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,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

PM'S JAPAN VISIT

Dhaka, Tokyo likely to ink $2b loan deals

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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



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

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1