and December 2026.

Housing, water, and sanitation remain major challenges. According to various reports from 2019, more than 50 lakh people in Bangladesh have no homes to live in. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019, 74.87 percent of families live in permanent mud houses, while only 4.95 percent of households have pucca buildings. Another 2.13 percent of people reside in slums and makeshift mud houses. The World Bank says 6.83 crore people lack safely managed drinking water, while 10.3 crore people lack safely managed sanitation facilities.



FILE VISUAL: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

Meanwhile, more than seven crore people are employed in Bangladesh, but around 85 percent of them are engaged in the informal sector, where wages are low, jobs are insecure, and there is no social protection. The number of unemployed people in the country stands at around 27.3 lakh as per the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data for 2025. An International Monetary Fund report published in 2026 noted that unemployment among highly educated young people in Bangladesh is around 36 percent.

It is unfortunate that, since independence, governments have come and gone, but ordinary citizens continue to struggle with the same basic problems.

BNP won the February 2026 election and Tarique Rahman became prime minister with a clear opportunity to present a different model of governance. Having spent many years in the United Kingdom, he has had the opportunity to observe how a developed country manages public services, healthcare, education, housing, transport, social protection, and institutions. It is therefore understandable that people expect his experience abroad to be reflected in his approach to state-building at home. Of course, no one expects Bangladesh to become a developed country overnight, as building effective institutions and public services takes time. But people do expect to see evidence that the government is moving in the right direction.

This is where the government could have made a visible difference through a few practical pilot projects. For example, our public hospitals are in dire straits, so why not transform at least one into a genuine model hospital, with modern equipment, clean facilities, proper nursing standards and reliable services? Similarly, why not develop affordable flats of 300 to 500 square feet for low-income families in selected areas? Why not turn one public school, college, or university into a model institution with modern classrooms, libraries, laboratories, playgrounds, and research facilities? Of course, such projects would not solve the country's problems overnight. But they would show people that change is possible and that the government is serious about delivering it.

People do not oppose ambitious economic goals, but they want to see the benefits of growth reflected in their own lives as well. That is why the government's performance cannot be judged by economic targets alone. Law and order are equally important. In the first eight months of 2026, police recorded 14,602 incidents of violence against women and children, while Ain o Salish Kendra reported that 254 children died in various forms of violence during the same period. Such figures are a reminder that economic progress has little meaning if people do not feel safe. The attack, looting, and demolition of the Radda MCH-FP Centre in Mirpur and a studio at ECB Chattar attacked and ransacked are troubling examples. For ordinary citizens, this is not an abstract issue of governance, but about whether the state can protect a public-serving institution and enforce the law.

Therefore, the lesson for the government is simple. Bangladesh does not need another development slogan. It needs visible results that ordinary people can see and feel in their daily lives. A trillion-dollar economy should not be measured only by the size of GDP, but by the quality of life it creates.

Shots fired at singer Asif's car in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants opened fire at the private car of singer Asif Akbar in Dhaka's Moghbazar early yesterday.

Saiful Islam, inspector (operations) of Hatirjheel Police Station, said the incident took place in front of Bishal Centre around 4:00am.

Asif, who has a private office in Moghbazar, had parked his car in front of the centre. He was not inside the vehicle when the shooting took place, the police official said.

Asif informed police about the incident around 5:00am, Saiful said.

Police visited the scene following the report. No casualties were reported.

Saiful said investigators could not collect CCTV footage immediately as the shops at the market were closed.

Police say they will collect the footage after the shops open and take further action based on their findings, he added.

CWASA plans 90,000 smart meters by 2030

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Chattogram WASA plans to install 90,000 automatic meter reading (AMR) meters by December 2030 to curb water losses, prevent billing irregularities and improve revenue collection.

The initiative, part of the World Bank-funded Chattogram Water Supply Improvement Project, aims to reduce non-revenue water (NRW) to 10 percent.

Around Tk 100 crore of the Tk 3,921 crore project has been allocated for installing the meters.

Under the existing system, inspectors manually collect readings from individual connections and enter them into software. With AMR meters, sensors will automatically record readings and transfer the data to the software when inspectors visit connection areas once a month.

"The system would prevent consumers and meter inspectors from manipulating readings, and help prevent water theft and reduce the NRW rate," said Rezaul Ahsan Chowdhury, project director and executive engineer of CWASA.

He said the automated system would prevent inspectors from entering arbitrary readings.

NRW refers to water that generates no revenue because of pipeline leaks, unauthorised consumption, metering and billing problems, theft and other operational irregularities.

According to CWASA data, the average NRW rate stood at 22.33 percent in the first six months of 2026, down from 30 percent in the 2023-24 fiscal year, when estimated revenue losses exceeded Tk 100 crore.

Abdur Rahim, a building owner in Khulshi-1, said water meters remained manual, unlike modernised gas and electricity meters.

"Automatic meters would benefit both consumers and CWASA. For instance, a meter inspector might issue an average bill without visiting, or record a higher reading than the actual consumption. That would be a form of harassment for me. An automated system would eliminate such problems," he said.

As of June 2026, CWASA had 1,06,339 registered water connections across a 965-kilometre pipeline network and produced an average of 479 million litres of water daily.

Project officials said CWASA would initially bear the cost of the meters, but a final decision had yet to be made on whether customers would eventually be charged.

Salim Md Jane Alam, managing director of CWASA, said construction work under the project would begin soon.

Several international companies have participated in the tender, and their bids are being evaluated before contractors are appointed, he added.



- Tk 100cr allocated for meter installation
- Water losses targeted to fall to 10%
- Automated readings to curb billing irregularities
- Decision on customer charges still pending

Half-day blockade in Rangamati, Khagrachhari

STAR REPORT

A half-day blockade of roads and waterways in Rangamati and Khagrachhari yesterday disrupted transport services as protesters demonstrated against alleged attacks, baton charges and vandalism during Thursday's blockade at Ujo Bazar in Sajek, Rangamati.

Called by the Chhatra Janata Sangram Parishad, the blockade began in the morning and ended at noon.

In Rangamati, protesters blocked the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road with logs and set fires at Sapchhari Khamar Para and Kutukchhari Dharmaghar. They also brought out a procession from Kutukchhari Half Bazar to Dharmaghar.

Vehicular movement on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road remained suspended throughout the morning, while traffic continued on the Rangamati-Chattogram road despite the blockade in Betbunia.

Md Yusuf, joint general secretary of the Rangamati-Chattogram Bus-Minibus Workers Union, said bus services on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari route resumed after noon, although passenger numbers were low.

In Khagrachhari, no long-distance buses departed, although some auto-rickshaws operated in the town.

Protesters burnt tyres at Chengi Bridge, Swonirbhar and Jorabridge in Guimara, while felled trees blocked the Chattogram-Khagrachhari road at Sapmara.

Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station OC Md Kay Kislu said police escorted overnight buses from Dhaka into town. Some vehicles stranded in Ramgarh were instructed to enter Khagrachhari after noon.

[Our correspondents from Rangamati and Khagrachhari contributed to this report]



FILE PHOTO

CUET stalemate drags on over VC row

ARUN BIKASH DEY

As universities reopen after the Durga Puja holidays today, Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) remains mired in a month-long deadlock, with no indication of when academic activities will resume.

Classes, examinations and practical sessions have remained suspended for over a month as students, teachers and staff demand the reinstatement of former vice-chancellor Prof Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem and removal of newly appointed VC Prof Sheikh Shariful Alam.

Protesting students have announced that their all-out shutdown will resume after the holidays.

Although the University Grants Commission has formed a six-member advisory committee to resolve the crisis, teachers and students have questioned its effectiveness, pointing out that it includes no CUET representative.

Samiun Basir, joint general secretary of the CUET Teachers' Association, said, "There is no one from CUET in the committee formed to solve the stalemate."

Protesting student Ahnaf Shahriar Arnob said demonstrations would continue until their demands were met.

The UGC formed the committee on Monday following directives from the education ministry.

The committee held its first virtual meeting on Thursday, said Prof Dr Yousuf Elahi Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and a committee member.

Another member, Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Professor Al Forkan, said the committee would soon meet all parties to facilitate the resumption of academic activities.

The crisis began after Prof Sayem was removed as CUET VC on September 21 and Prof Shariful of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology was appointed in his place.

Students launched a shutdown on September 22, while teachers, officers and employees joined through work abstentions and non-cooperation programmes.

Following a ministry directive on October 18, the UGC formed the advisory committee on October 19, naming UGC member Professor Dr Abdullah-Al-Mamun convener and Additional Director Dr Md Mohibul Ahsan member secretary.

Prof Mamun said, "We will start working to resolve the CUET deadlock very swiftly. It will not take much time."

'An internal matter of foreign ministry'

Shama Obaed on keeping envoy in Dhaka during PM's Japan visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decision to bring Bangladesh's Ambassador to Japan Md Daud Ali back to Dhaka during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's upcoming visit to Japan is an internal matter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said State Minister Shama Obaed Islam yesterday.

She was talking to reporters after an event at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka.

It emerged two days ago that Ambassador Daud Ali had been asked to remain in Dhaka ahead of the visit and would not be in Tokyo during the PM's Japan visit, scheduled for October 26-29.

"It is absolutely an internal matter of the ministry. This is neither a national nor an international issue," Shama said.

Highlighting Dhaka-Tokyo ties, she said Japan had remained Bangladesh's top trade and development partner for many years.

On the PM's upcoming visit, Shama said a number of memorandums of understanding could be signed in areas including infrastructure, energy, technology, garments, education and health.

10 killed, 23 hurt in road crashes in four districts

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and 23 others injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday and on Friday night.

In Munshiganj, three people were killed and at least 16 injured as a bus of Darshana Paribahan plunged into a ditch beside Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Hasara, Srinagar upazila while attempting to overtake a covered van early yesterday, said police and fire service.

The deceased are bus supervisor Rokunuzzaman Ranju, 57; helper Chanchal Biswas, 23; and passenger Salauddin Ahmed Sakib, 32.

Muhammad Shafiqul Islam, deputy assistant director of Munshiganj fire service, said the bodies were handed over to Hasara Highway Police.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Srinagar Upazila Health Complex and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Jashore, three youths were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles in the Natunhat Bazar area yesterday.

Siam Hossain, 18, Joy, 18, and Omar Ali, 17, died on the spot, said Kazi Babul Hossain, inspector (investigation) at Jashore Kotwali Police Station.

Rohan, 19, and Rifat, 17, were taken to Jashore General Hospital.

In Gazipur's Tongi, a man and his son were killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle while standing beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Kutumbari Hotel in the Gazipura area yesterday.

Tapan Chandra Das, 50, and his son Likhan Chandra Das, 20, were from Kaibartapara in Sherpur's Dewanganj, said Nureja Akter, duty officer at Tongi East Police Station.

In Chattogram's Satkania, a man and his two-year-old daughter were killed and five others injured as a passenger bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw near Jafar Ahmad Degree College on Friday night.



The deceased were identified as Delwar, 30, and his daughter Jannat, 2, of Malihabad area, said Dohazari Highway Police Station OC Md Nurul Absar.

The victims were in the three-wheeler, he said.

Following the accident, locals set the bus on fire and blocked the highway, disrupting traffic from 8:00pm to 9:30pm.

When a patrol vehicle from Satkania Police Station went to the spot, people vandalised it, leaving a policeman injured, OC Nurul said.

A unit of the Satkania fire service later brought the fire under control.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Home Affairs
Office of the Commandant
BCG Base Agrajatra, Patuakhali Sadar, Patuakhali-8600

INVITATION FOR TENDER

BCG Base Agrajatra e-GP Invitation no. 44.08.7895.453.22.256.26.16 Date: 19 OCTOBER 2026

E-TENDER NOTICE

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

Ser	Tender ID	Package Name	Method	Date & Time		
				Publication	Last Selling	Closing and Opening
1.	1358358	Repair and maintenance of existing vehicles in the MT pool of Bangladesh Coast Guard Base Agrajatra specifically: Dhaka Metro Gha 13-7430, Patuakhali Sa 11-0006, Bhola Gha 11-0044, Patuakhali A 11-0007, Patuakhali Gha 11-0051, Dhaka Metro Chha 71-0874, Dhaka Metro Cha 56-2065, Dhaka Metro Cha 56-6338, Dhaka Metro 10-4916, Dhaka Metro A 11-4835, Dhaka Metro Ga 26-9161, and Dhaka Metro Tha 13-4894.	OTM	22/10/2026 10:00 AM	01/11/2026 15:00 AM	02/11/2026 10:00 AM

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 (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.
Documents can be downloaded till deadline of Tender/Application/Proposal submission.

KANIZ AZAD
Lt Commander BN
For Commandant

GD-2571

5 more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died and 1,898 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the deaths, two were reported in Chattogram division, and one each in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Khulna and Rajshahi divisions.

With the latest deaths and cases, the death toll this year has risen to 376, while the total number of cases has reached 1,21,699.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Architecture
Ministry of Housing & Public Works
Sthapatya Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
www.architecture.gov.bd
Phone No- 02-223350954.

Memo No-General- 1506 /Arch Date:19-10-2026

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concern that the following tender have Published through e-GP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No	Name of Works	Publishing Date & Time	Last selling Date &Time	Closing Date &Time
01	1357898	DOA/egp/26-27/04	Procurement Of Software from Software and Database Maintenance Department of Architecture	25-Oct-2026 08:00	12-Nov-2026 09:00	12-Nov-2026 12:10
02	1358366	DOA/egp/26-27/05	Computer & Computer Accessories Department of Architecture	25-Oct-2026 08:50	12-Nov-2026 09:50	12-Nov-2026 11:50

The interested persons/firms/suppliers may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get details of the tender.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registaration in the National e-GP portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/) *is required.* Further information and guideline are available at the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

19.10.26
(S.M. Anisul Haque)
Executive Architect
circle-co-ordination
Sthapatya Bhaban
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Phone No- 02-223350954.

GD-2572

Beyond the pink ribbon: Why breast cancer survival remains unequal



DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

In Bangladesh, a breast cancer diagnosis can mark the beginning of two battles: one against the disease and another against fear, financial hardship and delayed treatment.

For countless women, the greatest danger is not simply cancer itself, but discovering it when precious time has already slipped away.

As October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the message is urgent: finding cancer early and receiving timely treatment can mean the difference between life and death.

Breast cancer remains the most common cancer worldwide and a leading cause of cancer deaths among women. Yet the chances of surviving it vary dramatically depending on where a woman lives, how quickly she receives care and whether treatment is affordable.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the global five-year survival rate between 2017 and 2021 was approximately 77.8 per cent. However, the figure was just 41.9 per cent in low-income countries, compared with 87.3 per cent in wealthier nations.

These numbers reveal an uncomfortable truth: survival is not determined by medical advances alone. Access to healthcare matters enormously.

For Bangladesh, where many women face financial pressures, limited awareness and difficulties reaching specialist services, the global findings carry particular significance.

A painless lump may be dismissed. Changes in breast appearance may go unnoticed. Fear of diagnosis, embarrassment or family responsibilities may push medical appointments further down the priority list.

Unfortunately, cancer does not wait for a convenient moment. Recognising these inequalities, WHO launched its Global Breast Cancer Initiative in 2021, bringing together governments, healthcare professionals and organisations to improve breast cancer care worldwide.

The initiative aims to reduce breast cancer deaths by 2.5 per cent annually, potentially saving 2.5 million lives over two decades.





Its approach rests on three essential priorities: helping women recognise warning signs and seek care early, ensuring faster diagnosis, and providing complete treatment and continuing support.

For women in Bangladesh, awareness must extend beyond wearing pink ribbons or sharing social media messages.

Knowing what is normal for one's breasts, recognising unusual changes and seeking medical advice promptly are practical starting points. A new lump, nipple discharge, skin changes or persistent breast discomfort deserves attention, although such symptoms do not necessarily indicate cancer.

Equally important is ensuring that women who seek help can actually receive it.

Affordable testing, accessible specialist services, clear referral pathways and uninterrupted treatment could transform the experience of patients, particularly those living outside major cities.

Families also have a crucial role. Emotional reassurance, financial support and encouragement to seek treatment can help women navigate an already frightening journey.

Breast cancer awareness should never become a month-long campaign that fades when October ends.

The pink ribbon may symbolise hope, but real hope comes from action: listening to women, removing barriers to care and ensuring that early detection leads to timely treatment. Because surviving breast cancer should depend less on geography, income or circumstance, and more on the simple promise that every woman deserves a fighting chance.

E-mail: tareq.salahuddin@thedailystar.net



A cancer vaccine made just for you: Is the future here?

Imagine a cancer vaccine designed for you, and you alone. What once sounded like science fiction is moving closer to reality, offering fresh hope to patients worldwide.

On 22 October 2026, pharmaceutical companies announced encouraging findings from research into a personalised cancer vaccine. Developed using the unique features of an individual's tumour, the vaccine aims to train the body's natural defences to recognise and destroy cancer cells, according to the study of the American Journal of Managed Care®.

Unlike conventional vaccines, this one does not prevent cancer. Instead, it is designed to stop the disease from returning after surgery.

Researchers reported that combining the experimental vaccine with an existing cancer medicine reduced the risk of skin cancer returning or causing death by 42 per cent over two years. The findings suggest a future where cancer treatment could be tailored to each patient rather than following the same approach for everyone.

However, the treatment remains experimental, and further scientific assessment is essential before its wider use.

For Bangladesh, the breakthrough raises an uncomfortable question: who will afford such personalised care?

With cancer treatment already financially devastating for many families, individually manufactured vaccines could deepen inequalities between wealthy and poorer nations.

The promise is extraordinary. But its greatest achievement will be ensuring that lifesaving innovation reaches everyone, not merely those who can pay.

The invisible poison stealing our children's future

Some of the most dangerous threats to our health are those we cannot see, smell or feel. Lead poisoning is one such silent danger, capable of creeping into our bodies through everyday products and polluted surroundings. Often unnoticed until the damage is done, it can affect people of all ages, particularly children, whose developing brains are most vulnerable. What makes this threat especially alarming is that even small amounts of lead can cause lasting harm, yet exposure is entirely preventable.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has sounded a fresh alarm, warning that lead exposure contributes to more than 3.5 million deaths worldwide every year. Hundreds of millions of children remain at risk, often without their families realising it.



Unlike many illnesses, lead poisoning does not always announce itself through obvious symptoms. A child may appear perfectly healthy while the poison quietly affects brain development, learning abilities and behaviour. Even small amounts can cause lasting damage.

For Bangladesh, where informal recycling, industrial pollution and potentially unsafe consumer products raise concerns, the warning deserves serious attention. Children are particularly vulnerable because their developing bodies absorb the consequences more severely.

Marking International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2026, WHO is urging countries to shift their focus from identifying poisoning to stopping exposure before it happens.

The organisation plans to introduce a global action plan and practical prevention guidance in 2027, helping governments identify dangerous products, strengthen safety rules and protect vulnerable communities.



From paper prescriptions to digital care: A new hope for Bangladesh

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Imagine walking into a hospital in Bangladesh without carrying a bundle of prescriptions, waiting hours for a ticket or repeating your medical history to every new doctor. What sounds like a distant dream could become part of the country's healthcare future.

Bangladesh has announced a nationwide push towards digital healthcare, with plans for a universal electronic health card and a competition inviting young innovators to help transform the system.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr M A Muhit unveiled the initiative on 18 October 2026 at a Dhaka event organised in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

At its heart is an ambitious plan to build a national health database covering nearly 200 million people. Medical consultations, prescriptions, medicine purchases and test results could eventually become part of connected health records.

For patients, the potential benefits are considerable. Doctors could access previous medical information more easily, while families might spend less time navigating paperwork and hospital queues.

One proposed solution is an appointment system allowing patients to book specific time slots through mobile applications, rather than arriving early and waiting for hours.

The government is also exploring digital tracking of medicines supplied to public hospitals to prevent illegal sales and improve accountability.

Young innovators will have an opportunity to contribute through a national e-Hackathon. Selected teams will attend a three-day training programme in Dhaka, receiving guidance from local and international experts to develop practical healthcare solutions.

However, digital convenience brings serious responsibilities. Protecting personal medical information, preventing misuse and ensuring secure access will be essential.

There is another challenge: making sure rural communities, older patients and people without smartphones are not left behind.

A digital health card alone cannot solve shortages of doctors, medicines or hospital beds. Yet, if thoughtfully introduced, it could make healthcare more organised, accessible and responsive.

For millions of Bangladeshis accustomed to crowded hospital corridors and endless paperwork, that would be a welcome beginning.

The real test will be whether these promises translate into shorter queues, safer records and better care for everyone.

Learn more about the national e-Hackathon on https://ehealthhackathonbd.org/

When menopause arrives too soon

The silent struggle of younger women



DR SUMAIYA KHALED

For many women in Bangladesh, missed periods in their twenties or thirties may raise concerns about pregnancy, stress or hormonal changes. Menopause rarely enters the conversation. Yet, for some women, this life-changing transition arrives decades earlier than expected, bringing physical discomfort, emotional distress and unanswered questions.

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) feature highlights the experience of physician and scientist Priya Satalkar-Götz, whose first warning sign appeared at just 26.

It began with an intense hot flush during a flight. Over the following years, sleepless nights, irregular periods and worsening symptoms became part of her daily life. Despite consulting several doctors, her concerns were repeatedly attributed to stress, lifestyle changes or weight loss.

Only at 33 did blood tests reveal that she had already reached the final stages of menopause. Her experience exposes a troubling reality: even medically trained women can struggle to obtain timely answers.

Early menopause can affect far more than fertility. Disturbed sleep, mood changes, memory difficulties and fragile skin may disrupt everyday life. Longer-term concerns include weakened bones and emotional distress.



In Bangladesh, where conversations about reproductive health can remain uncomfortable, recognising these symptoms and seeking appropriate care deserve greater attention.

Satalkar-Götz eventually found a specialist who listened, explained her options and involved her in treatment decisions. Appropriate hormone treatment subsequently improved her physical and emotional wellbeing.

However, her journey revealed a wider problem: limited research on younger women experiencing menopause and insufficient guidance for healthcare professionals. WHO's feature underscores the need for stronger research and internationally agreed recommendations to ensure women receive consistent, evidence-based care.

Families and workplaces also have important roles. Compassion, flexible working arrangements and emotional support can ease an already difficult transition.

For Bangladeshi women experiencing unexplained menstrual changes, persistent hot flushes or disrupted sleep, early medical consultation may help identify underlying causes.

Menopause should never be dismissed simply because a woman seems too young.

Ultimately, every woman deserves something beyond reassurance: the opportunity to be heard, properly assessed and supported without judgement.

Email: sumaiya.khaled@thedailystar.net



DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2026, KARTIK 9, 1433 BS

SPORT

Mohammedan stay perfect as BFL goes into break

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club maintained their perfect start to the Bangladesh Football League as the competition went into a month-long break on Saturday.

The Black and Whites thrashed Dhaka Wanderers Club 4-0 at the Birshreshtha Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj to collect 12 points from four matches. Shahriar Emon, Souleymane Diabate, Muzaffarov and Arif Hossain scored in the one-sided encounter.

Mohammedan, however, trail Police FC by a point after the latter beat PWD 1-0 in their fifth match of the campaign.

Ngong Sam Junior Stephen scored his second goal of the season in the 13th minute at the Shaheed Miraj-Topon Stadium in Manikganj, taking Police to 13 points from five matches and back to the top of the table.

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings retained third place with a 4-2 victory over Chattogram City FC. Caique da Silva scored twice, while Robson Robinho and Rakib Hossain netted the other goals. Aashish Sonam and Jafar Iqbal scored for Chattogram City, who remain without a point after five consecutive defeats.

Meanwhile, Pakistani forward Shayak Dost struck twice as City Club beat 10-man Arambagh 4-0. Enamul Islam Gazi and Onyekachi Ekafor scored the other goals as the season's surprise package stayed fourth with 10 points from five matches.

The league will resume on November 27 following a month-long break due to the national team's participation in the SAFF Championship in Dhaka.



PHOTO: BCB

Bangladesh veteran Mushfiqur Rahim chats with assistant coach Malibongwe Maketa during an optional practice session at the BCB Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday. A few Bangladesh players geared up on Saturday ahead of the Tigers' two-match Test series against West Indies, which begins on October 28 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. The Windies, having played a two-day warm-up game against BCB XI, took a rest day. The second and final Test, part of the World Test Championship, will be held in Sylhet from November 5.





PHOTO: REAL MADRID/X

Flawless Barca face Mourinho's Real

"We've been in a good dynamic, winning games, playing well, scoring goals, but in the Clasico, it doesn't matter what you did before, it has no influence."

Real Madrid coach **JOSE MOURINHO**

"We have to grow as a team. Tomorrow we play against one of the best teams in the world so it's a good opportunity to grow."

Barcelona coach **HANSI FLICK**

Hansi Flick's Barcelona host Real Madrid at Camp Nou for the season's first El Clasico, with the stakes heightened by Jose Mourinho's return to the Real dugout and the six-point gap between the archrivals. Real sit third in LaLiga with 21 points, behind leaders Barcelona who won all nine of their league games. Barca's only setback of the season came in a 4-2 defeat away to PSG in the Champions League last week, but they go into the game as favourites, while Mourinho faces the uphill task of ending their winning streak and getting Real firmly back in the title race. On the eve of the 2026 Ballon d'Or ceremony, Sunday's clash (Monday in Bangladesh) will also see two leading contenders go head-to-head, with Kylian Mbappe hoping to inspire Los Blancos and Lamine Yamal spearheading Blaugranas' star-studded attack.

- Lamine Yamal has scored eight goals in nine LaLiga games this season, the most by any player under 20 at this stage of a campaign in the 21st century.
- Kylian Mbappe has scored 12 goals in 10 games against Barcelona in all competitions – four in three appearances for PSG and eight in seven for Real. Only Cristiano Ronaldo (20) and Karim Benzema (16) have scored more against Barca in the 21st century.
- Since August 31, Yamal has recorded 14 goal involvements, the most by any player in Europe's top five leagues. Barcelona teammate Raphinha is next with 11.
- Barcelona are only the second team to win their opening nine LaLiga games, after Real in 1968-69. They can become the first team to win their first 10.
- Barcelona scored 39 goals in their opening nine LaLiga games. Only Sevilla, with 42 in 1940-41, have made a better start in the competition's history.
- Barcelona have won their last two home LaLiga games against Real. Their only three-match home winning streak against Real this century came under Pep Guardiola between 2008 and 2010.
- Real, however, have won three of their last six LaLiga away games against Barcelona, matching their tally from the previous 16 visits (W3 D6 L7).
- Mourinho will take charge of his first Clasico in 13 years. He could now become the third Real coach to go unbeaten in six consecutive Clasicos.

Ronan, Mahe earn maiden call-ups

SPORTS REPORTER

U-20 final hero Ronan Sullivan and English ninth-tier striker Mohammed Mahe Khan have earned their maiden senior call-ups as Bangladesh coach Thomas Dooley named a 28-man preliminary squad for next month's SAFF Championship in Dhaka.

Ronan famously scored the winning penalty with a Panenka in Bangladesh's U-20 final triumph. Mahe Khan, 18, earned his place after a prolific start to the season for Moulton FC in the ninth tier of English football.

The newcomers join a squad heavily reliant on overseas-based players, led by Hamza Choudhury. Shamit Shome, Farhaan Ali Wahid, Fahamedul Islam and Zayyan Ahmed.



Ronan

Meanwhile, Bashundhara Kings defenders Topu Barman and Bishwanath Ghosh return to strengthen the backline after missing the recent ASEAN Cup due to injuries.

Bangladesh will open their SAFF Championship campaign against Bhutan on Nov 5 before facing Sri Lanka in their final group-stage fixture on Nov 11.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Mitul, Sujon, Srabon

Defenders: Topu, Bishwanath, Saad Uddin, Rahmat, Zidane, Isa, Tariq, Zayyan

Midfielders: Sohel Sr, Sohel Jr, Ridoy, Hamza, Shamit, Quazem, Jamal, Ronan

Forwards: Farhaan, Morsalin, Rakib, Fahim, Fahamedul, Ibrahim, Shuki, Shadin, Mahe.

Striker solution at SAFF?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's search for a reliable centre-forward has led head coach Thomas Dooley to English non-league football, where 18-year-old Mohammed Mahe Khan has been making his mark.

Khan has reportedly scored nine goals in seven appearances for Moulton FC this season, earning a place in Bangladesh's 28-man preliminary squad for next month's SAFF Championship in Dhaka. His form offers another option to a side struggling for goals.



Mahe

Born in England, Khan plays for Moulton in the United Counties League Premier Division South, the ninth tier of English football. He spent seven years in Kettering Town's youth system before moving into senior football with Rushden & Higham United in 2024. He joined Moulton's senior side in July 2026 after gaining experience with the club's youth and senior teams.

The 1.83-metre, right-footed forward primarily operates as a centre-forward but can also play on either wing. He scored regularly for Rushden & Higham, and his latest run strengthened his case for a step up.

Khan has also represented Bangladesh at U-20 level, making three second-half substitute appearances in the AFC U-20 Asian Cup qualifiers against Uzbekistan, Syria and India. He played 192 minutes without scoring.

Khan's scoring record makes him an intriguing prospect, though he has produced it in England's ninth tier. Whether he can replicate that form against international opposition remains the key question.

Dooley acknowledged the gamble involved in selecting Khan before assessing him in training.

"Selecting him now is almost like leaving it to chance," the Bangladesh coach said, adding that the staff believed the teenager might be able to do the job required.



JACKSON BRACE ENDS CITY'S PERFECT START

Nicolas Jackson celebrates one of his two goals as Aston Villa ended Manchester City's perfect Premier League start with a 2-1 victory yesterday. Jackson blasted home the opener just six minutes into the game, before Erling Haaland briefly levelled early in the second half. Villa, however, responded on the hour mark when Jackson drilled home Ibrahim Mbaye's cross to seal the victory. Enzo Maresca had become the first manager to win his first seven Premier League games in charge of a new club, but he failed to find a solution to City's struggles at Villa Park, where they have now lost in each of the past four seasons. Just hours later, Arsenal went level on points (21) with leaders City following a 2-0 home win over Everton. PHOTO: REUTERS

IN BRIEF

Two more records in Summer Athletics

SPORTS REPORTER

Two national records were set on the second day of the Koko 18th National Summer Athletics Championship at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Saturday, taking the tally to seven in the first two days.

Bangladesh Navy's Rinki Biswas broke her own record in the women's 5,000 metres, winning gold in 18 minutes 8.50 seconds. She had set the previous record of 18:20.00 in 2025.

Navy teammate Priya Akter established a new national record in the women's 3,000 metres, winning gold in 10:24.38. The previous record of 10:27.60 was set by Rinki in 2025.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army's Lusad Islam won the men's 400 metres in 47.59 seconds, while teammate Barsha Khatun claimed the women's title in 56.20 seconds.

Mahfizul, Naim notch third NCL tons

SPORTS REPORTER

Opening batters Mahfizul Islam Robin and Mohammad Naim struck their third centuries of the National Cricket League (NCL) 2026-27 season on the opening day of the fourth round yesterday.

Mahfizul smashed an unbeaten career-best 156 off 229 balls against Chattogram Division, helping Mymensingh Division reach 299 for four at stumps in Bogura. Left-arm spinner Hasan Murad took three wickets.

In Rajshahi, meanwhile, Dhaka Division's Naim struck an unbeaten 171 off 242 balls, sharing an unbroken 205-run stand with Mahidul Islam Ankon (84 not out) after his side slipped to 88 for three.

Elsewhere, Rangpur reached 320 for five against Barishal in Sylhet, while rain prevented play in the Sylhet-Khulna fixture.

WHAT TO WATCH



T SPORTS
Pakistan ODI Tri-Series
Pakistan vs England
Live from 2:00 pm

LaLiga
Barcelona vs Real Madrid
Live from 2:00 am (Monday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1, 2, RAJDHANI TV
English Premier League
Liverpool vs Brighton
Man Utd vs Bournemouth
Live from 8:00 pm





Dual system proposed for upper house formation

JS body on constitutional amendment sits with lawyers, teachers

BAHARAM KHAN

A new proposal for forming an upper house of parliament through a dual system, combining vote share and seat share, has been placed before the special parliamentary committee on constitutional amendment.

The proposal, placed during the committee's meeting with lawyers and teachers yesterday, recommends electing half of the proposed 100-member upper house in proportion to the share of votes cast, and the other half based on the number of seats won in parliament.

Five more members would be nominated by the president, taking the total to 105.

Such a dual model will resolve differences among opposition and ruling alliances over the formation of the upper house, lawyers and teachers said during the meeting, according to sources.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



Some participants proposed that if an upper house is established through a constitutional amendment, an election-time caretaker government could be formed under the leadership of its Speaker.

Salahuddin Ahmed



PHOTO: **RIKORS CHAKMA**

Protesters block the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road in Kutukchhari by setting fire to tree branches and placing logs during their half-day blockade in Rangamati yesterday. The shutdown, called after clashes between law enforcement personnel and demonstrators in Sajek's Ujo Bazar area, brought traffic on the route to a standstill. Story on page 4.

1,000 held as France erupts in protests, violence again

70,000 police officers deployed; demos spread across Europe

AGENCIES

French police arrested nearly 1,000 people yesterday as hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched yesterday, with largely peaceful rallies giving way to clashes in Paris and Marseille as night fell despite a huge security operation aimed at preventing a repeat of last week's unrest.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez conveyed the figures to the media and compared them with those from a week ago, when a first round of national demonstrations over the cost of living degenerated into street violence, with hundreds of shops looted and 2,700 people ending up being arrested.

The interior ministry said 4,10,000 people took part in protests nationwide yesterday, though unions said the true figure was twice as high.

"In almost every march we saw the formation of these high-risk groups. They broke away from the main body and sought to commit acts of violence."

Interior Minister **Laurent Nunez**

The main demonstration took place on the southeastern fringes of Paris, where at least 1,10,000 people turned out to denounce rising living costs and growing inequality.

The atmosphere deteriorated sharply after the rally ended. Riot police fired tear gas and water cannons at a group of around 500 hooded youths before they eventually dispersed on a cold, rainy evening.

In France's second city, Marseille, youths set fire to rubbish bins to block roads and hurled rocks and bottles at security forces. Police said several stores, including two jewellery shops, were ransacked.

Clashes also flared in Lyon, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Clermont-Ferrand, Lille, Rennes, Nantes and Toulouse.

"In almost every march we saw the formation of these high-risk groups. They broke away from the main body and sought to commit acts of violence," said Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, accusing far-left

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Bewildering convictions

Experts also question why detainees of DJ party raid were filmed, photographed

TOUSIF KAIUM *and* **ARAFAT RAHAMAN**

The jailing of 85 people following a raid on a senior police officer's house in Purbachal last week has raised questions over the evidence behind their convictions and the circulation of their photographs and videos.

The Detective Branch (DB) detained 85 people, including 59 men and 26 women, in a raid on a house owned by Additional DIG Abdullah Al Jahir in Police Housing-1 on October 20.

According to DMP sources, Special Metropolitan Magistrate Assaduzzaman of DMP's Uttara Division sentenced all of them the same day in summary trials.

The 59 men were each given one month in jail and fined Tk 1,000, while the 26 women received 15-day terms and fines of Tk 500 each.

The detention, trials, and circulation of the detainees' images have left their families traumatised. Most families contacted by The Daily Star declined to discuss the incident, saying they were shocked. Only one agreed to speak, on condition of anonymity.

Rajib Hossain (not his real name), whose son was among those detained, said his son, a DJ, had previously attended a birthday programme at the same house on invitation.

This time, however, police detained him with the others on allegations of drug consumption and had him sentenced by a special court without any test to establish whether he had consumed drugs or alcohol, Rajib alleged.

Rajib said he had visited his son at Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, where he was told that none of the detainees had undergone such tests.

"When there was no test, how did they establish that they had consumed drugs or alcohol?" he asked.

Asked about this, DB chief Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



"The offence is not dancing or being at a DJ party. If the allegation is that they consumed intoxicating substances and disturbed public peace, what evidence was produced?"

Supreme Court lawyer **Sara Hossain**



Men allegedly working for middlemen syndicates snatch bundles of betel leaves from a grower at a wholesale market in Mohanpur upazila of Rajshahi yesterday after he refused to sell at below-market rates. Farmers say such incidents occur frequently, leaving them little choice but to accept lower returns for their hard-earned crops.

PHOTO: **AZAHAR UDDIN**



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
কর অঞ্চল-৯, ঢাকা।
৩২ গরীব-ই-নেওয়াজ এভিনিউ, সেক্টর-১৩, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।
www.taxeszone9dhaka.gov.bd

নথি নং- ১ই-১০/প্রঃনিয়োগ/কঃঅঃ-৯/২০২৬-২০২৭/(অংশ-৩)/২৪৭

তারিখঃ ৯ কার্তিক, ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ / ২৫ অক্টোবর, ২০২৬ খ্রি.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ, কর-১ শাখা, ঢাকার নথি নং-০৮.০০.০০০০.০০০.০৩৭.১১.০০০১.২৪.১২৮/১(৫), তারিখঃ ১৯/০৫/২০২৫ খ্রি. ০৮.০০.০০০০.০৩৭.১১.০০১.২৪.১৭৯/১(৪), তারিখঃ ১১/০৫/২০২৬ খ্রি. এবং ০৮.০০.০০০০.০০০.০৩৭.১১.০০০১.২৪.৩৪৯/১(৯), তারিখ: ২০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৬ খ্রি.অনুযায়ী প্রাপ্ত ছাড়পত্রের ভিত্তিতে কর কমিশনার, কর অঞ্চল- ০৯, ঢাকা এর অধীনে গ্রেড-১৩ হতে গ্রেড-২০ পর্যন্ত নিম্নোক্ত শূন্য পদে অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে বিধি মোতাবেক সরাসরি জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে কর অঞ্চল- ০৯, ঢাকার অধিক্ষেত্রাধীন ঢাকা মহানগর ও ঢাকা জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাগণের নিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত পদসমূহের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের শর্তসাপেক্ষে টেলিটক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর https://tax9.teletalk.com.bd/ ওয়েবসাইটের মাধ্যমে অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম, গ্রেড	পদ সংখ্যা
(১)	সাঁট লিপিকার কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর গ্রেড-১৩	০৪ (চার)টি
(২)	উচ্চমান সহকারী গ্রেড-১৪	০৪ (চার) টি
(৩)	সাঁটমুদ্রাক্ষরিক-কাম- কম্পিউটার অপারেটর গ্রেড-১৪	১১ (এগার)টি
(৪)	অফিস সহকারী-কাম- অফিস কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক গ্রেড-১৬	০৯ (নয়)টি
(৫)	গাড়ি চালক গ্রেড-১৬	০১ (এক)টি
(৬)	মেশিন অপারেটর গ্রেড-১৬	০১ (এক)টি
(৭)	নোটিশ সার্ভার গ্রেড-২০	০২ (দুই)টি
(৮)	অফিস সহায়ক গ্রেড-২০	০৫ (পাঁচ) টি
(৯)	নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী গ্রেড-২০	০১ (এক) টি

২. পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি কর অঞ্চল-৯, ঢাকা এর ওয়েবসাইট https://taxeszone9dhaka.gov.bd এবং https://tax9.teletalk.com.bd/ অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জব পোর্টাল https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি পাওয়া যাবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার, তারিখ, সময় ও অন্যান্য তথ্য https://taxeszone9dhaka.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইট হতে জানা যাবে।

৩. উল্লেখ্য, আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ২৫ অক্টোবর ২০২৬ খ্রি. সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা এবং আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১৪ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ খ্রি. বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।

*** Online এর আবেদন ও নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

কর অঞ্চল-০৯, ঢাকা এর ওয়েবসাইটে প্রবেশ এর QR code

কর অঞ্চল-০৯, ঢাকা এর টেলিটক পোর্টালে প্রবেশ এর QR code

স্বাক্ষরিত: ১৯-১০-২০২৬
(নাজনীন আক্তার নিপা)
উপ কর কমিশনার
সদর দপ্তর (প্রশাসন),
কর অঞ্চল-০৯, ঢাকা
ও
সদস্য সচিব
বিভাগীয় নিয়োগ কমিটি
কর অঞ্চল-০৯, ঢাকা।

*** শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে অনলাইন-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন ফি জমাদান সম্পন্ন করতে পরামর্শ দেওয়া যাচ্ছে।

NEWS IN FOCUS

Jubo Dal leader, grocery shop owner shot

Incidents take place on the day of IGP's visit to Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Unidentified criminals shot a local Jubo Dal leader and a grocery shop owner in separate incidents in Khulna yesterday.

In Terokhada upazila, Ramim Biswas, 32, president of Jubo Dal's ward-3 unit in Madhupur union, suffered a bullet wound in an attack by armed assailants in Parhaji village around 11:10am, said Kabir Hossain, inspector (investigation) of

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2,200 Palestinians forced to leave Hebron

AGENCIES

The Israeli military forced around 2,200 Palestinians to leave their homes in Hebron in the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian official said yesterday, a day after a Palestinian attack killed two Israeli soldiers.

A day earlier, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military would launch a large-scale operation after the soldiers were killed when two Palestinian gunmen opened fire at a military checkpoint near the city.

They also said the operation in the Al-Jaladah and Ein Deir Baha neighbourhoods near the military checkpoint at the entrance of Hebron was to search for militants and weapons. In a statement, it also said the military would carry out demolitions.

The Palestinian Authority criticised the operation as a "collective punishment".

Hebron Mayor Yousef al-Ja'bari told Al Jazeera that around 2,200 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from their homes

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