

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

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'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

