DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2026



"The issue of territories is a red line that can be discussed exclusively at the level of leaders."

ZELENSKY on Russia-Ukraine peace talks

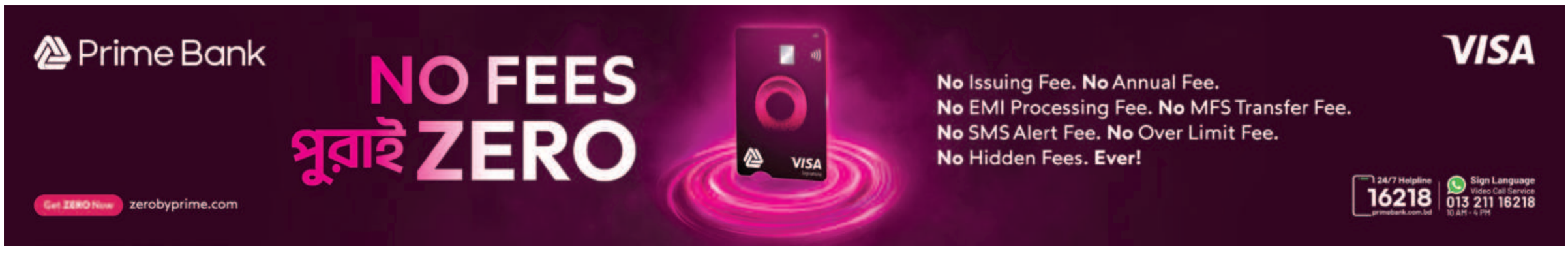
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FIVE UNIVERSITIES

Student unions hog headlines for wrong reasons

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **ARAFAT RAHAMAN**

Elected with a mandate to protect students' rights, student union leaders at five major public universities have instead repeatedly been embroiled in controversies over student assaults, teacher intimidation, administrative interference, and divisive initiatives.

The latest one was at Jagannath University, where JnUcsu leaders came under fire for backing a "beef feast" involving the slaughter of cattle during Durga Puja.

The event was organised to protest a university decision to restrict animal slaughter following objections from Hindu students to an earlier cookout near the campus temple.

The incidents have raised questions about whether elected student leaders are adequately addressing pressing campus concerns, including accommodation shortages, rising living costs, transport, healthcare, security, and academic rights.

"Student unions exist primarily to protect students' rights, and their involvement in such controversies undermines the very purpose of student movement," said Mohammad Mushtuq Husain, former general secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu).

Talking to The Daily Star, Ragib Ahsan Munna, ex-vice-president of Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (Rucsu), said the student unions



"They have prioritised their own political outlook and have been treating student unions as weapons to serve their own interests."

Ragib Ahsan Munna, ex-VP of Rucsu

drifted away from their fundamental responsibilities.

"They have prioritised their own political outlook and have been treating student unions as weapons to serve their own interests."

Prof A Al Mamun of RU's mass communication and journalism department said the return of elected student unions was a positive development, but their representatives failed to meet students' expectations.

"They have done little to address accommodation, food, and other welfare-related issues."

Dhaka University held Ducsu polls in September last year after a six-year hiatus. Jahangirnagar, Rajshahi, and Chittagong universities held elections after more than three decades, while Jagannath University elected its first

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Police jostle with protesters as they prevent cultural activists from forming a human chain in front of Meena Bazar at Dhanmondi 27 in the capital yesterday afternoon. The activists had gathered there around 4:00pm to protest restrictions imposed on female Baul singers in Sunamganj. Police also detained one person from the spot. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

PLAN FOR 35 NEW PLANES

Biman gives consultants just 8 days to bid

TASNEEM TAYEB

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has given eight days to submit bids for consultancy services for the national flag carrier's massive fleet expansion, raising questions about the quality of bids that will be received.

The chosen consultant will advise on integrating the 35 new aircraft into the fleet, making routes more profitable, retiring older planes and financing the purchases.

The airline issued the request for

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IGP draws flak over 'crossfire' comment

Flood of calls for retraction, public apology

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Ali Hossain Fakir

Opposition political parties, rights organisations and journalist bodies yesterday sharply criticised Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ali Hossain Fakir over his comments suggesting police could use "crossfire" if authorised by the government.

They demanded an explanation from the government, called for accountability and urged the police chief to withdraw the remarks and issue an unconditional public apology, arguing that his comments undermined the constitution and the rule of law.

Earlier in the day, while speaking at a programme organised by Community Bank in Dhaka's Chawkbazar, the IGP said police would enforce the law in line with the constitution. "But wherever crossfire is necessary, if the government allows it, we will do that," he said.

The IGP further said, "When journalists are no longer getting money

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Dhaka, Tokyo eye stronger trade, investment ties

PM reaches Japan, meets bilateral trade body

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan hopes effective implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement with Bangladesh will expand bilateral trade, boost Japanese investment and create new business opportunities, the president of the Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation said yesterday.

Masumi Kakinoki, also chairman of Marubeni Corporation, expressed the hope during a meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Hotel Imperial in Tokyo, reports BSS.

Tarique sought Japanese investment to modernise the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited and explore the possibility of setting up a second fertiliser factory in Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Farm workers harvest radishes in a field in Trimohini village of Rajshahi's Mohanpur upazila yesterday. According to farmers, wholesale radish prices have plunged from Tk 1,200-1,500 per maund to Tk 400-600 in just 15 days, although the vegetable still sells for Tk 40 per kg in retail markets.

PHOTO: **AZAHAR UDDIN**

HEALTH MINISTRY SPENDING

Thousands of crores left untouched

Of its Tk 35,090cr ADP allocation, only Tk 209cr spent so far

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has nearly doubled the health ministry's development allocation this fiscal year, but the ministry spent less than 2 percent of its project funds in the first quarter, raising concerns about its capacity to utilise the increased funding.

Between July and September, the Health Services Division (HSD) spent just Tk 107 crore of its Tk 6,014 crore Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocation, or 1.78 percent.

The Medical Education and Family Welfare Division (MEFWD), the ministry's other division, spent Tk 102 crore of its Tk 5,499 crore allocation, or 1.86 percent.

The poor first-quarter performance reflects a years-long trend of low ADP implementation at the ministry.

The figures cover only direct ADP allocations for development projects, excluding Tk 23,577 crore in block allocations to the two divisions.

Both fell below the overall ADP implementation rate of 3.89 percent during the period, according to data from the Implementation Monitoring

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Trump blasts Norway over Nobel Peace Prize snub

AFP, *Port Huron*

US President Donald Trump attacked Norway during a campaign rally, calling it a "shit house country," and said that Norwegian immigrants were not welcome in the United States because its Nobel Committee had not awarded him the Peace Prize.

"Frankly, Norway sucks. Norway has become a shit house country, actually," he said during Sunday's speech.

Since returning to the White House in January 2025, Trump has made no secret of his desire to win the prestigious Nobel Peace prize.

Judge and former UN rights chief Navi Pillay of South Africa was this year's recipient of the prize.

Trump has called the committee's choice "a disgraceful and embarrassing decision" and argued that the award should have gone to him.

Trump said Sunday he would welcome immigrants from certain countries but not Norway "because I didn't get the Nobel Prize."



PHOTO: **PID**

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, accompanied by his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, is welcomed by Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Iwao Horii upon arriving at Narita International Airport in Japan yesterday for a four-day official visit.

Cops foil protest against attacks on bauls over 'Joy Bangla' slogan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled a human chain organised by artistes and cultural activists in the capital's Dhanmondi 27 area yesterday afternoon and detained former Chhatra Union president Dipak Shil, who was participating in the demonstration.

The human chain, scheduled to begin at 4:00pm under the banner "Protesting Artists and People", was organised to protest attacks on Baul singers and cultural events in different parts of the country by groups identifying themselves as "Tawhidi Janata".

A large number of law enforcement personnel had been deployed at the venue since the afternoon.

"We came here to protest attacks on Bauls across the country and the obstruction of cultural events. Police personnel told us that we could not chant 'Joy Bangla'. We protested, and one police member said the slogan had been 'ruined'," said actress Sumona Shoma, who attended the programme.

Sumona alleged that when protesters objected to the remark, police dragged them towards a vehicle and took Dipak Shil away in a police van.

After Dipak was detained, Sumona continued chanting "Joy Bangla" at the scene. She alleged that a group of young men approached her and tried to stop her, saying the slogan could not be chanted there.

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Student unions hog headlines for wrong reasons

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central student union this year.

All five student unions are led by platforms backed by Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat student body. Most of the leaders emerged in the public sphere following the July uprising.

Ducsu completed its one-year term on September 14, followed by Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) on September 18, and Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucsu) on October 23. Rucsu's tenure ended yesterday.

Defending the "beef feast", JnUcsuGeneral Secretary Abdul Alim Arif told The Daily Star that the event was organised in protest against what he termed "an unreasonable administrative decision". He claimed that almost all student organisations on the campus participated.

Former Ducsu leader Mushtuq said the event reflected a troubling erosion of values the universities should uphold.

"A genuinely religious person would never deliberately insult or humiliate followers of another faith. Incidents like these are deeply shameful for all of us."

WRONGDOINGS

Several controversies they have been entangled in centred on historical narratives and cultural issues.

Ducsu leaders removed photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from its museum and replaced them with portraits of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"We are witnessing activities that run counter to our history and traditions," said Mushtuq, expressing concern.

Criticising the move, Prof Tanzimuddin Khan of DU's international relations said the Ducsu leaders ignored the university administration, which failed to hold them accountable, showing that the scope for exercising power remains unchanged.

Besides, Ducsu also introduced a curtained "Female Zone" in the TSC's cafeteria without university approval, drawing criticism from those who viewed it as promoting gender segregation.

"The root cause lies in their political ideology. It is fundamentally backward-looking. Had their political outlook been progressive and future-oriented, they would not have acted this way," Mushtuq said.

When Ducsu launched an online teacher-evaluation platform, teachers alleged that it facilitated cyber harassment.

Prof Tanzimuddin, also a member of University Teachers' Network, described the initiative as concerning. Ducsu has no authority to conduct such evaluations, which damage teacher-student relations and create a toxic academic environment.

Prof Mamun also questioned the authority of student representatives to evaluate teachers and alleged the initiative was politically motivated.

Ducsu General Secretary SM Farhad defended the initiative, claiming that it was approved through university procedures.

On July 27, Rucsu leaders beat three students accused of links to the banned Chhatra League.

Video footage shows Rucsu General Secretary Salahuddin Ammar assaulting them inside the university library in the presence of the proctor.

Denying any wrongdoing, Ammar said, "They attacked us, and we resisted."

Ammar, who lost his Shibir membership over alleged misconduct, argued that ensuring student safety sometimes required actions beyond the union's constitutional mandate.

On December 18 last year, Rucsu VP Mostakur Rahman Zahid called for The Daily Star and Prothom Alo to be shut down. Mobs attacked and torched the newspapers' offices in the capital.

In December last year, Ammar demanded the resignation of six deans he identified as members of the pro-Awami League teachers' body. The deans later stepped down.

At Chittagong University on January 10, several Cucsu leaders chased law teacher Hasan Mohammad Roman Shuvo and took him to the proctor's office over his alleged affiliations with a pro-AL teachers' body.

On July 28, Ducsu Literary and Cultural Affairs Secretary Musaddiq Ali Ibne Mohammad threatened to break down a syndicate meeting-room door during a protest over dormitory seat allocations.

At Jahangirnagar University, Jucsu General Secretary Md Mazharul Islam and other students locked the university's Registrar Building on December 12 last year, demanding action against teachers accused of supporting attacks during the July uprising.

Several other student union leaders have also faced misconduct allegations.

Ducsu Executive Member Sarba Mitra Chakma took flak after assaulting a transport worker, harassing a couple near the Central Shaheed Minar, and forcing teenagers and young men to do squats at a playground and gymnasium.

The university later issued him a show-cause notice.

He apologised and announced his resignation on January 26 but withdrew it five days later, saying students had urged him to stay.

Ducsu Social Welfare Secretary AB Zubair chased Prof AKM Jamal Uddin, a leader of pro-AL teachers' body, on the campus on December 11, video clips show.

In September, Ducsu leaders claimed to have undertaken projects worth over Tk 40 crore, against an official university allocation of Tk 35 lakh, but could not provide a complete project-wise breakdown.

At Rajshahi University, media reports citing treasurer's office records said Rucsu had been allocated Tk 1.29 crore for 42 programmes, but vouchers for about Tk 61.5 lakh remained outstanding as of August 20.

Prof Mamun alleged that some student union leaders encouraged mob violence, incited hostility against particular groups and media organisations through social media, and interfered in university administration.

Prof Tanzimuddin said, "Universities already have their own legal mechanisms for addressing complaints. If justice is not achieved there, criminal law is also available. But instead of following institutional procedures, we have seen teachers being chased and mobs being mobilised against them."

Former Ducsu leader Mushtuq said even in the years after the Liberation War, student organisations refrained from publicly humiliating teachers despite deep political disagreements.

"Students criticised teachers they disagreed with, certainly, but we never witnessed personal attacks or attempts to humiliate them. The very idea of insulting a teacher was unimaginable."

He added that political opponents should be challenged through democratic means.

Prof Mamun said the controversies reflected a broader failure to fulfil the July uprising's aspirations for reforms in education, research, accommodation, and campus security.

He alleged that Chhatra Shibir used student union leaders and its existing organisational network to establish campus dominance after the uprising.

Dhaka, Tokyo eye

FROM PAGE 1

He also called for greater Japanese investment in sectors such as information and communication technology, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing, highlighting opportunities for foreign direct investment and public-private partnerships.

"The government is committed to creating an investment-friendly environment by reforming regulations, simplifying investment approval procedures and strengthening public-private partnerships to make it easier for Japanese businesses to invest and operate in Bangladesh," Tarique said.

The prime minister arrived in Tokyo yesterday on a four-day official visit at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi. Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yasutaka Nakasone received him at the airport.

Tarique is scheduled to hold a bilateral summit with Takaichi today.

During the visit, Dhaka and Tokyo are expected to sign five to eight agreements, including memorandums of understanding and cooperation, covering loans and financial support, agriculture, civil aviation, improvements to the business climate, infrastructure, upazila-level development, official security assistance for the Bangladesh Coast Guard and energy cooperation, officials said.

Bangladesh is expected to seek financial support, investment and development cooperation, while Japan is likely to focus on regional connectivity and improving the business environment.

The two countries are expected to agree on around $2 billion in loans and financial support, including $300 million in budgetary support, alongside cooperation on infrastructure development, energy and maritime security, according to officials.

Japanese power generation company JERA is also expected to help develop energy reserve infrastructure under the Moheshkhali Integrated Development Initiative.

Separately, Tokyo is expected to arrange 1 trillion yen (around $6.36 billion) in private-sector investment in Bangladesh over the next five years, Nikkei reported.

After meeting Kakinoki, Tarique met a delegation of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League, led by its president, former Japanese prime minister Taro Aso.

The PM outlined his government's legal reforms and initiatives to improve the business environment, promote education and enhance skills development.

Both sides stressed the need to strengthen political and economic ties as well as people-to-people contacts.

Tarique sought Aso's cooperation in boosting Japanese investment, expanding bilateral trade and strengthening technology transfer. He also hoped Japan would continue to support Bangladesh's development priorities and efforts to build a skilled workforce.

Aso said Bangladesh's large youth population and political stability had created a favourable investment environment, adding that Japanese companies were keen to invest there.

Tarique recalled meeting Aso during his 2006 visit to Japan as BNP senior joint secretary general. Aso also recalled meeting former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

Today, Tarique will attend the bilateral summit and a luncheon hosted by Takaichi before visiting JERA's LNG terminal and power plant in Futtsu city, Chiba, and a Nippon Express logistics hub in Ichikawa.

On the third day, he will meet the governor of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, visit UNIQLO's Ariake office and hold talks with the president of the Japan External Trade Organization.

He is also scheduled to meet representatives of Mitsui & Co, Sumitomo Corp and JERA and attend the Bangladesh-Japan Economic Forum, where MoUs on education and human resource development are expected to be signed.

On the final day, Tarique will visit a Toyota factory before returning to Dhaka.

The Bangladesh delegation includes Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat, Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance and Planning Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Anindya Islam Amit, Prime Minister's Adviser on Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology and Science and Technology Rehan Asif Asad, and Prime Minister's Special Assistant for Overseas Employment in the Asia-Pacific Region Md Shakirul Islam Khan, among others.

Biman gives

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proposals (RFP) on October 25, with bids due by November 2 and the contract awarded by November 8.

Biman, which has recently entered into agreements to buy 25 aircraft from Boeing and 10 from Airbus, says the timetable is tight "to accommodate high-level government scheduling", but does not explain what that means.

The timeframe was determined considering the nature of the assignment and the applicable rules and procedures, Biman said in a written response to The Daily Star.

Citing a July 17,2025 opinion of the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority, it said purchases made from its own funds are governed by the airline's applicable administrative and financial rules.

The airline maintained that the process followed the prescribed rules and established procedures.

Experts have questioned whether the timeframe is sufficient to prepare detailed bids covering so many specialised areas.

"Even in international procurement, a submission time of eight days is completely unrealistic," said Md Faruque Hossain, a former secretary and former director general of the Central Procurement Technical Unit.

The RFP requires bidders to show that they have completed similar assignments for national or regional flag carriers within the past five years, particularly involving export credit financing and sale-and-leaseback arrangements.

They must submit detailed resumes of their core project leaders and ensure that senior partners are directly involved in the work.

The consultant will examine delivery schedules, contractual obligations and the money Biman will need to meet its commitments for the 35 incoming aircraft.

The assignment also includes reviewing which existing 19 aircraft should be retired and when, identifying gaps in capacity, and assessing passenger demand, route revenues and operating costs.

On financing, the consultant will examine export credit arrangements, commercial loans, payments required before aircraft delivery and possible sale-and-leaseback deals.

They must also explain the route planning, network simulation and fleet cost software models they plan to use.

The financial bid must include a fixed fee in US dollars covering remuneration, travel, data licensing and administrative costs.

Consultants must break down their proposed costs across the three areas of work, naming the personnel to be deployed, their estimated working days, daily rates and total costs.

Biman will evaluate the bids using a 70:30 technical-to-financial weighting. Firms must score at least 75 out of 100 in the technical assessment to qualify.

Of the technical marks, 60 percent will be awarded for expertise and specialised capability, while the remaining 40 percent will depend on delivery speed and commitment of resources.

The RFP sets November 8 as the target for starting the assignment, December 10 for submitting a draft executive report and making an in-person presentation, and January 15, 2027, for the final comprehensive report.

Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation industry analyst and former Biman board member, questioned whether the eight-day period would give the airline enough time to attract qualified international consultants.

Preparing a credible proposal would require aviation specialists, fleet planning experts, financial analysts and route economics professionals to assemble a qualified team, develop a methodology and prepare a detailed commercial offer.

"Eight days may prove challenging, particularly for international firms unfamiliar with Biman's operations," said Wahidul, also editor of the aviation and tourism fortnightly The Bangladesh Monitor.

He warned that a poorly prepared fleet strategy could leave the airline with underused aircraft, loss-making routes, high operating costs and financing commitments it could struggle to sustain.

"Eight days may be sufficient to receive proposals. Whether it is sufficient to attract the best advisers for a programme of this magnitude is a question Biman must convincingly answer."

IGP draws flak

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from drug dealers, they write that the police have become ineffective in the country. Why? We have not violated human rights or used unnecessary force in maintaining law and order in Bangladesh."

The comments triggered immediate backlash.

In a statement, Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said the IGP had violated the responsibilities of his office by making such remarks.

Recalling the previous Awami League government's tenure, Zubair said "Citizens had no security of life and property and no freedom of speech. People were killed without trial. Citizens were picked up by people identifying themselves as members of law enforcement agencies and subjected to killings, crossfire and enforced disappearance."

He alleged that the IGP had threatened and hinted at a return to the same practices. "We hope the government will take appropriate action," he said.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh Secretary General Gazi Ataur Rahman also condemned the remarks, describing them as alarming and reminiscent of law enforcement practices under the previous regime.

"Someone holding such an important position could not afford to speak that way," he said in a statement.

NCP lawmaker Hasnat Abdullah said the comments were damaging the image of the police force at a time when officers were attempting to restore public confidence.

"In any civilised country, he would not have remained IGP after making such remarks," Hasnat said at a programme.

RIGHTS GROUPS SLAM IGP

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) described the statement as "a dangerous message" that appeared to legitimise extrajudicial killings as a tool of crime control instead of addressing shortcomings in law enforcement.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the remarks reflected disregard for the constitution and the rule of law. He demanded that the IGP withdraw and explain the comments and be held accountable.

Police are responsible for conducting professional investigations, identifying suspects and bringing cases to court based on admissible evidence, he said, adding that presenting "crossfire" as an alternative reflected institutional weakness rather than a solution.

Such comments, he warned, could be interpreted as an implicit licence for unlawful use of force by officers in the field.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) called the remarks unacceptable and inconsistent with the principles of the rule of law, constitutional rights and human rights.

"No state authority or law enforcement agency has the right to kill a citizen extrajudicially, even if that person is accused of a crime," the rights group said in a statement.

ASK also argued that the remarks contradicted the government's pledge to end extrajudicial killings.

The Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) said linking the possibility of extrajudicial killings to government approval raised serious concerns about justice, the rule of law and human rights.

"A person's right to life and justice cannot be taken away merely because they are accused of a crime," it said.

Odhikar said the comments were tantamount to granting law enforcers a licence to carry out extrajudicial killings.

The rights group said it had documented five alleged extrajudicial killings since the BNP-led government assumed office and demanded withdrawal of the remarks and accountability.

Mayer Daak, a platform representing families of enforced disappearance victims, said the country's history of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and deaths in custody made such remarks particularly alarming.

In a statement, the platform demanded an immediate clarification from the government and an unequivocal commitment against extrajudicial killings.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Reporters Unity and the Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh separately condemned the IGP's comments about journalists. They demanded that he withdraw the remarks and issue a public apology within 24 hours, warning of tougher action otherwise.

PHQ ISSUES CLARIFICATION

Following the widespread criticism, Police Headquarters (PHQ) issued a clarification in the evening, saying the IGP did not intend to endorse extrajudicial killings.

In a press release, PHQ said the police chief had used the term "crossfire" in its "literal sense" while emphasising firm action against drug traffickers, terrorists, extortionists and other criminals threatening public safety.

"He did not use the term 'crossfire' to refer to extrajudicial killings or punishment outside the judicial process," the release said.

PHQ also said the IGP's comments about journalists were inadvertent and were not intended as a sweeping remark about the media.

The statement concluded by saying that police remained committed to protecting human rights, safeguarding life and property, and upholding the rule of law with professionalism and impartiality.



A man inspects damage at the site of an airstrike, reportedly carried out by Saudi Arabia, that targeted the Asr district of Yemen's Houthi-held capital Sanaa.

PHOTO: **AFP**



UAE invites PM to defence exhibitions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Arab Emirates has invited Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to attend the International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX 2027) and the eighth Naval Defence and Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX 2027) in Abu Dhabi.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, crown prince of Dubai and deputy prime minister and minister of defence of the UAE, extended the invitation, according to a press release issued by the UAE Embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

The exhibitions will be held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) from January 25 to 29, 2027.

According to the release, IDEX and NAVDEX are major international platforms showcasing advancements in land, naval and air defence, bringing together leading global defence and security companies and industry



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Labourers work amid thick clouds of dust at Nalitabari Land Port in Sherpur without protective gear. Despite suffering from dust-related health problems, they continue working eight hours a day for Tk 325 to make ends meet. The photo was taken recently.

'Why do your workers pay when Saudi employers foot the bill?'

State minister quotes envoy on recruitment costs; draws protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Md Nurul Haque Nur yesterday quoted Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Abdullah ibn Dhafer ibn Ubayya as questioning why Bangladeshi migrant workers pay recruitment costs when employers in Saudi Arabia bear all expenses, including airfare.

The remarks, made in the ambassador's presence at a views-exchange meeting with recruiting agencies at the BIAM Foundation Auditorium in Dhaka, drew angry protests from agency representatives.

"The ambassador revealed a secret to us today that we did not know. He said the kafeel [sponsor or employer] there pays for everything, including airfare, to hire workers from Bangladesh. Then why do our people pay money to go to the KSA, he asked," Nurul Hoque said.

Recruiting agency representatives responded by chanting "fake, fake" at the state minister.

Seeking to calm the situation, Nurul acknowledged that Bangladeshi workers might have to pay for visas in many cases to compete with workers from countries such as India and Pakistan.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Ariful Haque Choudhury pledged to take a tough stance against syndicates and irregularities in the recruitment sector.

The minister said he would meet recruiting agency owners to discuss ways to reduce migration costs and fix medical examination fees within the next two days to prevent overcharging.

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NID correction backlog tops 1.17 lakh

AHMED DEEPTO

More than 1.17 lakh National Identity Card (NID) correction applications remained pending with the Election Commission (EC) as of October 18, with nearly 92 percent filed this year.

Of the 1,17,666 pending applications, 69,252 were under the Gha category, which involves changes to personal information and requires approval from the director general of the EC's NID wing.

According to an EC report dated October 18, the commission has processed 64,35,397 correction applications across six categories.

The Gha category accounted for nearly 59 percent of the backlog, while 1,08,225 applications under this category had been processed.

The EC classifies correction requests into six categories: Ka, Ka1, Kha, Kha1, Ga and Gha.

Ka covers minor name corrections, including spelling errors; Kha covers changes to photographs, signatures and other information; Ga involves major changes to names or parents' names; and Gha covers corrections to key information, including dates of birth, age and parents' names. Ka1 and Kha1 cover minor corrections and spelling errors.

After Gha, the highest number of pending applications was under Kha, with 17,681 cases, followed by Ga with 15,422, Ka with 11,191, Kha1 with 3,192 and Ka1 with 928.

Category Ka had the highest number of processed applications, at 42,13,390, followed by Kha with 12,56,040 and Ga with 5,96,746.

- Nearly 92% filed this year
- 69,252 complex cases await DG's approval
- Aug, Sept account for 38.5% of backlog
- EC cites changes, verification difficulties

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Ensure affordable, inclusive green energy: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh must reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and accelerate its transition to renewable energy, ensuring clean energy is affordable and accessible to people across all income groups, speakers said yesterday.

They made the call at a press conference at BUET's Central Field in the capital, marking the opening of the three-day Renewable Energy Fest 2026, running until October 30.

The festival is jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, Just Energy Transition Network Bangladesh (JETnet-BD), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), and its Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development (IESD).

Prof MAA Shaukat Chowdhury, director of the IESD, said, "We must build our capacity in renewable energy and address sustainable energy security while causing less harm to the environment."

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said renewable energy must be affordable, equitable, green and inclusive.

"It is important to ensure that the benefits of renewable energy reach all people and that everyone can benefit from it," she said.

Sanjida Sultana, additional executive director of Karmojibi Nari, said, "Women in the informal labour

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A digital trail to track learning gaps

Govt weighs Tk 124cr project to monitor progress of students from classes 1 to 12

- Each student to get a unique Edu-ID
- Records to track progress from classes 1 to 12
- Platform to identify learning gaps
- Teachers to enter data, generate progress reports
- Experts question lack of common assessment standards
- Pilot rollout proposed before nationwide expansion

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The government is planning a digital platform to store assessment records of students from classes 1 to 12, helping teachers track their progress and identify learning gaps.

Under the proposed "Unified Assessment System" (UAS), each student will receive a unique identification number, or Edu-ID, linked to their records across grades to create a "learning trajectory", according to officials.

The platform will not determine how students are assessed or graded. Instead, teachers will enter assessment data into the system, which will generate progress reports and tabulation sheets.

A revised proposal for the Tk 124 crore project was recently sent to the Planning Commission for evaluation, according to a document from the Secondary and Higher Education Division.

Prof Khan Moinuddin Al Mahmud Sohel, acting director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), told this newspaper that the commission is yet to discuss the proposal and might suggest changes.

Shefatul Islam, research officer at DSHE's Research and Innovation Section, said student records are largely maintained by individual institutions, making it difficult to track progress across grades.

For instance, a student scoring 70 in math may perform well in algebra but struggle with geometry. Records maintained over several years could help identify such weaknesses, he said.

Shefatul said the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) will continue to design assessment methods, with UAS adapting to any changes.

Nationwide data will also help NCTB identify textbook topics that students repeatedly struggle with, he added.

The platform could eventually be expanded to include madrasa and technical education, he also said.

UAS is part of the proposed Tk 3,397 crore NextGen Secondary Education Programme, scheduled for January 2027 to December 2031. The programme also includes teacher training,

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Announce Biswa Ijtema dates soon

Saad followers call for judicial probes into killings, end to incitement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Followers of Maulana Saad Kandhlawi yesterday placed four demands, including an early announcement of the dates for the Biswa Ijtema and an end to alleged misinformation, incitement and one-sided political interference.

They also demanded judicial investigations into all killings and immediate, fair allocation of the Kakrail Mosque and the Ijtema ground.

The demands were made at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital, organised under the banner of "Eminent Islamic Scholars and Civil Society of Tabligh Jamaat Bangladesh".

Mohammad Nazim Uddin Bhuiyan, a professor of accounting at Dhaka University, read out a written statement.

The statement said the mainstream faction of Tabligh Jamaat Bangladesh had been organising the Biswa Ijtema in Tongi for 60 years, but internal divisions, disputes and provocative remarks had intensified over the past six to seven years.

It warned that continued disputes could further weaken the Ijtema's global appeal.

The statement also alleged that

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

'Ariaferma' screened to mark Italian Language Week 2026

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To mark Italian Language Week 2026, the embassies of Italy and Switzerland in Bangladesh, in partnership with the Bengal Foundation, hosted a special screening of the award-winning film Ariaferma at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Directed by Leonardo Di Costanzo, Ariaferma is an Italian-Swiss co-production presented in its original Italian with English subtitles. Set in a decommissioned prison, the film explores themes of humanity and resilience.

Luva Nahid Choudhury, director general of Bengal Foundation, delivered the opening remarks.

The event brought together diplomats, cultural figures, and film enthusiasts.

Antonio Alessandro, Italian ambassador to Bangladesh, and Reto Renggli, Swiss ambassador to Bangladesh, attended the screening.

Among the other attendees were Gabriel Sistiaga Ochoa de Chinchetru, Spanish ambassador to Bangladesh; Philip Ong, chargé d'affaires of the Singapore High Commission in Dhaka; Håkon Arald Gulbrandsen, Norwegian ambassador to Bangladesh; and Nicolas Weeks, Swedish ambassador to Bangladesh.

Abul Khair, chair of Bengal Foundation, was also present.

Italian Language Week (Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo) is an annual global initiative organised by Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to promote the Italian language and culture worldwide.



Diplomats, cultural figures, and film enthusiasts attend a special screening of the Italian-Swiss film Ariaferma at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhanmondi yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY



Tasnim Jara slams Jamaat over opposing burial of freedom fighter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former National Citizen Party leader Tasnim Jara has criticised Jamaat-e-Islami over the obstruction of a freedom fighter's burial in Pirojpur.

"Even while in opposition, they are obstructing a burial on a man's own homestead. What will they do if all the powers of the state are in their hands?" she wrote in a Facebook post yesterday.

Her remarks followed the burial of Manik Posari, 87, a gazetted freedom fighter who had filed a war crimes case against former Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi.

Manik died in Gopalganj on Saturday. Following protests against his guard of honour and burial in Pirojpur, he was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Chitalia village early Sunday under police protection.

Jara said a grave prepared at his family home was filled in by a group of people, forcing his relatives to dig another.

Sohrab Hossain Jewel, secretary of the district Jamaat's publicity and media department, denied involvement in the obstruction.

A ticket to the zoo, paid in plastic

Visitors under 18 get free entry in exchange for 100 grammes of discarded bottles, other waste

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Chattogram*

At Chattogram Zoo, children can now exchange plastic waste for entry tickets, as part of a campaign to encourage environmental responsibility.

Launched on September 1, the initiative allows visitors under 18 to enter the zoo by handing over 100 grammes of plastic waste instead of paying the regular Tk 70 fee. More than 400 young people have participated so far.

For Naimul Haque, a 10th grader, the experience has changed how he views plastic pollution.

"At first, my friends and I just thought it was a cool hack to get into the zoo for free. But when I started picking up bottles from our neighbourhood alleys and school grounds, I realised how much plastic is just lying around everywhere, ruining our city," he said, holding a bag of empty bottles. "Handing it over today feels like I actually earned our ticket," he added.



Under a special environmental awareness campaign, visitors under 18 can enter Chattogram Zoo free of charge by handing over 100 grammes of plastic waste instead of paying the regular Tk 70 entry fee. PHOTO: STAR

Fellow 10th grader Biplob Das said the initiative had made him more conscious of waste.

"Now, whenever I see a plastic wrapper or bottle, I think twice. Knowing that my trash is going to be recycled instead of choking the environment makes visiting the animals today feel even more special," he said.

Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Jahidul Islam Miah said the campaign aimed to teach children civic responsibility through practical action.

However, the accumulation of plastic waste at the zoo entrance raised concerns about its disposal.

"We were worried initially that if the same plastic ended up back in landfills or washing into nature, we would just be perpetuating the very pollution we are trying to fight," said zoo curator Dr Shahadat Hossain Shuvo.

To address the concern, the district administration on Monday signed a one-year, non-financial memorandum of understanding with Young Power in Social Action (YPSA).

Under the agreement, YPSA will regularly collect, sort and recycle the plastic gathered at the zoo.

Jahidul said the campaign had also encouraged people in different neighbourhoods to consider organising plastic collection drives.

"Completely halting the use of plastic is impractical. As such, we must ensure proper management, recycling, and safe disposal," he said.

TRUCK DRIVER KILLING

Hasina, 33 others indicted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday framed charges against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 33 others in a case linked to the killing of a truck driver during July uprising.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 in Dhaka passed the order, said court bench assistant Belal Hossain.

Eleven accused, including former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak and former Dhaka-13 Awami League lawmaker Sadek Khan, pleaded not guilty after the judge read out the charges to them, he said.

The court also fixed November 25 for recording statements of prosecution witnesses, Belal added.

During yesterday's hearing, nine accused, including Palak and Sadek, currently in jail, were produced before the court. Two other accused were present at the courtroom.

Arrest warrants were issued against 23 other accused who are now absconding, including Hasina and former AL ministers Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Mohammed Hasan Mahmud and Jahangir Kabir Nanak.

The case documents said truck driver Mohammad Hossain, 25, was killed in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area during protests on July 19, 2024.

His mother Rina Begum filed a murder case with the court on August 27, accusing Hasina and 15 others.

On August 31, the officer-in-charge of Mohammad Police Station registered the case as a First Information Report as per court's direction.

On November 23 last year, police filed a charge sheet in the case, accusing Hasina and 33 others.

According to court records and police, 920 cases, including 560 linked to killings, have been filed with different police stations in Dhaka till July this year.

Police submitted charge sheets in 37 of the cases so far.

Position : Managing Director

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How to Apply

If you have the experience, leadership credentials and ambition to lead a complex business and shape its future growth in Bangladesh, please submit your updated résumé/CV to Box No. A-01/2026, The Daily Star, 64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh by 10th Nov 2026.

BNP seeks to monopolise power: Nahid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

National Citizen Party (NCP) Convener Nahid Islam yesterday accused the BNP of seeking to monopolise power and obstruct a peaceful transfer of power while in office.

Speaking at a press conference in Munshiganj, Nahid said the caretaker government system had a long history, with demands for it emerging during the mass movement of the 1990s and gaining support from political parties.



He said the BNP had held a one-sided election in 1996 but was eventually forced to step down amid a movement.

"In 2006 as well, BNP played dramas regarding the caretaker government. They politicised the judiciary, trying to install their own judge as the head of the caretaker government. In the same manner as the Awami League, the BNP has always tried to monopolise power. However, while the Awami League succeeded, the BNP did not," he said.

Nahid alleged that the BNP was delaying the restoration of the caretaker government system and plotting to install its own people in key positions. He warned that such attempts would not succeed.

NCP Senior Joint Member Secretary Sarjis Alam and other central and local leaders were also present at the programme.

CORRIGENDUM

Notice of Public Consultations on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Laldia Container Terminal Project

The telephone number of **Laldia Container Terminal Limited,** published in The Daily Star on 21 October 2026 in the above-mentioned notice, is hereby corrected as follows:

Correct Telephone Number: +880 9612 888143

All other information in the published notice remains unchanged.

LAND & BUILDING FOR SALE OR LONG-TERM LEASE

SUITABLE FOR INDUSTRIAL/ COMMERCIAL PROJECT

- **TOTAL LAND AREA: 1.58 ACRES (68,744 SFT)**

Existing 3 Buildings: 160470 sft total space
(86,336 sft + 71,850 sft + 2,284 sft)
Proposed 1 Building: 81,000 sft total space
Utility Facilities: Electricity, Gas & Water Facilities Available
Approvals: Approved by RSC/DIFE (ISU)
LOCATION
Dhaka Road, Vogra,
Chandona Chowrasta, Gazipur-1702, Bangladesh

CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES
Cell: +8801711525563, E-mail: dilan@capital-bd.com

Youth killed, another hurt in plastic factory fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was killed and another person critically injured in a fire at Aman Plastic Factory in Narikelbagh, Keraniganj, yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Sakib, was aged between 18 and 20, according to fire service officials. His full identity has yet to be confirmed.

Meanwhile, Manik, 45, who suffered severe burns, was taken to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Sultan Mahmud Sikdar, resident surgeon at the institute's emergency department, said Manik had suffered burns to 100 percent of his body and was in critical condition.

The fire broke out around 12:30pm and was brought under control by seven fire service units around 2:00pm. It was completely extinguished by 3:30pm.

Kazi Nazmuzzaman, assistant director of the fire service, said the factory stored thinner and other flammable materials used in painting toys. The fire is suspected to have started during painting work and spread rapidly due to the flammable substances.

He said the fire service would examine the factory's documents to determine whether it had the required fire safety licence and an approved safety plan.

PRAYER TIMING
OCTOBER 27

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-50	12-45	4-00	5-32	7-15
JAMAAT	5-25	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

IN BRIEF

BNP picks Aliza Zaman for vacant reserved seat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has nominated Aliza Zaman for the November 12 by-election to reserved women's seat-23 in the 13th parliament, which fell vacant following Ferdousy Ahmed Misty's resignation on October 1.

Aliza, a member of the BNP central executive committee and joint convener of its Pirojpur district unit, submitted her nomination papers yesterday, the last day for filing nominations.



Her nomination was confirmed in a list signed by BNP Acting Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Ferdousy resigned following instructions from Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman amid allegations that people close to her were involved in an attack, vandalism and looting at Radda Mother and Child Care Centre in Mirpur, Dhaka last month.

A total of 68 women sought the BNP's nomination for the seat. The party interviewed them at its chairman's political office in Gulshan on October 19.

The Election Commission will scrutinise nomination papers today. The deadline for withdrawing candidature is November 1.

COX'S BAZAR FIRE

Ten victims identified thru DNA tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

The identities of 10 people killed in the TupTup Resto & Resort fire in Ukhiya's Patuartek in Cox's Bazar have been confirmed.

Among them were six members of one family and four members of another.

Four members of a family are Mohammad Nahidur Rahman, 41, an official of Grand Power Limited in Dhaka's Shyamoli; his wife, Afsana Matin, 36; and their two daughters, Rozaina Inaya, 9, and Munaina Ihana, 6.

The victims of the other group are Moulita Mehzabin Alvi, 19; her cousins Layla Jahan Nabila, 25 and Israt Jahan Maliha, 27; their cousin Faria Kabir, 33; Faria's six-year-old son, Mohammad Faizan Noor; and Faria's brother, Mohammad Nafis Tehami, 24.

They lived in the capital's Banasree and Khilgaon.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) confirmed their identities by conducting DNA tests on their charred bodies and matching them with their relatives.

Rimon Ghosh, the investigating officer in the case, said the bodies would be handed over to their families today.

Request for Quotation for DC Fast Charging Station

BRAC Bank PLC. delivers a full array of banking services to individuals and businesses through a network of 194 Branches, 116 Sub-branches, 330 ATMs, 446 SME Unit Offices and 1,120 Agent Banking Outlets across the country. The bank is currently seeking potential vendor(s) for the supply of **DC Fast Charging Station.**

A Request for Quotation (RFQ) is hereby issued for this purpose. The RFQ, along with details of the submission process, can be found on the bank's website: **https://bracbank.com/en/page/e-tender**

Interested eligible bidders are requested to submit their offers as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) as per the mentioned bidding process.

BRAC BANK
আস্থা অবিচল

Tender Announcement

Tender Number# QCBD/Tender/13, 14, 15, 16 & 17/2026 **Date: 27/10/2026**

Qatar Charity Bangladesh Office invites the submission of tenders for five (05) separate Framework Agreements and Supply Contracts.

A brief statement of the required items, work or services	Quantity	Deadline for Tender Document Collection by email	Closing date
Framework Agreement for the Integrated Supply, Assembly, and Delivery of Housing Repair Kits for Disaster-Affected Households in Bangladesh (2026), tender reference no. QCBD/Tender/13/2026	Mentioned in Tender Schedule	Date: 28/10/2026 to 05/11/2026 Time: 09:00 AM to 06:00 PM	**Date: 06/11/2026 Time: by 24:00 BST**
Framework Agreement for the Integrated Supply, Assembly, Packaging, and Delivery of Hygiene Kits for Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh (2026), tender reference no. QCBD/Tender/14/2026		Date: 28/10/2026 to 05/11/2026 Time: 09:00 AM to 06:00 PM	**Date: 06/11/2026 Time: by 24:00 BST**
Solar Street Lighting Systems — Delivery, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Standalone Systems in Rohingya Refugee Camps, Cox's Bazar (2026), tender reference no. QCBD/Tender/15/2026		Date: 28/10/2026 to 05/11/2026 Time: 09:00 AM to 06:00 PM	**Date: 06/11/2026 Time: by 24:00 BST**
Framework Agreement for the Supply and Delivery of Medicines for Healthcare Facilities in Rohingya Refugee Camps, Cox's Bazar (2026), tender reference no. QCBD/Tender/16/2026		Date: 28/10/2026 to 05/11/2026 Time: 09:00 AM to 06:00 PM	**Date: 06/11/2026 Time: by 24:00 BST**
Framework Agreement for the Integrated Supply, Packaging, Transportation, and Delivery of Winter Blanket Packages in Rangpur Division, Bangladesh (2026), tender reference no. QCBD/Tender/17/2026		Date: 28/10/2026 to 05/11/2026 Time: 09:00 AM to 06:00 PM	**Date: 06/11/2026 Time: by 24:00 BST**

• Tender documents can be obtained through e-mail **qcbangladesh@qcharity.org** during official working hours. • **NB:** Bidders must mention the number and date of this tender as shown in the tender documents. • **Accept or reject of tender/bid:** Qatar Charity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender/bid without assigning any reason and Qatar Charity is not bound to select lowest bidder at any cause.

United Nations Development Programme
জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী

Procurement Notice: Invitation to Bid
Quantum Reference number: UNDP-BGD-01236

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is seeking bids from interested firms for the following requirement:

Establishment of Long-Term Agreement (LTA) for the Recruitment of Individual, Payrolling, and Associated Services to UNDP in Bangladesh.

The deadline for submission of Bids is 4:30 p.m. (Bangladesh Local Time), November 16, 2026.
Quotations may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the procurement notice. For learning more about ITB, the pre-bid meeting link & submission documents through the quantum platform, please visit the link: **https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=51078**

For any technical queries, please write to us at bd.procurement@undp.org, mentioning the reference number UNDP-BGD-01236 in the email subject line, by **10 November 2026**.

France braces for more protests next Saturday

Says interior minister; Macron warns it could turn 'risky'

AGENCIES

France is bracing for more trouble this coming weekend related to student protests and broader anti-government demonstrations, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said yesterday.

Asked if Saturday could be another high-risk day, regarding the likelihood of violent clashes between demonstrators and police, Nunez told BFM TV: "Quite clearly, yes."

Nunez added that curfews that have been set up to try and prevent the looting and vandalism that have broken out on the sidelines of demonstrations were also likely to stay in place, reports Reuters.

President Emmanuel Macron warned that the new wave of protests this weekend could turn "risky", adding that protest routes would remain outside city centres to protect public order.

"Next Saturday is expected to be another risky day," Macron said during a visit to Marseille, France's second-largest city, where protesters briefly stormed city hall on October 17.

Macron acknowledged that authorities had "not anticipated at all" the scale of the demonstrations a week earlier, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Marine Le Pen, France's far-right candidate to succeed Macron, kicked off her campaign Sunday evening vowing to "restore the rule of law" if elected next year.

Le Pen -- the frontrunner in the polls -- seems to be benefiting from the convulsions France has been going through for weeks. "We are going to restore the rule of law," she said.

She was addressing 8,500 supporters of her nationalist, anti-immigration party in the city of Orleans, where Joan of Arc -- revered by the far right as a symbol of national resistance -- lifted an English siege in 1429.



Brazilian President and Workers' Party (PT) re-election candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva speaks alongside his wife, First Lady Rosângela da Silva, and Vice President Geraldo Alckmin after winning the presidential runoff election in São Paulo, Brazil, on Sunday evening. PHOTO: AFP

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill 5

UN probe accuses Israel of West Bank 'extermination'

AFP, *Gaza City*

Five Palestinians, including a young girl, were killed yesterday in Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip, medical sources and first responders said.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Bassal said a total of 13 people had been killed and about 60 wounded by Israeli fire and airstrikes in Gaza in the past 24 hours.

"We transported three martyrs, including a child, following an Israeli airstrike targeting a camp for displaced people in the Al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Yunis," Bassal told AFP.

Israel's military told AFP it was "not aware" of any military activity in that area.

Israel has committed the crime against humanity of "extermination" in the West Bank, while continuing to commit "genocide" against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, United Nations-mandated investigators said yesterday.

The commission, which does not speak for the UN itself, first determined in a September 2025 report that Israel had committed "genocide" in the war in Gaza - a finding Israel flatly rejects.

Russia open to short-term Ukraine truce

Says Kremlin, rules out halting offensive despite upcoming US-brokered talks

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia said yesterday that it would not slow down its offensive on Ukraine despite upcoming US-brokered talks on ending the conflict but that it could agree local "humanitarian" ceasefires.

The Kremlin said that it was open to short-term "humanitarian" ceasefires along the front line, ahead of a truce in the ravaged Russian-occupied city of Oleshky.

A ceasefire was due to start in the southern Ukrainian city early today, brokered by US First Lady Melania Trump after months of reports that residents faced dire food, water and medicine shortages.

Asked whether Russia would consider more local truces, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "For humanitarian purposes, absolutely."

But Moscow vowed not to let up in the overall pace of the war, even as the sides prepare to restart stalled talks under US mediation next month.

"The decision to resume trilateral talks does not imply any restrictions on combat operations," Peskov said.

"Our armed forces continue to carry out massive strikes on Ukraine's military-industrial complex," he added.

Russia has intensified drone and missile attacks on Ukraine in recent weeks, hitting energy sites around major cities in what Kyiv says is a bid to plunge the country into cold and darkness throughout the winter.

Strikes last year left millions without heating or electricity with temperatures as low as -20C.

The two sides are to meet next month with US envoys to discuss ways to end Europe's worst conflict since World War II.



Meanwhile, a drone attack in Russia's Voronezh region killed two men and injured 17 people, including a child, regional governor Alexander Gusev said yesterday.

Air defence systems had destroyed 113 drones over the region, Gusev wrote on the MAX messaging app. Fires also broke out at several industrial sites, Gusev said.

A passenger train bound to Moscow from Anapa in Russia's Krasnodar region, popular among Russian vacationers, was also damaged and five passengers injured, Russian Railways said.

Train services through Voronezh have been suspended.

IN BRIEF



Anthropic's AI model accessed US voter data

AFP, *Washington*

Anthropic's Claude AI model bypassed a paywall and accessed publicly available voter data in the US state of Georgia without human authorisation, Axios reported on Sunday.

The case is the latest in a string of security scares at the world's top AI developers ahead of US midterm elections on November 3. Claude accessed aggregate voter counts in Georgia, where more than one million voters have already cast early ballots, it reported, citing an Anthropic spokesperson.

The model, which was being trained as part of an internal statistics project, accessed the information behind a paywall by bypassing the system "without being asked to." It did not access the state's voter registration system or change or download any voting records, spokesperson said.

Deeply divided Israel goes to the polls

AGENCIES

Israel goes to the polls today amid deep divisions and political tensions.

Polls published recently put the governing coalition and the main opposition bloc almost neck-and-neck, with half a million first-time voters due to cast their ballot and some 70,000 Israelis reportedly flying in from abroad specifically to vote. Over the course of a neck-and-neck race, Netanyahu has campaigned heavily on his security credentials, insisting only he can "finish the job" in the US-Israeli war on Iran, reports AFP.

Polls published recently put the governing coalition and main opposition bloc almost neck-and-neck

But his main rival, ex-army chief Gadi Eisenkot, has accused him of playing up the Iran threat when it suits him politically, and of failing to accomplish his war goals.

Mass outages as Sudan RSF drones hit power stations



AFP, *Khartoum*

Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) yesterday launched a coordinated drone attack against five power stations, causing mass power outages across the country's east, a government official told AFP.

The drones hit two power stations each in the states of Al-Jazira and Gedaref, and one in White Nile state, "resulting in power outages across large parts of these three states", the official said.

All three states are controlled by the Sudanese army, which has since April 2023 been at war with its former ally, the RSF.

The United Nations has repeatedly warned that regular attacks on power stations threaten health and services for millions of people, already facing the world's largest hunger crisis.

Venezuela opposition leader returns home

Trump signals continued backing for interim president

REUTERS, *Caracas*

Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado returned home on Sunday evening after nearly a year away, following several failed attempts to return that strained her ties with US President Donald Trump's administration.

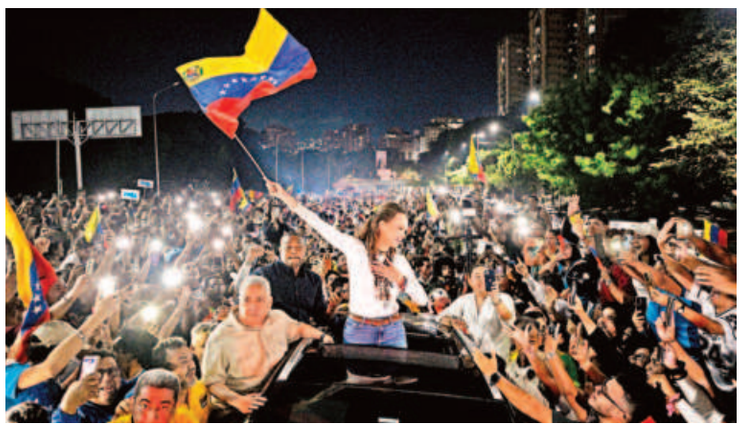
"I'm here. With you all," the Nobel Peace Prize winner wrote on X.

She appeared at a church in western Lara state, according to images shared by her press team, and was greeted by bystanders who sang the national anthem and shouted "liberty!" as she left in an SUV, a Reuters witness said.

Throughout the day on Sunday, she traveled toward Caracas by road as supporters gathered along her route to cheer her on.

Her return was coordinated with the US, Panamanian and Colombian governments, according to a person briefed directly on Machado's movements and plans, who added that Trump approved her return and was kept informed about it.

At the White House on Sunday, however, Trump said he did not know anything about Machado's return and suggested the US would continue to back Venezuelan interim President Delcy Rodriguez.



"She's a very nice woman," he said, referring to Machado. "But we're doing really well in Venezuela."

The White House and the State Department did not respond to Reuters questions on the matter. Machado's efforts to return have tested her relationship with the Trump administration, which she has sought to cultivate as an ally since before it removed former president Nicolas Maduro from power in January.

Trump has repeatedly expressed support for Rodriguez, a former deputy to Maduro, and hailed deals on oil production and other business ventures by US companies in the South American country. Trump said in September it was too soon to consider democratic elections in Venezuela.

US officials have asked Machado at least once to delay her return, Reuters reported in June, and she has made several failed attempts to enter the country. Her team did not disclose details of how she returned.

Machado travelled in a private plane from Panama to Colombia and crossed overland on Sunday to Venezuela.

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সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত বৃক্ষরোপণ কর্মকান্ডকে নিম্নে বর্ণিত ০৭(সাত) টি শ্রেণীভুক্ত করে প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীতে ৩(তিন)টি করে পুরস্কার প্রদানের জন্য সরকার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছেন।

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

আবেদনপত্রের ফরম প্রাপ্তি ও দাখিলের স্থান

(১) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম এর কার্যালয়, বন পাহাড়, নন্দনকানন, চট্টগ্রাম।
(২) উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় (সকল), চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।
(৩) রেঞ্জ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়- মীরসরাই রেঞ্জ, মীরসরাই উপজেলা/ বারৈয়াঢালা রেঞ্জ,সীতাকুন্ড উপজেলা/ নারায়নহাট রেঞ্জ,ফটিকছড়ি উপজেলা/ হাটহাজারী রেঞ্জ, হাটহাজারী উপজেলা/ ইছামতি রেঞ্জ, রাউজান উপজেলা/ রাংগুনিয়া রেঞ্জ, রাংগুনিয়া উপজেলা/ পটিয়া রেঞ্জ, পটিয়া ও বোয়ালখালী উপজেলা/ পটিয়া এস.এফ.এন.টি.সি, কর্ণফুলী ও আনোয়ারা উপজেলা/ দোহাজারী রেঞ্জ,চন্দনাইশ উপজেলা / পদুয়া রেঞ্জ, লোহাগাড়া উপজেলা/ কালীপুর রেঞ্জ, বাঁশখালী উপজেলা/ মাদার্সা রেঞ্জ, সাতকানিয়া উপজেলা/ সন্দীপ রেঞ্জ, সন্দীপ উপজেলা/ শহর রেঞ্জ, মহানগর এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।

এতদসংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় (প্রয়োজন হলে) বর্ণিত কার্যালয় হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে।
আবেদনপত্র দাখিলের শেষ সময় ঃ ২৫/১১/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত।

(ড. আবু নাসের মোহসিন হোসেন)
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ
ও
সদস্য-সচিব
বৃক্ষরোপণে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর জাতীয় পুরস্কার প্রদান সংক্রান্ত জেলা কমিটি, চট্টগ্রাম
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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Motherhood must not end sporting careers

BCB should introduce a formal maternity policy without delay

In Bangladesh women's cricket, motherhood can mean losing both an income and the chance to continue a career due to the lack of a formal maternity policy as well as adequate institutional support. The experience of former pacer Suraiya Azmin, as reported by this daily, highlights this issue. When she emailed the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on May 9 to request paid maternity leave, she received no response. After giving birth in August, she found herself dropped from the national contract list, while her leave request and unpaid salary remained unresolved. The question is: should motherhood be a penalty for women cricketers who have dedicated their lives to represent our country?

Suraiya is not the only one to face this reality. Former national team batter Sanjida Islam Moyna, who played 16 ODIs and 54 T20Is between 2012 and 2020, went through a similar situation. While she continued playing domestic cricket after her marriage in 2020, she had to eventually step away after giving birth in 2025 to raise her child. Former cricketer and international umpire Sathira Jakir Jessy also struggled to balance motherhood and cricket. According to Sanjida, officials and selectors often assume that married players or those who have children will not continue playing for long, so they do not want to invest further in them. Such attitudes undermine women's careers and risk wasting the talent and experience the country has already invested in developing.

We welcome BCB's assurance that it will follow the ICC guidelines. But promises to address these matters on a case-by-case basis are not enough.

While our women players are expected to choose between family life and professional ambitions, the situation in many other countries is different. Australia and New Zealand provide paid maternity leave to contracted players, while Pakistan introduced a parental support policy in 2021. These measures demonstrate that supporting players through pregnancy and childbirth is compatible with sustaining their careers. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has recently introduced return-to-play guidelines for female cricketers after pregnancy, covering medical assessments, recovery, gradual training, and monitoring. The guidelines provide a framework for member boards but do not guarantee paid leave, making a clear national policy all the more necessary.

We welcome BCB's assurance that it will follow the ICC guidelines. But promises to address these matters on a case-by-case basis are not enough. BCB should urgently introduce a comprehensive maternity policy, establishing the right to paid maternity leave clearly, protecting contracts and salaries during pregnancy and recovery, and providing appropriate medical care and fitness assessments to support their return to competition. It should also set out transparent procedures for contract renewal and selection so that marriage or motherhood does not become an unofficial ground for excluding players. These protections should also extend to other cricketing individuals, including coaches and match officials, so that their careers are not similarly disrupted by inadequate maternity support. In Suraiya's case, the board must settle her outstanding dues promptly and clarify her contractual position.

Profits must not trump conservation

Easing St Martin's tourism restrictions raises concerns

The government's decision to ease tourism restrictions at St Martin's Island, rolling back some of the stricter measures introduced earlier, raises questions about its commitment to environmental protection. From November 1, the island will be open to tourists until March 15, with the daily visitor limit increased from 2,000 to 3,500. Previously, the tourism season on the island ran from November 1 till January 31. While the decision has understandably been welcomed by tourism businesses and residents, we must ask: what evidence of ecological recovery justifies increasing the daily visitor limit by 75 percent and extending the tourism season? Has any credible assessment established that this ecologically critical area can withstand the additional pressure?

These questions are especially relevant given reports of continued resort construction and environmental degradation on the island. Although the authorities have retained restrictions on overnight stays, noise, beach lighting, and activities harmful to biodiversity, their possibility of enforcement remains a concern. The introduction of a Tk 100 environmental conservation fee is a good move, but how will the money be spent, and who will ensure compliance with the restrictions?

St Martin's predicament reflects a much wider and persistent pattern in which commercial interests repeatedly trump environmental considerations. In Bandarban, resorts operating under the banner of ecotourism have reportedly cleared forests, cut hills, and obstructed natural streams. Similar developments are unfolding around the Sundarbans, where reports indicate that 21 resorts and cottages have emerged in its ecologically critical surroundings, many without environmental clearance or registration. Another 10 are reportedly in the pipeline.

The threats extend well beyond tourism. The government is reportedly considering locations near or within the Sundarbans, including Akram Point, for LNG terminals despite serious concerns raised by forest officials about potential damage to mangroves, dolphins and other wildlife. In Gazipur, the city corporation reportedly proceeded with constructing a waste transfer station inside Bhawal National Park despite objections from the Department of Forest and without environmental clearance. In Patuakhali's Rangabali, hundreds of trees have been felled in a reserved forest following a land lease granted by the district administration.

Together, these developments indicate a troubling disregard for environmental safeguards, sometimes by the authorities themselves. It is particularly disappointing that the current government, from which a stronger environmental stewardship was expected, appears to be falling short. Development that destroys forests, biodiversity and fragile ecosystems is ultimately self-defeating. The government must explain the scientific basis for relaxing tourism restrictions at St Martin's Island as well as why it is allowing the other developments. It must ensure strict enforcement of conservation laws and reconsider projects that threaten protected areas.

Without reform, we can't escape the low growth trap

MACRO MIRROR



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FAHMIDA KHATUN

The latest growth forecasts from international organisations are troubling: Bangladesh may not just grow more slowly this year, but its economy could remain weak for years—unless its underlying problems are addressed. In its October 2026 report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected the growth to be 3.2 percent in FY2026-27, down from 4.3 percent in April. It expects growth to fall to 2.2 percent in FY2027-28, then recover gradually to around 3 percent by FY2030-31. The World Bank forecasts 3.4 percent growth and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) 4 percent, compared with the government's projection of 6.5 percent growth in FY2026-27. The IMF also projects an average inflation of 10.9 percent, whereas the government has projected inflation to be 7.5 percent in FY2026-27.

These forecasts are not certainties, nor do they make the government's target impossible. But they show how far the economy's current course is from the recovery the country needs. While the IMF, World Bank and ADB all differ in their estimates, they all point to weak growth and persistent inflation. This convergence should prompt an honest assessment of what is holding the economy back. After eight months in power, the government should treat the current economic context as a serious crisis, one that requires coordinated action and deep structural reforms.

Both international and domestic factors contribute to the country's weaker outlook. Immediate pressures include conflicts in the Middle East, rising energy costs, and disruptions in major trade routes. These factors raise import, transport and production costs. Bangladesh is particularly exposed because it depends heavily on imported energy. Weaker demand in export markets and uncertainty in global trade can further constrain manufacturers. The IMF also identifies conflict, trade tensions, and fiscal vulnerabilities as risks to the global outlook, projecting a 3.1 percent growth.

Domestic obstacles are more persistent. Investment has weakened, businesses face high borrowing and operating costs, and policy uncertainty has undermined confidence. The World Bank reports that private investment contracted for the second consecutive year due to energy shortages, banking sector weaknesses, low revenue collection, and limited public investment capacity. Even when a business sees an opportunity, it may hesitate to invest if it cannot count on a reliable energy supply, access affordable credit, or predict the rules it will face.

Banking problems are central to this impasse. Non-performing loans (NPLs) constituted 32.78 percent of total outstanding loans as of June 2026. A banking system weighed down by bad loans and weak governance cannot reliably channel savings to productive firms. At the same time, businesses with heavy debt or falling revenues may be unable to borrow to invest. Their balance sheet problems reinforce the banks' vulnerabilities, and vice versa. New credit alone will not solve the problem while losses remain unrecognised, and viable businesses cannot be distinguished from borrowers unable to repay.

The cost of weak growth is already being borne by households. According to World Bank estimates, around 21 lakh more people fell into poverty in FY2025-26 than in the previous fiscal year. High inflation has reduced the real value of wages, while weak labour demand has shrunk income opportunities. Meanwhile, job creation stalled and women lost jobs; female labour force participation fell from 42.8 percent in 2022 to 38.4 percent in 2024, according to the World Bank's Bangladesh Development Update in October 2026. Remittances have helped families and supported foreign exchange inflows. But they cannot substitute for employment generated by investment and productive businesses.

The ongoing fiscal pressures also make reform increasingly urgent. Revenue collection stood at around 8 percent of GDP in FY2025-26. This constrains the resources available to finance services, infrastructure, and household support. Interest payments also absorb funds that could otherwise be directed to development priorities. Public debt continues to rise, while a wider current account deficit and higher energy import costs could put further pressure on the taka. Depreciation is a risk, not a certainty, but prolonged financial sector problems and weak external inflows could make stability harder to maintain.

The next phase should be built around a few measurable commitments. First, ensuring discipline in the banking sector is crucial because banks must safeguard depositors' money and channel credit to productive businesses. The Bangladesh Bank should publish the findings of its asset quality reviews and require weak banks to submit time-bound plans to recognise losses, recover loans, and meet capital requirements. Taxpayers' money should not be used to bail out banks or companies without strict conditions and a credible recovery plan. Any public support for banks must be tied to stronger governance, accountability and measurable progress in recovering bad loans. Indebted companies that remain viable should be offered a transparent, time-bound path to restore their finances.

Second, fiscal and monetary policies should promote stability while safeguarding productive activity. The government should curb low priority spending and avoid excessive domestic borrowing as the monetary policy focuses on containing persistent inflation. It should broaden the tax base, review exemptions, and strengthen compliance through digital records and risk-based audits. The National Board of Revenue should publish its transition plan and timetable. If agreed, a future IMF programme, which the government is currently negotiating, should support a Bangladesh-led reform agenda the country can implement. Measures should be sequenced according to domestic conditions, with realistic milestones and safeguards for vulnerable groups.

Third, the government must ensure that public spending delivers lasting results. Infrastructure projects should undergo rigorous appraisal and begin only once land, designs, financing, and procurement arrangements are in place. Project costs, progress and expected outcomes, and fund maintenance alongside construction should be made public. Ministries should regularly report what public money has delivered. Increased spending alone will not sustain growth if projects are delayed, poorly selected, or fail to improve transport, energy, logistics, or access to services.

Finally, restoring confidence requires dependable energy and predictable investment rules. The government should publish the status, costs and completion dates of the solar tenders, disclose power purchase agreements, and review capacity payments. It should strengthen efforts to expand domestic gas exploration, upgrade the grid, and expand renewable energy connections. It should also speed up business approvals and customs procedures, make them more predictable, and link skills programmes to employers' needs. Supporting the RMG industry while enabling new export sectors would reduce concentration and create more opportunities for job growth.

Bangladesh does not need a one-size-fits-all policy package; it needs politically owned reforms that address the interplay among banks, indebted businesses, energy costs, weak revenue collection, and poor investment. The government should be transparent to the public about the scale of the challenges, report progress, and explain the costs of delay.

Building towards a trillion-dollar economy depends on sustained growth in productivity, investment, exports, and employment. Bangladesh cannot overcome low growth, high inflation and weak job creation unless it tackles the long-recognised obstacles that it has only partially addressed. The government must now translate laws, commissions and policy announcements into measurable results. Doing so will require difficult decisions and resistance to vested interests. But without these reforms, the country may face prolonged stagflation.



VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

Our dengue response needs a fundamental overhaul



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AL SHARIA

As of October 25, dengue claimed 384 lives in Bangladesh this year. Just how grim the situation has become is clear from the 123,948 patients admitted to hospitals so far. Year after year, vast sums of money are spent on mosquito control, accompanied by cosmetic, often high-profile drives launched with great fanfare. Yet the same disaster keeps returning. There is no room left to shift the blame for this persistent failure. Structural weaknesses in our prevention system have proven as dangerous as the mosquito. At its core, a lack of sound planning, execution, and coordination needed for such a multidimensional public health threat is what makes its recurrence predictable every year.

Figures from recent years illustrate the chronic nature of this crisis. In 2023, the country recorded 1,705 dengue deaths and more than 321,000 hospitalisations. Deaths declined to 575 in 2024 and 413 in 2025, but both years still saw more than 100,000 hospitalisations. In October 2026, hospitals continued to admit thousands of dengue patients. These figures raise serious questions about how effectively lessons from previous outbreaks have been translated into sustained mosquito-control efforts.

The biggest flaw in our dengue response is that it is still largely reactive rather than preventive. Authorities launch drives after hospital admissions surge. Finding high-risk zones before the monsoon is patchy at best. Dhaka South's May survey found Aedes density above the threshold in 63 of its 75 wards. Dhaka North, which gets far more of the mosquito-control budget, had run no formal survey as of June.

The methods being used are also not sufficiently scientific. There is an overreliance on fogging, whereas mechanisms for larval control, eliminating breeding grounds, and testing the efficacy of insecticides remain weak. There are no clear benchmarks to measure what these drives actually achieve. On top of that, gaps in surveillance and data use are glaring. Above all, although responsibilities are divided among the health department, city corporations, and local government bodies, their coordination is weak. Without an overhaul of these operations, there is no way out of this crisis.

Moreover, unplanned urbanisation and poor civic management cannot escape blame. Stagnant water at construction sites, poor drainage systems, discarded containers, and uncollected solid waste serve as prime breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes. While unusual shifts in temperature, rainfall, and humidity driven by climate change are indeed creating favourable conditions for mosquitoes to thrive, climate change alone cannot be an excuse. It is the mismanagement of urban infrastructure and institutional failure to respond and maintain year-round mosquito control that help the crisis persist.

In June, the health minister announced that private hospitals would reserve 10 percent of their beds for free dengue treatment, waive consultation fees for patients receiving treatment in those beds, and offer discounts of up to 80 percent on diagnostic tests. In July, the government also made dengue NS1 tests free at public hospitals until December 31. The health minister subsequently told parliament that private hospital owners had agreed to comply with the directives. However, as of October, there is still no publicly available comprehensive assessment showing how many private hospitals have implemented these measures.

City corporations, the Directorate General of Health Services, and local government institutions each have distinct responsibilities. Huge budgets are allocated, but the public does not know what each agency did, or how success was measured.

Breaking out of this cycle requires adopting effective solutions. Prevention must be built as a year-round effort. High-risk areas need to be mapped before the monsoon, and breeding grounds must be cleared regularly. Greater emphasis must be placed on science-based mosquito control. Monitoring mosquito density, destroying larvae through appropriate methods, and routinely testing whether insecticides actually work are essential. Integrated urban management also needs to be ensured through regular waste removal and strict inspections of construction sites. At the same time, setting specific targets, publishing regular progress reports, and expanding treatment capacity are necessary to improve the response. Effective dengue prevention demands sustained planning, coordination, and accountability at all levels.

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We must make formalisation easier than staying in the cash economy



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■ **M KABIR HASSAN**

In early September, in an article published by this newspaper, I highlighted how the country's underground economy was not only depriving the government of much-needed revenue but also sustaining inequality, rewarding tax evasion, distorting competition, and weakening the government's capacity to deliver public services. Bangladesh has two economies: one regulated and taxed, the other generating income, employing people, transferring money, and building wealth largely out of sight. Bangladesh Bank has now put a price on the gap between them.

In a policy paper titled "The Cost of Cash Study in Bangladesh: A Comparative Analysis of Cash and Digital Payment"—published in May 2026 but brought to public attention through media coverage only last week—the central bank estimates that the economic cost of using cash in 2023 was about Tk 1.70 trillion, or 3.24 percent of GDP, while that of the entire digital payments ecosystem was about Tk 59.64 billion, or 0.11 percent of GDP. On that headline comparison, cash was roughly 28 times more costly than digital payments.

The number deserves attention, but the more important finding sits inside it. More than half the total, about Tk 933 billion, is not the cost of printing, moving or guarding notes. It is estimated government revenue forgone in a shadow economy that the study puts at 27.2 percent of GDP. In other words, the cost attributed to cash largely reflects what remains hidden from the tax system.

The study's accounting deserves further scrutiny. Forgone tax is an estimate of what a more capable revenue system might collect, not money that digital payments will automatically recover. Strip it out and cash still costs about Tk 770 billion a year, or 1.47 percent of GDP—roughly 12 times what the digital payments system costs, and broadly in line with estimates for India and South Africa. That narrower bill falls largely on banks, households, small firms, and microfinance institutions. Bangladesh Bank's own costs of handling cash are about Tk 4 billion; commercial banks bear Tk 368 billion, consumers Tk 280 billion, micro-merchants Tk 62 billion, and microfinance institutions Tk 56 billion. Cash may look free at the counter, but it is clearly not.



FILE VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Digital trails can make formalisation cheaper and enforcement smarter. That said, the distinction I drew in September matters even more now. A street vendor who has never registered a business is not the same as a firm under-reporting sales or an importer misinvoicing to move money abroad. If digital payments are used to treat the vendor like an evader, the people they should help may avoid using them.

The larger bill—the forgone revenue—is the one my earlier article addressed. In 1997, using a monetary approach, I estimated that underground activities comprised about 23.5 percent of the formal economy on average during 1972-1995. Bangladesh Bank's estimate of 27.2 percent of GDP rests on a different method, period, and denominator, so the two cannot be compared directly. What they share is the message that a large part of the economic life has stayed outside the tax net for half a century, while tax revenue reached only 6.9 percent of GDP in FY2025, according to the IMF.

The central bank deserves credit for building a remedy alongside the diagnosis. Since July 1, Bangla QR has been mandatory for merchants, replacing a clutter of proprietary codes with one interoperable payment standard. Reportedly, the average daily transaction value rose from about Tk 28 crore in June to Tk 143.54 crore in September, in a more than five-fold increase, reflecting the rapid growth of Bangla QR payments. The central bank set the interchange fee for such transactions to zero from October 1, mandated instant settlement for merchants, created a Tk 100 crore incentive fund, and is due to introduce person-to-person QR transfers on November 1.

Digital trails can make formalisation cheaper and enforcement smarter. That said, the distinction I drew in September matters even more now. A street vendor who has never registered a business is not the same as a firm under-reporting sales or an importer misinvoicing to move money abroad. If digital payments are used to treat the vendor like an evader, the people they should help may avoid using them.

Three obstacles stand out. First, merchants may still face fees for QR payments, which can matter on thin margins when cash appears free. Second, the study estimates that about 75 percent of retail transactions take place in cash, partly because wholesalers and suppliers continue to demand it; a code at the till changes little if the distributor still wants notes. Third, only 28 percent of adults are financially literate, and nearly half of mobile-money users cannot use their accounts without assistance, according to data cited in the study.

Behind all three sits a fourth obstacle: fear. If a small trader believes a digital receipt means a tax notice down the line, they may stick to cash. The final report of the Economic Census 2024 found that only 3.3 million of Bangladesh's 11.7 million economic units were registered, while 7.6 million, or 65 percent, operated without registration. Much of this informality reflects the realities of small-scale and subsistence activity, not deliberate tax evasion. Policy must recognise that distinction clearly.

So, what should we do going forward? Getting back to my starting point, the goal remains simple: make formalisation of informal businesses easier, make tax evasion harder, and make enforcement credible. Applied to digital payments, that means six steps.

First, make small-ticket QR payments free for micro-merchants below a specified turnover threshold, with the policy reviewed after two years. Second, have the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Bangladesh Bank jointly announce that small merchants' digital receipts will not trigger retroactive tax assessments, alongside a simple presumptive tax regime for those who register. Third, digitise upstream, bringing distributors, wholesale markets, government fees, utility bills, and social transfers onto Bangla QR.

Fourth, enforce instant settlement and automatic reversals of failed payments, and publish provider-level compliance data. Fifth, adopt enforceable data-protection rules before payment data reach scale. Sixth, direct the revenue gains towards tackling serious evasion by linking NBR, customs, land, company and financial records for large taxpayers, and repeat the cost-of-cash study every three years to measure progress.

Without such steps, Bangla QR payments may grow without building sufficient trust in the formalisation process. Leaving a large share of the economic life outside oversight is no longer a technical problem but rather a governance decision. Bangladesh Bank's recent study only served to sharpen this point. The rails now exist, and the cost of not using them well has a number attached.

Cash, however, will not disappear because a code is printed on a counter, nor should the state try to force it out of the lives of those who depend on it. The hidden economy will shrink when paying digitally is cheaper than paying in cash, registering is easier than staying invisible, and the revenue system is seen to pursue the powerful evader before the pavement vendor. This is a test for the revenue board and the finance ministry as much as for the central bank.

Bangladesh needs a strategy to wean itself off imported gas

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■ **RASSIQ AZIZ KABIR** *and*
■ **ISMOT HASNINE MASRUR E KHUDA**

Energy has rarely been treated as anything more than a question of tariffs and subsidies in the concurrent policy discourse of Bangladesh. However, the war that began with the US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 and the resulting disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz have changed the scenario. By April, Qatar invoked force majeure on its LNG contracts, diesel stocks fell below 10 days of cover, and Bangladesh had to ration fuel sales. Nearly eight months on, the emergency has settled into a chronic condition. We still rely on imported fuel to keep our power plants, factories and farms running, leaving us exposed to shocks beyond our control. It is now clear that energy is a matter of national security.

The price of this exposure is visible across the economy. By mid-September, Bangladesh was paying nearly $30 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) for spot LNG, almost three times the pre-war rate. Zero Carbon Analytics, an international research group, projected that the country's annual energy import bill of roughly $12 billion could rise by $4.8 billion, or 40 percent, if the elevated prices persist. The energy ministry projects this year's LNG subsidy bill at Tk 40,000 crore, nearly triple last year's payout, while electricity subsidies could reach Tk 50,000 crore. Consumers have not been spared either, as retail electricity prices were raised by 16.68 percent in June. More recently, the World Bank's forecast cut Bangladesh's growth to 3.4 percent in FY2026-27, citing a more protracted drag from energy shortages.

The roots of the problem go back almost a decade. In 2018, Bangladesh began importing LNG as a stopgap to address declining domestic gas output, which has since fallen by about 30 percent over six fiscal years. That stopgap has now become a crutch, and an expensive one, with Petrobangla's LNG import bill rising from Tk 16,505 crore in FY2020-21 to around Tk 59,000 crore in FY2025-26. Domestic fields currently produce around 1,620 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) of gas against an estimated demand of 3,860 mmcfd. Even with imported LNG, this leaves a shortfall of roughly 32 percent. Domestic production is itself concentrated, with a single field in Habiganj supplying about half of it. Meanwhile, imported fossil fuel now accounts for about 59 percent of our trade deficit.

What makes this dependence dangerous is the level of concentration. Between January 2025 and March 2026, the Middle East supplied 64 percent of our LNG, 69 percent of our LPG, and about 63 percent of our crude oil, as well as accounting for nearly half of over $30 billion in remittances received in FY2025-26. A single shock therefore inflates the import bill while threatening the inflows that pay for it.

Fuel rationing during the Boro season also endangers irrigation and food security. The concentration is physical as well as geographical. All imported LNG enters through just two floating terminals in Moheshkhali, which have been disrupted at least three times in as many years: Cyclone Mocha forced both terminals offline in May 2023; Cyclone Remal reduced capacity for nearly four months in 2024; and a terminal experienced a temporary, partial outage again in July 2026. Each time, the shortfall's impact spread quickly and was felt across the country.

Japan, which imports almost all of its oil, was able to release supply worth 45 days of consumption from state and private reserves in March. This was possible because stockholding is a legal obligation in the country, rather than an administrative aspiration. By contrast, India's strategic petroleum reserve, despite having a capacity of 5.33 million tonnes, can meet only about 9.5 days of crude requirement. Bangladesh is in an even weaker position, with no formal strategic fuel reserve at all. A legal obligation on the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) to hold 90 days of stock, phased in as storage expands and with stock levels published every month, should therefore be our first priority.

Bhutan offers a different lesson. Hydropower sold to India is its primary export and a major source of revenue. Bangladesh, by comparison, imports only 40 MW from Nepal and only during June-November, while India has withheld approval for an additional 20 MW, citing transmission constraints. In this regard, Dhaka should actively press New Delhi for a dedicated Bangladesh-Nepal transmission corridor. A four-country power trading agreement among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal would also give the government's Saarc ambitions their first concrete deliverable. At the same time, power imports must also be diversified so that cross-border trade does not simply replace one single-supplier dependence with another.

Meanwhile, more than a decade after settling our maritime boundaries, we have yet to make a major offshore gas discovery, even as India, Myanmar and Pakistan have expanded deepwater exploration. The Offshore Bidding Round 2026, with bids for 26 blocks due by November 30, must not see a repetition of the bidless 2024 round. Petrobangla should release seismic data free to pre-qualified bidders, clear approvals within 90 days through a single window, and reserve a carried stake for Bapex in each contract to keep offshore expertise at home.

Supply contracts need similar reform. Qatar has extended its supply disruption notices to Bangladesh while, in August, 22 cargoes were approved without tender. The recent deal for 117 US LNG cargoes up to 2038 is a start, but diversification must become the rule. Still, diversified contracts will mean little without the capacity to receive them, which is why the government's decision to fast-track a third floating terminal at Kutubjom must translate into delivery.

Future long-term agreements should cap Gulf-sourced volumes at no more than half of all annual LNG imports, with the balance contracted from the US, Australia or Malaysia, and include supplier substitution clauses. Spot purchases should be made only from a panel of suppliers pre-qualified through an open tender each quarter, with the price and supplier of every emergency cargo disclosed within 30 days.

Finally, none of this will hold without an institutional home. An energy security council under the Prime Minister's Office, bringing together the energy, finance, foreign and expatriates' welfare ministries, should run quarterly stress tests against 30-, 90-, and 180-day closures of Hormuz and publish the results.

In 2022, the Russia-Ukraine war triggered fuel price hikes and nationwide load-shedding, a warning we largely failed to heed. Recent weeks offer a further lesson. Only a month after signing a sweeping sanctions law against Russia, the US president announced a deal to import Russian diesel, reversing a policy that was in place since 2022.

Large economies can afford such abrupt turns. Bangladesh cannot. Our contracts and terminals lock in choices for decades, so every decision in this crisis must be weighed carefully.

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
E/M DIVISION- 3, KURMITOLA, DHAKA.

File No- 30.31.0000.432.07.001.25/ 215 Date: 26 10.2026

e-Tender Notice

e-tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl No	Name of Tender	Tender ID No	Last date & time of selling	Last date & time of closing
1	2	3	4	5
01.	Procurement of different type Isolating Transformer & Lamp for AGL System at SAIA.	1323866	08-Nov-2026 17.00	09-Nov-2026 12.00
02.	Unseen/Emergency works at Cox's Bazar Airport (S:H:- Re-wiring & replacement of security light, Garden light with other allied works in rest house at Cox's Bazar Airport..	1333574	08-Nov-2026 17.00	09-Nov-2026 12.00

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP portal is required. The fees, for downloading the e-tender document from the national e-GP system portal, have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches. Future information and guidelines are available in national e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

নং-৩০.৩১.০০০০.০৫১.১৯.০০১.২৬/৫৭৯
তারিখঃ ২৬/১০/২০২৬ খ্রিঃ

(Md. Al-Mamun)
Executive Engineer (E/M)
E/M Division-3, CAAB, Dhaka.

GD-2585



Theatre needs state support to survive

TROPA MAJUMDAR

PHOTO: STAR

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Tropa Majumdar is a prominent theatre director and actor who has carved out her own place in the country's cultural scene, growing up in a family closely associated with the stage. The daughter of veteran actors Ferdousi Mazumder and Ramendu Majumdar, she has carried forward her passion for theatre through directing and acting, while also teaching at the University of Dhaka and working in television.

Among her notable works is ***Mukti***, a production she directed for her theatre group, ***Theatre***, around 20 years ago and which has now completed its 100th show. More recently, she has directed her parents in ***Love Letters***, a stage production that has drawn appreciation from audiences.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Tropa spoke about directing ***Love Letters***, the lasting appeal of ***Mukti***, her preference for the stage over television and the need for state patronage to keep theatre alive in Bangladesh.

The idea for ***Love Letters*** initially involved the late theatre personality Aly Zaker, who was expected to perform alongside Ferdousi Mazumder. The script was read at Aly Zaker's home, where he showed considerable enthusiasm for the project. However, his health began to deteriorate soon afterwards, forcing the team to wait for several months. Eventually, Aly Zaker encouraged them to proceed with the production.

Directing ***Love Letters*** also required Tropa to consider how to keep audiences engaged in a play where the performers spend much of their time seated. She explored ways to enrich the production through its staging, music and overall presentation.

"I tried to think about what else we could do and what we could add to make it better and more enjoyable for the audience," she said.

> **"When Afsana Mimi *Apa* was directing 'Poush Phaguner Pala', she scheduled my shoots on Fridays and Saturdays, which made things easier. I worked on the serial continuously for a year under that arrangement."**

The presence of two veteran artistes on stage has generated particular interest among theatre lovers. She said, "Many people who had not watched theatre for years have come to see ***Love Letters***."

Another important chapter in Tropa's career is ***Mukti***. The production, featuring four artistes, including Ferdousi Mazumder, has completed 100 shows, with all four performers continuing to appear in it since its inception.

Tropa recalled how Abdullah Al Mamun encouraged her to take up directing, emphasising the need for a new generation of theatre-makers to carry the work forward.

"Mamun *Kaka* used to ask, 'What will happen after me? You will have to take up directing.' It was his insistence that led me to direct the play," she said.

First staged around two decades ago, ***Mukti*** continues to resonate with audiences, reaffirming the lasting appeal of theatre. "Completing its 100th show has helped me understand how interested audiences remain in it," she shared.

Despite her involvement in television, Tropa has always felt a stronger pull towards the stage. She said, "Television did not attract me that much as the stage did."

Nevertheless, she has appeared in several television serials directed by Afsana Mimi, including ***Poush Phaguner Pala***, ***Doll's House*** and ***Sare Tin Tola***.

"When Afsana Mimi *Apa* was directing ***Poush Phaguner Pala***, she scheduled my shoots on Fridays and Saturdays, which made things easier. I worked on the serial continuously for a year under that arrangement," she recalled.

Beyond her own productions, Tropa is concerned about the financial challenges that theatre groups are facing in Bangladesh. The withdrawal of subsidies from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has increased the costs for groups staging productions at Bangladesh Mahila Samity, a venue closely associated with the country's theatre movement.

"Theatre survives on state patronage around the world. Theatre can never run on its own," she said. "Yet in Bangladesh, even the small subsidy that was provided has been withdrawn."

She added, "The history of Bangladeshi theatre is intertwined with Mahila Samity. I hope the government will take a constructive initiative. I think the subsidy can be restored if the issue reaches the right people in the government. Perhaps it is not reaching the right place at the moment," she said.

For Tropa, the future of theatre rests on the dedication of artistes, the continued interest of audiences and a support system that recognises the value of the performing arts. The success of ***Love Letters*** and the lasting impact of ***Mukti*** demonstrate that stage productions can continue to attract audiences across generations. Ensuring that theatre remains accessible and sustainable, however, will require more than the commitment of artistes alone.

Elvis Presley estate sues Anthropic over AI use of music catalogue

The estate and rights holders of Elvis Presley have sued artificial intelligence firm Anthropic, alleging it used 274 of the late singer's copyrighted compositions to train its AI models without authorisation.

Filed on October 23, the lawsuit names songs including ***Can't Help Falling in Love***, ***Don't Be Cruel*** and ***A Little Less Conversation***. The plaintiffs include a division of Authentic Brands Group, which controls much of Presley's intellectual property and licensing rights.

Their lead attorney, Richard Busch, said the action seeks to protect the exclusive rights to Presley's catalogue. The lawsuit adds to growing legal disputes over the use of copyrighted works in AI training. Anthropic has not issued a formal statement on the filing.



EVENTS

'Oki Gariyal Bhai'

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy hosts a commemorative musical evening titled ***Oki Gariyal Bhai*** to mark the 125th birth anniversary of legendary folk icon Abbas Uddin Ahmed. The cultural program celebrates his enduring legacy through timeless folk melodies that defined the soul of Bengali traditional music.

Date: Today | October 27, 2026
Time: 6 pm onwards
Venue: National Music and Dance Centre Auditorium, BSA



NEWS

Govt to hold roadshows in HK, NYC, London

FROM PAGE 12

It will also advise the government on liaising with international credit rating agencies.

JP Morgan's final commission will be negotiated between both parties.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, approved in-principle two separate proposals for their appointment.

The government is also exploring Japanese yen-denominated Samurai Bonds and Chinese yuan-denominated Panda Bonds alongside US dollar-based Eurobonds.

The development comes after the government in July formed an eight-member high-level inter-ministerial committee led by Tanvir Ghani, PM's special assistant on investment and capital market affairs, to assess the feasibility of issuing sovereign bonds.

The move comes as part of broader institutional reforms to reduce reliance on debt financing and boost equity-based foreign direct investment.

The government is implementing policy and institutional reforms to make public debt management more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable while keeping medium-term debt risks within acceptable limits, said the finance ministry proposal.

Entering international capital markets aims to diversify funding sources, extend debt maturity profiles, mitigate refinancing and rollover risks and build a strong foundation for long-term financing.

The government is appointing Hong Kong-based Bridgeworks International to advise on capital market reforms and attract foreign investment for a one-year tenure.

Bridgeworks will also advise Bangladesh on sovereign bonds, investment funds, telecommunications, digital infrastructure, data centres, renewable energy and mega-infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile, an international debt conference is set to take place in Cox's Bazar by the middle of next month.

The conference will be jointly organised by the Asian Development Bank and the government. Representatives from 30 countries have been invited to attend the event.

Woman sent to jail over remarks criticising BNP

FROM PAGE 12

custody at around 8:30pm on Sunday.

The video triggered angry reactions among local BNP activists and supporters who took position in front of her shop.

In the videos, Sathi said she had been running her business for nearly 14 years but had suffered financial losses following a series of thefts this year. Last month, electrical wires connected to an air conditioner were stolen from one of her shops.

On Sunday morning, she discovered that electrical wires had been cut and stolen from two of her showrooms, while air-conditioner wires were also taken from one of them. She said wires had also been stolen from several nearby shops.

During the Facebook Live sessions, Sathi expressed frustration over her decision to vote for the BNP.

Guljar Ahmed, joint convener of Bhaluka upazila BNP, said party activists were angered by her remarks and, along with locals, went to the scene. Police later went there and brought the situation under control.

Mohammad Zahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bhaluka Model Police Station, said Sathi was taken to the police station to maintain law and order.

"No specific complaint has been lodged in connection with the incident so far," he said.

The OC said the local businesswoman had made the remarks out of frustration over the repeated thefts at her establishment. He added that her comment about voting for the BNP and later suffering losses did not amount to an anti-state statement.

She was produced before a Mymensingh court on Monday afternoon under Section 151, the OC said.

ASM Mustasinur Rahman, court inspector in Mymensingh, said Sathi was produced before the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Sajidul Islam, which sent her to jail.

Contacted, Mymensingh Additional Police Superintendent (Admin) Md Abdullah Al Mamun said if there is any scope for deterioration of law and order, police can arrest a person under Section 151.

'Brazil is no one's backyard'

FROM PAGE 12

defeated foreign intervention through them. Bolsonaro, however, refused to accept the loss and said he would seek to annul the vote, reports AFP.

Lula, who turns 81 today, defied projections to win an unprecedented fourth term. According to official results, he won 51.8 percent of the votes to 48.2 percent for Flavio Bolsonaro, with Lula pulling around 4.4 million more votes.

The senator is the son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving a 27-year jail term for attempting a coup after his loss to Lula in the country's last election in 2022.

World leaders hailed the victory of Lula in the runoff. Sunday's vote was marked by confusion after a Supreme Court ruling extended voting by two hours as some polling stations had already closed.

The move came at the request of Lula who complained that buses had been pulled from circulation in various cities, barring citizens from voting.

Flavio Bolsonaro also requested an extension in some regions due to heavy rains, but he described the decision as "unacceptable" and a "dirty trick".

"It is impossible to recognize the results. I am going to request the annulment of these elections," he said, stone-faced, in a brief speech in Brasilia.

No candidate who lost the first round has gone on to win the second in Brazil since 1989, the first direct election after the end of the country's military dictatorship.

"People went to vote because we managed to convince them that voting was very important for ensuring democracy in the country," Lula said in his first comments after the win.

Fireworks and vuvuzelas rang out in Rio de Janeiro, while thousands of people dressed in red, the color of Lula's Workers' Party, streamed into the streets of Sao Paulo to celebrate.

Serbian student movement gets ready to govern

FROM PAGE 12

the 250-seat assembly, with 103 for the SNS. So far no other party has passed the required threshold to enter parliament.

"Students won and with them also a hope that Serbia can be a country of justice, freedom and dignity," Radomir Saicic, a candidate for the List, told supporters in a speech at the movement's election headquarters late Sunday.

Near-record turnout of almost 70 percent, the Balkan nation's highest at a parliamentary election in more than three decades, likely drove the political upset. The figure surpassed the 1993 parliamentary election, when just over 61 percent voted.

Shocking many observers, Vucic, who has grown increasingly authoritarian in recent years, conceded defeat less than two hours after polls closed.

It triggered raucous scenes as supporters of the movement celebrated the defeat of a government they blamed for deep-rooted corruption.

Thousands poured into the streets of Belgrade and other cities to celebrate, with cars honking, crowds chanting, and fireworks lighting up the skyline.

Addressing supporters late Sunday, Vucic, who has maintained close ties with Russia throughout his tenure, blamed foreign powers for the result.

"I want people to know, this was the validation of a revolution carried out with the direct support of various European countries and the US deep state, the one that is also against President Trump," he said.

For nearly two years, students have staged rallies and marched across the Balkan nation to reach voters directly and counter the media machine of Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party.

Their protests have drawn huge crowds. A final pre-election rally in Belgrade on Thursday attracted around 150,000 people, according to an independent protest monitor.

Houthi missile

FROM PAGE 12

support to help defend Saudi Arabia, parliamentarians said and local media reported, a move that could push Cairo directly into the regional conflict.

Top officials from Makkah Pact countries Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan were due to meet Iran's leaders in Tehran yesterday in their first high-level contact since the kingdom became a pressure point in the wider Middle East conflict.

An oil spill from a damaged tanker off the coast of the United Arab Emirates has widened, satellite images showed, triggering more beach closures and raising environmental concerns, reports Reuters.

Images from the European Union's Copernicus satellite observation network dated October 24 show the oil spill has widened over the last few days and is reaching close to the shores of the northern Umm Al Quwain emirate, with dark layers of oil spreading at sea and along its coastline.

The US Central Command on Sunday said it helped Gulf countries export 1.5 billion barrels of oil via the Strait of Hormuz since summer, bypassing an Iranian blockade.

"More than 3,000 commercial vessels have successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz with support from CENTCOM forces over the last six months," it added, stating that "over 95 percent of ships navigating the Strait of Hormuz have sailed through safely".

JS committee seeks probe into alleged irregularities

FROM PAGE 12

Committee Chairman Shahadat Hossain Salim told reporters that the committee had asked the ministry to temporarily suspend fertiliser dealerships in places where specific allegations had surfaced.

"Necessary steps would be taken if allegations against anyone were proved within three months," he said.

The committee also recommended that dealership agreements yet to be signed remain on hold until complaints are resolved. Where agreements have already been signed, the allegations should be properly investigated and appropriate action taken, according to a Parliament Secretariat press release.

The chairman noted fertiliser stocks remain adequate, with supplies exceeding demand. The committee expressed satisfaction with the ministry's briefing on fertiliser stocks and distribution.

The committee also formed a subcommittee to inspect fertiliser distribution, stock management and allegations of illegal hoarding and other irregularities.

Mostafizur Rahman was named convener of the subcommittee, with Md Rokon Uddin and Sabira Sultana serving as members.

Jubo Dal leader

FROM PAGE 12

told journalists: "There are many political issues. The Home Minister's flawed decisions are causing harm to many people, including the prime minister.....That is why, he [home minister] should resign. I will continue to speak the truth."

Contacted, the upazila unit Jubo Dal's Convener Farhad Iqbal said Rafiqul made different types of inappropriate comment about several party leaders in the past. He was warned, but he remained unchanged.

Cops foil protest

FROM PAGE 2

Several cultural activists, including Ehsanul Aziz Babu and Shamima Shawkat Lovely, protested the men's actions, prompting them to leave the area.

A senior official at the Tejgaon division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), speaking on condition of anonymity, said the slogan was not banned, but police had asked protesters to refrain from chanting it.

"Although the slogan is not banned, both the government and the police feel uncomfortable with it. That is why the protesters were asked not to chant it. The current circumstances are not conducive to chanting 'Joy Bangla'," the official said.

Abdul Halim, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said there had been some chaos at the event.

"Police later brought the situation under control and detained one person, who was taken to the police station. A decision on further action will be made after questioning him," he said.

Jordan arrests three over church attack: state TV

AFP, *Amman*

Jordanian security forces arrested three people over the unprecedented attack on a Greek Orthodox church that killed nine people and wounded 25 others, state TV reported yesterday.

"Following a joint security operation, specialised investigation and raid teams apprehended the three terrorists responsible for the cowardly terrorist attack," the broadcaster said on X, adding that all three were wounded during an armed clash.

Gunmen stormed the compound of St George's Church in the village of Hammoud in Karak governorate during a funeral procession on Friday and opened fire, Jordanian authorities said.

Man to die for killing wife, daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A Satkhira court yesterday sentenced Abdur Rouf Sardar to death and fined him Tk 50,000 for killing his wife and infant daughter over dowry demands and family disputes.

Judge Md Zakaria Hossain of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal delivered the verdict, said Public Prosecutor Sheikh Alamgir Ashraf.

According to the case statement, Sabina Islam, 26, had married Rouf about three and a half years before the incident. The couple had a daughter, Ayesha Siddika.

Rouf allegedly demanded Tk 50,000 for his mother's medical treatment and money to buy a motorcycle. Following disputes over the demands, Sabina returned to her parents' house with their daughter.

Rouf continued visiting his in-laws' house. On the night of September 7, 2015, he visited again and had an argument with Sabina.

Around midnight, Sabina's mother, Jahanara Khatun, went to an adjoining room and found her daughter and granddaughter dead. Rouf had fled by then.

Rouf went into hiding after securing bail on July 30, 2020, and remains absconding.

PRABARANA PURNIMA

A festival of lights, faith and heritage in the hills



PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: JOYANTI DEWAN

MONG SING HAI MARMA

As dusk fell over the hills yesterday, thousands of lamps illuminated the surroundings, while glowing sky lanterns floated above the settlements in tribute to Chulamoni Cetiya.

Devotees worshipped Buddha Upagupta on a chariot modelled on a mythical celestial bird, which was later immersed in the Sangu river.

These scenes marked the celebration of Maha Waggyowai Pwe, also known as Prabarana Purnima, among Buddhist communities in Bandarban and the other two hill districts.

Observed by Marma, Mro, Khyang, Khumi, Chak and other Buddhist communities, the festival combines religious devotion, agricultural traditions and cultural heritage.

Prabarana Purnima marks the end of the three-month Buddhist retreat, known as Vassa, which begins on Ashari Purnima and ends on Ashwina Purnima.

During this period, monks remain in monasteries, practising meditation and studying Buddhist teachings.

The festival symbolises self-purification, restraint and reflection. Devotees visit monasteries to offer prayers, donate food and seek blessings for their families and communities.

It also celebrates the harvest from jhum fields, with families offering rice, maize, vegetables and other seasonal produce at monasteries while paying respects to elderly community members.

A major attraction is the worship of Buddha Upagupta on a decorated chariot.

The ceremony begins with the presiding monk, known as Gurubhante, lighting lamps before the Buddha image. Devotees then offer prayers and pull the chariot through streets and past monasteries before floating it into the Sangu.

Another tradition involves releasing sky lanterns, locally known as phanush, in tribute to Chulamoni Cetiya.

Families also prepare traditional cakes, bringing generations together to celebrate and preserve customs passed down through the years.

A digital trail to track learning gaps

FROM PAGE 3

digital classrooms and artificial intelligence laboratories.

Shefatul said funding for UAS could come from the Global Partnership for Education, a multi-stakeholder partnership hosted by the World Bank.

QUESTIONS OVER EFFECTIVENESS

Samir Ranjan Nath, programme head at the BRAC Institute of Educational Development at BRAC University, said, "The platform will undoubtedly generate a large dataset. However, the meaning of the data is a major question, as our school system lacks common assessment standards."

"Weak classroom teaching and academic supervision are the bigger problems. Without improving the quality of classroom teaching, no assessment or record-keeping exercise involving unique IDs can serve the purpose," he told The Daily Star.

Samir suggested tracking core subjects at primary and secondary levels and stream-specific subjects from class 9, rather than every subject in every grade.

Experts also cited past initiatives that failed to achieve their intended outcomes.

A School-Based Assessment pilot for classes 6 to 9 in 2005 found "widespread limitations" in evaluation and record-keeping. Only 17.4 percent of participating teachers had received training.

About three years ago, a digital assessment platform named Noipunno was introduced under the competency-based curriculum. A 2024 NCTB survey of 2,53,000 teachers found that 37.6 percent only "roughly" understood the assessment system.

Samir recommended piloting UAS, the latest project, in a few upazilas before a nationwide rollout and strengthening oversight through upazila education offices.

"Teachers should be creators of assessment tools, assessors, and users of assessment results to improve classroom teaching and learning," he said.

Shefatul said UAS was intended to reduce teachers' paperwork, not increase their workload. "Teachers will enter data only if the system saves them time."

The platform could initially be piloted in a few districts, replacing existing registers and report cards with an offline data-entry system, he added.

Announce Biswa Ijtema dates soon

FROM PAGE 3

controversial remarks, accusations and misinformation targeting Maulana Saad Kandhlawi, the global ameer of Tabligh Jamaat, were being spread at religious gatherings.

It urged Islamic scholars to remain neutral, refrain from provocative remarks favouring either faction and help resolve the divisions peacefully without exerting one-sided pressure on the government.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Shipping
Admin-2 section (Store)
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
www.mohpw.gov.bd

Memo No: 18.00.0000.016.45.001.19-395 Date : 26 October 2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) under the Revenue Budget for the following package of goods:

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Package Name	Tender Publication Date and time	Tender last Selling Date and time	Tender Closing and Opening Date and time
1.	1353084	Procurement of computer Equipment for office use. (Framework Agreement)	27-Oct-2026 14:00	12-Nov-2026 10:00	12-Nov-2026 16:00
2.	1354265	Procurement of Furniture for Office use. (Framework Agreement)			
3.	1355221	Procurement of Printing related service for office use. (Framework Agreement)			
4.	1355235	Procurement of Stationary for office use. (Framework Agreement)			
5.	1355247	Procurement of Electronic Accessories for office use. (Framework Agreement)			

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP system Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

26.10.2026

(Md. Jakir Hossen)
Senior Assistant Secretary
Admin-2 Section
Ministry of Shipping
Phone: 02-55100880
E-mail:sas.admin1@mos.gov.bd

GD-2586

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate, Cox's Bazar
Hospital Road, Cox's Bazar
(Temporary Office)
www.coxbazarvat.gov.bd

Number: 08.01.2200.039.004.07.003.26. Date: /10/2026

Amendment e-Tender Notice (e-GP)

Tender Invitation Reference No.: 08.01.2200.039.004.07.003.26

This is to notify all concerned that due to unavoidable circumstances the following amendment have been made for the above-mentioned e-Tenders published in the National E-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

SL. No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Package No. & Description	Amendments	
			Previous Closing Date & Time of Tender	Revised Closing Date & Time of Tender
04	1353173	CEVCCOX26-27/04 Miscellaneous Equipment	25 October, 2026; 23.59	02 November, 2026 10.00
05	1344879	Procurement of Others Stationery	25 October, 2026; 23.59	29 October, 2026 10.00

S/d-
(Minhaz Uddin Ahmed Sourav)
Assistant Commissioner
On Behalf of the Commissioner.

GD-2583

NID correction backlog tops 1.17 lakh

FROM PAGE 3

Of the pending applications, 1,08,188 were filed between January and September this year, while 9,025 were from 2025, 171 from 2024 and 282 from 2023 or earlier.

Dhaka had the highest number of pending Gha applications, at 10,615, followed by Chattogram with 10,559 and Mymensingh with 8,332. Barishal had the lowest.

The Gha category, often dubbed the "ICU" category because of its complexity, is handled by the NID director general, while other categories are dealt with by election officers at different levels.

Asked about the backlog, NID Director General Abul Hasnat Muhammad Anwar Pasha said, "Behind every application lies a significant story. In many of these cases, applicants are seeking fundamental changes to their information. A large share of these correction requests appears to be driven by ill intent. Even so, we are trying to resolve them."

Abdullah Al Amin, a private company employee, recently faced difficulties correcting the permanent addresses on his parents' NIDs.

The applications were approved one month and five days after submission, following visits to the Sabujbagh Election Office.

"We had to visit the Sabujbagh Election Office twice to correct the error. The applications then remained pending for a long time because they had not been assigned a category. Through a personal contact, we managed to expedite the correction, and it was eventually made," he said.

EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said four out of every five correction applications submitted to him fell under the Gha category.

He said such requests involved fundamental changes to personal information, while supporting documents often complicated verification.

"In some cases, the revised information would indicate that a child was born one and a half years after the father's death. Applications involving such inconsistencies pose challenges for us," he said.

Bangladesh currently has 12,83,23,240 registered voters, including 6,52,12,731 men, 6,31,09,266 women and 1,243 hijra voters.

Why do your workers pay when Saudi employers foot the bill?

FROM PAGE 3

He also said Saudi authorities had announced automatic extensions for visas that expired due to wartime disruptions.

BNP Chairman's Adviser Dr Enamul Haque Chowdhury said the government wanted to strengthen ties with Saudi Arabia by sending more skilled workers alongside unskilled ones.

Translating key points of the Saudi ambassador's intended speech into Bangla, Enamul said the Saudi embassy in Dhaka had issued 3,10,415 work visas and 8,00,623 visas in total, including Hajj, Umrah and visit visas, since the BNP government took office in February.

Ensure affordable, inclusive green energy

FROM PAGE 3

sector would find their work easier if they had access to affordable renewable energy. The government needs to consider how marginalised women and women living in char areas can be included in renewable energy policies."

Anwar Hossain, executive director of The Earth Society, said clean energy was an immediate priority rather than a future concern.

Noting the significant use of energy for irrigation nationwide, he suggested exploring greater use of solar power in the sector to reduce energy consumption.

Abul Kalam Azad, manager of Just Energy Transition at ActionAid Bangladesh, also spoke.

More than 200 youth activists and climate group representatives joined a rally titled "Power to People: A Call for a Just Energy Transition" on the opening day.

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd
স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.৪৫৩.১৮.০০৩.২১.১৭৩৩ তারিখঃ ২৫/১০/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

নবনির্মিত কুষ্টিয়া-মেহেরপুর ১৩২ কেভি সঞ্চালন লাইন চার্জিং এর সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন "ঢাকা এবং পশ্চিমাঞ্চলীয় গ্রিড সঞ্চালন ব্যবস্থা সম্প্রসারণ" প্রকল্পের আওতায় নবনির্মিত **"কুষ্টিয়া-মেহেরপুর ১৩২ কেভি সঞ্চালন লাইন"** আগামী ২৮ অক্টোবর ২০২৬, বুধবার, দুপুর ০১:০০ ঘটিকায় ১,৩২,০০০ (এক লক্ষ বত্রিশ হাজার) ভোল্টেজ দিয়ে চালু করা হবে। চালুর পর হতে উক্ত বৈদ্যুতিক লাইনটি সার্বক্ষণিক ১,৩২,০০০ ভোল্টেজে বিদ্যুতায়িত থাকবে। উক্ত লাইনটি কুষ্টিয়া ১৩২/৩৩ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র হতে কুষ্টিয়া জেলার সদর ও মিরপুর উপজেলা, চুয়াডাঙ্গা জেলার আলমডাঙ্গা উপজেলা এবং মেহেরপুর জেলার গাংনী ও সদর উপজেলার উপর দিয়ে অতিক্রম করে নবনির্মিত মেহেরপুর ১৩২/৩৩ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্রে যুক্ত হয়েছে।
নবনির্মিত ১,৩২,০০০ ভোল্টেজের বিদ্যুৎ সঞ্চালন লাইনের টাওয়ারসমূহে আরোহন, গবাদি পশু বাঁধা, টাওয়ারে রশি বেঁধে কাপড় শুকানো, লাইনের নিচে ও পাশে বাঁশঝাড় ও বড় বৃক্ষাদি রোপন প্রভৃতি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজ হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য এবং সঞ্চালন লাইন হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্ব বজায় রাখার জন্য সর্বসাধারণকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে। উচ্চ ভোল্টেজে বিদ্যুতায়িত উক্ত সঞ্চালন লাইন/ টাওয়ারের সংস্পর্শে এসে কেউ দূর্ঘটনার শিকার হলে পাওয়ার গ্রিড কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না।

মোহাম্মদ ফয়জুল কবীর
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (প্রধান প্রকৌশলী)
ঢাকা এবং পশ্চিমাঞ্চলীয় গ্রিড সঞ্চালন ব্যবস্থা সম্প্রসারণ প্রকল্প

রেজিস্ট্রারের কার্যালয়
জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ত্রিশাল, ময়মনসিংহ-২২২৪, বাংলাদেশ
ফোনঃ ০২-৯৯৬৬৭৬৪০৪, PABX: ২১০

Office of the Registrar
Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University
Trishal, Mymensingh-2224, Bangladesh
Phone: 02-996676404, PABX: 210

স্মারক নংঃ জাকজকানইবি/রেজিঃ/নবিজনি/১৬৩২/২২/৬৮০৬ তারিখঃ ২৬/১০/২০২৬ ইং

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় বেতন ও অন্যান্য আর্থিক সুবিধাসহ নিম্নলিখিত স্থায়ী/অস্থায়ী পদে নিয়োগকল্পে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্র.	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০২৬)	পদের সংখ্যা	বয়স (বছর)
০১।	**পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক** বেতন স্কেল-৩য় গ্রেড (১১৩০০০-১৪৮৮০০/-) পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক দপ্তর	০১টি	অনূর্ধ্ব ৫০ বছর
০২।	**উপ-রেজিস্ট্রার** বেতন স্কেল-৫ম গ্রেড (৮৬০০০-১৩৯৭০০/-) রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর	০১টি	অনূর্ধ্ব ৪৫ বছর
০৩।	**উপ-পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক** বেতন স্কেল-৫ম গ্রেড (৮৬০০০-১৩৯৭০০/-) পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক দপ্তর	০১টি	অনূর্ধ্ব ৪৫ বছর
০৪।	**প্রভাষক** বেতন স্কেল-৯ম গ্রেড (৪৪০০০-১০৫৯০০/-) সঙ্গীত বিভাগ-০২টি (স্থায়ী-০১টি এবং সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে অস্থায়ী-০১টি) দর্শন বিভাগ-০১টি ইতিহাস বিভাগ-০১টি ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ-০১টি পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগ-০২টি নৃবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ-০২টি সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগ-০১টি স্থানীয় সরকার ও নগর উন্নয়ন বিভাগ-০১টি মার্কেটিং বিভাগ-০২টি ব্যবস্থাপনা বিভাগ-০৩টি	১৬টি	
০৫।	**ডাটা এন্ট্রি অপারেটর** বেতন স্কেল-১১তম গ্রেড (২৫০০০-৬০৫০০/-) আইসিটি সেল	০১টি	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর
০৬।	**সহকারী হিসাব রক্ষক** বেতন স্কেল-১৩তম গ্রেড (২৪০০০-৫৮০০০/-) শিউলিমালা হল	০১টি	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর
০৭।	**অফিস সহায়ক** বেতন স্কেল-২০তম গ্রেড (২০০০০-৪৮৪০০/-) দোলন-চাঁপা হল -০১টি, কেন্দ্রীয় গ্রন্থাগার-০১টি মেডিকেল সেন্টার-০১টি	০৩টি	১৮-অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর
০৮।	**সিক গার্ল** বেতন স্কেল-২০তম গ্রেড (২০০০০-৪৮৪০০/-) দোলন-চাঁপা হল	০২টি	১৮-অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর
০৯।	**সহকারী বাবুর্চি** বেতন স্কেল-২০তম গ্রেড (২০০০০-৪৮৪০০/-) অগ্নি-বীণা হল-০১টি দোলন-চাঁপা হল-০১টি	০২টি	১৮-অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর
১০।	**নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী** বেতন স্কেল-২০তম গ্রেড (২০০০০-৪৮৪০০/-) রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর-০৭টি	০৭টি	১৮-অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বছর

উপরোক্ত পদসমূহের জন্য আবেদনপত্র রেজিস্ট্রার, জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ত্রিশাল, ময়মনসিংহ-২২২৪ বরাবরে আগামী ১৯/১১/২০২৬ ইং তারিখ বিকাল ০৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অবশ্যই পৌঁছাতে হবে। আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের নির্ধারিত ফরম, নিয়োগপত্রের যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা এবং অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রেজিস্ট্রার অফিস থেকে সংগ্রহ অথবা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট www.jkkniu.edu.bd থেকে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে অথবা ১০/-টাকা মূল্যের অব্যবহৃত ডাকটিকেটসহ নিজস্ব পত্র যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা সম্বলিত ফেরত খাম প্রেরণের মাধ্যমে নির্ধারিত ফরম ও আবেদন করার শর্তাবলী সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। ডাকযোগে আবেদন ফরম সংগ্রহের ক্ষেত্রে খামের উপর পদের নাম স্পষ্টাক্ষরে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

ভাইস-চ্যান্সেলর মহোদয়ের অনুমোদনক্রমে,

(খন্দকার নাজমুল হাসান)
রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
জাতীয় কবি কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ত্রিশাল, ময়মনসিংহ-২২২৪
ফোন-০২৯৯৬৬৭৬৪০৪

GD-2587

Drive against illegal resorts in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Authorities yesterday demolished a four-storey resort building in Ukhiya's Inani during a joint drive against unauthorised hotels and resorts along Cox's Bazar's Marine Drive.

The drive came days after a fire at the three-storey TupTup Resort near Patuartek beach killed 10 tourists on October 17. Led by the Cox's Bazar Development Authority (CoxDA), the drive began in the afternoon.

CoxDA Secretary Sanjida Begum said the building had been constructed in violation of existing laws and regulations. Its owner had received four demolition notices but failed to take effective action, she added.

However, owner Shahidul Haque claimed he began construction in 2014 after obtaining permission from the union parishad.

He had planned to inaugurate the resort soon.



An illegal resort being demolished in Inani yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Shahidul claimed he had responded to all four notices and possessed the necessary documents, but the authorities had ignored them.

CoxDA Chairman Engineer Mohammad Jasim Uddin said numerous resorts, cottages and restaurants had been built along both sides of the 80-km Marine Drive, many without the required approvals.

Thousands of crores left untouched

FROM PAGE 1

and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The IMED report is available on its website. Although the IMED website does not specify how much of the block allocations was spent, health ministry sources said no funds had been spent from these allocations.

The two health divisions also recorded the lowest fund utilisation rates among the 10 ministries and divisions with the highest ADP allocations, data shows.

The poor first-quarter performance reflects a years-long trend of low ADP implementation at the ministry.

Since the health ministry was split into two divisions in 2017, neither has met the national average ADP implementation rate in any fiscal year, except for the MEFWD in 2020-21, according to IMED documents.

That year, the MEFWD only marginally exceeded the national average of 82.11 percent.

Last fiscal year, the HSD utilised just 31.15 percent of its ADP allocation, and MEFWD utilised 37.92 percent. Both fell well below the national average of 67.52 percent.

Health experts and campaigners have long called for greater investment in the sector, where public spending has remained below 1 percent of GDP for over a decade.

The now-defunct Health Sector Reform Commission, formed under the interim government, recommended raising health expenditure to 5 percent of GDP. The BNP also pledged to meet this target in its election manifesto.

This fiscal year, the government allocated Tk 69,409 crore to the health sector, equivalent to 1.01 percent of GDP, crossing the 1 percent threshold for the first time.

Of this, Tk 62,852 crore was allocated to the health ministry, with the rest earmarked for health-related activities under other ministries.

The HSD received Tk 6,014 crore for 18 projects, along with a block allocation of Tk 20,800 crore.

The MEFWD received Tk 5,499 crore for 15 projects and a block allocation of Tk 2,722 crore.

Together, the two divisions received Tk 35,090 crore under the ADP, more than double the original allocation of Tk 17,520 crore last fiscal year.

Prof Rumana Huque of Dhaka University's Economics Department attributed the slow spending to inadequate preparation, project planning and coordination.

"We had anticipated that unless new development project proposals [DPPs] were prepared quickly, the large allocations, particularly the block allocation, would remain unused without a sector programme."

She said the health ministry had so far prepared only a handful of DPPs, while key steps, including the appointment of project staff, consultants and contractors, remained incomplete.

"As a result, implementation has not begun in many cases."

Rumana said the ministry could have involved experienced professionals and sought technical assistance from development partners to expedite project preparation.

"Better coordination between the ministry's planning wing and project-implementing agencies was also needed to identify priorities and align projects with government plans.

"Although it is still early in the fiscal year, the slow progress raises questions about whether the remaining allocation can be utilised. The government needs to prioritise projects, strengthen implementation capacity and develop a clear roadmap."

Contacted, HSD Secretary ANM Bazlur Rashid said he had yet to review the IMED report on ADP implementation and would comment after doing so.

MEFWD Secretary AKM Benjamin Riazi could not be reached for comment despite being sent a message.

Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain could not be reached by phone either.

বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইনস্ Biman BANGLADESH AIRLINES
HEAD OFFICE, BALAKA, KURMITOLA, DHAKA-1229, BANGLADESH, PHONE- 8901600-14, 8901680-94, FAX: 88-02-8901558, www.biman-airlines.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Tender Ref: BG/FIN-FLEET/OPTIMIZATION/2026/01
Date of Issuance: October 25, 2026
Subject: Appointment of a Specialist Techno-Financial Consultant for 35 New Aircraft Integration, Fleet Modernization, Route Optimization, and Capital Structuring.

1. Introduction & Objective
Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd., is a public limited company whose 100% shares are owned by the Government of Bangladesh. It is run by a board of directors nominated by the Government of Bangladesh and also look after by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism of the Government of Bangladesh. It is the national flag carrier of Bangladesh. It is currently running its aviation operation with 19 aircrafts. Biman has taken initiative for its strategic modernization and fleet expansion. It has entered into an agreement with Boeing to purchase twenty-five (25) modern commercial aircraft and with Airbus to purchase ten (10) commercial aircraft.

To navigate this transformation, Biman requires the immediate services of a reputable, globally recognized, and highly specialized aviation advisory firm. The selected consultant will conduct independent financial due diligence, optimize network and route architecture, and design a highly efficient, multi-tiered financing structure.

Time is of the essence for this engagement. The consultant is required to submit an initial high-level executive report by late November 2026.

2. Scope of Work (SOW)
The selected consultant will deliver an integrated strategic and financial model structured across three (3) core pillars:

Pillar I: Fleet Integration & Asset Obsolescence Due Diligence

- **New Fleet Integration:** Conduct deep-dive operational and financial due diligence on the delivery schedules, contractual obligations, and capital commitments associated with the 35 forward-order aircraft.
- **Legacy Fleet Management:** Evaluate the existing active fleet of nineteen (19) aircraft to develop a phased decommissioning and retirement schedule synchronized with incoming deliveries. This includes assessing optimal financial utility until absolute economic obsolescence.
- **Capacity Gap Mitigation:** Identify capacity gaps and potential mismatches between aircraft type and route demand.

Pillar II: Route Network & Profitability Optimization

- **Network Restructuring:** Develop a data-driven route and network architecture centered on Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), evaluating the viability of existing routes and simulating new international long-haul and regional expansions.
- **Spill & Demand Modeling:** Conduct Origin and Destination (O&D) traffic simulations and competitive capacity assessments against foreign operators, while optimizing scheduling waves to maximize aircraft utilization rates.
- **Financial Profitability Vectors:**
  (i) Review and implement optimized pricing mechanisms designed to maximize Revenue per Available Seat Kilometer (RASK) and minimize Cost per Available Seat Kilometer (CASK).
  (ii) Review route-level revenues, operating costs, contribution margin and profitability (in place of pricing mechanism designed to maximize revenue.
  (iii) Asses passenger yield, load factors and revenue management practices.

Pillar III: Aircraft Financing & Capital Structuring
Biman expects to receive Sovereign Guarantee from the Government of Bangladesh, and received soft commitment from ECA for comprehensive financing (including Pre-Delivery Payments/PDP financing). Operating within this framework, the consultant will advise on the optimal financing mix across multiple options, including but not limited to the following:

- **Export Credit Agencies (ECAs):** Structure a comprehensive framework optimizing financing combinations from ECAs from both US and Europe to support both PDP and aircraft delivery financing.
- **Commercial Debt vs. PDP Financing:** Design debt profiles detailing the exact structure and scaling of Pre-Delivery Payment (PDP) financing relative to long-term structured commercial debt.
- **Sale-Leaseback (SLB) Integration:** Advise on the optimal proportion and structural mechanics of partial Sale-Leaseback (SLB) transactions to optimize balance sheet liquidity, optimize cash flow management, and mitigate asset residual value risks without relinquishing operational control.

3. Timelines & Deliverables
To accommodate high-level government scheduling, this engagement will operate on an accelerated timeline. Bidders must demonstrate the capacity to meet the following deadlines:

Milestone / Deliverable	Target Deadline
RFP Issuance	October 25, 2026
Submission of Consultant Proposals	November 2, 2026
Contract Award & Commencement	November 8, 2026
Draft Initial Executive Report & In-Person Presentation	December 10, 2026
Final Comprehensive Report	January 15, 2027

4. Proposal Submission Requirements
Bidders are required to submit separate Technical and Financial proposals, which must include:

a) **Corporate Track Record:** Evidence of comparable, successful mandates executed for national or regional flag carriers within the last five (5) years, specifically demonstrating successful structured ECA and SLB financing arrangements.
b) **Team Composition & Deployment:** Detailed resumes of the core project leads, guaranteeing the direct, active involvement of senior partners rather than the deployment of junior resources.
c) **Methodology & Toolsets:** A comprehensive explanation of the proprietary route-planning, network-simulation, and fleet-cost software models to be utilized throughout the mandate.
d) **Financial Quote:** A fixed-fee commercial proposal aligned with a milestone payment schedule, inclusive of all travel, modeling, advisory, tax and administrative expenses.

5. Evaluation Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated using a Quality and Cost-Based Selection (**QCBS**) framework consisting of a **70% Technical weight and 30% Financial weight**.

- **Technical Evaluation (70% total weight):** Bidders will be scored out of 100 points based on the following two key elements with m*inimum qualification threshold of 75 points*:
  - **Technical Expertise & Specialized Agility (60%):** Demonstrable domain competency and successful track record in specialized aviation financing, ECA structures, and fleet optimization, alongside an agile corporate structure free of excessive bureaucratic overhead and proprietary tools and methodology.
  - **Delivery Speed & Resource Commitment (40%):** Definitive institutional capability and resource allocation to meet the strict November deadline with executive-level clarity.
- **Financial Evaluation (30% total weight):** The lowest compliant financial bid will receive 100 financial points. Higher bids will be normalized inversely proportional to the lowest price.

6. Contact & Submission Portal
All proposal submissions, formal requests for clarification, and technical correspondence must be submitted to the Chairman's Secretariat, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited, Head Office, Balaka, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh through courier or drop in the box or through e-mail to fleet.opt.2026.01@biman.gov.bd

By Order of the Board,

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd.

ANNEXURE B: FINANCIAL BID FORM
(To be submitted by Bidders in a Separate Sealed Envelope marked "Financial Proposal")

Tender Ref: BG/FIN-FLEET/OPTIMIZATION/2026/01

Bidder Name: _____
1. Total Financial Bid Summary

The Bidder must state an **All-Inclusive Fixed Fee** for the successful execution of the entire Scope of Work (Pillars I through III) as defined in the RFP. This fee must be inclusive of all consultant remuneration, global travel, corporate overhead, out-of-pocket expenses, data-licensing fees, and administrative costs.

Fee Component	Amount (USD)	Amount (In Words)
Total Remuneration (Section 2 & 3)	$	
Total Overhead (Section 4)	$	
Gross All-Inclusive Fixed Fee	$	
Applicable Local Taxes/VAT (if any)	$	
TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE	**$**	

2. Breakdown of Remuneration Costs by SOW Pillars
To evaluate the commercial realism of the bid, please distribute your Gross Fixed Fee across the three main areas of execution:

Workstream Pillar	Allocated Fee (USD)	% of Total Fee
Pillar I: Fleet Integration & Asset Obsolescence Due Diligence	$	%
Pillar II: Route Network & Profitability Optimization	$	%
Pillar III: Aircraft Financing & Capital Structuring	$	%
TOTAL (Must Match Section 1 Total Remuneration)	**$**	**100%**

3. Resource Staffing & Remuneration Details
Bidders must provide transparency regarding the elite team deployed for this accelerated mandate. *Note: These figures are for evaluation purposes only; the contract remains strictly Fixed-Fee.*

Deployed Resource Name	Project Role / Area of Expertise	Estimated Total Man-Days	Blended Daily Rate (USD)	Total Cost Contribution (USD)
e.g., xxx xxxx	*Lead Partner - Aviation Finance*			$
				$
				$
				$
				$
TOTALS		_____ **Days**	**Must Match Section 1 Total Remuneration)**	**$**

Authorized Signatory Stamp & Date:

(Name, Title, and Company Seal of the Bidder's Authorized Representative)

GD-2588

DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2026, KARTIK 11, 1433 BS

SPORT

Ex-keeper eyeing No 9 spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Rafayel Tudu has made a habit of making an impact when it matters, even if his opportunities have been limited. The Fortis FC forward scored in consecutive AFC Challenge League matches after coming off the bench, adding to a return of two goals and an assist in three Bangladesh Football League (BFL) appearances this season, all as a substitute.

Having come a long way from his days as a goalkeeper, the 25-year-old now wants to turn those cameos into a regular starting role and eventually claim Bangladesh's No 9 spot.

Rafayel came on in the 91st minute against Al Qadsia, but made his mark in the next two matches. He scored in the 78th minute against FC Goa to draw Fortis level at 1-1, before they eventually lost 2-1. Against Regar-TadAZ, he entered at the start of the second half and found the net again as Fortis secured their first win in the main stage of the competition.

"I do not want to remain a substitute throughout my career. I want to play in the starting XI," Rafayel told The Daily Star over



the phone from his village home on Monday.

His path to becoming a forward was anything but conventional. The player from Amtalipara village in Godagari, Rajshahi, began training as a goalkeeper at Rajshahi Kishore Football Academy around 2018. After moving to Dhaka in 2020-21 to join Victoria Sporting Club in the Bangladesh Championship League, he found himself third or fourth in the goalkeeping pecking order, with few chances to play.

Back in Rajshahi, he began featuring as a striker in local tournaments and kept asking his academy coach to give him a chance up front. A goal against the academy's team in a local tournament eventually persuaded the coach to make the switch permanent.

The gamble paid off at Fakirerpool in the 2023-24 season. After missing his first few matches, Rafayel scored four goals against Uttara FC and went on to finish as the Championship League's top scorer and best player. Fakirerpool won the title and earned promotion to the Bangladesh Premier League, now known as the BFL. Rafayel subsequently moved to Mohammedan before joining Fortis, where he has found a platform to test himself against opposition from across Asia.

The recent goals have showcased his attacking instincts, though he is clear-eyed about what he needs to improve.

"Moving forward, finding attacking positions and finishing chances are among my strengths. I am comfortable in one-on-one situations with the goalkeeper, and physical contests and pressing do not trouble me much," he said. "My first touch needs improvement. Sometimes I could control the ball better and move more quickly."

Rafayel was disappointed not to be included in Bangladesh's preliminary squad for the SAFF Championship, as a call-up would have made him only the third player from the Santal community, after Hemanta Vincent Biswas and MS Bablu, to be called up for the men's senior national team. However, he says the omission will not distract him from his work.

"I would have liked an opportunity, but I will remain prepared and keep working. I will also support Bangladesh because it is my country," he said.

For Rafayel, the ambition extends beyond securing a place in the starting XI at club level. He wants to become the centre-forward Bangladesh have been searching for.

"I believe Bangladesh need a proper centre-forward, and I want to fill that gap. If I get an opportunity on merit, I want to help end the country's goal-scoring problems."



PHOTO: AFP

Real reign supreme in Clasico

Kylian Mbappe stole the show with a brace to hand Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid a 2-1 El Clasico win over LaLiga leaders Barcelona at Camp Nou yesterday. The French superstar struck just before the interval and buried a late winner to cancel out Raphinha's equaliser, inflicting Barca's first domestic defeat of the season and slashing the title gap to just three points. The victory leaves third-placed Real on 24 points from 10 matches, hot on the heels of Atletico Madrid (25) and Hansi Flick's pacesetters (27). It caps a brutal week for a surprisingly subdued Barca. After a flawless nine-game league start and claiming six of the last seven Clasicos under Flick, the Catalans have now suffered back-to-back losses following Tuesday's Champions League stumble against PSG.

■ **107** Both teams entered with 106 Clasico wins each, but Real moved ahead with their first win at Spotify Camp Nou since October 2023, having won just one of their previous six Clasicos. In LaLiga Clasicos, Real lead 81-76, with 35 draws.

■ **100** Mbappe's brace took his Real tally to 100 goals. He reached the mark in 116 games, the fourth-fastest after Ferenc Puskas (100), Cristiano Ronaldo (105), Alfredo Di Stefano (114) and Pahino (114).

■ Jose Mourinho is unbeaten in his last six Clasicos (W4 D2), dating back to his previous Real spell. Only Miguel Munoz (seven, 1962-65) and Vicente del Bosque (seven, 2001-03) have managed longer unbeaten runs among Real coaches.

■ Yamal missed a glaring first-half chance to equalise and failed to score with any of his five shots. He created no chances and completed 76.6% of his passes (47/76).

■ **13** Raphinha's 60th-minute equaliser was his 13th goal in nine LaLiga games, matching Lionel Messi's 2012-13 tally. Only Cristiano Ronaldo, with 17 in 2014-15, scored more in his first nine games of a LaLiga season.



The way we won is also important because you can win with luck and by defending a lot. We won calmly and with full merit.

JOSE MOURINHO, Real Madrid coach



Australia captain Pat Cummins steps out for training at Newlands, the venue of the infamous Sandpapergate scandal in 2018, ahead of a high-stakes third and final Test against South Africa starting today. With the series locked at 1-1 following the hosts' emphatic innings victory in Gqeberha, the decider carries immense weight. South Africa can claim the world №1 Test ranking with a win, while a draw is enough for the visitors to retain their crown. As Australia sweat on Steve Smith's fitness and prepare to recall Cameron Green, South Africa will unleash fiery paceman Gerald Coetzee.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Shoriful fetches highest price in D3 auction

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Shoriful Islam fetched the highest price among Category A players at the D3 Trophy Player Auction, with Citizens Bank securing his services for 2.3 crore points at a city hotel on Monday.



Pacer Taskin Ahmed was snapped up by Walton Group for 2.1 crore points, while Fortune secured several national team players, including opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim for two crore points, batter Najmul Hossain Shanto for 1.55 crore, all-rounder Soumya Sarkar for 75 lakh and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain for 60 lakh.

All-rounder Mahedi Hasan joined Blue Star for 1.6 crore points, while Walton Group signed wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das for 1.55 crore.

Seven Rings Cement secured left-arm spinner Taijul Islam for 80 lakh points and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman for 70 lakh, while wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali joined Citizens Bank for 1.8 crore.

All six teams completed their squads, each comprising 22 players recruited through the auction and one icon player.

Players will receive match fees in line with the Bangladesh Cricket Board's domestic structure: Tk 1.5 lakh per four-day match, Tk 1 lakh per one-day match and Tk 80,000 per T20 fixture.

Each team had a budget of 10 crore points, taking the combined auction purse to 60 crore. A total of 275 players were listed for the auction.

The six teams will compete across three formats in 42 matches: seven four-day games, 16 one-day matches and 19 T20 fixtures.

The T20 tournament is scheduled to begin in Barishal on December 15, followed by the four-day and one-day competitions in January and May next year, respectively.

Chaos building towards a perfect storm?



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket cannot seem to escape chaos. Although the Test team have reasons for optimism ahead of the home series against West Indies, beginning tomorrow, a turbulent buildup has left them with plenty to address before the first ball is bowled.

"Is this the first time there's chaos before a match?" Bangladesh head coach Phil Simmons asked with a wry smile when questioned about the buildup to the two-match series yesterday.

Batting coach Mohammad Ashraful had attended a session on Saturday, only to be discontinued by evening. The sudden axing came on the back of Bangladesh's faltering batting in the recent ODI tri-series in the UAE, which had already cost them momentum ahead of their red-ball assignments. More troubling, however, is the debate over players' accountability and dedication that has followed the tri-series.

The Tigers' Test side, on the other hand, had been on a high, despite a slightly deflating draw in the one-off Abu Dhabi Test against Afghanistan. Yet the squad had been unable to prepare together before the crucial Mirpur Test, as the World Test Championship (WTC) campaign gathers pace.

"Every series is important," Simmons said. "Those that we were playing at the start of these two years were important too. But the thing is how we go about our business, our preparation for the series."



"No! It's definitely not like last year."

West Indies head coach **DARREN SAMMY** said with a hearty laugh when The Daily Star reminded him of the black wickets that grabbed attention during their white-ball tour of Bangladesh last year.

Following the second Test in Sylhet, Bangladesh will travel to Johannesburg to face South Africa six days later in another WTC assignment, leaving little time between matches to prepare for the upcoming challenges. "It's not what's happening outside, it's what we do as a team to prepare," added the former West Indies coach.

The players had met Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Tamim Iqbal in the UAE after the defeat against Zimbabwe. On Sunday, Tamim again sat down with five national team players, with a few members of the team management also present.

"I was there." Simmons said. "The meeting was more about the things we need to put together to push Bangladesh cricket forward."

With the team in form in the red-ball format, the focus on broader development ahead of a Test series raised questions. The Bangladesh coach, however, dismissed concerns that the meeting had been a distraction "because it was not about the series".

The Tigers will be without Nahid Rana for the first Test. The push for results in Zimbabwe had already cost them the services of the express pacer. His absence could make the South Africa Tests considerably harder, but team management, still harbouring hopes of securing Rana's services, may take risks that only add to the uncertainty.

Litton Das, meanwhile, has yet to receive clearance for the series opener, leaving another question mark, although Simmons understands the wicketkeeper-batter is available.

A perfect storm may be brewing, threatening to engulf Bangladesh as it has in the past, particularly at ICC events. Whether they can keep their heads above water will depend on how they navigate the mounting distractions and respond when the Test series gets underway.

WHAT TO WATCH

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

SONY SPORTS 1
New Zealand vs India
3nd T20I
Live from 1:00 pm

FOR ALL LATEST UPDATES, FOLLOW THE DAILY STAR SPORTS FACEBOOK PAGE





SOVEREIGN BOND PROMOTION

Govt to hold roadshows in HK, NYC, London

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government will hold roadshows in London, New York and Hong Kong in preparation for the sovereign bond issue.

The development comes after Prime Minister Tarique Rahman gave approval earlier this month to the issuance of sovereign bond of less than $1 billion, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

American investment bank JP Morgan and Hong Kong-based consultancy firm Bridgeworks International will be commissioned to facilitate the bond issue and provide technical support.

The coupon rate, the duration of the roadshows and other modalities are yet to be finalised.

Since Bangladesh is issuing sovereign bonds for the first time, there is no reference rate. So, the coupon rate will be finalised after discussion with issue managers.

American investment bank JP Morgan and Hong Kong-based consultancy firm Bridgeworks International will be commissioned to facilitate the bond issue and provide technical support.

JP Morgan will manage the selection of legal counsel and trustees, prepare the offering circular, organise investor roadshows, market the issue and determine the optimal timing and issue structure.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A wooden boat lies stranded amid thick layers of sludge and floating waste on Gulshan Lake in the capital. Once known for its scenic beauty, the lake is now severely polluted by sewage and garbage, emitting a foul stench. Twelve sewage discharge points have been identified along the lake. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has directed the authorities to take immediate measures to stop sewage and polluted water from entering it. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

FERTILISER DEALER APPOINTMENT

JS committee seeks probe into alleged irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Agriculture yesterday voiced concern over allegations of irregularities, political influence and bribery in the appointment of fertiliser dealers in several districts, and called for investigations and action if claims are proven.

The concerns were raised during a committee meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban that reviewed fertiliser stocks, distribution and dealer appointments.

At least three committee members alleged that fertiliser dealerships had been awarded to Awami League supporters in exchange for money. One opposition member claimed political affiliation had become the primary criterion for selecting dealers, sidelining experienced and qualified applicants.

According to meeting sources, at least three committee members alleged that fertiliser dealerships had been awarded to Awami League supporters in exchange for money. One opposition member claimed political affiliation had become the primary criterion for selecting dealers, sidelining experienced and qualified applicants.

Following the meeting, the committee recommended that allegations related to dealer appointments in Lalmonirhat, Barguna, Satkhira, Faridpur, Naogaon and Jashore be thoroughly examined and addressed.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

SNAP POLLS VICTORY

Serbian student movement gets ready to govern

AFP, *Belgrade*

Serbia's student-led movement is preparing to govern, ending 14 years of right-wing populist rule.

The victory in Sunday's parliamentary vote came after nearly two years of anti-government protests sparked by the 2024 collapse of a canopy at Novi Sad railway station that killed 16 people.

The disaster has been widely blamed on corruption and triggered some of Serbia's largest protests since the fall of strongman Slobodan Milosevic in 2000.

The result will be closely watched across Europe as the continent faces a wave of youth-led demonstrations. But political analyst Dusan Vucicevic said that the movement was distinct from other protests.

"This experiment in grassroots democracy ultimately succeeded in securing more than 50 percent of the vote, although it remains unclear whether a similar model could work in other countries," Vucicevic told AFP.

According to independent electoral watchdog CeSID, the Students' List secured 53 percent of the vote while Vucic's populist Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) garnered almost 39 percent based on 96 percent of the count.

The result would give them 140 MPs in

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Houthi missile sites destroyed in Yemen

Says Saudi coalition after Riyadh airport attack; Egypt okays military support for KSA

AGENCIES

The Saudi-led military coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis struck several of its missile launchers and storage facilities, a spokesman said yesterday, while the Iran-backed group claimed a new attack on Riyadh's international airport.

The coalition's operation came a day after explosions rattled Saudi Arabia's capital and authorities sent text messages to residents warning them of a "hostile aerial threat" to the city, which has been heavily targeted by the Houthis in recent weeks.

Makkah pact officials to meet Iran officials in Tehran | Widening UAE oil spill prompts more beach closures | US helped Gulf export 1.5bn barrels through Hormuz

The Saudi-led military coalition's spokesman Turki al-Maliki posted on X that the operation had destroyed four ballistic missile launchers, as well as a missile depot and tunnels used by the Houthis, who control a large part of Yemen, reports AFP.

The operation "focused on cutting off Houthi militia supply lines between areas under their control," he added. The group has carried out waves of strikes on the King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, including an attack this month that killed 13 people.

Meanwhile, Egypt's parliament yesterday authorised its military to provide

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

'Brazil is no one's backyard'

Says Trump critic Lula after winning fourth presidential term

AGENCIES

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won a fourth presidential term after defeating conservative challenger Flávio Bolsonaro in Sunday's runoff election, with the electoral authority confirming his victory and extending left-wing leadership in Latin America's largest economy.

Addressing supporters in São Paulo after his re-election, Lula, a vocal critic of



US President Donald Trump, said, "BRAZIL IS NO ONE'S BACKYARD," in an apparent swipe at US influence in the region, after defeating Flávio Bolsonaro, who had advocated closer ties with the Trump administration.

He also called for the regulation of digital platforms, claiming Brazil had

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Radomir Saicic, a chemistry professor and candidate on the student-backed electoral list, celebrates the Students' List victory in the Serbian parliamentary elections on stage with other candidates and supporters at their headquarters in Belgrade on Sunday evening. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN FOCUS

Jubo Dal leader expelled over FB post on home boss

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A local leader of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal in Tangail was expelled from the party allegedly for 'violating party's discipline by making inappropriate comment about the government and the party's senior leaders in social media'.

SM Rafiqul Bari, who was serving as the senior joint convener of Tangail's Sakhipur upazila unit Jubo Dal, was expelled following a Facebook post on Friday.

"I am mentally hurt. I want resignation of the home minister," read the Facebook post.

He, however, did not clarify the reasons for his grievance or the context in which he made this demand.

Following his expulsion, Rafiqul

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Woman sent to jail over remarks criticising BNP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A Mymensingh court yesterday sent a woman to jail this afternoon after she allegedly expressed frustration with the BNP government during a Facebook Live session over the theft of electrical wires from her business.

The woman, identified as Sathi Akter, owns a beauty parlour in Bhaluka upazila of Mymensingh.

Sathi went live twice on Facebook from an account named "Sathi Makeover" at around 2:00pm on Sunday, expressing anger over repeated thefts at her business.

At one point, she said, "I voted for the BNP government, and now I am the sufferer."

As the videos circulated on social media and tension reportedly escalated, police took her into

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

WASHING WONDERS

The Daily Star
DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2026
KARTIK 11, 1433 BS

S1 SUPPLEMENT



THE SCIENCE BEHIND A GOOD WASH

ILLUSTRATION: MAGNIFIC

TASHAHUD AHAMED RAFIM

"I put my favourite woollen sweater in the washing machine, expecting it to be cleaned. I did not expect it to shrink. Now, it barely fits anymore," says Lipi Akter, a homemaker from Mugda, Dhaka.

A washing machine is supposed to clean clothes. However, the process may have some unwanted side effects too. A cleaned shirt may become faded, or a sweater may no longer fit. How can something designed to remove dirt also damage the clothes? To understand why these things happen, we must first follow a load through the machine.

HOW CLOTHES ARE CLEANED

Professor Muhammad Abdur Rahman Bhuiyan of the Department of Textile Engineering at Dhaka University of Engineering & Technology says effective washing depends on two things working together: detergent and movement. Neither can be used excessively without negative effects on the fabric.

Imagine putting a sweaty cotton T-shirt, dusty pair of jeans and a polyester sports jersey into a machine. Once a cleaning routine starts, water enters through an inlet and detergent mixes with it. The clothes begin moving through the water. In a front-loader machine, the rotating drum lifts them and lets them fall. Some top-loaders instead move them with an agitator or impeller.

According to Bhuiyan, the washing process starts with loading the clothes and adding detergent, followed by water entering through an inlet valve. The machine then moves the clothes at a controlled speed to loosen dirt. Once the wash is complete, the dirty water is drained, the clothes are rinsed, and a final high-speed spin removes excess moisture.

Each stage has a different purpose. While washing loosens dirt, rinsing carries it away. The final spin mainly removes excess water at the end of cleaning cycle.

DETERGENTS ARE ESSENTIAL

Water alone can can carry away some sweat and loose dust. But body oils and greasy stains cling to the fabric and no amount of mechanical force or water can remove them adequately. Detergent contains cleaning ingredients called surfactants, which help water spread through clothing and loosen those oily marks.

Bhuiyan explains that surfactants have two parts, one attracted to water and the other to oil and grease. When detergent comes into contact with dirty fabric, the oil-attracting part attaches to greasy particles, while the water-attracting part helps lift them away from the fibres and disperse them in the wash water.

> **A good wash is not just about removing dirt. It is about getting clothes clean without damaging their fibres, fading their colours or changing their shape.**

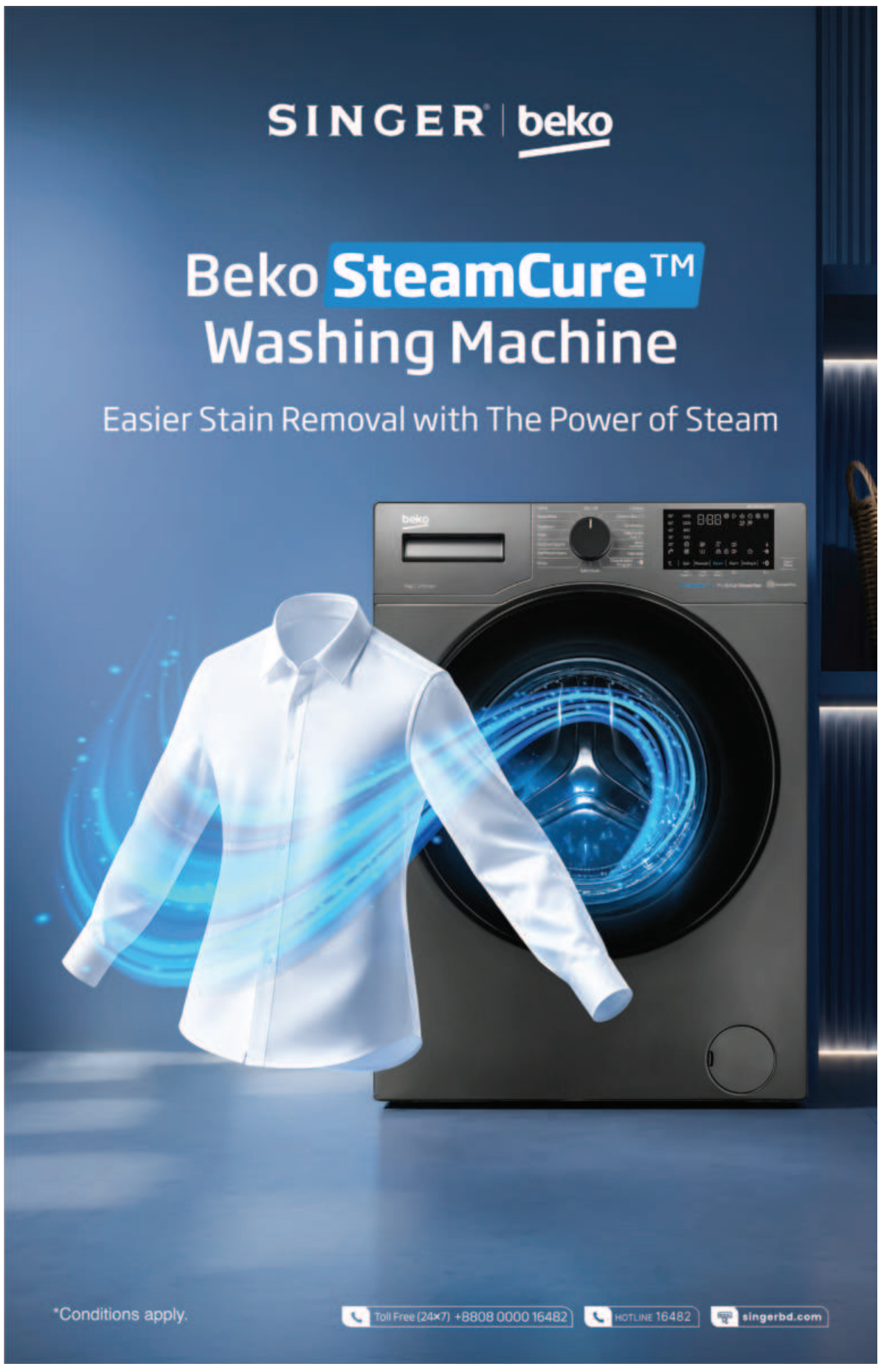
Once loosened, oily dirt can remain dispersed in the wash water instead of immediately settling back on the cloth. Moving water also carries away particles of dust. That is why draining and rinsing matter as much as the first wash: dirt has to leave the machine, not merely leave the shirt.

THE FORCE CONUNDRUM

The movement that makes washing effective also has a downside. As clothes move inside the drum, they rub against one another and the machine's surface. While this friction helps dislodge dirt, Bhuiyan points out that excessive rubbing can loosen fibres,

SEE PAGE S3





WASHING WONDERS

The Daily Star
DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2026
KARTIK 11, 1433 BS

S2 SUPPLEMENT

The cost of your clean clothes

MARZIA ZAHAN MOMO

Tandra Khan's family of four has no single way of doing laundry. She handwashes everyday soft garments and underclothes, gets domestic help with heavier items such as bedsheets, curtains and blankets, and uses her washing machine when time is short or clothes need to dry sooner.

Laundry is a routine household chore, but its cost goes beyond detergent, water and electricity. Buying a washing machine requires an initial investment, while handwashing takes time and effort. Paid laundry services offer another option, each with a different price. So, what does a load of laundry really cost?

A washing machine's first expense comes before the first wash. A local appliance manufacturer's website lists a semi-automatic model at Tk 12,500, an automatic top-loader at Tk 24,500 and a front-loader at Tk 54,990. These are examples from one manufacturer, not market averages, and the machines offer different levels of convenience.

For primary school teacher Mehenika Moon, that convenience matters. Finding time to handwash clothes alongside work is difficult, so her husband usually handles the laundry. The machine makes the task easier to manage and she considers it worth the expense.

But the purchase price should also be counted towards each wash. Consider a four-person household washing three loads a week, or around 13 a month. If a front-loader costing Tk54,990 lasts five to eight years, its purchase price works out at roughly Tk44–71 per wash. This estimate assumes regular use over that period; the actual cost depends on the machine's lifespan and how often it is used.

Detergent adds another regular expense. An online shopping platform lists a 1,020ml bottle of liquid detergent for front-loading machines at Tk400. The manufacturer's regional dosing guidance recommends 60ml for an ordinary load and 90ml for heavily soiled clothes. At that price, detergent costs around Tk24–35 per wash. The amount varies by product and how dirty the clothes are.

Tandra prefers handwashing some garments because she feels it gives her better control over water and detergent use. Her household uses around two kilograms of washing powder a month across different washing methods, so it would be misleading to attribute the entire amount to machine washing. Her experience also does not establish that handwashing always uses less water.

IT professional Safwan Ahmed used to spend weekends handwashing his clothes, with heavy jeans particularly difficult to wash and dry. He recently switched to a small top-loading machine to save time and effort, although he shares Tandra's concern about water consumption.

The running cost of a machine depends on its water and electricity use. For an eight-kilogram front-loader, the manufacturer's specifications list 48 litres of water and 0.54 kilowatt-hours of electricity per cycle. Based on published residential electricity rates from Dhaka Power Distribution Company, electricity costs roughly Tk3–8 per wash. At Dhaka WASA's published residential rate, the basic water charge for 48 litres is less than Tk1.


PHOTO: MARZIA ZAHAN MOMO

Actual consumption varies by programme and load. Water may not appear separately on shared apartment bills, and the interviewees did not measure their handwashing water use, making a direct comparison difficult.

Drying clothes presents another challenge. Gulshan Ara, a homemaker and home-food entrepreneur, says handwashing and wringing clothes can be tiring when balconies are small and sunlight is limited. A machine's spin cycle removes much of the water, making clothes easier to hang up, although they still need time to dry. For her, reducing the effort and mess of dripping clothes is part of the machine's value.

For the illustrative front-loader, the estimated cost of ownership, detergent, electricity and basic water charges comes to roughly Tk 70–115 per wash. For 13 loads a month, that is around Tk 900–1,500, or Tk 11,000–18,000 a year. The estimate excludes repairs, maintenance and other possible charges. It is a modelled example, not an average household bill.

Even with a machine at home, some clothes need a different approach. Gulshan handwashes delicate or colour-sensitive garments. Banker Debika Roy does the same with her beloved saris, which she enjoys wearing to work. She puts everyday clothes in the machine but washes her saris gently with a mild liquid detergent suited to the fabric.

For those without a washing machine, paid services offer an alternative. At Dhaka University's Shamsunnahar Hall, resident Prapti books YOUR Laundry through the Your Campus app. She reports paying Tk 50 for one wash or Tk 200 for five, bringing the cost down to Tk 40 per wash with the package. Paying per use removes the need for an upfront investment, making it practical for students in shared accommodation.

A Dhaka-based commercial laundry service advertises washing and drying at Tk 99 per kilogram, or Tk 495 for five kilograms, before applicable collection fees. Unlike booking a campus machine, this is a staffed service, so the prices are not directly comparable.

Then there is the labour behind handwashing. Asia Begum, a domestic worker on Dhaka's northern outskirts, says she earns Tk 100 an hour for an agreed task. Heavy laundry is particularly tiring, she says, and she feels insufficiently compensated. Without knowing how long a load takes, it is impossible to calculate a reliable per-load labour cost. Her experience, however, highlights the work that disappears when handwashing is treated as free.

Tandra's routine offers no universal answer. A machine requires an initial investment and regular running costs. Handwashing demands time and effort, while paid services come with their own charges. The balance depends on the household, the garments and the work involved. The cheapest option on paper does not always mean the lowest cost in practice.

Breaking down the expense of a 5kg laundry load

Cost by washing method

One 5 kg load, five washing methods; costs are indicative rather than directly comparable.

Washing method	Estimated cost	Cost breakdown
Handwashing at home	Tk 10–25	Detergent and water. Personal labour is excluded.
Domestic help	Tk 60–125	Laundry assistance: Tk 50–100, depending on the area and the arrangement. Detergent and water: Tk 10–25.
Own washing machine	Tk 70–115	Machine ownership: Tk 44–71, based on 13 washes a month over 5–8 years. Detergent: Tk 24–35. Electricity: Tk 3–8. Water: below Tk 1.
Campus laundry	Tk 40–50	Single-wash or package rate.
Commercial laundry	Tk 495	Tk 99 per kg × 5 kg; includes washing and drying.

Cost of one machine wash

Cost component	Estimated cost
Machine ownership	Tk 44–71
Detergent	Tk 24–35
Electricity	Tk 3–8
Water	Below Tk 1
Estimated total	Tk 70–115

This model assumes 13 washes a month over five to eight years and excludes maintenance.

Note

These are illustrative estimates for a 5 kg load rather than market averages: handwashing excludes personal labour, domestic-help costs vary by time, task and arrangement so no fixed estimate is given, machine ownership assumes 13 washes a month over five to eight years with maintenance excluded, campus laundry assumes a 5 kg load is permitted, and commercial laundry includes drying and may carry additional charges.


ILLUSTRATION: MAGNIFIC

Sources: Walton, DPDC, Dhaka WASA, Surf Excel, YOUR Campus, Opulent Laundry and field interviews. Data compiled in 2026.

WASHING WONDERS

The Daily Star
DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 27, 2026
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The science behind a good wash

FROM PAGE S1

causing them to gather into tiny balls known as pilling.

Over time, this can weaken the fabric and affect its original appearance.

This does not affect every kind of clothing the same way. Cotton is absorbent and usually tolerates everyday washing, but a dyed T-shirt can fade and certain cotton garments can shrink. Denim is sturdy, although repeated rubbing may wear down its surface colour. A polyester sports jersey may hold on to body oils and odours, yet aggressive heat is not necessarily the answer.

Wool is particularly sensitive to the wrong kind of movement. Each fibre has tiny scales on its surface. In water, rubbing can make those scales catch on neighbouring fibres. The fibres become more tightly packed, and the garment shrinks. This process, known as felting, is one possible explanation for what happened to Akter's sweater, although her wash settings are unknown.

DIFFERENT MODES FOR DIFFERENT FABRICS

A 2008 study in Ultrasonics Sonochemistry compared different ways of agitating wool during laundering. Researchers Christopher Hurren, Peter Cookson and Xungai Wang found that experimental ultrasonic washing caused less shifting of fibres and less felting than hand washing, while removing more of the tested stains. The experiment did not test ordinary home washing machines, but it showed why the kind of movement matters.

Some woollen garments are specially treated to resist shrinkage and can be machine washed if their care labels permit it. Silk shirts and delicate blouses may also need gentler handling, depending on their weave, dyes and finishing. The label matters as much as the fibre name.

Modern machines offer programmes to manage these differences. Cotton, synthetics, wool and delicate cycles may use different temperatures, drum movements, washing times and spin speeds. A quick wash is generally meant for a smaller, lightly soiled load. Load sensing can help some machines adjust the water level, but it does not mean they can automatically recognise every fabric.

PROPER PRACTICES MATTER

Even simple choices make a difference. "If we put too many clothes into a machine, they become crowded, and water and detergent cannot move properly between them," Bhuiyan says. "If we use too much detergent, more rinsing may be needed. Otherwise, detergent can remain in the clothes. The aim is to get them clean without damaging their properties."

A clean garment is not necessarily a well-washed one, especially if it comes out faded, stretched or smaller than before. Akter's sweater is a reminder that what happens inside the drum matters just as much as what comes out of it. After all, a good wash should take the dirt out of clothes, not the life out of them.



ILLUSTRATION: MAGNIFIC

Choose the right detergent for your wardrobe

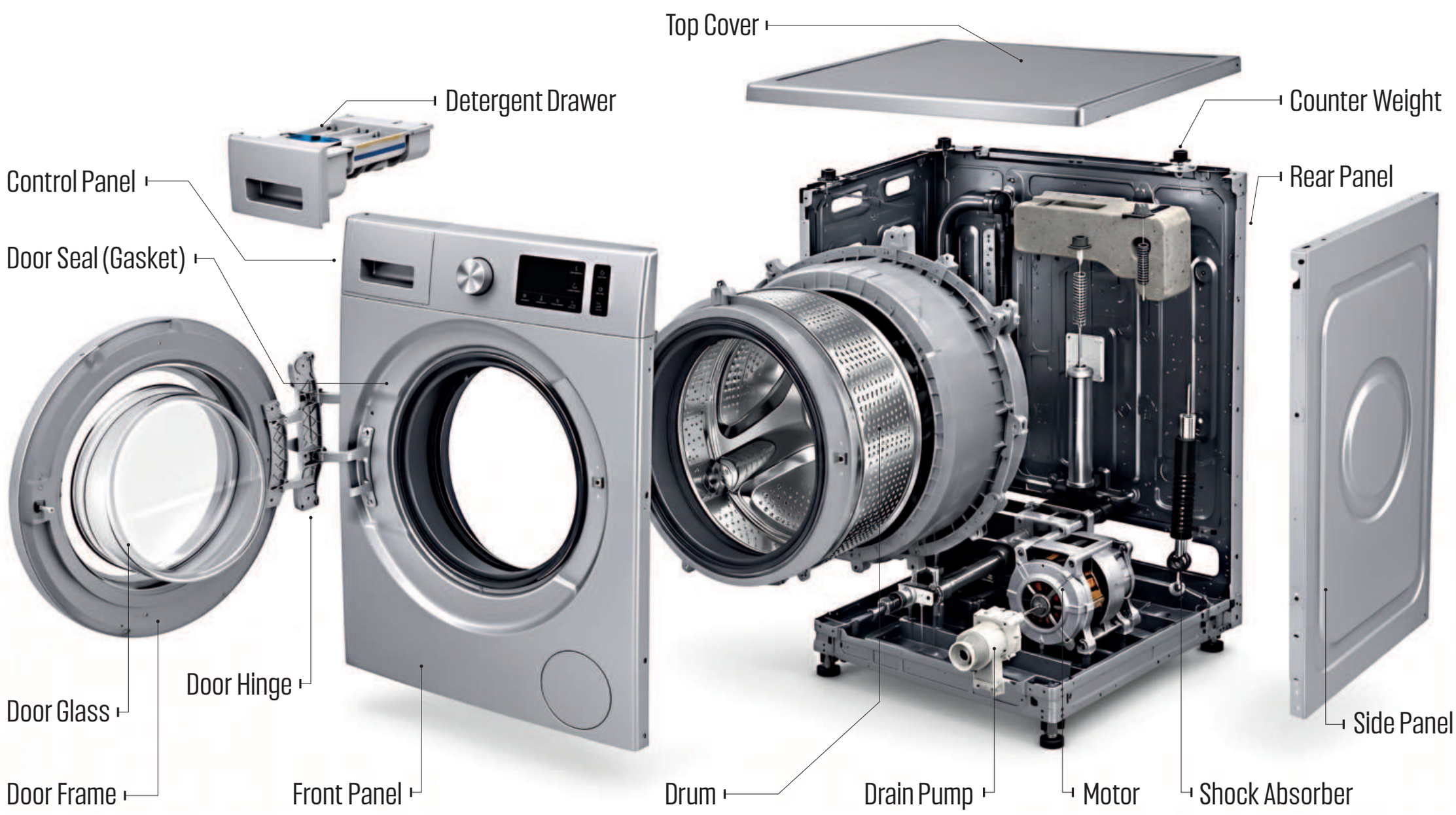
A quick guide for fabric care & detergent selection

Fabric Category	Detergent Type	Market Brand Examples
Heavy Duty & Sturdy (Cotton, Denim, Canvas)	High-Active Powder Detergent	Surf Excel, Tide, Jet, ACI Supreme
Delicates & Luxury (Silk, Wool, Chiffon)	Fabric Shampoo / Mild Liquid	Rin Liquid, Jet Liquid, Orix Fabric Shampoo
Brights & Whites (Vibrant & White Clothes)	Color Guard / Brightening Detergent	Rin, Wheel, Orix Crystal Wash, Chaka Super White, Redy
Everyday & Synthetics (Nylon, Polyester, Activewear)	Multi-Purpose General Detergent	Wheel, ACI Smart, Redy, Rin Washing Liquid

Source: Detergent Dillemas?, The Daily Star, 2024. Unilever Bangladesh Limited, Square Toiletries Limited. Remark LLC/ Herlan, ACI Limited



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The eight-step LAUNDRY DANCE

TAHSIN MONON

Rayan has a system. At the end of a long day, he takes off his clothes and leaves them on a chair, alongside the rest of the week's laundry. When the pile becomes impossible to ignore, he calls a pickup service a few blocks away.

A North South University student living in a bachelor home in Mirpur, Rayan measures his laundry routine in steps: two from his bed to the chair and six from the chair to the door. Two days later, his clothes return clean, crisp and ironed.

Would he trade this arrangement for a Western-style laundromat, where customers wash their own clothes in shared machines?

"Over my eight-step dance with my dirty laundry? I don't think so," he says.

Dhaka has plenty of laundry services. Yet self-service laundromats, a familiar sight in many Western cities, are hard to find here. This reporting could not identify one currently operating in the capital. Why has the idea not caught on?

LAUNDRY AT YOUR DOORSTEP

There is, however, a business in Mirpur called Hour Laundromat. Despite the name, customers do not operate its machines themselves.

Abdullah Al Mamun, one of its four partners, says the idea was to adapt the Western laundry model to local needs. Laundry takes up time, especially for working people and nuclear families. For decades, he says, washing machines and detergent have been the main tools for making the chore easier.

Hour takes the task out of customers' hands altogether.

Customers book through WhatsApp. A delivery worker collects and weighs their clothes, checks for stubborn stains and fabric issues, and labels the items. The clothes are then washed, ironed and delivered to their door. Automated messages let customers know when their laundry reaches the facility and when it is ready.

Prices are based on weight rather than the number of items. Mamun says Hour was the first to introduce this system in the local market. Regular delivery takes one to two days, which he sees as a selling point. Customers in a hurry can use a walk-in service that takes two to three hours.

Those waiting at the shop can have tea or coffee and use free Wi-Fi in the lounge.

Even the name carries a small joke. Mamun says "Hour" is meant to sound like "our", giving the service a homely feel.

TURNING INTEREST INTO BUSINESS

Mamun has found that getting people to understand the service is part of the work.

Hour has spent heavily on digital advertising, he says. Plenty of people are curious, but not all become customers. The idea of paying by weight, in particular, can take some explaining.

In a city where laundry can be collected from the doorstep, doing it yourself may be a tough sell

Walk-in customers pose another challenge. They see what look like ordinary domestic washing machines and are not necessarily interested in using them themselves. For Hour, the attraction is having someone else take care of the laundry.

Sometimes, that means handling an unusual request. Mamun recalls one customer bringing in a five-foot teddy bear for a wash.

The business has yet to break even, he says. It was set up in October 2024 and began operations in June 2025. It now has one outlet in Mirpur and also serves business clients. Alongside its four partners, Hour has one investor.

THE FAMILIAR LAUNDRY ROUTINE

Students such as Rayan may seem like natural customers for a pickup-and-delivery service. Waniya has less need for one.

A consultant at a law firm, she lives in Uttara, where domestic help does the family's laundry in a washing machine at home.

Some items still leave the house. Bed sheets, window curtains and sarees go to the corner laundry, which her family has used for as long as she can remember.

Would she try a laundromat?

"Depends, actually. If they are easily accessible then maybe, but it will still be once in a while," she says.

Mamun says households like hers are harder to win over. When domestic help is available, a professional laundry service struggles to compete on convenience and cost. He believes it can offer a better wash, though. In his view, traditional neighbourhood laundries tend to focus more on ironing than washing.

These habits help explain the shape of Dhaka's laundry market. People generally pay someone to wash, collect, deliver or iron their clothes. Taking them somewhere to use a shared machine has not become part of that routine.

There is also competition among the growing number of pickup-and-delivery services. Rayan says he switched to one for better care of his clothes and free delivery on orders above seven kilograms. He feels traditional laundries can be rough on fabrics, another reason for his choice.

WOULD DHAKA DO ITS OWN WASHING?

Two customers and one operator cannot speak for an entire city. But their experiences suggest that having the work done matters more to these customers than having access to a machine.

For Rayan, the eight steps between his bed, the laundry chair and the door are enough. Waniya already has domestic help and a trusted neighbourhood laundry. Neither has much reason to make a separate trip to wash clothes.

Mamun has not ruled out opening more neighbourhood branches. That will depend on Hour meeting its targets and finding enough demand. For now, he wants more people to know about the service and first-time customers to return. He believes those who have tried it may come back when they need their clothes cleaned in a hurry.

A self-service laundromat would ask customers to make that trip and do some of the work themselves. For people used to having their laundry collected from the doorstep, it may be a hard sell.

For now, at least, the eight-step laundry dance seems difficult to beat.

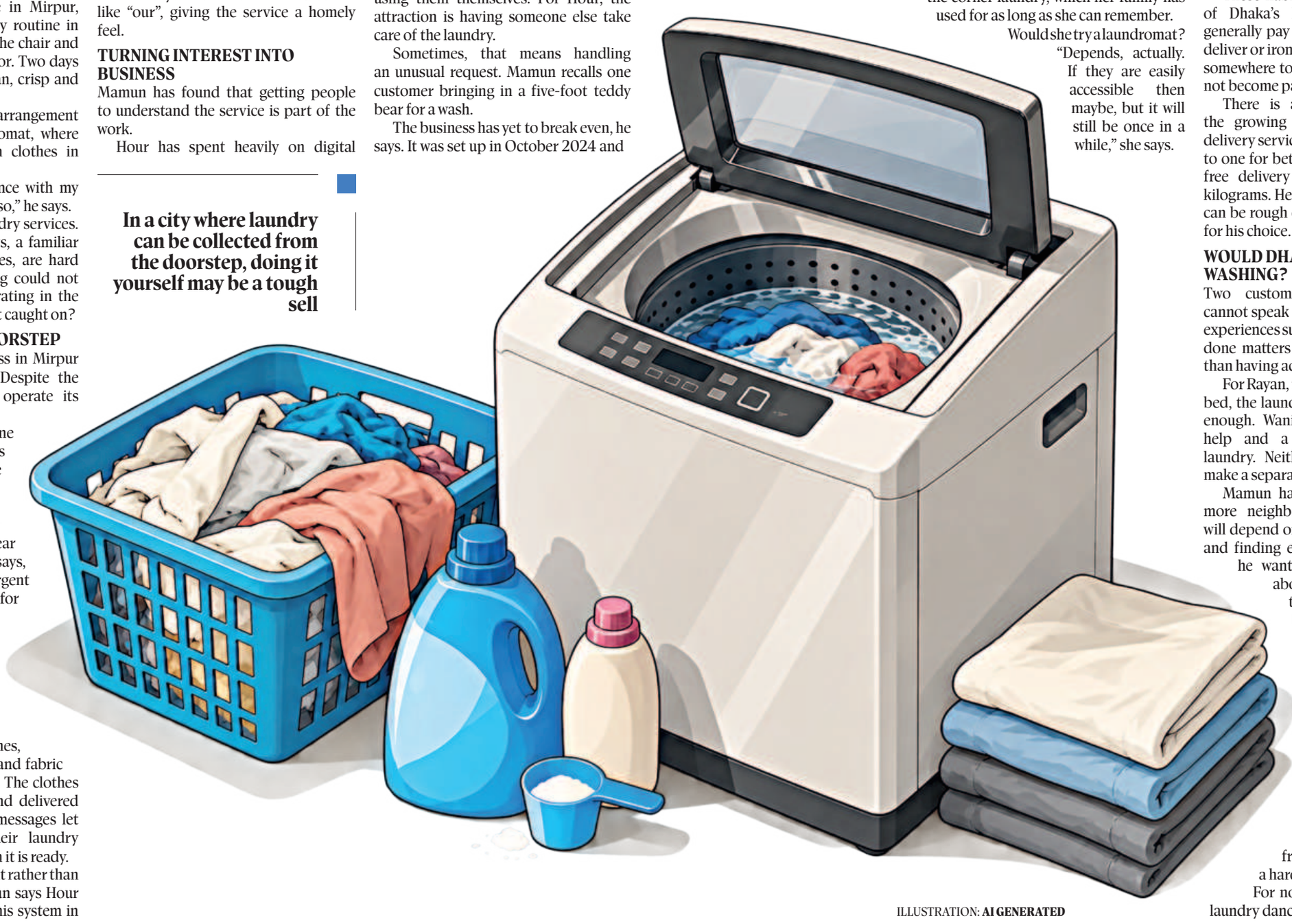


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