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

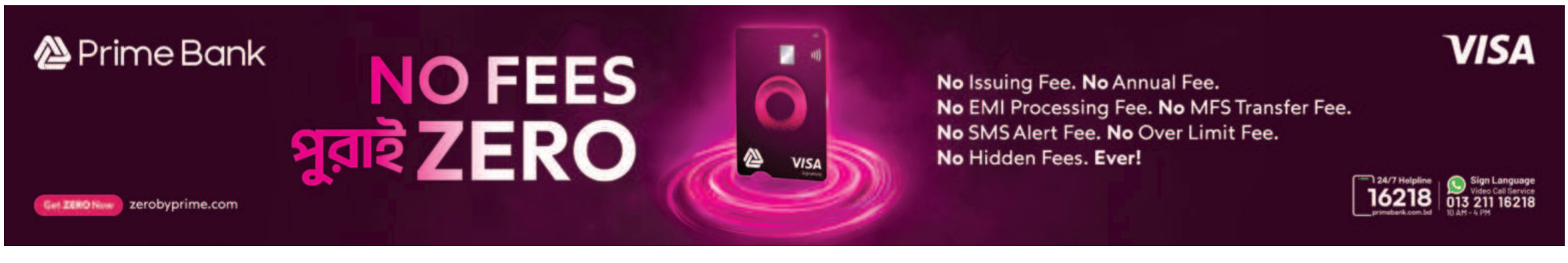
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FIVE UNIVERSITIES

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.

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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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