DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026



"Venezuela will become a prosperous country, and who knows? Maybe some day soon it'll become a prosperous 51st state."

**TRUMP** floats Venezuela as 51st US state

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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## NO COUNTRY FOR GENTLE GIANTS

**A herd of wild elephants, including calves, gathers beside a waterbody in Mymensingh's Haluaghat, near the Bangladesh-India border. Wild elephants began crossing from India's Meghalaya state into neighbouring Sherpur around the year 2000, initially numbering 15 to 20. Their population gradually grew, with herds regularly moving between forests on both sides of the border. However, barbed-wire fencing erected along the border in 2007, followed by the closure of passage gates on the Indian side, has reportedly prevented the elephants from returning to their original habitats in Meghalaya, said BSS. Although 44 gates and 11 underpasses were reportedly built to facilitate their movement, the gates remain closed. According to Forest Department officials, around 120 elephants, including 25 to 30 calves, now roam the border forests. With their traditional migration routes blocked and food sources dwindling, the elephants increasingly venture into farmland and settlements, triggering conflicts with humans.** PHOTO: **AYMAN NAKIB**

# Out-of-pocket medical bills push 1.08cr into poverty

The number found in 2022 govt study is nearly double the 2005 figure, with 42% people facing financial hardship

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Out-of-pocket (OOP) healthcare expenditure pushed more than 1.08 crore Bangladeshis, or 6.4 percent of the population, below the poverty line in 2022, a new government study has found.

The figure is almost double the 56 lakh people, or 3.9 percent of the population, pushed below the poverty line by OOP expenditure in 2005, according to the study.

The rise came even though the national poverty rate more than halved, from 40 percent in 2005 to 18.7 percent in 2022.

The share of the population facing financial hardship due to healthcare spending also rose, from 28.2 percent in 2005 to 41.7 percent in 2022, well above the global estimate of 26 percent in 2022.

"The poorest households were the worst sufferers," said Subrata Paul, focal point for Universal Health Coverage and National Health Accounts at the Health Economics Unit (HEU).

The HEU conducted the study with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Swedish Embassy. The findings of the study, "Financial Risk Associated with Out-of-Pocket Healthcare Payments and Benefit Incidence in Bangladesh", were presented at a hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Tarique vows to address Japanese firms' concerns

Invites investment in key sectors; seeks stronger trade ties



**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday assured Japanese companies that his government would address their concerns over Bangladesh's business environment, including energy supplies, infrastructure, customs clearance and taxation, while inviting them to invest in key sectors.

Addressing the Bangladesh-Japan Economic Forum Dialogue at the Japan

PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# Mob killings persist despite pledges of action

Rights activists blame culture of impunity, failure to punish perpetrators

**DIPAN NANDY**

Around 4:00am on Tuesday, 32-year-old pickup driver Jony received a phone call from his friend Arafat for a meeting in the capital's Kajla area.

Soon after he reached there, he was taken to a local club near Gate No 4 of Bibirbagichha in Jatrabari, where a group of men allegedly beat him up on suspicion of being a mugger.

Around 6:00am, Arafat called another pickup driver Md Nishat to the area.

He was also assaulted by the group on the same allegation. Jony died on the spot, while 27-year-old Nishat, who suffered critical injuries, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 9:00am yesterday.

Nishat's sister Sharmin Akter alleged that seven to eight people, including a local influential named Harun, were involved in the incident.

She said her father, Md Mohsin, was also beaten up when family members went to the spot.

Sharmin said Arafat called her brother and Jony.

She said they killed her brother over a previous enmity. "We want justice. We want those who beat him up to be held accountable."

Hasan Kabir, sub-inspector of Jatrabari Police Station, said,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



- At least 15 killed in mob beatings this month
- 3 beaten to death in Dhaka within a week
- Govt records 40 deaths in Jan-Sept; ASK 171, HRSS 187
- Many high-profile cases remain unresolved

# IEDCR director assaulted by pro-BNP doctors

**DAB expels its leader**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Prof Kazi Ahmed Zaki, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control, and Research (IEDCR), was assaulted in his office allegedly by members of the Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB) yesterday.

The pro-BNP physicians' body expelled its assistant legal affairs secretary Jahid Hasan in a revised notice last night, saying that investigation found his involvement in the incident.

Hours earlier, the organisation suspended him and served him a show-cause notice over the incident, which took place around 11:30am.

Video footage shows Prof Zaki holding a meeting with several people in his office when eight to nine individuals entered the room, pulled him out of his chair, and assaulted him.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



**Relatives help a patient into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw outside Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning as a strike by private ambulance owners demanding parking facilities on the hospital premises left patients struggling to arrange transport for medical tests, hospital transfers and trips home for the second consecutive day. The strike was suspended for seven days following an evening meeting with the hospital administration and police.** PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

# As classrooms thin out, govt sleeps on

**MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR**

Bangladesh's secondary school enrolment figures should serve as a strong warning. While the number of schools has been going up, the number of students has been going down. The mainstream schools lost 18 lakh since 2018.

Successive governments have been putting in considerable effort for over two decades to expand access to education. Despite concerns over quality, enrolment had been increasing. But the latest figures since 2018 are sobering. Even the government schools, which are virtually free, have been losing students too.

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

At the same time, enrolment is increasing at registered Alia madrasas as well as the unregistered Qawmi madrasas. English-medium schools have also witnessed student growth.

This suggests that the choice of school is not determined by fees only. But the contrasting trend suggests that families are making different choices based on their financial circumstances, religious beliefs and expectations from school.

While religious preference is one reason to choose Alia madrasas, affordability is another important factor. Mainstream schools not only charge higher fees, families also have to pay for coaching, guidebooks, uniforms and transport, besides other incidentals like exam fees. For lower-middle-income households already struggling with high living costs, these expenses can

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

PURBACHAL RAID

# Seven women detainees get bail

## 4 of 26 released from jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven of the 26 women arrested during a raid on the Purbachal residence of Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Abdullah Al Jahir have secured bail from a Dhaka court since Sunday.

Judge Md Shahjahan Kabir of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court granted them bail, according to a court employee.

According to court records, at least 30 people, including seven women, have so far filed appeals against their convictions.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Oliva Sharmi, jailer of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail in Gazipur, said three of the women were released yesterday, while another had

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



**Prime Minister Tarique Rahman waves to expatriate Bangladeshis during an exchange of views at the New Otani Hotel in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. His wife, Dr Zubaida Rahman, was also present.** PHOTO: PID

# Thakurgaon-1 by-polls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voting in the Thakurgaon-1 by-election will be held today amid allegations by the Jamaat-led 11-party alliance that the local administration is not acting impartially.

The Election Commission, however, yesterday said there was no cause for concern, adding that it was closely monitoring the polling environment and law-and-order situation.

Five candidates are contesting the by-election, including BNP-backed Mirza Faisal Amin, who is running with the "sheaf of paddy" symbol, and Delawar Hosen of the Jamaat-led alliance, whose symbol is the "scales".

The others are Islami Andolan Bangladesh-backed Khademul Islam (hand fan), Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan-backed Abdul Alim Nizami (banyan tree) and Bangladesh Congress candidate Muhammad Omar Farukh (green coconut).

The seat fell vacant on August 21 after former Thakurgaon-1 MP Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was elected president and took oath of office.

The constituency, comprising Thakurgaon Sadar, Bhulli and Ruhia upazila, has 516,138 voters. Polling will take place from 8:00am to 4:00pm at 185 centres.

Md Quamrul Islam, returning officer and district election officer, said all necessary measures had been taken to ensure peaceful and credible polling.

A total of 185 presiding officers, 989 assistant presiding

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

# Tension grips Gurudaspur over JCD leader's murder

## Natore-4 MP's son remanded, case sent to DB for probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Tension prevails in Natore's Gurudaspur upazila following the death of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader, who succumbed to his injuries on Monday night, 12 days after being attacked.

Shakil Islam, 30, joint general secretary of the JCD's Gurudaspur upazila unit, died at a hospital, triggering anger among party activists who demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Nooruzzaman, elder son of Natore-4 BNP lawmaker Abdul Aziz, has been arrested and placed on a three-day remand in connection with the murder. However, the attackers have yet to be identified.

Angry locals chanted slogans against the lawmaker when he attended Shakil's janaza on Tuesday night. Earlier, Aziz had announced Tk 20 lakh in financial assistance for the victim's family.

Following the janaza, protesters vandalised Rash Mega Shopping Mall in Chachkoir Bazar, owned by expatriate Russell Hossain, a close associate of Nooruzzaman.

Meanwhile, Gurudaspur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abdul Hannan was withdrawn yesterday for professional negligence, while the murder case was transferred to the Detective Branch for investigation.

Gurudaspur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Fahmida Afroz said additional law enforcement personnel had been deployed across the upazila.

"Aside from the vandalism at the shopping complex, no other untoward incident has occurred, and the situation is under control," she said.

Police said helmeted assailants hacked Shakil with sharp weapons in Chachkoir Bazarpara on October 14.

He was initially taken to Gurudaspur Upazila Health Complex, then transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital before being referred to Dhaka for advanced treatment.

On October 19, Shakil's father filed a case against 8-10 unidentified people with Gurudaspur police.

Natore Additional Superintendent of Police Mohammad Ifte Khayer Alam said, "Police are working from various angles to identify and apprehend both the attackers and the masterminds behind the incident".

He declined to disclose further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Locals alleged that Shakil was close to the lawmaker's younger son Mahamuduzzaman, who has a longstanding political rivalry with Nooruzzaman, and that the killing might have been linked to their dispute.

However, MP Aziz rejected the allegation, saying the disagreement between his sons was a "family matter" unrelated to Shakil's death.

Natore DB OC Nazrul Islam said Nooruzzaman's name had surfaced during the murder investigation.

# Govt seeks World Bank funding for MRT Line-2

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has finally sent a formal request to the World Bank to provide funding for the 30.4-kilometre Metro Rail Line 2, stretching from Gabtoli to Narayanganj via New Market.

The estimated cost for the metro line is Tk 60,837 crore, which is about $4.95 billion at the current exchange rate, according to the Dhaka Mass Transit Company.

In the letter sent to the WB early this month, the government sought technical assistance for overall metro rail management alongside financing for the Metro Rail Line 2, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

After several years of slow progress in metro rail construction, the current government is emphasising the speedy execution of all metro rail projects.

The government plans to construct six metro rail lines in Dhaka city. Among these, construction work has begun for MRT Line-6, Line-1 and Line-5 (Northern Route), all with funding from Japan.

ROUTE
**Gabtoli to Narayanganj via New Market**

LENGTH
**30.4km**

ESTIMATED COST
**Tk 60,837 crore**
**($4.95 billion)**

During Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's ongoing tour of Japan, emphasis was placed on expediting the implementation of Japan-funded metro rail projects.



The MRT Line-5 (Southern Route), funded by the Asian Development Bank and South Korea, got the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approval last month, while the government is awaiting a response from Korean Exim Bank for the MRT Line-4.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury will be travelling to South Korea from Japan on a six-day visit to discuss Korean financing for the two metro rail lines.

The WB, which is preparing a new country programme for Bangladesh, is being sought for the MRT Line-2 financing. The MRT Line-2 will start from Gabtoli; stop at Dhaka Uddan, Bosila Mor, Mohammadpur BRTC Bus Stand, Dhanmondi 15 (Jigatola), Science Lab, New Market, Azimpur, Lalbagh, Chawkbazar, Mitford, Nayabazar, Dholaikhal, Dayaganj, Jatrabari (Kanchpur/Kanchla), Demra, Signboard, Bhuigarh, Chashara (Jalkuri), Shib Market; and stop at Narayanganj, according to the preliminary development project proposal (PDPP).

Khosru, also the planning minister, approved the PDPP on September 20.

It will have interchanges with both the routes of MRT Line-5 at Gabtoli; MRT Line-6, MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-4 at Kamalapur Metro Station; and MRT Line-4 at Signboard.

Of the total length of 30.4 kilometres, 7.5km would be underground and rest overground.

# Out-of-pocket medical bills

FROM PAGE 1

OOP payments are the money households pay directly for healthcare, including medicines, diagnostic tests and treatment, rather than having the costs covered by the government or others.

A person faces financial hardship when OOP healthcare payments exceed 40 percent of the money remaining after meeting basic needs, while impoverishing OOP payments are those that push a household below the poverty line.

The study analysed four rounds of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), conducted in 2005, 2010, 2016 and 2022, to assess trends in healthcare spending, its impact on poverty and inequalities in access to publicly funded health services.

The incidence of catastrophic health expenditure climbed from 12.5 percent in 2005 to 32.1 percent in 2022, the study found.

"This indicates a sharp deterioration in households' ability to afford healthcare without facing financial strain," Subrata said.

Catastrophic health expenditure (CHE) occurs when OOP healthcare payments exceed 10 percent of a household's total consumption expenditure. The WHO replaced the indicator with financial hardship last year, as CHE does not reflect the actual situation.

Average monthly household OOP payments (inflation adjusted) rose from Tk 1,241 in 2005 to Tk 3,238 in 2022, and the proportion of households reporting any OOP payment rose from 52.5 percent to 92.7 percent during this time, Subrata said.

The study identified medicines, diagnostic tests, hospitalisation and consultation fees as major contributors to household healthcare expenses. It also found growing reliance on pharmacies for outpatient care, with their share rising from 32.5 percent in 2016 to 55.4 percent in 2022.

In 2022, 90.8 percent of people in the poorest consumption quintile faced financial hardship due to healthcare spending, compared with only 13.6 percent in the richest quintile, he added.

Rural people bore the brunt, although financial hardship increased in both rural and urban areas. The study found that 47.9 percent of people in rural areas faced financial hardship in 2022, compared with 28.2 percent in urban areas.

Barishal division showed a striking reversal, he said. In 2005, it had the lowest rate of financial hardship among all divisions, at 22.5 percent. By 2022, it had the highest, with 59.1 percent of people facing financial hardship.

Public facilities remained the main provider of inpatient care, but their share fell from 61.3 percent in 2016 to 56 percent in 2022, while the private share rose from 36.9 percent to 42.5 percent during this time, he said.

The report also raised concerns over the distribution of public healthcare benefits, finding that public health spending no longer clearly favoured poorer households despite their greater needs.

"Compared with 2016, the findings suggest a loss of the previously observed pro-poor distribution of inpatient public health benefits, raising concerns about whether public resources are adequately reaching populations with the greatest health and financial needs," the study says.

To reduce financial hardship, the study recommended increasing public financing, improving spending efficiency and equity, restoring the pro-poor distribution of public healthcare benefits, ensuring free and reliable access to essential medicines and diagnostics, and providing continuous and affordable care for chronic conditions.

Speaking at the programme, State Minister for Health MA Muhit said the findings reflected the dire straits of the health sector under the Awami League government.

Expressing deep concern over the alarming rise in OOP healthcare expenditure, Muhit said the government was committed at the highest level to curbing irregularities and corruption in the health sector.

Touhidul Islam and Sayem Ahmed of WHO Bangladesh gave separate presentations on the study. Rajesh Narwal, acting WHO representative to Bangladesh, was present at the programme, which was chaired by Enamul Haque, director general of the HEU.

# Mob killings

FROM PAGE 1

"A gang of youths committed a mugging in the area on Tuesday morning. Locals chased them. Two were caught and beaten while the others fled."

The deaths of Jony and Nishat occurred just six days after Alam Sheikh, who came to Dhaka in search of a job and reportedly had some mental health issues, was beaten to death on the premises of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital on October 21 on suspicion of being a kidnapper.

The Daily Star, however, could not contact Arafat and Harun for comments.

The three killings within a week are among at least 15 deaths reported in mob beatings by media across the country this month, again raising questions about the authorities' ability to prevent such violence and bring those responsible to justice.

"What is being called mob beating is actually mob violence, or outright terrorism," rights activist Nur Khan Liton told The Daily Star. He said the violence continued because the state and law enforcers had failed to take visible and effective action.

Kamarun Munira, assistant inspector general (media) at Police Headquarters, said police were taking action whenever they received information about mob beatings. She also claimed that such incidents had declined compared with earlier periods and that the overall situation had improved.

The government repeatedly said mob violence would be dealt with firmly.

On September 1, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed pledged strong action against mob violence, saying that the government was fully alert to the situation.

"We are very alert and aware. We will firmly tackle the culture of mob violence that had developed in Bangladesh, Insha Allah," he told reporters after inaugurating a BGB facility in Sylhet.

The minister also said no separate law was necessary to deal with mob violence, as existing laws already provided sufficient scope for action against the perpetrators.

**MOB VIOLENCE DATA**

The government's assessment of mob violence also differs sharply from the figures documented by rights bodies.

According to a home ministry report released on October 20, based on Police Headquarters data, 40 people were killed in 63 incidents of mob beatings between January and September this year.

During the corresponding period last year, 63 people were killed in 107 incidents, indicating a 41.12 percent decline in the number of incidents. The number of injured people also fell from 82 to 65, according to the report.

But Ain o Salish Kendra documented 171 deaths in mob beatings during the first nine months of this year, more than four times the government's figure. Human Rights Support Society recorded an even higher toll, reporting 187 deaths and 401 injuries in 398 incidents during the period.

According to ASK, 128 people were killed in mob beatings in 2024 and 198 in 2025. Its records show that 497 people were killed between January 2024 and September this year. HRSS documented 168 deaths in 2025. The organisation recorded 259 deaths in 413 incidents between September 2024 and January 2025.

Even victims who were targeted were taken from hospitals after being injured in mob beatings and subjected to further beatings. Take the instance of Wahiduzzaman Shamim, 38, who died after being beaten up in Debhata, Satkhira, over "hurting religion sentiments" on October 13.

Police rescued him from the attackers and admitted him to hospital. However, a group later took him away from the hospital and assaulted him again. He died on the way to another healthcare facility.

**MUCH-TALKED CASES**

Despite hundreds of deaths caused by mob beatings since 2024 and repeated promises of swift justice, several high-profile cases remain unresolved.

In Rangpur, Rupalal Das and Pradip Das were beaten to death on August 9, 2025, on suspicion of theft. Videos showed hundreds of people assaulting them at Burirhat High School. Eight police personnel were suspended for failing to intervene.

The victims' families alleged that Rubel Paikar, accused of planning the killings, threatened them after securing bail in January. They filed a general diary and a complaint.

Inspector (Investigation) Abdullah Al Mahmud of Taraganj Police Station said 19 people were arrested and a chargesheet would be submitted soon.

At Dhaka University's Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall, Tofazzal Hossain was beaten to death on September 18, 2024, on suspicion of theft. Police initially submitted a chargesheet against 21 people, while Police Bureau of Investigation later filed a supplementary chargesheet against 28.

On March 10 this year, a Dhaka court accepted it and issued arrest warrants against 22 accused. Six were arrested.

On the same day, former Chhatra League leader Shamim Ahmed, known as Shamim Molla, was beaten to death at Jahangirnagar University over allegations of involvement in attacks on quota reform protesters. The PBI has yet to submit its investigation report.

Another ex-BCL leader, Abdullah Al Masud, was beaten to death on September 7, 2024, at Binodpur Bazar near Rajshahi University. The probe moved from local police to the DB and then to the PBI, but no one has been arrested, and no significant progress has been reported.

On December 18, 2025, garment worker Dipu Chandra Das was beaten to death in Mymensingh's Bhaluka over "hurting religious sentiments". His body was later hung from a tree and set on fire. According to media reports, 23 people were arrested.

Nur Khan said mob violence had become widespread since August 5, 2024, with groups targeting people over land disputes, personal issues, and political rivalries. He said the failure to ensure exemplary punishment had created a culture of impunity. Although some perpetrators were arrested, many later secured bail.

"The state has repeatedly failed to send a strong message to perpetrators, encouraging them to believe they can escape punishment."

ASM Nasiruddin Elan, director of Odhikar, said people often lost their sense of right and wrong when joining violent crowds, while some mobs were deliberately formed to serve personal interests.

He blamed the government's failure to take a strong stand against such violence and called for nationwide awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas, alongside punishment for perpetrators.

Tawhidul Hoque, associate professor at DU's Institute of Social Welfare and Research, said, "When people lose confidence that the state will protect them, the tendency to take justice into their own hands increases."

He said inadequate action by successive governments and the tendency to justify mob violence due to social divisions had encouraged perpetrators to believe they could escape punishment.



**Firefighters work at the site of an industrial facility hit by a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, yesterday. The strike injured five people, including a 4-year-old child, Ukraine's emergency service said.** PHOTO: REUTERS

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# Verdict in 11-yr-old child's rape case on Nov 11

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

A Netrokona tribunal yesterday set November 11 to deliver its verdict in a case over the rape and impregnation of an 11-year-old girl in Madan upazila.

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal fixed the date after concluding arguments from both sides, said state counsel Advocate Nurul Kabir Rubel.

Rubel expressed hope that the court would impose the maximum punishment. The accused, madrasa teacher Aman Ullah Mahmudi, alias Sagar, has been in jail since his arrest on May 6. A court later granted police three days to question him in custody.

On May 10, the court allowed DNA testing as part of the investigation. A Criminal Investigation Department report subsequently found a 99.99 percent DNA match between the newborn and Aman, according to investigation sources.

The charge sheet also names Aman's brother, Maimun, alias Mamun Mia, 32.




**Loader tractors remove vendors' goods during an eviction drive near Mirpur-1 roundabout yesterday as Dhaka North City Corporation clears footpaths of illegal structures.**

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

IN FOCUS

# Constitution guarantees protection against disappearances

## Says Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Existing constitutional safeguards are sufficient to protect people against enforced disappearances, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said yesterday, noting that Article 32 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting of the special committee on constitutional amendments, he said the government had also enacted legislation to prevent enforced disappearances and provide remedies for victims.

At the meeting, the committee heard accounts and demands from victims' families, including relatives of those still missing, and survivors who returned after years of enforced disappearance and torture. The families sought state recognition and support, while survivors called for justice and safeguards to prevent such abuses from recurring, Salahuddin said.

Asked whether an agency accused of involvement in a disappearance could investigate the incident, the minister said the law provides for investigations by a force other than the one facing allegations.

# No grading system for recruiting agencies yet

## Speakers call for accountability, migrant protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has yet to introduce an effective grading system for recruiting agencies, leaving prospective migrant workers without an official way to assess recruiters before paying for overseas jobs.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Nurul Haque Nur acknowledged the shortcoming yesterday at a dialogue titled "Fair and Ethical Recruitment: Accountable Sub-agents".

Supported by The Asia Foundation and funded by FCDO, the event was organised by Witness Foundation at a Dhaka hotel.

**Workers often lacked receipts or other payment evidence, making complaints against intermediaries difficult to pursue.**

**PERVEZ SIDDIQUI**
Director of Witness Foundation Executive

Nur said he could not confidently recommend a recruiting agency even to people from his own constituency seeking jobs abroad. Although the issue had been discussed with the prime minister, little progress had been made, he said.

He added that the software for recruiting agencies to submit

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

# The growing toll of uncontrolled diabetes

## Speakers warn 92% of patients fail to control diabetes; stress early screening and better healthcare

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uncontrolled diabetes increases the risk of dying from heart disease eightfold, accounts for about 60 percent of dialysis patients, and can reduce life expectancy by up to 6.5 years, healthcare experts said at a roundtable yesterday.

They called for urgent national action, as well as early screening, lifestyle changes, improved access to treatment and universal health coverage to prevent complications.

The roundtable, titled "World Diabetes Day 2026: Acting Early to Prevent Diabetes and Improve Care in Bangladesh", was jointly organised by The Daily Star and Nevian Life Science Limited at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Dr Fazila Tun Nesa Malik, professor of cardiology and chief consultant at the National Heart Foundation, said cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among people with diabetes.

Uncontrolled diabetes increases the risk of heart attacks, abnormal heart rhythms, and heart failure, she said, calling for early screening and integrated management of diabetes and cardiovascular risks.




PHOTO: STAR

**Speakers at a roundtable jointly organised by The Daily Star and Nevian Life Science Limited at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.**

Dr Shamim Ahmed, professor of nephrology at Kidney Foundation Hospital and Research Institute, said diabetes is the leading cause of chronic kidney disease in Bangladesh, accounting for about 60 percent of dialysis patients.

A lack of playgrounds for children, excessive screen time, fast food and sugary drinks, and widespread physical inactivity are contributing to rising obesity and diabetes among younger people, he said.

Advanced kidney disease requiring lifelong dialysis or a transplant could devastate families financially and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# Landlords must build septic tanks, soak wells

## Rajuk sets Nov 15 deadline, warns of mobile court action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) has set November 15 as the deadline for owners of buildings with approved provisions for septic tanks and soak wells to begin construction, warning of mobile court action against violators.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of a technical committee formed to reduce pollution in lakes under Rajuk's jurisdiction and ensure sustainable environmental management at the Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

The committee decided to send residential societies lists of 1,269 buildings that have received final notices to install septic tanks, soak wells and sewage treatment plants (STPs).

It also decided that Rajuk must approve the structural designs of septic tanks and soak wells within three days of receiving applications.

Owners who fail to start construction by the deadline will face mobile court action under the Building Construction Act, 1952, and the Dhaka Metropolitan Building Construction Rules, 2025.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Ahammad Sohel Monzoor attended the meeting, along with Rajuk Chairman Md Reazul Islam, Additional Secretary Md Abdul Matin, Additional Secretary Md Sarwar Alam and Rajuk Member Eradul Haque.

# Six killed in two road accidents

## Two siblings, father, son, among deceased

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and at least 22 others injured in two road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Rangpur, four people were killed and 17 injured when a bus rammed into a sand-laden dump truck parked beside the Dhaka-Rangpur highway in Mithapukur upazila early yesterday.

The deceased are Mozaffar Rahman, 44, and his younger sister Golapi Begum, 36, of Chandrakhana Talukdar Para in Kurigram's Phulbari; Alamgir Hossain, 40, of Kurigram Sadar; and Apel Mia, 26, the bus driver's helper.

Moazzem Uddin, OC of Baradarga Highway Police Station, said the truck had been parked in front of a mosque.

The Khan Enterprise bus hit the truck from behind. Locals, police and firefighters took the injured to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Dr Abdul Mokaddem, the hospital's deputy director, said one person died at the scene and three others at the hospital. At least 17 injured passengers were receiving treatment.

In Narayanganj, a man and his four-year-old son were killed and at least five others injured when a bus collided head-on with a truck on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Bandar yesterday.

The deceased -- Shafiqul Islam, 35, a brick kiln worker, and his son Bipul -- were from Uttar Khagura village in Gaibandha.

SI Shafiul Alam of Kanchpur Highway Police Station said the bus was heading towards Chattogram when it collided with the truck travelling on the wrong side.

Kanchpur Highway and Bandar police took the injured to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

# Jungle Salimpur: 65 land deeds registered for 'gang leader' in a day

## Sub-registrar questioned, transfer put on hold; DC seeks probe

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Sitakunda Sub-Registrar Raihan Habib registered 65 land sale deeds in favour of Md Yasin, the alleged leader of the "Yasin gang" in Jungle Salimpur and an accused in the killing of a Rapid Action Battalion (now Special Response Battalion) officer.

Habib registered the deeds yesterday, shortly before his scheduled transfer. After the matter came to light, Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Zahidul Islam Mian lodged a verbal complaint with the law ministry, seeking an investigation and appropriate action. The ministry then postponed Habib's transfer for seven days.

Sitakunda UNO Fakhrul Islam also questioned the sub-registrar over the registrations.

District administration sources said around 3,200 personnel from the army, SRB, police and borderguards conducted an operation in Jungle Salimpur on March 9, taking control of the area for the first time.



PHOTO: STAR

**An aerial view of Jungle Salimpur in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila.**

Authorities had previously failed to establish control despite several attempts following attacks on law enforcers and administrative officials.

Two joint SRB-police outposts have since been established at SM Pilot High School in Jungle Salimpur and Alinagar High School.

The area contains around 3,100 acres of government-owned khas land spread across Jungle Latifpur, Jungle Salimpur, Jungle Bhatiyari, Jalalabad and Uttar Pahartali. Nearly 30 percent of the land is hilly, and the area also includes privately owned plots.

Land grabbers and criminal groups have controlled government land and assets there for years. Several armed groups, including those led by Yasin and Rokonuddin, have operated in different parts of Jungle Salimpur.

Yasin and his associates reportedly went into hiding following the latest operation.

Sources at the sub-registrar's office and the district administration said Nazim Uddin, a former general

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

# CUET classes resume after 36 days, but protest continues

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT,** *Ctg*

Students of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) returned to classes yesterday after a 36-day shutdown, but attendance remained low, and several departments did not resume classes as protests demanding the reinstatement of former vice-chancellor Prof Abu Sadat Muhammad Sayem continued.

Meanwhile, a consultation committee formed by the University Grants Commission held talks with teachers, students, officials and employees yesterday to address the deadlock.

Chittagong University Vice-Chancellor Prof Al Forkan, a member of the committee, told The Daily Star, "We have talked to all the stakeholders of the protests, including teachers, staff and officers. We have recorded their version."

The committee will prepare its findings based on ground-visit issues, he added.

Classes resumed in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, its head Prof Fouzia Gulshana Rashid said. However, classes remained suspended in departments including Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) and Computer Science and Engineering (CSE).

EEE department head Prof Tofayel Ahmed said they are ready to hold classes.

# Garbage dumping pollutes Ayman river

**OUR CORRESPONDENT,** *Mymensingh*

Years of indiscriminate waste dumping along the banks of the Ayman river in Mymensingh's Muktagachha upazila have been polluting the water, while local authorities have failed to address the problem.

Residents of Trimohoni, beside the Mymensingh-Tangail road, have long been suffering from the nuisance amid inadequate monitoring and poor waste management by the municipal authorities.

The 32.75-kilometre-long river flows through Muktagachha upazila before meeting the Brahmaputra in Trishal.

Established in 1878, Muktagachha municipality covers 11.99 square kilometres and has a population of over 61,000, generating around 12 tonnes of waste daily. However, the municipality lacks an adequate number of waste bins.

A 3.5-acre landfill in Nandibari, outside the municipality, has been used for waste disposal for the past three years. Around 10 tonnes of waste are dumped there daily using four municipal dump trucks, said Conservancy Officer Md Shamim Kabir.

He said a shortage of conservancy workers had also limited the municipality's waste disposal capacity.

As a result, household and market waste is often dumped in the open, particularly along roadsides and riverbanks, causing pollution and inconvenience to residents.

Sukomol Das, a resident of Trimohoni, said accumulated garbage washes into the river during rain, polluting the water and harming the environment.

Arshad Ali, 70, a local farmer, said the Ayman river once served as a lifeline for agriculture, river transport and fisheries in the area. "Years of pollution, illegal grabbing and siltation have left the river on its deathbed," he said.

Hundreds of people in at least seven villages live on both sides of the river.

Contacted, Krishna Chandra, Muktagachha upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and president of the upazila unit of the Nodi Rokhha Committee, said he would look into whether local residents or shopkeepers were dumping waste along the riverbank.

Steps would also be taken to curb river pollution and maintain ecological balance and a healthy environment, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

**Household and market waste is often discarded indiscriminately along the banks of Ayman river in Muktagachha of Mymensingh, polluting the river's water.**

# SAU students vandalise fair structures

## Protest Secretariat relocation plan

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) vandalised structures being built for two fairs at the old Dhaka International Trade Fair ground in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday, protesting the planned relocation of the Secretariat to the site.

Around 70 to 80 students damaged the main gate, corrugated iron sheets and fences around several stalls, according to police and fair organisers.

Preparations were underway for a month-long Asia International Trade Fair and a week-long Youth Fair.

Md Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said the students claimed the field belonged to the university and vowed to prevent the fairs.

Organisers alleged that construction materials and tools were also taken away, causing financial losses. They said they had government permission to build the stalls and urged the authorities to resolve the land dispute.

SAU Acting Proctor Prof Tajul Islam said the field remained university property on paper but had been temporarily acquired by a previous government for the trade fair.

"After the trade fair was permanently shifted to Purbachal, a university steering committee had been working to reclaim the field. Amid this, the announcement to relocate the secretariat here was not taken well by the teachers and students," he said.

# No grading system for recruiting agencies yet

FROM PAGE 3

details of their sub-agents was not fully operational. Agencies would eventually have to submit lists of their representatives for publication on the ministry's website so workers could verify their identities before making payments.

He also questioned whether existing training courses matched overseas job demand and whether training centres tracked how many trainees secured jobs abroad.

Presenting data, Witness Foundation Executive Director Pervez Siddiqui said overseas employment fell 32 percent to 5,69,979 workers during January-September this year, from 8,38,892 in the same period last year, although remittances reached $35.56 billion in FY2025-26.

Migrants needed around 14 months to recover their recruitment expenses, he said.

Of 1,414 complaints, 785 had been resolved, with Tk 6.48 crore refunded to affected workers, he said. Workers often lacked receipts or other payment evidence, making complaints against intermediaries difficult to pursue.

Syed Saiful Haque, chairperson of WARBE Development Foundation, alleged that agencies collected large sums without receipts, while intermediaries obscured accountability. He also accused many agencies of trading visas.

Advocate Farida Yeasmin of the Centre for Women and Children Studies said legal recognition of sub-agents would achieve little without enforcement. Referring to the 2023 legal amendment and 2025 regulations, she called for updated lists of registered intermediaries and proposed using the BMET digital system to monitor compliance.

ILO National Programme Manager Rehnuma Salam Khan urged the government to assess workers' skills, working conditions and protection, as well as whether migrant complaints were declining.

Fakhrul Islam, a former joint secretary of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), proposed online recruitment records listing selected workers and authorised charges, with payments through banks and legal action against agencies that overcharged.

Former BAIRA secretary-general Ali Haider Chowdhury called for diversifying labour markets, providing demand-based training and punishing trafficking networks.

Former expatriates' welfare secretary Kazi Abul Kalam, expatriates' welfare ministry Additional Secretary Ahmadul Haque, and Ahmed Aziz of the International Organization for Migration also spoke.

**PRAYER TIMING**

**OCTOBER 29**

| | 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

NOTIFICATION OF BANK ASIA
**EARNINGS DISCLOSURE PROGRAM**
Q3, 2026

Bank Asia

This is for information of all concerned that an Earnings Disclosure Program on Un-Audited Third Quarter (Q3) Financial Statements 2026 of Bank Asia PLC. will be held at 3:30 p.m. on 3 November 2026 through a digital platform, as per the BSEC notification dated 20 June 2018. All concerned shareholders, existing and potential investors across the globe, research analysts, financial reporters and individuals involved in capital market activities are cordially invited to participate in the program through the live webcast facility at following link : **https://meetbd.live/BankAsiaQ32026**, User name : **BankAsiaQ3-2026**, Password : **basia@321**. The details of un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the third quarter ended on 30 September 2026 will also be available on the website of the Bank at 'www.bankasia-bd.com'.

**Bank Asia PLC.**
Corporate Office, Bank Asia Tower
32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Dated: Dhaka
28 October 2026

SAUDI-BANGLADESH INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED (SABINCO)
79, Nikunja-2, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh
*Investing for a Sustainable Tomorrow*

**TENDER NOTICE**

**FOR SALE OF 100% SHARES OF GAZI FISH CULTURE LIMITED (GFCL)**

Sealed tenders are invited from intending **local/international buyers** for the proposed sale of **100% shares along with all rights to the assets and all liabilities and obligations** of **Gazi Fish Culture Limited (GFCL),** an operational (going concern) project, on **"As-Is, Where-Is"** basis. Intending buyers will have to submit their quotation in separate prescribed tender forms and other required papers duly filled in and supported by necessary documents.

**KEY PARTICULARS OF GFCL**

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of the enterprise | Gazi Fish Culture Limited (GFCL) |
| Location | Mouza: Kailashgonj, Tetultala, Hodda and Gunari under Dacope, Khulna. |
| Items produced | White fish (Rui, Catla, Pangash, Tilapia etc.) |
| Project Land area | 378 Acres (approximate) as per Deed |
| Other amenities | Electricity from Pally Biddut Samity, office cum staff accommodation, Mosque etc. |

**TENDER DOCUMENTS**

- Set of prescribed forms, tender conditions and other related paper can be procured from the **Accounts Department, SABINCO,** on all working days from **01 November 2026 to 12 November 2026** during office hours on cash payment/Pay Order/Demand Draft of **Tk. 50,000/-** (Taka fifty thousand only) favoring SABINCO which is non-refundable. Interested foreign bidders are required to pay in equivalent U.S. Dollars through a bank draft/pay order favoring SABINCO.
- Relevant information relating to the enterprise is available with SABINCO. It can be obtained by intending buyers (those who have purchased bid documents) during office hours from **01 November 2026 to 12 November 2026** upon signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).
- Second copy of the Money Receipt issued by SABINCO will have to be attached with the completed tender document.

**SUBMISSION & OPENING**

Tender Box Closes
**12 November 2026 at 02:00 p.m.**

Tender Opening
**12 November 2026 at 03:00 p.m.**

Bidders' representatives may attend the tender opening session.

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

1. Tenders found incomplete or otherwise faulty shall stand canceled.
2. Interested foreign participants will have to obtain all relevant permission/clearance from BOI and relevant government agencies on their own and all related costs and expenses will have to be borne by them.
3. SABINCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**Managing Director**
**SABINCO**

SAUDI-BANGLADESH INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED (SABINCO)
79, Nikunja-2, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh
*Investing for a Sustainable Tomorrow*

**TENDER NOTICE**

**FOR SALE OF 100% SHARES OF S&M SHRIMP CULTURE LIMITED (SMSCL)**

Sealed tenders are invited from intending **local/international bidder - buyers** for the proposed sale of **100% shares along with all rights to the assets and all liabilities and obligations of S&M Shrimp Culture Limited (SMSCL),** an operational (going concern) project, on **"As-Is, Where-Is"** basis. Intending bidder - buyers will have to submit their quotation in separate prescribed tender forms and other required papers duly filled in and supported by necessary documents.

**KEY PARTICULARS OF SMSCL**

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of the enterprise | S&M Shrimp Culture Limited (SMSCL) |
| Location | Katakhali under Banishanta mouza, Dacope, Khulna (opposite side of the river of Mongla port). |
| Items produced | White fish (Rui, Catla, Pangash, Tilapia etc.) |
| Project Land area | 104.60 Acres (approximate) as per Deed |
| Other amenities | Electricity from Pally Biddut Samity, office cum staff accommodation etc. |

**TENDER DOCUMENTS**

- Set of prescribed forms, tender conditions and other related paper can be procured from the **Accounts Department, SABINCO,** on all working days from **01 November 2026 to 12 November 2026** during office hours on cash payment/Pay Order/Demand Draft of **Tk. 50,000/-** (Taka fifty thousand only) favoring SABINCO which is non-refundable. Interested foreign bidders are required to pay in equivalent U.S. Dollars through a bank draft/pay order favoring SABINCO.
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2. Interested foreign participants will have to obtain all relevant permission/clearance from BOI and relevant government agencies on their own and all related costs and expenses will have to be borne by them.
3. SABINCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**Managing Director**
**SABINCO**

# The growing toll of uncontrolled diabetes

FROM PAGE 3

emotionally, he warned. He called for routine screening to help detect kidney problems early and reduce the burden on families.

Dr Shahjada Selim, associate professor of endocrinology at Bangladesh Medical University, said nearly 92 percent of diabetic patients in Bangladesh fail to control their condition.

He warned that diabetes also leads to heart disease, kidney failure, fatty liver, and a decline in mental health.

Uncontrolled diabetes can reduce life expectancy among people under 50 by an average of 5.5 years for women and 6.5 years for men, he said.

He called for a holistic approach involving medication, lifestyle changes, and management of blood pressure and cholesterol.

He also stressed the need for greater government involvement and universal healthcare amid a shortage of endocrinologists and trained healthcare workers.

Prof AK Azad Khan, president of the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh, called for addressing the underlying causes of diabetes and ensuring access to essential treatment.

He said insulin should be recognised as a human right and its availability should be made a government responsibility.

Citing research, he also highlighted the effectiveness of faith-based awareness campaigns, particularly led by mosque imams.

Unpublished research suggested premarital screening and counselling could reduce gestational diabetes by 45 percent, he added.

Dr Md Faruque Pathan, professor of endocrinology at BIRDEM General Hospital, described prediabetes as a critical stage when intervention can prevent the onset of diabetes. He said nearly 50 percent of patients seek medical care only after serious complications have developed.

Rapid and unplanned urbanisation, sedentary lifestyles and excessive screen time are contributing to insulin resistance and rising rates of prediabetes, he said.

As prediabetes often has no visible symptoms, he called for screening at community clinics, upazila health facilities, and schools.

Dr Faria Afsana, head of endocrinology at BIRDEM General Hospital, recommended that asymptomatic adults aged 35 and above undergo diabetes testing every three years, saying relying on symptoms alone could delay diagnosis.

People at higher risk, including those with obesity, hypertension, polycystic ovary syndrome or a family history of diabetes, should be tested annually, she said.

Overweight children with risk factors should be screened from age 10 or the onset of puberty, she said, recommending the two-sample oral glucose tolerance test.

Prof Dr Shaikh Zinnat Ara Nasreen warned that undiagnosed or poorly controlled diabetes during pregnancy can lead to excessive foetal growth, difficult deliveries, birth injuries and neonatal complications.

It can also increase the child's risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease later in life, while making mothers more vulnerable to recurrent infections, she said.

She recommended screening at the first antenatal visit and between the 24th and 28th weeks of pregnancy, ideally before conception.

Prof M Saifuddin of Dhaka Medical College Hospital noted that South Asians face higher metabolic risks even at normal BMI levels.

He called for reducing excessive carbohydrate intake and consulting endocrinologists early.

Dr MA Samad, CEO of National Healthcare Network Bangladesh; Dr Nazmul Kabir Qureshi, senior consultant of endocrinology at NHN Uttara Executive Centre; and Abdus Sobhan, sales director at Nevian, also spoke.

Tanjim Ferdous, head of strategic partnerships at The Daily Star, moderated the discussion.

**Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited**
**'Connecting Worlds for Enriching Lives'**
**116 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000**
**www.bscl.gov.bd**

**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/) for the procurement of the following services:

| S/N | EOI ID | EOI Name | Package No: | EOI Publication Date and Time | EOI Closing Date and Time | EOI Opening Date and Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01. | 1336764 | Procurement of Consultancy Service for Power System Audit of Both GS (Retender) | 14.39.0000.000.012.07.0004.23.162(E) | 29-Oct-2026 Time: 10:00(A.M) | 18-Nov-2026 Time: 16:00(P.M) | 18-Nov-2026 Time: 16:00(P.M) |

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 (http://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).

(Signed)
Md. Golam Sarowar
General Manager (Admin & Procurement)
Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited.

GD-2605

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**
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www.prison.gov.bd

পত্র সংখ্যা- ৪৪.০৪.০০০০.০২১.০৫.০০৬.২৬-১৮৭৮

তারিখঃ ১১ কার্তিক ১৪৩৩ / ২৭ অক্টোবর ২০২৬

**"পুরাতন গাড়ী পুন: বিক্রয়ের বিজ্ঞপ্তি"**

১। কারা বিভাগের ব্যবহৃত অকেজো ঘোষিত নিম্নবর্নিত গাড়ীটি দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয় করা হবে। আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

| নং | গাড়ীরে রেজিষ্ট্রেশন নম্বর | গাড়ীর ধরণ/মডেল ও ইঞ্জিন | জ্বালানী | মন্তব্য |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ১ | ২ | ৩ | ৪ | ৫ |
| ক। | ঢাকা মেট্রো-ঘ-১১-০৯২১ | পাজেরো জীপ (মিতসুবিশি) ও নং০২৩১ | প্রেট্রোল | ৪র্থ বিজ্ঞপ্তি |

২। দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ঃ ০৪-১১-২০২৬ বিকাল -৪.০০ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।

৩। দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ সময় ও তারিখ ঃ ০৫-১১-২০২৬ সকাল - ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।

৪। দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান ঃ চকবাজার থানা প্রাঙ্গন, বিভাগীয় কমিশনার এর কার্যালয় এবং কারা অধিদপ্তর,ঢাকা।

৫। গাড়ী দেখার স্থান ঃ কারা অধিদপ্তর প্রাঙ্গন।

৬। দরপত্র খোলার সময় ঃ ০৫-১১-২০২৬ বেলা-১৩.০০ ঘটিকা।

৭। নিরাপত্তা জামানত ঃ প্রস্তাবিত মূল্যের ১০%।

৮। কারা বিভাগের ব্যবহৃত পুরাতন গাড়ী বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত সিডিউল কারা অধিদপ্তরের www.prison.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইট এ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে। উক্ত ওয়েবসাইট থেকে ডাউনলোড করে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ৫০০/- ( পাঁচশত মাত্র) টাকা নগদ/যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হতে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট কারা মহাপরিদর্শক, বাংলাদেশ ,ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে জমা দিয়ে দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন দরপত্রের সাথে উক্ত পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/ফি পরিশোধের রশিদ সংযুক্ত না থাকলে দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

৯। নিরাপত্তা জামানতের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফস এবং দরপত্রের মূল্য বাবদ পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট আলাদাভাবে দাখিল করতে হবে।

১০। যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার সম্পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন। উহার জন্য কোন কারণ দর্শাতে কর্তৃপক্ষ বাধ্য নহে। অন্যান্য তথ্যাদি জানার জন্য কারা অধিদপ্তরের নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর সহিত যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

২৭/১০/২০২৬
মুহাম্মাদ হেনায়েত উল্যাহ
সহকারী কারা মহাপরিদর্শক (লজিস্টিক)
পক্ষে-কারা মহাপরিদর্শক
ফোন নং-৫৭৩০০৫১৩
aig.dev@prison.gov.bd

GD-2602

UNREST DAMAGE

# French Senate passes bill to make protesters pay

**AFP,** *Paris*

The French parliament's upper house yesterday passed a bill that would make protesters financially liable for damage caused during street demonstrations, despite warnings from critics that it could curb the right to protest.

The bill was drafted in response to riots that followed Paris Saint-Germain's victory over Arsenal in the UEFA Champions League final in May.

But it has taken on added significance after weeks of protests over inequality and soaring prices culminated in some of the worst violence France has seen in years on October 17, when thousands of businesses across the country were damaged and looted.

The Senate passed an expanded version of the bill by 229 votes to 105, backed by a right-wing and centrist alliance which holds a majority.

The legislation has been sent to the National Assembly, which is split between France's political factions, for debate and voting. Far-right leader Marine Le Pen, whom opinion polls place as the frontrunner to succeed Emmanuel Macron in next spring's presidential election, supports the legislation.

Speaking in parliament, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez stressed the "urgency" of responding to the damage and scenes of chaos seen on October 17.

"We can no longer allow the vast majority of our fellow citizens to pay for a minority of vandals," he said.

Under the legislation, protesters could be ordered to pay up to 10,000 euros for damage caused during street demonstrations.




PHOTO: **REUTERS**

**University students scuffle with a police officer carrying a riot shield during a protest against economic hardship, graft and the government's handling of devastating wildfires that have caused toxic haze, sickening thousands, in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday.**

# Five killed as Cyclone Arnab hits eastern India

## 180 homes damaged, 220 trees uprooted

**REUTERS**

At least three people were killed, dozens of houses damaged and crops destroyed as a powerful cyclone struck India's eastern coast from the Bay of Bengal yesterday, bringing heavy rain and strong winds, authorities said.

Cyclone Arnab, classified by the India Meteorological Department as a very severe cyclonic storm – the third-highest category on its scale – made landfall in Andhra Pradesh state early yesterday, with its centre then moving fully inland, the agency said.

"Andhra Pradesh has been most affected ... three people have lost their lives," Narendra Singh Bundela, a top official at the National Disaster Response Force



(NDRF), told reporters.

Heavy rain and high winds destroyed at least 180 houses, brought down 220 trees and disrupted power supply in several areas, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said in a letter to federal Home Minister Amit Shah, updating him on the situation.

Two of the deaths were caused by a tree falling and electrocution, officials in Naidu's office told Reuters. Neighbouring Odisha state was not as badly affected, Bundela said, adding that wind-speeds were expected to reduce as the cyclone moved inland.

More than 180,000 people had been evacuated in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha ahead of the cyclone's arrival. Some schools were closed and some train and flight services cancelled along the eastern coast. Several NDRF and state teams were working in the affected areas.

# Bolsonaro flees to US after Brazil polls loss

**AFP,** *Washington*

Defeated right-wing presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro will be granted entry into the United States, Washington said Tuesday, amid media reports that he has left Brazil for the country despite a court order banning his exit.

The son of jailed ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro lost the presidential election Sunday to incumbent Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and refused to concede defeat.

The US State Department said Tuesday it would issue visas to Bolsonaro and his family, allowing them entry into the US, without confirming his travel plans. The plane that Argentine authorities say is carrying Bolsonaro made a brief stop in Ecuador yesterday before flying on to an unknown destination, journalists saw.

The right-wing senator on Monday said a Supreme Court justice had ordered him to hand over his passports. Bolsonaro is under investigation for alleged corruption and money laundering, and with his election loss is also set to lose parliamentary immunity.

A police source told AFP that the senator's Brazilian and diplomatic passports had been canceled, adding that "there is no formal record of Flavio Bolsonaro leaving the country."

BLACK SEA VESSELS

# Turkey warns Russia, Ukraine against attacks

**REUTERS,** *Ankara*

Turkish Defence Minister Yasar Guler yesterday warned Russia and Ukraine against further attacks on commercial vessels in the Black Sea, saying Ankara reserved the right to take legal action against the strikes, in Turkey's most direct intervention to date.

Nato member Turkey, which has maintained good ties with both Moscow and Kyiv since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has repeatedly called on both sides to halt attacks in the Black Sea that have also struck Turkish-flagged and Turkish-owned commercial vessels.

Ankara says it is waiting for responses to a proposal it conveyed to Russia and Ukraine aimed at stopping the intensifying attacks and ensuring the safe shipment of grain from the region.

Speaking in Sofia after a security meeting between defence ministers and military chiefs of Black Sea littoral states Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria, Guler said commercial vessels sailing and operating in the Black Sea had been affected by drone attacks, stray mines and missiles during the conflict.

"We follow with concern the intense attacks on commercial vessels in the Black Sea and call on the sides to act with common sense, in line with the principle of navigational safety in open seas," he said, adding that another commercial vessel had been struck by three drones inside Bulgaria's maritime jurisdiction yesterday.

It was not clear who carried out the attack on a Greek container ship that was sailing under the Liberian flag in Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone.

"We also reserve every legal right regarding attacks on Turkish-flagged or Turkish-owned vessels and follow developments very closely... The necessary warnings are constantly



being conveyed to both sides to keep commercial navigational out of the conflict zone and immediately halt attacks on civilian vessels," Guler added.

Ukraine has stepped up attacks on ships and infrastructure facilitating Russian oil and grain exports since July.

In a late September meeting, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskiy that attacks by Russia and Ukraine on commercial vessels in the Black Sea were inexplicable and steps must be taken to stop them.

## IN BRIEF

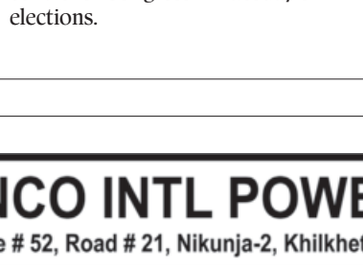
# Afghan-Pak border clash kills one, injures five

**AFP,** *Peshawar*

A clash on the restive border between Afghanistan and Pakistan killed one person and injured five, Pakistan officials said yesterday.

The countries went to war earlier this year and, with no permanent resolution reached on security issues, there have been sporadic attacks since a March truce. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harbouring militants responsible for deadly attacks on its territory, an allegation the Taliban government in Afghanistan denies.

Homes and shops were targeted in the market town of Angoor Adda during the cross-border fire from Afghanistan, according to the office of the deputy commissioner in Pakistan's South Waziristan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.



# Trump vows to respect results if voting 'honest'

**AFP,** *United States*

President Donald Trump said Tuesday he would respect the results of the US midterm elections "if they're honest," in what appeared to be a fresh bid to sow doubt ahead of next week's crucial vote.

Trump has ramped up his baseless claims of mass voter fraud as polls show Republicans could lose control of Congress in Tuesday's elections.


গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়
ঢাকা সামাজিক বন বিভাগ
বন ভবন, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২৬-২৭ তারিখঃ ২৮/১০/২০২৬ খ্রি.।

**"বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার-২০২৬" প্রদানের জন্য আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান।**

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, প্রতিবছরের ন্যায় এ বছরও "বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার-২০২৬" প্রদান করা হবে। সে প্রেক্ষিতে ঢাকা, মানিকগঞ্জ, মুন্সিগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ ও নরসিংদী জেলাধীন সকল সরকারী, আধা-সরকারী, স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠান, শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান, সিটি কর্পোরেশন, পৌরসভা, ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ, এনজিও, ব্যক্তিমালিকানাধীন নার্সারী ও বৃক্ষরোপণের সহিত সম্পৃক্ত সকল জনসাধারণের নিকট হতে "বৃক্ষরোপণে জাতীয় পুরস্কার-২০২৬" প্রদানকল্পে নিম্নবর্ণিত ০৭ (সাত) টি শ্রেণীর প্রত্যেকটিতে ১ম, ২য় ও ৩য় পুরস্কারের জন্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদনপত্র বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, ঢাকা সামাজিক বন বিভাগ এর কার্যালয়, সামাজিক বনায়ন নার্সারী ও প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র, ঢাকা, মানিকগঞ্জ, মুন্সীগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ, সোনারগাঁও, নরসিংদী, শিবপুর এবং ঢাকা, মানিকগঞ্জ, মুন্সিগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ ও নরসিংদী জেলার সকল উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয় ও উপজেলা বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় হতে সংগ্রহ করতঃ উহা পূরণ করে বর্ণিত কার্যালয়সমূহে আগামী ৩০/১১/২০২৬ খ্রি. তারিখের মধ্যে দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। প্রয়োজনে এ সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন তথ্যাদি নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয়/সংশ্লিষ্ট জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয় অথবা সংশ্লিষ্ট উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয় ও বন বিভাগের স্থানীয় কার্যালয় হতে জানতে পারা যাবে।

**পুরস্কারের শ্রেণীসমূহ ঃ**

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

(শারমীন আক্তার)
পরিচিতি নং-১৩২০৬
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, ঢাকা।
ফোন-০২২২২২৮৩৫৩০।

GD-2601



**RPCL-NORINCO INTL POWER LIMITED**
Asian Tower, 10th Floor, House # 52, Road # 21, Nikunja-2, Khilkhet, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh.

**1st Amendment Notice to the Bidding Document for Supply of Coal for Patuakhali 1320 (2×660) MW Coal Fired Thermal Power**

Ref No.: RNPL/1320/2026/2287 Date: 28 October, 2026

| As per the Bidding Document | As Amended |
|---|---|
| Page 65 of 204<br>Sub Clause 14.2<br>Clause 14: Demurrage and Despatch<br>Section-III of the Bidding Document | Minor Amendments have been made in these sub clauses/clauses/subsections/ sections.<br><br>The amendments have been published on the website of RNPL in detail. All the prospective bidders are requested to go to the following link:<br><br>https://rnpl.com.bd/notice-board/rnpl-tender/tender-detail/?item=183<br><br>or visit **www.rnpl.com.bd** website's "Tender" tab. |
| Page 63-65 of 204<br>Clause 11.4: Change in Legal Requirement<br>Section-III of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 100 of 204<br>Clause 5.10.3<br>Subsection 5: Delivery and Shipment<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 103 of 204<br>Clause 10.1.1<br>Subsection 10: Quality Inspection<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 104 of 204<br>Clause 10.1.3<br>Subsection 10: Quality Inspection<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 104 of 204<br>Clause 10.2.3<br>Subsection 10: Quality Inspection<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 104 of 204<br>Clause 10.2.4<br>Subsection 10: Quality Inspection<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 118-122 of 204<br>ATTACHMENT 4-7 to ATTACHMENT 4-11<br>Section-IV of the Bidding Document | |
| Page 133-135 of 204<br>ATTACHMENT-1<br>TECHNICAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION LETTER<br>Section-V of the Bidding Document | |

Prospective tenderers are requested to follow the published amendment on the website of RNPL (www.rnpl.com.bd). All other terms and conditions of the Bidding Document will remain unchanged.

Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO INTL POWER LIMITED

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



# Plan better to prevent recurring outbreaks

## Better preparedness to keep measles, dengue in check is key

This year has been an unprecedented test of resilience for the country's healthcare system. The double whammy of measles and dengue outbreaks has once again exposed our persistent inability to learn from past events and trends, anticipate foreseeable crises and prepare for them adequately. Time and again, our hospitals get overwhelmed during a disease outbreak because preventable gaps are not addressed on time, costing us precious lives.

There has been a fresh spike in both dengue and measles cases, hospitalisations, and deaths this month, which is happening despite a three-month dengue control drive and an intensified measles catch-up vaccination campaign launched by the government in September. The dengue death toll has already reached 400, with more than 1,28,000 patients hospitalised around the country so far this year. Doctors say dengue severity is more common than in previous years: patients are arriving at hospitals while already suffering from shock, with complications affecting the liver, kidneys and heart. Delayed diagnosis, hospitalisation and treatment are major contributing factors here.

Meanwhile, a recent study of measles vaccination, led by the state-run Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), has found that 27.5 percent of children receiving the jabs this year have not developed antibodies. Children aged 9 to 14 months are particularly affected. The findings do not, by themselves, establish why immunity failed to develop. As public health expert Dr Mushtuq Husain argues in his analysis, every stage—from vaccine production and storage to transportation and administration—must be scientifically examined, alongside children's nutritional status and gaps in routine immunisation.

**The writing on the wall is clear: emergency drives cannot substitute for a functioning public health system.**

However, this ineffectiveness is only one side of the story; immunisation gaps, depleted vaccine stocks in 2025, delays in catch-up campaigns, and serious staffing shortages—as found by a joint independent review—have led to where we stand today, with more than 1,200 measles-related deaths till date. A similar pattern is evident in dengue control. Public health experts have criticised the lack of year-round mosquito surveillance, targeted elimination of breeding sites, and properly trained field workers. Now, while the country struggles with this dual health crisis, an independent committee of national and international experts has sounded another alarm: a deteriorating immunisation system could make way for deadly outbreaks of diphtheria, whooping cough and polio. Are our health policymakers listening?

The writing on the wall is clear: emergency drives cannot substitute for a functioning public health system. To achieve continuous protection from deadly but preventable diseases, the government must ensure uninterrupted vaccine supplies, accurate child-level immunisation records, stronger surveillance and routine research to see if the jabs are doing their intended job, and adequate staffing at the community and upazila-level health facilities so that treatment is not concentrated in the tertiary ones. It must also strengthen dengue testing, referral systems and clinical management, while making disease prevention a year-round priority. Without constant vigilance and preparedness, every outbreak will become another emergency, reminding us what foresight could have prevented.

# Don't let Khulna's security crisis deepen

## Police must stop criminal networks, flow of firearms

We are deeply concerned by the rising crimes in Khulna, including shootings and killings that are taking place in broad daylight. In criminal rivalries, robberies and extortion, guns are being used with alarming frequency, leaving residents increasingly fearful for their safety. Between January and October 26 this year, 71 people were killed in the district, including 23 in incidents involving firearms, according to reports. On October 27 alone, at least three people were shot and injured in separate incidents.

According to a report by Prothom Alo, nine gangs have repeatedly been linked to these recent crimes, with rival groups fighting for control of drug trafficking, extortion and other illicit businesses. Their activities extend across the jurisdictions of several police stations, while smaller armed groups are also active in different upazilas. Drug-related disputes have been a major cause of violence. Police suspect that the killings of Tawhidul Islam and Khushi Akter on October 22 were linked to such disputes. The growing availability of illegal firearms is another major concern. Although police have recovered many weapons in recent months, an estimated 300 illegal firearms remain in circulation in Khulna city. Some of the weapons reportedly enter the country through border routes, underscoring the urgent need for a more effective strategy to trace illegal arms and disrupt their supply chains.

In recent times, all sorts of crimes have surged across the country, not just in Khulna. Weak and ineffective policing is one of the reasons behind this situation. More than two years after the July uprising, a reliable policing system remains elusive. And despite changes to their uniforms, police reforms remain largely confined to paper. The force still seems paralysed by fear and uncertainty, with field-level officers hesitant to arrest influential people. A recent instruction barring Khulna police personnel from moving alone at night raises further concerns about the risks they face while carrying out their duties. How can police effectively fight armed criminal networks if they cannot move freely and are influenced by politically powerful individuals?

We urge the government to treat Khulna's worsening security situation with urgency. Police should identify and dismantle the networks behind the violent crimes and intensify operations against illegal firearms and drug trafficking. Investigations into killings and shootings must be thorough, while repeat offenders must not be allowed to exploit the weaknesses in the justice system. At the same time, political affiliation must not provide protection to those involved in crime.

# We cannot wait two years to manage our energy demand



*Dr M Niaz Asadullah is professor of economics at Dhaka University and a visiting professor at the University of Reading in the UK.*

■ **M NIAZ ASADULLAH**

Finance Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury recently acknowledged that Bangladesh needs at least two years to stabilise its energy sector and the wider economy. The admission is sobering, but also useful. It raises a question that deserves more attention: if adequate supply cannot be restored soon, how will the country manage with scarce energy during the next two years?

The government does have plans for new wells, production-sharing contracts (PSCs), solar generation, LNG terminals, and an energy hub near Khulna. Japan's $317 million Emergency Support Loan, highlighted during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Tokyo visit, is also relevant as it supports economic and energy reforms, not a specific power plant. But these initiatives will be helpful in the medium term at best. Wells, terminals, pipelines, and renewable projects require time, capital, and capable institutions. Until they deliver, the government must decide who receives scarce energy, at what price, and with which level of reliability.

As things stand, Bangladesh is not short of installed power plants. A recent Panam Institute policy note estimates the country's grid capacity at about 28,900 MW, against a record generation of only 17,200 MW. Its message is that the system is short of gas and money, not power plants. The same note reports that domestic gas production has been falling since 2016-17, while imports rose from contributing 47.7 percent to 62.5 percent of primary energy between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

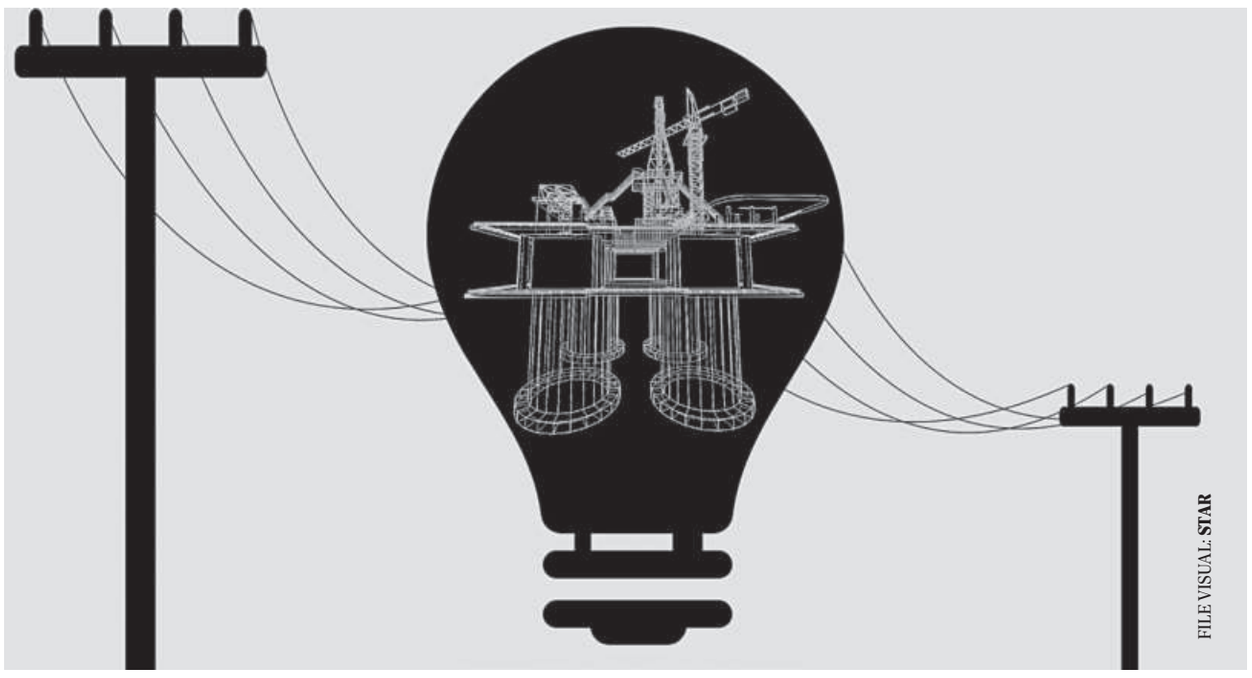
My recent conversation with a leading industrialist in the energy business pushed me beyond this familiar supply-side diagnosis. His argument was that the deeper problem lies in industrial policy. For decades, extraordinarily cheap domestic gas influenced where firms invested, what they produced, and how much they focused on energy efficiency. Bangladesh did not pursue textbook import-substituting industrialisation throughout the 1980s and 1990s; those decades also brought trade liberalisation and the rise of export-oriented garments. But policies protected and promoted domestic processing industries such as steel re-rolling, fertiliser, ceramics, glass, cement, and textiles while gas and electricity remained priced below their full economic cost.

That model could appear successful while domestic gas was plentiful, but it is harder to justify when the marginal unit is imported LNG. An industry that saves one dollar of imports but requires more than a dollar of imported fuel, foreign exchange, and public subsidy is not genuinely saving foreign exchange. It is merely replacing one import bill with another, while part of the cost is concealed in the accounts of Petrobangla, the Bangladesh Power Development Board, and in the national budget.

This does not make steel, ceramics, or glass inherently undesirable. They create jobs and supply essential inputs. The relevant question is whether a new project or major expansion can compete when charged the full, long-run cost of reliable energy. Existing workers and capital cannot be moved without serious disruption. New investment, however, should not receive an open-ended entitlement to subsidised energy.

Khan's warning that politicians and their business associates helped create today's gas crisis. He pointed to unnecessary generation capacity, promises of industrial gas connections when gas was unavailable, and connections awarded through corruption. My argument is complementary but broader: even without an illegal transaction, a policy regime can create the wrong industrial structure when it socialises energy costs while privatising the returns.

Additionally, Professor Anu Muhammad's recent diagnosis in this newspaper emphasises imported-energy dependence, weak national capability, and the political interests surrounding large projects. Here, a comparison with Malaysia is especially instructive. Malaysia built Petronas into a capable national institution rather than treating lack of domestic capacity as a permanent excuse. Bangladesh must likewise strengthen Bapex and Petrobangla while using foreign firms for capital and specialised knowledge under transparent contracts. But stronger supply



FILE VISUAL: STAR

The allocation problem is already substantial. Industries directly consume about 19 percent of Bangladesh's gas, while captive power generation inside factories accounts for another 17 percent—together more than one-third of supply, according to the Panam Institute policy note. However, the rules governing how shortages are distributed among grid power, industrial processes, captive generation, fertiliser production, and households remain unclear to the public. In practice, allocation is determined by pressure fluctuations, unplanned outages, administrative discretion, and political access. This is industrial policy by default, rather than by design.

This is where I partly agree with former energy adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir

institutions still need a disciplined demand policy.

For the next two years, grid management must therefore become an explicit part of industrial policy. The government should publish and enforce clear rules for rationing gas and electricity during shortages; introduce predictable time-of-use tariffs for large consumers; replace arbitrary interruptions with scheduled curtailments; and set public reliability standards for industrial zones. Efficient exporters should be able to plan production rather than discover their effective energy allocation through the duration of an outage. Major sectors should also be assessed for energy intensity, value added, employment, and net foreign-exchange contribution. Any subsidy that remains should be transparently accounted for in the budget, carry a time limit, and be justified by measurable economic benefits.

Over the longer term, new energy-intensive production should cluster near ports, fuel storage, regasification facilities, renewable resources, and common utilities. "Off the national grid" should not mean thousands of unregulated diesel generators, but rather serviced industrial-energy zones using dedicated generation, cogeneration, direct contracts, or transparently priced grid connections. The most energy-intensive stages may sometimes be better located in energy-abundant economies such as Malaysia, while fabrication, distribution, and higher-value activities remain in Bangladesh. Temporary duty relief for heavy fuel oil may ease an emergency, but it should be time-bound and tied to efficiency and emissions standards rather than becoming another permanent subsidy.

The costs of this model are now becoming harder to avoid. Cheap domestic gas helped generate profits and keep input costs low, but it also weakened incentives to explore, conserve, and invest in efficient machinery. The same business leaders who benefitted from that model for decades now find themselves grappling with unreliable supplies and the high cost of imported LNG.

The finance minister's two-year timetable should be treated as more than a forecast; it should be viewed as a deadline for replacing implicit rationing with transparent demand management.

Bangladesh must accelerate exploration, renewable energy, and import infrastructure while also deciding which uses of scarce energy generate enough social and economic value to justify their cost. Otherwise, the country will continue allocating energy through outages, influence, and inherited privilege.

# Dhaka needs traffic discipline, not just new transport initiatives



*Sajedul Hoq is a development practitioner and president of Bangladesh Traffic & Transport Forum. He can be reached at sajedhoq@gmail.com.*

■ **SAJEDUL HOQ**

The public policy response to Dhaka's traffic has increasingly retreated into short-term fixes rather than addressing the structural breakdown of order. Recent government initiatives continually fail not from a lack of intent, but because they treat symptoms through isolated interventions while ignoring basic road discipline.

In the post-liberation 1970s, lighter traffic allowed administrators to treat discipline as a secondary concern. As the population grew, this leniency calcified into institutional callousness. Today, navigating choke points like Farmgate, Shahbagh, or Mirpur 10 reveals a brutal reality: our roads operate on the survival of the fittest. To fix this, we must stop deploying hardware without ensuring operational software.

For decades, regulatory authorities have responded to Dhaka's traffic crisis with high-profile directives that routinely stall or vanish within months. These interventions are usually designed in isolation. Frontline stakeholders, such as transport syndicates, drivers, police, and commuters, are rarely consulted. Handed down as top-down mandates without ground-level consensus, these policies inspire no public ownership, making it so that compliance vanishes the moment direct supervision wanes.

Consider the recent rollout of 400 electric buses. Dropping high-tech hardware onto unregulated streets does nothing to fix the underlying chaos. In an ecosystem where diesel-run buses operate without fitness certificates while drivers are forced to aggressively race for fares, expensive e-buses simply join a chaotic system. Similarly, isolated initiatives like the BRTC's pink bus service or AI-powered traffic control cameras fail when they collide with ground-level realities: unlinked vehicle databases, unstandardised plates, and intersections managed by manual gestures.

To make any public transport investment stick, existing directives must be retrofitted with an operational foundation of strict traffic discipline. The most effective way to fix this environment—without waiting decades for new infrastructure—would be to restore traffic predictability.

We have lived with chaotic road conditions for so long that we struggle to grasp the scale of the loss incurred by these conditions—millions of unproductive hours, excess fuel burned, and severe economic drain. The single most effective way to fix this environment without waiting decades for new infrastructure is restoring street predictability by forcing a cultural shift. This means transitioning from aggressive, offensive manoeuvring of vehicles to an environment of neutral, defensive driving. When drivers and pedestrians are reassured that everyone else is also bound by enforced lane limits and signal queues, the need to aggressively cut off the vehicle ahead will disappear.

Currently, pedestrians navigate streets with the same risky, offensive manoeuvres as vehicles—darting across active lanes or standing in the middle of moving traffic to force vehicles to stop. When predictable vehicle trajectories are enforced, pedestrians will no longer feel forced to take these aggressive gambles and, crucially, will realise that the risk is simply not worth it.

Predictability isn't an abstract ideal; it is built on specific, enforceable rules that target the most destructive driving habits. On Dhaka's urban streets, four violations are particularly debilitating: intersection gridlocking, reckless lane shifting and tailgating, haphazard bus stops, and mixing fast and slow vehicles.

If we conceptually isolate these violations, traffic flow theory provides a clear picture of the capacity we are currently throwing away. Traffic flow theory indicates that addressing all four major violations simultaneously could cut overall delays by 50 percent to 70 percent, effectively doubling road capacity without adding any new roads. However, to prevent corruption and ensure consistency, enforcement cannot rely on discretionary manual police ticketing. It requires the immediate deployment of CCTV and automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

Bogotá's late-1990s TransMilenio transformation offers a blueprint for Dhaka's struggling Bus Route Rationalisation (BRR). Before reform, the Colombian capital's streets were choked by something identical to Dhaka's aggressive target-based racing. Bogotá succeeded by consolidating fragmented operators into regulated franchises, replacing cash targets with fixed contracts, and enforcing strict docking discipline. Transit speeds reportedly doubled and fatal collisions dropped by over 70 percent.

Similarly, Kigali in Rwanda, achieved remarkable traffic order without massive infrastructure overhauls. By deploying automated camera networks linked to digital registers and mandating speed limiters, Kigali eliminated human discretion and enforced zero-tolerance for reckless lane shifting.

Ultimately, road discipline is not a luxury reserved for wealthy nations. When micro-enforcement is automated and impartial, driver behaviour transforms rapidly, unlocking capacity at a fraction of the cost of building new roads. More than 50 years of worsening traffic conditions cannot be solved by sporadic hardware drives. To convert modular directives into lasting urban assets, policymakers must commit to a three-step baseline. First, paint and strictly enforce clear yellow-box junctions and lane boundaries. Second, deploy automated camera networks linked to digital fines to remove human discretion from enforcement. Third, consolidate bus operations to standardise driver compensation, shifting from aggressive passenger-commission models to fixed-salary contracts.

When city authorities clear intersections, eliminate lane-shifting shockwaves, isolate bus stops, and segregate slow traffic, the benefits compound. Ultimately, traffic rules are not arbitrary restrictions made to be addressed by fines. They are a collective contract that saves time, preserves economic capital, and protects human lives on our roads.

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# Expanding hospitals is not enough. We must plan healthcare resources better



*Dr Rumana Huque is professor in the Department of Economics at Dhaka University and executive director of ARK Foundation.*

■ RUMANA HUQUE

Bangladesh's healthcare crisis is often seen as a shortage of hospital beds or doctors. However, the problem actually lies in how healthcare resources are planned, allocated, and coordinated. Essentially, hospital infrastructure continues to expand without corresponding investments being made in skilled personnel, essential services, and operational capacity.

Consequently, overcrowded hospitals, overburdened healthcare workers and inadequate quality of care have become persistent features of our public health system. Two recent investigations by The Daily Star highlight this disconnect. One reported that 2,688 of 2,879 additional public hospital beds (approximately 93 percent) approved recently were allocated to selected districts, while several severely overcrowded hospitals elsewhere received no expansion. Another report revealed that Bangladesh had only 15.16 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 10,000 people in 2025, far below the World Health Organization's (WHO's) indicative threshold of 44.5.

According to the DGHS Health Bulletin 2024, average bed occupancy reached 178 percent in district hospitals and 164 percent in medical college hospitals. Mymensingh Medical College Hospital recorded 329 percent occupancy, while several other tertiary hospitals operated at more than twice their capacity in 2024.

Due to overcrowding, patients receiving treatment on floors and corridors face compromised privacy, inadequate monitoring, and increased infection risks. Excessive workloads leave healthcare profes proper examination, communication, counselling, and follow-up. When a nurse has to care for far more patients than is manageable, timely medication administration, infection prevention, and complication detection become increasingly challenging. Expanding hospital beds without ensuring adequate workforce and operational resources may increase nominal capacity without improving the actual quality of care.

Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, dengue, and measles continue to challenge Bangladesh's health services, while non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and chronic respiratory conditions, require sustained management. Simultaneously, maternal and child healthcare, family planning, immunisation, neonatal care, and emergency services require continued attention. These diverse needs demand different levels of competency, appropriate staffing mixes, and coordinated services across primary, secondary, and tertiary health facilities.

Managing diabetes requires continuous follow-up, counselling and diagnostic support. Safe childbirth requires skilled midwives, nurses, obstetricians, and emergency referral arrangements. Infectious disease outbreaks demand trained laboratory personnel, surveillance workers, and infection prevention teams. Emergency care requires the availability of immediate access to properly trained health professionals. A healthcare system designed mainly around hospital beds and doctor numbers cannot adequately respond to these changing demands.

Workforce shortages are not limited to doctors and nurses. The DGHS Health Bulletin 2024 reported that 42,903 of 122,433 sanctioned DGHS positions (35 percent) remained vacant as of December 2024. Vacancies extended across staff grades, including medical officers, technologists, field workers, administrative personnel, and essential support staff. These shortages have consequences throughout the healthcare delivery chain. Without adequate laboratory technologists, diagnoses are delayed. Shortages of health assistants and field workers weaken immunisation, disease surveillance, and community-level prevention. An insufficient number of cleaners, ward attendants, and other support personnel compromise hygiene, infection prevention and hospital operations.

More recent reporting by The Daily Star indicated that 73,045 of 234,024 sanctioned posts (31.21 percent) were vacant across DGHS, the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM), and the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). Equally important, sanctioned positions may themselves be inadequate relative to actual patient workloads. Filling existing vacancies is therefore necessary but insufficient.

Workforce shortages become particularly dangerous during emergencies, when timely intervention determines survival. District and upazila hospitals and health centres often lack sufficient personnel trained in emergency triage, resuscitation, and stabilisation. Emergency departments need dedicated, round-the-clock teams, trained nurses, functional diagnostics, and coordinated ambulance and referral services. Expanding emergency rooms without ensuring appropriate staffing across shifts will not improve emergency preparedness.

Retention of health personnel in rural areas remains another challenge. Bangladesh's Health Workforce Strategy 2024 provides a starting point, but vacant posts and new graduates will not translate into quality care without supportive management. Rural service cannot rely solely on compulsory placement. Workers need safe accommodation, functioning equipment, mentoring, transparent transfers, career progression and financial incentives.

Bangladesh should pilot retention packages in its hardest-to-staff districts, evaluate results, and adopt applicable outcomes. Improving healthcare requires investment beyond the health ministry. Education helps train healthcare workers, transport services enable patient referrals, and effective public financial management ensures that approved positions are funded and filled. In addition to recruitment, a credible reform needs a costed, multi-year plan.

Institutional fragmentation further weakens healthcare delivery. The DGHS, DGNM, and DGFP operate through separate recruitment, deployment, and management arrangements, despite delivering interconnected services. These parallel administrative structures result in duplication and weak coordination. For patients, these administrative divisions are irrelevant. A pregnant woman requires accessible antenatal care, skilled delivery services, and emergency obstetric support, regardless of which directorate employs the professionals.

Bangladesh therefore needs integrated workforce planning, coordinated recruitment, and a shared human resources information system across directorates. The objective should be to match staffing to service requirements rather than maintain separate institutional priorities.

International experience offers useful lessons. England's National Health Service uses weighted population-based funding formulas that consider demographic characteristics, healthcare needs, deprivation and inequalities. Bangladesh could adopt a simpler framework incorporating population size, disease burden, poverty, geographical accessibility, patient volumes, bed occupancy, and existing workforce capacity. The WHO's Workload Indicators of Staffing Need also provides a practical approach for determining staffing based on actual service workloads. Bangladesh has already applied this methodology in selected facilities, demonstrating substantial staffing gaps.

Three reforms deserve immediate prioritisation. Firstly, hospital expansion must be accompanied by a fully costed workforce and operational plan that covers all staff categories, diagnostics, medicines, and emergency services. Secondly, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare should establish coordinated, district-level workforce planning across the DGHS, DGNM, and DGFP, supported by publicly available staffing and service delivery-related information. Thirdly, recruitment must be complemented by rural retention incentives, continuous professional development, supportive management, career progression, and improved working conditions. Strengthening primary healthcare and referral systems is equally essential to reducing unnecessary pressure on tertiary hospitals. Financing must prioritise functional services rather than infrastructure alone.

Bangladesh's progress towards universal health coverage depends not only on increasing the number of hospital beds or producing more graduates, but on ensuring an adequately staffed, appropriately skilled and equitably distributed workforce. The ultimate measure of healthcare progress is not how many beds are sanctioned, but whether every patient receives timely, safe and quality care.



**People leave their belongings on the floor to secure their places in the chemotherapy token queue at NICRH in Mohakhali.** PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

# *What outcomes can COP31 realistically deliver?*



*Dr Mizan R Khan is a climate negotiator since 2001 and technical lead at LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC).*

■ MIZAN R KHAN

The Conference of the Parties-31 (COP31) of the Climate Convention, scheduled for November 9-20 in Antalya, Türkiye, arrives at an uncomfortable moment for the climate regime. Ten years after the Paris Agreement, the political energy that built it has thinned significantly. Leadership is fragmented, finance remains contested, and the conference format itself is questioned. The question is no longer about COP31's success or failure, but what kind of politically negotiated result is most likely, and its ramifications for climate diplomacy in the coming years.

For the first time, this climate conference will have dual leadership: Türkiye will host the conference and be the principal actor in the non-negotiated Action Agenda, while Australia will be the President of Negotiations with authority to steer the process. It is an experiment in dividing the political, convening and procedural functions, usually concentrated in one host government.

The model has advantages. It lets Türkiye showcase implementation of its priorities in electrification, halving global waste generation and reducing energy intensity of buildings, promoting partnerships and business engagement, while Australia, backed by Pacific partners, concentrates on the grinding work of drafting and consensus-building. The Pre-COP meetings in Tuvalu and Fiji in October gave the process a Pacific legitimacy from small island developing states (SIDS). The risks are equally clear: ambiguity over who speaks for the Presidency in the final hours, divergence between the Action Agenda and negotiated text, and the temptation to claim successes and attribute failures to the other.

The COP31 context is sobering. An El Niño-influenced year, Europe's unprecedented heat for the fifth time in recent years, flash floods, rainstorms and typhoons ravaging the world. Such events shift domestic narratives, as disaster-stricken publics appear more receptive to positive actions. Yet extreme weather has repeatedly proved a weak driver of ambition; it raises rhetoric faster than commitments.

Additionally, the conference is taking place amidst the US's withdrawal from the process and Europe's reprioritisation of military and energy security, at the expense of climate security. Meanwhile, China is the largest emitter and the world leader in renewable energy, but its intended leadership role remains unclear. The result is a vacuum with no actor able and willing to pull the process forward, making the skill of the Presidency more decisive than ever.

There is a structural pattern in these United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations. Until around 2017–2018, the regime's characteristic response to finance needs was the proliferation of funds, in the public, private and philanthropic sectors, in a very fragmented fashion. In the last few COPs, the proliferation has shifted to work programmes, expert committees, alliances, coalitions, partnerships and dialogues. These generate activity and reports, but hardly any substantive decisions.

This feeds a growing debate about reforming the COP format: limited, prioritised agendas, stronger linkage between formal negotiations and the Action Agenda, and clearer accountability for implementation. COP31 is unlikely to deliver a formal reform, but may issue a mandate through a set of presidency consultations. The dual-presidency format itself provides an unintended pilot, since it separates negotiation from implementation, as proposed by reform advocates.

The COP outcomes depend significantly on how a Presidency reads disparate interests and steers the process. Both Tü rkiye and Australia NDCs show positive trends in emissions reduction, which gives them credibility. Türkiye is also a member of the Coalition to Grow Carbon Markets and is likely to promote it as a business-friendly pathway. Australia, as a major fossil fuel exporter, now taking on the role of voice for Pacific SIDS, must balance domestic interests with the vulnerability narrative it carries from Tuvalu and Fiji. These interests will shape the texture of any deal, with a strong emphasis on adaptation and ocean issues that resonate with both hosts.

With more than two dozen agendas spread across several tracks, the plate is crowded and a handful of items might dominate the talks. The Mitigation Work Programme will test whether the "transition away from fossil fuels" language of recent years can be translated into anything operational. The climate finance work programme, including the interpretation of Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement on developed countries' obligations, will reopen the argument over who pays and how much. Article 2.1(c), aligning all financial flows with low-emission, resilient development, is linked to Article 9, and developing countries will resist any reading that shifts responsibility onto them. Other issues that will be at the centre of discussion are: the Just Transition Work Programme, the New Collective Quantified Goal and its follow-up, adaptation finance and the Ocean agenda. The Presidency's challenge is to bridge these narratives without papering over the disagreements, perhaps by pairing a transparent accounting of past commitments with a more concrete delivery plan.

Based on the presidency pronouncements and Pre-COP Ministerial, several outcomes can be expected. First, COP31 may adopt a cover decision with language on implementation, adaptation, finance and just transition; establish or extend several work programmes; announce a set of priority Action Agenda partnerships; and leave the hardest questions on Article 9.1 and fossil fuel pathways for later years. Few will be delighted, and few will walk out.

Or, if the Presidency keeps the two tracks coordinated, builds trust with the SIDS and LDCs, with quiet backing from China and the EU, a credible adaptation finance roadmap and a clearer finance-for-mitigation linkage can be secured. That would require political capital in short supply.

Third, a visible split between the two presidencies could lead to disputes over Article 9.1, trade-related measures or the scope of just transition, blocking agreement on major items, producing a thin outcome and a heavy reliance on voluntary announcements. The Paris Agreement would continue to hold, but COP's credibility suffers further, strengthening calls for reform.

The most probable outcome of COP31 is an incremental outcome. Its success is more likely to be measured by the initiatives and commitments announced under the Action Agenda and by progress on climate adaptation and ocean-related issues than by major agreements reached through formal negotiations. Besides, the Presidency's choices in prioritising items, managing the dual role and handling the finance debate also matter more in a landscape marked by leadership vacuum and process fatigue. So, the Antalya experiment will be judged not only on its decisions but on whether a divided presidency can deliver a more disciplined and credible COP.

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27.06.26
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Divisional Commercial Officer
Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali,Chattogram.

GD-2608

# Indebted to my parents for everything I know:

# BIPASHA HAYAT

## Illustrious actor plans to go behind camera for Liberation War film



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

**SHAH ALAM SHAZU**

After winning the National Film Award for Best Actress in Humayun Ahmed's ***Aguner Poroshmoni*** and earning acclaim for the Liberation War drama ***Joyjatra***, Bipasha Hayat deliberately shifted away from commercial screen acting toward an introspective, multi-disciplinary practice.

Speaking to The Daily Star at her residence, Bipasha reflected on the literature and responsibility guiding her evolution. At the core of her worldview is a deep grounding in poetry. "Poetry has changed my life at various turning points," she notes.

Studying Robert Browning's ***The Patriot*** in class ten taught her the fickle nature of public affection, while Samuel Taylor Coleridge's ***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*** instilled a lasting compassion for living beings. Her literary palette spans from the deep perceptions of Jibanananda Das to Rabindranath Tagore—reciting as Devayani in Tagore's ***Biday Abhishap*** at age 13 alongside dancer Bijori Barkatullah, and drifting to sleep as a teenager to a cassette of ***Shesher Kobita*** narrated by Soumitra Chatterjee.

This engagement with poetic rhythm naturally led her to the stage in her early twenties. "When I acted in Syed Shamsul Haq's ***Khatta Tamasha*** at 21 or 22, as well as in ***Dewan Gazir Kissa*** and ***Achalayatan***, those dialogues were pure poetry," she recalls. "Becoming those characters and internalising that mindset was an extraordinary experience."

Her writing career began organically at Viqarunnisa Noon School with a piece in the school magazine. Encouraged by her father, legendary actor Abul Hayat, and urged by editors including Sanjeeb Choudhury, Tapash, Sajjad Sharif, and Anisul Hoque during their tenure at Bhorer Kagoj, she published regularly, eventually releasing a book with Somoy Prokashani.

Her celebrated plays, including ***Shankhabash*** and ***Jochhonakal***, emerged directly from observing human dynamics. "In ***Jochhonakal***, I experimented with emotional distance—how people close to you become strangers over time," she explains. "I always write from the audience's perspective: if I were in that seat, what would I want to experience?"

That search for truth extends to her visual art. Asked whether she paints to depict or to express, Hayat is clear: "I express through painting. What I render on canvas or paper is my inner world. The language of images is universal, connecting people across the globe."

Her work recently gained global recognition when an Italian publication featured her among 20 international artists bridging art and justice, devoting a full chapter to her portfolio in a book available on Amazon. In New York, she collaborates with an international collective: "I am the only Bangladeshi in those circles, but we interact simply as human beings belonging to a global community."

Her ongoing hiatus from screen acting remains a deliberate choice. "A good story and a strong core idea are essential. Art must serve a purpose and carry a philosophy. Dialogue alone does not make a play; there must be an inner urgency. That is what I am waiting for."

Looking ahead, Hayat plans to step behind the camera for a feature film on the Liberation War. "I have lined up the script outline," she reveals. "I want to do it out of a sense of responsibility, hopefully starting in three years. I was born in 1971; I am a child of the Liberation War. This project is not about becoming a filmmaker—it is about keeping that emotion alive. Whether I shoot with a high-end camera or a small one, it will be one of the most vital expressions of my life."

Reflecting on her foundation, she returns to her family roots. "Everything I have learned, outside of painting, was inspired by my father, while my mother shaped my understanding of home life. My father's influence on my journey remains immense."

## 'Mirzapur' leads IMDb's decade-long chart of Indian streaming series




***Mirzapur*** has emerged as one of India's most consistent streaming hits, featuring on IMDb's annual list of the country's most popular web series nine times in the past decade, according to a report released on Tuesday.

Titled "10 Years of Streaming in India – An IMDb Report 2026", the study examines 110 chart positions across 64 titles from 2016 to 2026, with rankings based on IMDb page views.

***Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*** also performed strongly, appearing on the annual charts five times despite having only one season.

The rankings reflect changing audience preferences, with ***Sacred Games*** topping the charts in 2018 and 2019, ***Scam 1992*** in 2020, and ***Mirzapur*** in 2024. ***The Bads of Bollywood*** led in 2025, while ***Pritam and Pedro*** topped the 2026 chart up to October 15.

**EVENTS**

## '13th Liberation DocFest Bangladesh'

The Liberation War Museum hosts the ***13th Liberation DocFest Bangladesh***, centered on the theme ***Presence in Absence.*** Featuring 17 curated documentaries across national and international competitions, the festival examines human rights, historical memory and liberation struggles alongside academic seminars on documentary cinema.

**Date:** Thursday–Saturday | October 29–31, 2026
**Time:** 1pm- 9pm
**Venue:** Liberation War Museum, Agargaon




# NEWS

## 68 killed in Spain as two high-speed trains collide

FROM PAGE 12

an express operated by Spanish train operator Iryo stopped near Toledo due to a signal fault, on orders from infrastructure manager ADIF, when it was struck by another high-speed train, reports Reuters.

Castilla-La Mancha's leader Emiliano Garcia-Page told reporters that more victims were likely as "it has not yet been possible to reach the bottom of the carriages."

State railway operator Renfe confirmed in a statement that the main high-speed line from Madrid to southern Spain had been suspended after one of its services suffered an accident with a train from private Spanish company Iryo.

## Netanyahu camp leads but lacks majority

FROM PAGE 12

minister, who has pushed the country sharply to the right and unleashed a wave of wars.

Following the vote, both Netanyahu and his main rival Gadi Eisenkot vowed to form a government despite neither being projected to win a majority.

With nearly 86 percent of votes tallied yesterday, Israeli media forecast Netanyahu's bloc of right-wing, far-right and ultra-Orthodox parties winning 53 seats in parliament, far surpassing 48 for the opposition bloc of rival Gadi Eisenkot.

## Qatar offers Iran new war-ending deal

FROM PAGE 12

countries would act as guarantors of the deal, the official added.

Qatar, along with Pakistan, has led mediation to end the war that the US and Israel launched in February. The conflict has disrupted global shipping and oil supplies and spilled over across other parts of the Middle East, reports Reuters.

Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran's ambassador and chargé d'affaires to the United Nations, has described US sanctions as a form of economic terrorism, saying they constitute acts of aggression under international law, IRNA reports.

## Malaysia-bound workers may leave from early Nov

FROM PAGE 12

He urged the government to disclose and justify the actual costs, as was done under the previous government-to-government arrangement, and clarify how workers would be selected for the BOESL initiative.

**'ZERO-COST' RECRUITMENT**

Asked about the zero-cost initiative, Nur acknowledged that workers would still have to bear some expenses.

"It would not be right to call it completely free," he said, adding that workers would have to pay for airfare, medical examinations and a small BOESL service charge.

He said workers could travel at minimal cost but did not specify how much they would have to pay under the initiative.

Explaining the higher estimated recruitment costs through private agencies, Nur said they incurred expenses securing job orders and maintaining ties with foreign employers, unlike BOESL, whose staff salaries and operating costs were government-funded.

He described the previous government-fixed recruitment rate as unrealistic, saying it was not followed in practice.

Asked whether recruitment costs through private agencies could exceed Tk 5 lakh, he said there was no reason to assume so, as the government would set a rate and try to ensure agencies complied with it.

A survey by US-based non-profit Verité found that workers spent an average of Tk 5.44 lakh to secure jobs in Malaysia during 2022–2024, against the government-fixed rate of Tk 78,990.

**MEDICAL TESTS TO BEGIN OCT 31**

In a statement yesterday, the expatriates' welfare ministry said medical examinations for prospective Malaysia-bound workers would begin on October 31 at government-approved centres.

Tests conducted before that date would not be accepted for immigration clearance, it warned.

The ministry said a list of authorised medical centres would soon be published on its website. Nur said Malaysian authorities were expected to finalise the list by October 31 following bilateral discussions.

The ministry also warned that middlemen and unscrupulous recruiting agencies were trying to collect passports and money from jobseekers by offering unauthorised medical tests.

It urged workers to avoid such offers and verify the authorisation of agencies and medical centres before handing over passports or money.

No medical centre or recruiting agency would be allowed to conduct or arrange tests without government approval.

Until further notice, recruiting agencies seeking clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training must submit the required documents, including Visa With Reference (VDR) papers, to authorised medical centres for examinations.

Violations could lead to the closure of medical centres, suspension of recruitment activities or cancellation of government authorisation, the ministry warned.

Workers were also urged to report unauthorised medical tests, with supporting details and evidence, to secretary@probashi.gov.bd.

**WHEN CAN WORKERS LEAVE?**

Nur expressed hope that recruitment procedures would be ready by November 1, allowing workers to travel to Malaysia after completing medical examinations.

The first workers could depart within two to four days of undergoing the tests, provided the remaining formalities were completed, he said.

Recruitment would begin through BOESL, with private agencies also expected to start sending workers in the first week of November. However, Nur acknowledged that some formalities remained incomplete.

Malaysia has approved 338 recruiting entities under the new arrangement: 25 principal agencies, 312 associate agencies and BOESL.

Associate agencies must work through principal agencies or BOESL for key recruitment procedures, raising concerns among agency owners and migration experts over the continued dominance of a limited number of agencies.

Nur said Malaysian employers had begun submitting demand letters through the Foreign Workers Centralised Management System and the Bangladesh mission's electronic services.

However, the mission had yet to attest the letters, without which no job demand would be accepted.

Malaysia suspended new recruitment from Bangladesh on May 31, 2024, following allegations of irregularities and excessive migration costs. The government announced the labour market's reopening earlier this month, but recruitment procedures and costs remain unsettled.

## Attacks on political parties undermine

FROM PAGE 12

to building a democratic government and a democratic state. They also affect freedom of expression and normal political activities."

He said democracy was not limited to elections and required political parties to operate freely and express differing views.

Contacted, CPB President Kazi Sajjad Zahir Chandan said, "If the BNP does not move away from this path and fails to restore the democratic system in the country, it too may face the same fate as the Awami League. This is the political reality in Bangladesh."

On October 26, two CPB activists were beaten following a dispute over slogans during a procession in Paltan, according to the party.

Earlier, police detained former Bangladesh Chhatra Union president Dipak Shil during a protest in Dhanmondi against attempts to stop female Baul singers in Sunamganj. He was later released.

CPB activists subsequently brought out a procession, chanting "Joy Bangla, Joy Samajtantra". According to the party, around 40 to 50 self-identified Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal activists objected, leading to an argument and the alleged assaults.

The CPB alleged that the group later gathered outside its central office with sticks and shouted slogans. The party said police briefly detained CPB members Iran Molla and Sohel Fakir at that time.

On September 26, police detained 289 people during a JaSoD representatives' meeting at its Gulistan office. Of them, 27 were formally arrested on allegations of creating fear and instability by chanting "Joy Bangla". Almost all were later released on bail.

JaSoD said the meeting had police permission and alleged that BNP activists attacked its office before police surrounded it and detained participants.

On October 12, a group attacked Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader's residence in Uttara, chanting slogans and hurling bricks that shattered windowpanes. No one entered the house.

Police confirmed the attack but said they had not identified those responsible. The party's central office had also faced attacks, vandalism and arson during the interim government's tenure.

Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, formerly of Jahangirnagar University's Department of Government and Politics, said resentment towards the Jatiyo Party could stem from its ties with the Awami League and its role during the 2024 uprising.

"Some of the recent attacks may have been an expression of that anger," he said, adding that the party's recent statements might also have fuelled resentment.

However, he stressed that such grievances could not justify violence.

"Since the party has not been banned, it can carry out its political activities.

Considering this, such attacks or violent incidents against the party should be avoided. We expect them to learn from their past mistakes and continue their politics."

He cautioned against seeing the incidents as a pattern, but added that even

as separate incidents they were not good for healthy politics.

Mojibur said the BNP, after forming a government following a long stint out of power, cannot "wait a few days more" and must now take the lead in protecting political freedoms, consulting others, and restoring law and order.

"The government must quickly bring the overall situation, including law and order, under control and ensure people's freedom of expression and their right to carry out political activities. This is one of the government's main responsibilities."

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Emran Saleh Prince said the party remained committed to maintaining a healthy political environment and that its leaders and activists had shown restraint.

He denied any organisational involvement by the BNP in the incidents, saying the party had made no decision to carry out such activities.

"The incidents that have occurred are certainly regrettable," he said.

He, however, described JaSoD as "an ally of the fascist Awami League", and claimed there was a secret plot to rehabilitate the Awami League through other political parties, as its activities remain banned.

## Lax rules, looting pushed banking sector into crisis

FROM PAGE 12

Laws and regulations alone cannot restore discipline, he said, stressing that a minimum level of ethics is essential among all players in the banking, corporate and industrial sectors.

On state-owned banks, he said repeated reforms had failed because political patronage had turned them into hubs for distributing undue favours.

Keeping this vital sector free from political influence requires genuine political will, he added.

The government must significantly reform the judicial and enforcement mechanisms to compel defaulting borrowers to repay, said Abdul Hai Sarker, chairman of the Bangladesh Association of Banks and Dhaka Bank.

"Relying on conventional, time-consuming procedures will not bring results," he said, adding that faster and more effective enforcement is needed to restore discipline in loan repayment.

Although banking governance has begun to improve, the culture cannot be corrected in a day or a year, said Mashrur Arefin, chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh.

Defaulted loans are now known to be about 30 percent, against the 9 percent reported earlier, which he called the starting point for recovery.

Arefin questioned the reported 4 percent private credit growth, saying the real figure is doubtful once accrued interest and forced loans are excluded.

Banks see little demand for large letters of credit for machinery or factory expansion, said Arefin, also the managing director of City Bank.

He cited the Purchasing Managers' Index falling from 57.8 in July to 48.6 in September, signalling contraction, along with high inflation, stagnant exports and low imports.

Political uncertainty, despite the recent election, keeps businesses from using offered credit lines.

He also criticised the Bangladesh Bank's policy mismatch, saying it offers expansionary packages while maintaining a tight stance, with the policy rate at 9.5 percent and inflation at 8.5 percent.

The country should urgently repair its banking sector, open up finance for small businesses and lay the groundwork for capital markets, said Jean Pesme, the World Bank's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

He called for a system-wide, time-bound roadmap including asset quality reviews, transparency, triage of weak banks, resolution of defaulted loans and asset recovery.

"Large-scale recapitalisation with burden-sharing will be needed, since the government cannot fund it all. Regulatory forbearance should be phased out, and legal tools such as the Distressed Asset Act, Bankruptcy Act and money laundering law must be in place."

To prevent a recurrence, he recommended reforming the Bank Company Act and amending the Bangladesh Bank Order to strengthen governance and the central bank's operational independence.

The central bank is prioritising cleaning up bank balance sheets, recapitalising weak banks and restoring confidence in the financial sector, said BB Deputy Governor Md Kabir Ahmed.

Asset quality reviews have been completed for 15 banks, with others under way, using standards stricter than those of international auditors, he said.

"An asset management company should help. A recapitalisation plan with the finance ministry should stabilise state-owned banks by March or April. Private banks with shortfalls must submit plans, and a bank restructuring and resolution fund is being developed for early intervention," he said.

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

## Revision Clause-3 "Timelines & Deliverables"

# 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 mid-December' 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 6, 2026[Revised] |
| **Contract Award & Commencement** | November 12, 2026[Revised] |
| **Draft Initial Executive Report & In-Person Presentation** | December 14, 2026[Revised] |
| **Final Comprehensive Report** | February15, 2027[Revised] |

### 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 *minimum 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 December 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-2609

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Essential Drugs Company Limited
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1202.

EDCL

## Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) (International)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Health and Family Welfare/Health Service Division |
| 2 | Agency | Essential Drugs Company Limited |
| 3 | Procuring Entity Name | Project Director, Establishment of Essential Biotech and Research Centre at Munshiganj. |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code | Project Director |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District | Dhaka |
| 6 | Invitation for Expression of Interest for Selection of | Procurement of Consultancy firm (International) for Bid Documents Preparation, Monitoring, Supervision, and Validation for Vaccine, Therapeutics, and Diagnostics (VTD) facility on Turnkey basis |
| 7 | EOI Ref No | 45.06.0000.000.015.14.0001.26.001, 27 October 2026 |
| 8 | Date | 29 October 2026 |
| KEY INFORMATION | | |
| 9 | Procurement Method | QCBS (90:10) |
| FUNDING INFORMATION | | |
| 10 | Budget and Source of Funds | Development, RPL (Special Account)- Asian Development Bank (ADB) |
| 11 | Development Partners | Asian Development Bank (ADB) |
| PARTICULAR INFORMATION | | |
| 12 | Project/ Programme Code | 224398200 |
| 13 | Project/ Programme Name | Establishment of Essential Biotech and Research Centre at Munshiganj (1st Revised) Project |
| 14 | EOI Closing Date and Time | 30 November 2026 (11:59 PM Manila Time) |
| INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT | | |
| 15 | Brief Description of Assignment | The assignment involves hiring an international consulting firm to provide consultancy services to support the project planning, preparation of bid documents, procurement support, construction supervision, monitoring, commissioning, testing, and validation, etc., for an integrated, state-of-the-art manufacturing complex for Vaccines, Therapeutics, and Diagnostics (VTDs) and a research centre located at Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj. |
| 16 | Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Req'd | The prospective bidders are requested to refer ADB CSRN for detailed information and submission of EOI application by using the following link: **https://selfservice.adb.org/OA_HTML/adb/xxcrs/jsp/ADBCsrnFwd.jsp?sel=23100** |
| 17 | Other Details of Application | The prospective bidders are required to submit the EOI application in duly prescribed format on ADB CSRN (please note that there is no other platform) by using the mentioned link. For applying on ADB CSRN, prospective bidder has to register on ADB CSRN. After the registration, the bidder will be allowed to view and submit the EOI application (on line only) before the EOI Closing date and time. All prospective bidders are requested to refer ADB CSRN for any further update, modification, rescheduling of dates etc. |
| 18 | Association with foreign firms is | This is an international assignment. The prospective bidders are suggested to refer Qualification and Eligibility Criteria before EOI submission. Bidders may form JV or sub consultancy with other firms to meet qualification criteria. |
| 19 | Phasing of services | Please Refer TOR attached with the advertisement posted on ADB CSRN at mentioned link. |

| PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | Name of Official Inviting EOI | Md. Mostafizer Rahman (Joint Secretary) |
| 21 | Designation of Official Inviting Expression of Interest | Project Director, Essential Biotech and Research Centre at Munshiganj (1st Revised)" Project |
| 22 | Address of Official Inviting Expression of Interest | Essential Drugs Company Limited., 395-397, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208. |
| 23 | Contract of Details of Official Inviting Expression of Interest | PABX: 02-41010771-3,02-41010779-80<br>G.P.O. Box No. 2447 , Email: vaccine@edcl.gov.bd |
| 24 | The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all EOI's without assigning any reasons | |

Md. Mostafizer Rahman
Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Office of Project Director,
Essential Biotech and Research Centre
at Munshiganj.

(১০x৪ কলাম)

## Tarique vows

FROM PAGE 1

External Trade Organization (JETRO) headquarters in Tokyo, he said, "Our government gives priority to the needs of businesses and investors. Japanese companies have raised three key concerns: reliable energy, efficient infrastructure, and predictable customs clearance and taxation. We have listened. We have resolved some already, and we are working hard to address all the outstanding issues."

Tarique invited Japanese firms to invest in automotive manufacturing, energy, technology and space, high-speed rail and logistics, promising government support and reforms to improve the business climate.

The event was organised by JETRO in cooperation with the Japan-Bangladesh Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation, with support from the Bangladesh Embassy in Japan.

The prime minister also called for stronger trade and investment ties to elevate the two countries' longstanding relationship following the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), Bangladesh's first such agreement with another country.

He said Bangladesh aimed to become a global manufacturing hub, citing its large domestic market and potential as an export base.

"By setting up factories in Bangladesh, you not only enjoy direct access to a large and growing domestic market but also benefit from efficient factors of production to export to the rest of the world."

**MEETINGS WITH INVESTORS**

Earlier yesterday, Tarique met Kazuhiko Amakawa, governor of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), and urged the bank to open an office in Dhaka to strengthen investment and economic cooperation.

They discussed energy, information and communication technology, and infrastructure.

Tarique said his government had initiated regulatory reforms to improve the business environment and attract domestic and foreign investment. Amakawa said he would seriously consider opening an office in Dhaka.

The prime minister also met Tadashi Yanai, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Fast Retailing, the parent company of Uniqlo.

He urged the company to expand its investment in Bangladesh's garment sector, particularly in man-made fibres, technical textiles and sustainable apparel.

They discussed technology transfer, skills development, product innovation, advanced manufacturing and environmentally friendly production.

Separately, Tarique met JETRO President Susumu Kataoka and sought Japan's support in diversifying Bangladesh's exports and expanding trade and investment.

He also called for more Japanese investment in special economic zones, particularly in advanced manufacturing, ICT, automobiles, renewable energy and agro-processing.

Tarique sought further Japanese assistance with skills development programmes and the establishment of Japanese-language training centres in Bangladesh. Both sides highlighted the EPA's potential to boost bilateral trade and investment.

Later, Tarique exchanged views with members of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Tokyo.

**SIX INSTRUMENTS SIGNED**

During the visit, Bangladesh and Japan signed six instruments, according to Japan's foreign ministry: four memorandums of cooperation (MoCs), a letter of intent (LoI) and a letter on grant aid.

The MoCs cover economic relations, improvements to the business environment, agriculture, fisheries and livestock. The LoI concerns climate change cooperation, while the grant-aid letter provides up to 2.12 billion yen (about $13 million) for a maritime security capacity-building project.

Apart from the six instruments, Japan pledged two loan projects to support Bangladesh's development -- a 15.88 billion yen ($100.8 million) project to improve the investment environment and a 30.68 billion yen ($194.7 million) loan for the Upazila Governance and Development Project (Phase 2).

Tarique arrived in Tokyo on Monday for a four-day official visit at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. The two leaders held a summit on Tuesday.

Today, on the final day of his visit, Tarique is scheduled to visit a Toyota factory before returning to Dhaka.

## As classrooms

FROM PAGE 1

make mainstream education increasingly difficult to sustain.

Qawmi madrasas can be even cheaper than Alia madrasas. Many of them operate as residential institutions, making them particularly attractive to low-income families in industrial areas. For parents working long hours, sending their children to such residential madrasas can ease the burden childcare.

The fact that many of these Qawmi madrasas continued to operate during the coronavirus pandemic might have been another factor to trigger this "migration" from the mainstream Bangla schools to the madrasas.

This trend is rather worrying and warrants serious attention. Although inadequate and failing to equip students with desired competencies, the mainstream schools were still better than Qawmi madrasas that do not teach science, social science or technology. Exclusively religious instruction, and limited exposure to scientific knowledge, technology or practical skills severely restrict employment opportunities and stunt the potential for producing a skilled workforce.

The three separate education streams -- general, madrasa, and English-medium --have resulted in distinct social and cultural outlook among students, which can only pose a challenge for a nation desperately seeking greater cohesion.

If the government sincerely examines why mainstream schools are losing students, then it should become clear that the traditional "one size fits all" formula is not working. The following remedy, therefore, should advocate for customised programmes. Policymakers will need to understand whether families are seeking lower costs, stronger religious grounding, residential facilities or a different learning environment. The objective should be to ensure that every child receives a sound education, including the knowledge and skills needed to participate in a changing economy.

The government must also confront the possibility that some students are dropping out of the education system entirely. And this is perhaps the most worrisome aspect that authorities utterly lack the means to ascertain where the students are going. They do not have reliable information on how many transfer to madrasas, English-medium institutions or technical education, or how many are dropping out altogether. As such, policymaking is little more than guesswork.

The response should begin with a thorough investigation into falling enrolment aiming to establish the reasons and the destination of these missing students. Once there is a clearer idea about the expectations and aspirations of the families, it would become easier to decide on the response, which must also ensure quality and relevance of mainstream education. Education should also result in tangible benefits like better employment opportunities.

But improving schools alone will not be enough. Bangladesh must also confront the growing fragmentation of its education landscape. A nation cannot afford to educate its children in silos with little shared foundation. It will need serious thought, sincere deliberation and perhaps more importantly, bold action.

## Thakurgaon-1

FROM PAGE 2

officers and 1,978 polling officers will be on election duty.

Meanwhile, the 11-party alliance yesterday alleged administrative bias, voter intimidation and attacks on campaign activities.

After meeting the chief election commissioner, alliance coordinator and Jamaat leader Hamidur Rahman Azad claimed the EC had failed to act despite receiving detailed complaints. He warned of tougher political programmes unless a fair election was ensured.

EC Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed, however, said there was no cause for concern so far.

## IEDCR director

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to The Daily Star shortly after the attack, Prof Zaki said a government institution had been attacked by "some goons".

"I don't want to make any comments right now. I am going to the [health] ministry."

Contacted, DAB Secretary General Zahirul Islam Shakil said both sides involved in the incident were members of the organisation.

He also confirmed receiving information that the person identified as leading the incident was a DAB member. "We don't support any such incident. If anyone uses the name of DAB, we will take organisational action."

Shakil declined to comment on what led to the incident. Jahid could not be reached for comment.

A DAB leader familiar with the incident said Jahid had been working on a project at the IEDCR whose tenure recently ended.

He had been demanding an assignment to another project, but the director asked him to wait until a new project began. Jahid was unwilling to wait, leading to the incident, the leader said, seeking anonymity.

Speaking to the Prothom Alo, DAB President Prof Harun Al Rashid pointed to a photograph on his mobile phone and questioned, "How could Kazi Ahmed hold a meeting with Meerjady Sabrina Flora at his office during this government's tenure?"

Public health expert Flora held various positions, including director at IEDCR during the Awami League government.

The IEDCR is a key government agency responsible for monitoring disease outbreaks, conducting research, and issuing public health alerts.

Prof Zaki, a public health expert who recently conducted research on the effectiveness of the measles vaccine, was appointed IEDCR director after the BNP government took office.

In another development, the health ministry formed a three-member committee, led by Arif Ahmad, additional secretary (budget) of the Health Services Division, to investigate the incident. The committee has been asked to submit a report within seven working days, according to an office order of the division.

In a statement posted on Facebook, Leader of the Opposition and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman termed the incident an act of "mob" violence, calling it a "dark chapter in the history of the country's healthcare services". He also demanded a fair probe into the attack and the trial of those responsible.

## Jungle Salimpur

FROM PAGE 3

secretary of the Chattogram District Bar Association, submitted the documents required to register the sale of 65 plots recorded in Yasin's name. Habib then issued deeds transferring the properties to various individuals.

Asked about the registrations, Habib said records at the Sitakunda land office showed the properties had been registered in Yasin's name through mutation and that he had regularly paid land revenue.

"The documents were prepared as per law with valid papers, so the deeds were registered. I had informed my higher authorities about the matter beforehand," he said.

He said his office had received no specific directive concerning land in Jungle Salimpur and had examined the submitted documents before registering the deeds.

DC Mohammad Zahidul Islam Mian said the administration learned about the registrations yesterday afternoon and asked the ministry to investigate and take punitive action.

The Sitakunda UNO summoned Habib for questioning. According to the DC, the sub-registrar said Yasin had not appeared in person and the deeds were registered after documents were submitted on his behalf.

Land near Bayezid Link Road and surrounding areas reportedly sells for Tk 9-10 lakh per shotok.

On January 19, a RAB team entered Jungle Salimpur to arrest an accused member of the Yasin gang. Gang members and some locals later attacked the team, beating RAB-7 Deputy Assistant Director Nayek Subedar Motaleb Hossain Bhuiyan to death and injuring three other personnel.

Cases have been filed against Yasin and other gang members over the incident.

Police said Yasin led the Alinagar cooperative and operated an armed gang. During the Awami League government's tenure, he reportedly had political backing of former Sitakunda MP SM Al Mamun.

## Seven women

FROM PAGE 2

been released earlier.

"We have not yet received the bail documents for the others. We will take the necessary steps once we receive them."

On October 20, a team from the Detective Branch's Uttara division raided the house owned by Addl DIG Jahir in Purbachal's police housing area and detained 85 people, including 26 women.

During the nearly three-hour raid, DB officials seized one yaba pill, a small quantity of a substance identified as "kush", four bottles of alcohol and equipment used to consume yaba, according to the DB seizure list.

These included an empty 750ml bottle of locally manufactured Carew whisky, a half-filled one-litre bottle of Indian whisky, a one-litre vodka bottle that was about one-quarter full, and another one-litre bottle of Indian whisky.

Later that day, Special Metropolitan Magistrate Assaduzzaman of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Uttara division sentenced all 85 detainees in summary trials.

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

The convictions have raised questions about the evidence used to convict the detainees, as well as the subsequent circulation of their photographs and videos.


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- ২৭.২১.৬১৫২.৬৪৩.০৭.৩৩৭.২৬.৯০৪ তারিখঃ ২৭/১০/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের জিএমডি, ময়মনসিংহ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

| ID | Title of Works |
|---|---|
| 1354649 | Construction of a Security Watch Tower With an Approach Road at Kishoreganj 132/33kV Grid Sub-Station under GMD-Mymensingh, Power Grid. |
| 1339716 | Supply of a "Thermal Image Camera" For Muktagacha Grid Sub-Station Under GMD-Mymensingh, Power Grid. |

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মাসুদুল হক
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, জিএমডি, ময়মনসিংহ



Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga.
E-mail: eechu@rhd.gov.bd
Phone & Fax: 02-477789139

Memo No.: 35.01.1800.409.05.001.26-2049 Dated:-28/10/2026

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of the following works:

| Tender ID | Tender No and Description | Last selling Date and Time | Closing Date and Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1358746 | e-GP/LTM/CHURD/12/2026-2027. Repair & SBST work at Ch. 13+400 Km (Dugdugi) to Ch. 15+000 Km (Loknathpur) (Total Length=1600.00m) of Chuadanga-Darsona-Jibannagar-Kotchandpur-Kaligonj Road (R-748) under Road Division, Chuadanga, during the year 2026-2027. | 10-Nov-2026 16:00 | 11-Nov-2026 11:00 |

- 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 (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any Member of Schedule Banks for e-GP.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@procure.gov.bd)

28/10/26
(Md. Shakirul Islam)
ID No. 602272
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga.
01730-782778

GD-2604



অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
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বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ০৯/২০২৬ তারিখঃ ২৮/১০/২০২৬

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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28/10/2026
মহাব্যবস্থাপক
এইচআর প্ল্যানিং, ডিপ্লয়মেন্ট এন্ড অপারেশনস্ ডিভিশন
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মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০।

GD-2606



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Rajshahi Medical College

Memo No. 59.14.8100.028.59.008.26--4141 Date:28-10-2026

e-Tender Notice-2/2026-2027 (OTM)

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

| Tender ID | Description | Tender /Proposal publication Date | Tender /Proposal Closing & Opening Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1351384 | Supply of MSR & Chemical. Code No. 3252105 under Rajshahi Medical College during the FY 2026-27. RMC/26-27/P-20 | 29-Oct-2026 | 16-Nov-2026 |
| 1361731 | Supply of Others Machinery Equipment Goods. Code No. 4112316 under Rajshahi Medical College during the FY 2026-27 RMC/26-27/P-34 | 29-Oct-2026 | 16-Nov-2026 |

This is 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 e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP 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).

Principal 28.10.26
Rajshahi Medical College

GD-2607



Government of the People`s Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Office of the Superintendent of Police
Rajbari

Memo No.3423 /E Date 28-10-2026.

Tender Notice No-05/2026-2027 (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of Following Works Details are given bellow.

| SL NO: | Procurement Nature, Title | Tender ID No | Publication Date | Tender Closing & Opening (Date & Time) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Goods, Procurement of high-quality Edible oil, Soyabean oil for Police Ration Store of Rajbari District Police. | 1361072 | 28-10-2026 18.00 | 09-11-2026 13.00 |

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(Mir Monir Hossain)
BP-7910126902
Superintendent of Police
Rajbari.
☎-02-478807576, -02-478807490
E-Mail: sprajbari@police.gov.bd

GD-2611

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026, KARTIK 13, 1433 BS

# SPORT



PHOTO: BAF

# Gold cannot gloss over archery's shortcomings

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh claimed one gold and two silver medals in the compound events of the Asia Cup Archery Stage-2 in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, yesterday. The tally looked respectable, but the results exposed a gap between medal returns and performance, with several of Asia's strongest teams absent.

The compound women's team of Bonna Akter, Sreeporna Bishwas and Kulsum Akter Mone beat Kazakhstan 230-220 to win gold -- their first in the tournament -- needing just two victories in a four-team competition.

Bangladesh's other two teams fell to Kazakhstan in the finals. The compound men's trio of Himu Bachhar, Toriqul Islam and Newas Ahmed Rakib lost 230-224, while the mixed pair of Bonna and Rakib went down 153-142. Both settled for silver in six-team events.

South Korea, India, China, Japan, Malaysia and Chinese Taipei were among the major Asian archery nations missing from the competition. Against a field featuring improving sides such as Kazakhstan, Iraq, Syria, Sri Lanka, Palestine and Afghanistan, Bangladesh had a chance to dominate the compound events. Instead, the men's and mixed teams fell short at the final hurdle.

The results raise questions about whether Bangladesh are getting sufficient returns from year-round training and substantial investment under a foreign coach.

Bangladesh archers have previously shown they can compete at a higher level. Ruman Sana and Sagor Islam qualified for the Olympics on merit, while other archers won recognition at the World Archery Championships, World Cups and Asian Archery Championships. But several leading archers, including Ruman, Diya Siddique and Hakim Ahmed Rubel, have since migrated to the United States amid limited prospects at home.

Their departures have left a gap that newcomers have struggled to fill. Compound archers such as Himu and Newas Rakib offer promise, but their defeats in Iraq underline the difficulty of turning potential into results when medals are at stake.

Archery remains one of Bangladesh's potential routes to an Olympic medal. Realising that ambition, however, requires more than favourable draws and occasional podium finishes. Retaining established talent, building viable careers for newcomers and delivering in international finals are essential to sustained progress.

Bangladesh will contest three more finals in the recurve events today.



**Six national records fell on the opening day of the Max Group 35th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Competition 2026 in Mirpur yesterday, with Bangladesh Navy's Samiul Islam Rafi setting a new 50m backstroke mark of 25.81 seconds, bettering his previous record of 26.05.**

**Read full story on The Daily Star's website

# Shadman's 'realisation' on cracking conversion code

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The surface for the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and West Indies was not conducive to fluent batting. For a top-order batter, it demanded unwavering concentration, with deliveries rising sharply from a length or keeping low. Bangladesh opener Shadman Islam negotiated the challenge with patience and perseverance, remaining unbeaten on 99 before bad light brought an early end to the day's play. Movement and spin were also on offer, but the left-hander held his nerve to take control of his innings rather than let the conditions dictate terms.

Since scoring a century against Zimbabwe last April, Shadman had gone 17 innings without reaching the three-figure mark, managing four fifties and twice missing out on centuries against Ireland. His struggles, particularly away from home, had raised concerns over his place in the side and Bangladesh's World Test Championship (WTC) campaign.

Yet Shadman remains the seventh-highest run-scorer among Test openers over the past three years, with 1,115 runs. His problem, however, has been converting starts into big scores.

Yashasvi Jaiswal leads the run-getters with 2,346 runs, six centuries and 12 fifties. Ben Duckett has a conversion rate of 38.5 per cent, while Tom Latham's stands at 50 per cent. Shadman, by contrast, has a conversion rate of just 11.1 per cent, with one century and eight fifties over the same period.

Bangladesh batting coach Mohammad Salahuddin believes Shadman may be recognising the need to turn his starts into bigger scores.

"Yes, I think he may be realising it himself or maybe he has talked to others about it. His conversion rate is not really that high. He hit dominating fifties in many innings but he could not make them longer. Maybe there was an issue with the process," Salahuddin said after the day's play.

The coach hopes the innings will help the left-hander develop a better understanding of how to build on promising starts.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

"I think this innings will help him and I think he is finding out for himself what he should be doing at that time. I hope what I am saying is that this innings will teach him a lot. It will teach him a lot of things," he added.

Judgement and patience were crucial throughout the day. Shadman rotated the strike with 38 singles, collected nine twos and struck 10 boundaries when opportunities arose. His priority, however, was to minimise risk against both pace and spin.

"Sometimes we may play risky shots or there may be tough periods where we may play loose shots. But I think he assessed the wicket, overcame that difficult time and took the innings under his control. It's been a while I have seen an innings like that from him," Salahuddin said.

"I think he worked on it and that's why the innings got bigger," he added.

For Shadman, the challenge now is to carry that approach forward. His unbeaten 99 could prove a valuable lesson in managing difficult periods and converting promising starts into hundreds, provided he can replicate the discipline in the innings to come.

**"I think there is something for bowlers here, and they can get a lot of help if they bowl well. I think our batters handled the conditions quite well, though our top order could have done a little better. Had we been able to handle the initial period, I think we could have been in a better position. However, I would say that being three wickets down at the end of the day is probably a decent position for us. But I would say that drama could unfold in this Test at any moment."**

Bangladesh batting coach
**MOHAMMAD SALAHUDDIN**

**"Spin is going to play a very important role in deciding who wins the series. I guess the outcome of the series will depend on who bats the best and who plays spin the best. So, as a team, we've got to be disciplined in both batting and bowling. Simple as that."**

West Indies spinner
**JOMEL WARRICAN**



PHOTO: REUTERS

# Fleetwood shoot Gunners down

STAR SPORTS DESK

Fleetwood Town pulled off one of the biggest upsets in Carabao Cup history, dumping Premier League champions Arsenal out on penalties to reach the quarterfinals.

Ranked 84 places below the Gunners in the football pyramid, Fleetwood -- currently 18th in League Two, the fourth division of English football -- stunned Mikel Arteta's side when Aaron Loupalo-Bi struck in the 21st minute. Viktor Gyokeres equalised after the break, but Arsenal wasted chance after chance before teenager Max Dowman was sent off in the 86th minute for kicking out at Harrison Neal.



Jay Lynch then denied Ben White and Martin Odegaard late on to force a shootout, where he saved Bruno Guimaraes' spot-kick before Conor Haughey converted the winner to spark wild celebrations at Highbury Stadium.

Fans stormed the pitch, players swore in post-match interviews and Fleetwood boss Matt Lawlor fought back tears.

Arsenal had arrived to a welcome of flames and fireworks, but a drone halted play early on, delaying the restart by eight minutes. Despite making nine changes, Arteta's side managed just one goal from 26 shots and 59 touches in the Fleetwood box.

# Dooley adds defensive cover amid injury concerns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head coach Thomas Dooley has called up defenders Tajuddin and Abdullah Omar for the ongoing preparation camp ahead of the SAFF Championship, seeking cover amid fitness concerns over Bishwanath Ghosh and Topu Barman who made it to the 28-member preliminary squad.

"We could add another two players as we had some injuries," Dooley told reporters before yesterday's training session at the National Stadium. "[Bishwanath] He is very important for us but we have to be careful if he



pulls his hamstring again."

The US-German coach indicated that Tajuddin and Omar could make the 23-member final squad if they impress in training. Dooley also pushed back against a recent report suggesting he did not trust his players, urging the media to focus on the team's preparations rather than negative narratives.

"If I'm asked a question, can we win against Bhutan without Hamza? Yeah, of course we can. And I trust my players.

"We have to perform every single time ," Dooley said, adding that he had told players and staff he did not want to "deal with anything that is negative".

## WHAT TO WATCH

**T Sports**
Bangladesh vs West Indies
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 9:30 am
Pakistan ODI Tri-Series
England vs Sri Lanka
Live from 2:00 pm
NCL GT20
Live from 8:00 pm

**Star Sports Network**
Nepal Premier League
Live from 5:30 pm


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# 68 killed in Spain as two high-speed trains collide

## 100 hurt; signal fault blamed; death toll may rise

**AGENCIES**

A high-speed train collision south of Madrid killed 68 people and injured over 100 yesterday, with the toll likely to rise, regional authorities said, in Spain's second such disaster this year.

AFP reporters on the scene in the central region of Castilla-La Mancha saw one train embedded into another and some carriages lying on their side in tangles of metal debris at the bottom of an embankment.

Dozens of emergency services vehicles were racing to and from the site and helicopters hovered above during a frantic search for survivors.

A person briefed on the disaster said

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



**Emergency services work at the site of a collision between a high-speed Renfe AVE train and an Iryo train near Urda and Los Yébenes, about 150km south of Madrid in Spain's Toledo province, yesterday.** PHOTO: AFP

# Lax rules, looting pushed banking sector into crisis

## Say experts, bankers at conference

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Excessive relaxation of rules created room for irregularities and plunder in banks, pushing the sector into its current crisis, said economists, bankers and experts yesterday.

"Many are now calling for looser regulations to tackle the sluggish economy and the liquidity crunch in the banking and industrial sectors. But any easing must come with adequate safeguards so it does not open the door to fresh plunder or irregularities," said Wahiduddin Mahmud, former planning adviser to the interim government.

Support should go to honest and genuine entrepreneurs, he said at the inaugural session of the two-day 11th Annual Banking Conference 2026 at the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management.

Fresh policies should draw on lessons from Bangladesh's own banking crises and reform experiences, rather than blindly following prescriptions from international organisations.

"The sector should be reshaped in line with the country's own realities."

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

# Qatar offers Iran new war-ending deal

## Says official; Houthi missile fired towards Saudi Arabia's Taif downed

**AGENCIES**

Qatari mediators presented Iran with a new draft deal yesterday to end the war with the US and Israel, and Tehran is expected to send a response to the draft by the end of the week, an official briefed on the negotiations said yesterday.

The new draft being considered by Iran sets a seven-day timeline addressing both Tehran's and Washington's concerns, laying out daily confidence-building steps that each side must take, the official said.

The timeline could begin early next week and several

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

# Attacks on political parties undermine democratic gains

## They must be allowed to function freely, safely, analysts say

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Attacks on party offices and activists, along with attempted disruptions of meetings and rallies, threaten democratic practices and freedom of expression, political analysts have warned.

Differences of opinion or resentment over a party's past conduct cannot justify violence or restrictions on its activities, they said. Parties that have not been banned must be allowed to operate freely and safely, and the government must protect them, they added.

Their concerns follow incidents involving the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JaSoD) and Jatiyo Party. In some cases, the parties have blamed leaders and activists of the ruling BNP and its affiliated organisations.

Prof Mojibur Rahman of Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research said the "mob attacks" and vandalism seen after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, 2024 were expected to end once a democratic government took office.

"But we are still seeing similar incidents in some cases," he said.

"These incidents create obstacles

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

**ISRAELI ELECTIONS**

# Netanyahu camp leads but lacks majority

## Media forecast shows; Arab parties could emerge as kingmakers after nearly 86pc of votes counted

**AGENCIES**

The camp of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was ahead of his rival's opposition bloc but still short of a majority yesterday after over two-thirds of the votes were counted in Israel's pivotal general election.

Voters turned out in the highest numbers in decades to give their verdict on Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



**Batters Shadman Islam and Litton Das (10 not out) walk back to the pavilion with broad grins as Bangladesh ended Day 1 of their first Test against West Indies in a decent position at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. The Tigers reached 213 for three in 74 overs before play was called off early due to bad light. Unbeaten on 99, Shadman will have to wait another day for a chance to notch his third Test century and help Bangladesh post a challenging first-innings total.** PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# Malaysia-bound workers may leave from early Nov

## Medical tests from Oct 31; govt yet to fix recruitment costs; agencies warn expenses could reach Tk 6 lakh

**MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

Bangladeshi workers may begin travelling to Malaysia in the first week of November, with medical tests set to start on October 31. However, uncertainty persists over recruitment costs, with private agencies warning that actual expenses could far exceed preliminary estimates.

The government is yet to finalise recruitment costs, with initial estimates of Tk 3–4 lakh through private agencies and Tk 1.55–1.60 lakh through state-run Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL). The government-fixed rate during the previous recruitment period was Tk 78,990.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Nurul Haque Nur disclosed the estimates yesterday, clarifying that the figure for private agencies was his personal assessment, not an official rate, while the BOESL estimate was based on preliminary discussions.

An owner of a recruiting agency approved under Malaysia's recruitment system told The Daily Star, "The government may fix the cost at Tk 3–4 lakh, but we are paying around 10,000 ringgits [around Tk 3.04 lakh] in commission against each work order. Once airfare and medical expenses are added, the cost will be no less than Tk 6 lakh."

The agency owner, whose firm has received job orders for around 15,000 workers, expects to complete recruitment procedures by the first week of November.

Meanwhile, questions have emerged over the government's much-publicised plan to send 10,000 workers, selected according to Malaysia's skill requirements, through BOESL at zero migration cost, as they will still have to pay for airfare, medical tests and a small service charge.

Migration expert Asif Munier said the lack of clarity over the zero-cost promise could create confusion and opportunities for exploitation.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

**Questions have emerged over the government's much-publicised plan to send 10,000 workers, selected according to Malaysia's skill requirements, through BOESL at zero migration cost, as they will still have to pay for airfare, medical tests and a small service charge.**

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তারিখঃ ১২ কার্তিক, ১৪৩৩ বঙ্গাব্দ / ২৮ অক্টোবর, ২০২৬ খ্রি.

"নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

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| ৩. | প্রধান সহকারী (গ্রেড-১৩) | ০৯ (নয়) টি |
| ৪. | উচ্চমান সহকারী (গ্রেড-১৪) | ১০ (দশ) টি |
| ৫. | সাঁটমুদ্রাক্ষরিক কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর (গ্রেড-১৪) | ১২ (বারো) টি |
| ৬. | অফিস সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক (গ্রেড-১৬) | ১২ (বারো) টি |
| ৭. | অফিস সহায়ক (গ্রেড-২০) | ১৩ (তেরো) টি |

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| Online-এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময় | : | ০১ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ খ্রি., সকাল ১০:০০ টা। |
| Online -এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | : | ২১ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ খ্রি., বিকাল ০৪:০০ টা। |

নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি দেখার জন্য কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, কর অঞ্চল- ১৯, ঢাকা এর www.taxeszone19dhaka.gov.bd ভিজিট করুন অথবা নিম্নোক্ত কিউআর কোড স্ক্যান করুন। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোনো আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

কর অঞ্চল-১৯, ঢাকা এর ওয়েবসাইটে প্রবেশ এর QR code

কর অঞ্চল-১৯, ঢাকা এর টেলিটক পোর্টালে প্রবেশ এর QR code

(এস এম মেহেদী হাসান)
উপ কর কমিশনার,
সদর দপ্তর (প্রশাসন),
কর অঞ্চল- ১৯, ঢাকা
ও
সদস্য সচিব, বিভাগীয় নিয়োগ কমিটি,
কর অঞ্চল- ১৯, ঢাকা।
ই-মেইলঃ taxeszone19@gmail.com

GD-2610

The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026
KARTIK 13, 1433 BS
SUPPLEMENT S1

# SHIFTING shelves



# Supershops adapt to LOCAL TASTES AND TIGHTER BUDGETS

**ERSHAD ISLAM**

On Thursday evenings, Rumana Akter finishes marking exercise books, picks up her grocery bag and walks ten minutes to the supermarket on the main road of her district town. She used to send her husband to the bazaar on Fridays with a list and a warning about onion prices. Now she goes herself, trolley in hand, keeping most of the list in her head.

"I like that I can pick things up and read the label," she said. "At the bazaar, I'd just trust the man. Here, I can compare two packets of lentils and nobody's watching me do it."

She buys rice and oil there, along with frozen parathas her children like and a tray of marinated chicken she would have laughed at five years ago. However, she still buys vegetables at the Saturday market because they are fresher and she knows whom to ask.

Her routine reflects what supershops have changed for a growing number of households, and what they have not. They have altered how many urban families shop but have yet to replace the bazaar.

Modern stores account for only about 2.5% of Bangladesh's retail market, compared with 12% to 30% in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, according to media reports. Figures from the supermarket owners' association, cited by Prothom Alo, put the number of supershops at more than 1,500. About 600 are chain outlets, while the rest are local businesses operating one or two stores.

Shwapno leads the chains, accounting for more than 50% of the supermarket market, with over 500 outlets serving more than 100,000 customers a day, according to media reports. Prothom Alo named Daily Shopping, Meena Bazar, Agora, Amana Big Bazar, Unimart and Prince Bazar among the other players. Independent businesses also remain important, particularly outside the capital.

Mizanur Rahman runs one such business in an upazila. He started selling groceries in the 1990s with a counter and a ledger.

"My father weighed everything out by hand," he said. "Now people pick their own. It took a few years before customers stopped asking staff to fetch things." He now maintains stock records on a computer, reorders according to demand and buys packaged goods through distributors instead of local wholesalers. Barcode billing has ended the weekly arguments over prices by providing printed receipts. However, margins on branded goods remain thin, while rent, electricity and wages put pressure on his business.

For national chains, expansion requires adapting to local demand. Tanvir Hasan, a regional manager at a national chain, said outlets outside Dhaka were not simply copies of those in the capital.

SEE PAGE S3

ILLUSTRATION: **S. M. TAHMID**



The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026
KARTIK 13, 1433 BS
SUPPLEMENT S2

# SHIFTING shelves



# MINISO in Bangladesh:

## Bringing the world's lifestyle home

On a weekend afternoon at a MINISO store in Dhaka, a university student searches for a Naruto keychain, a father chooses a plush toy for his daughter, and a young couple picks out travel accessories. Nearby, friends explore beauty products while a teenager photographs an official FIFA World Cup scarf.

Founded in 2013 by entrepreneur Ye Guofu in Guangzhou, China, MINISO was built on a simple idea: everyday products should combine thoughtful design, dependable quality and fair prices. Today, it operates more than 8,500 stores across 112 countries and regions, guided by its philosophy, "Life is for Fun".

Its range spans gifting, travel accessories, electronics, perfumes, skincare, cosmetics and home essentials, bringing global lifestyle trends into everyday Bangladeshi routines.




**GLOBAL POP CULTURE, NOW AT HOME**

Intellectual property collaborations have become central to MINISO's appeal. The brand partners with more than 150 global licensors, introduces over 10,000 new products annually and has sold more than 800 million licensed products worldwide.

**From a single storefront in Banani to more than 32 outlets across six cities, the global lifestyle brand has brought international trends and pop culture closer to Bangladeshi shoppers.**

In Bangladesh, Harry Potter and Sanrio collections arrived in 2024. This year, MINISO Bangladesh became the country's only retailer offering officially licensed FIFA World Cup 2026 merchandise, including collectible trophies, pins, scarves, mugs and tote bags. National football captain Jamal Bhuyan visited to see the collection first-hand.

Its growing roster includes Star Wars, Formula 1, Naruto, One Piece and Pingu. This December, the official collection for Marvel's Avengers: Doomsday is scheduled to arrive alongside its worldwide release.

**FROM BANANI TO SIX CITIES**

MINISO Bangladesh began its journey in 2017 with the aim of making global trends and lifestyle products accessible to local consumers.

"When we opened our first store in Banani, many people asked whether Bangladesh was ready for a concept like this," said Shah Rayeed Chowdhury, director of MINISO Bangladesh. "Our customers answered that question for us."

The brand has since expanded to more than 32 stores across six major cities, including Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Khulna and Bogura. Chattogram has emerged as its second hub, with further expansion planned.

**RECOGNITION AND THE ROAD AHEAD**

In January 2025, MINISO Bangladesh's Gulshan 2 store was named among the Top 100 MINISO stores worldwide at the company's annual global event in Guangzhou. The Bangladesh operation also received recognition for its brand culture across stores, office and warehouse.

In 2026, MINISO Bangladesh won Best Retailer and Best In-Store Design at the Retail Congress Awards.

Globally, the company is pursuing deeper IP collaborations and larger, more immersive stores. In Bangladesh, bigger flagship outlets, themed launches and expansion into new cities are shaping its next chapter.



# Bridging the gap between farms and markets

**SHAMEEM AHMED JAIGIRDER, CEO, MEENA BAZAR**

Shameem Ahmed Jaigirder, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Meena Bazar, Meena Sweets & Gemcon Agro, talked to The Daily Star about the "Back to Root" initiative, its efforts to connect farmers with organised retail, ensure food quality and build a more efficient farm-to-market supply chain.

**THE DAILY STAR (TDS): What gap in Bangladesh's farm-to-market system was "Back to Root" designed to address?**

**Shameem Ahmed Jaigirder (SAJ):** Many farmers struggle to access reliable markets and receive fair returns, while consumers face challenges with freshness, consistency and pricing. Back to Root aims to connect farmers directly with organised retail, reduce unnecessary intermediaries and make quality produce available at competitive prices.

**TDS: How does the initiative work in practice?**

**SAJ:** We identify suitable farmers and producers, coordinate sourcing with retail demand, conduct quality checks and deliver produce to our outlets. We aim to improve forecasting, handling and collection to reduce waste and ensure a more reliable market for producers.

**TDS: How many farmers are connected, and what share of fresh produce comes directly from them?**

**SAJ:** We are building relationships with farmers and agricultural producers across different sourcing areas. Our priority is to develop a structured network that provides reliable market access while increasing direct sourcing as a share of our fresh produce procurement.

**TDS: How do you ensure food safety and quality, particularly through GAP?**

**SAJ:** Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) promote responsible use of agricultural inputs, safe water, proper hygiene and careful post-harvest handling. We focus on selecting suitable producers, checking quality and improving handling, with a long-term goal of strengthening traceability and responsible production.

**TDS: What measurable benefits has direct sourcing delivered for farmers and consumers?**

**SAJ:** We aim to provide farmers with reliable market access and consumers with fresher products at competitive prices. Better coordination can reduce intermediaries and waste, but the real benefit depends on improving the supply chain and sharing the value created fairly.

**TDS: How do you manage seasonal supply fluctuations and minimise waste?**

**SAJ:** We aim to align procurement with seasonal availability and store demand through better forecasting, transportation, storage and distribution. Stronger links with farming communities and improved post-harvest handling can also help reduce losses.

**TDS: Does the initiative include small growers, rooftop gardeners or technology-enabled farms?**

**SAJ:** Our vision is to include different producers, from small-scale and rural growers to technology-enabled and urban farms, provided they meet our quality standards. Better collection and market linkages can help smaller producers access organised retail.

**TDS: How do you plan to scale up the initiative?**

**SAJ:** We plan to expand our producer network, strengthen sourcing relationships and improve logistics, quality control and demand forecasting. Collaboration with agricultural experts and relevant institutions will also support our goal of building a more reliable, efficient and inclusive food supply chain.






The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026
KARTIK 13, 1433 BS
SUPPLEMENT S3

# SHIFTING shelves



# Supershops adapt to local tastes and tighter budgets

FROM PAGE S1

"A shop in a district town carries more staples and fewer imported items," he said. "Spending power is different, and so are tastes. We stock more loose-weight rice and lentils there and fewer ready meals."

Large purchasing volumes and cold storage also allow chains to offer frozen and chilled products that traditional shops rarely carry. Some are strengthening their supply links with farmers. Meena Bazar told The Daily Star in an earlier report that it sources vegetables directly from growers, although published accounts do not establish how extensively this practice extends to its district-town outlets.

Franchising offers another route into smaller towns. Local investors provide the premises and capital, while brands supply products, systems and signage. This reduces the chains' financial exposure and gives investors access to established business models. However, questions remain over who bears the losses when an outlet struggles and whether service standards remain consistent.

For shoppers, the advantages are straightforward. Fixed prices eliminate bargaining, stores often stay open late, and some offer delivery. Promotions on oil and detergent can help households manage their budgets, although comparing discounts is not always easy.

Packaged and frozen foods have also become more common. However, it is difficult to determine how much of this shift is driven by supershops and how much by busier working lives, smartphones, delivery apps and greater access to refrigerators.

The drawbacks are equally clear. Loose vegetables, fish and meat can cost less at traditional markets. Organised retail does not guarantee quality either. Air-conditioned stores can sell stale produce, and shoppers have reported finding expired products on shelves.

Tax also affects the price difference. Media reports have highlighted the 5% VAT on supermarket purchases compared with the absence of equivalent retail VAT in open markets. Later reports said VAT relief boosted chain sales, with Shwapno recording a 15% increase in footfall over a month.

Yet traditional shops offer something chains cannot easily replicate: credit. Khadija Begum buys her monthly supply of rice and oil from the shop her family has used for twenty years. She pays at the end of the month, when her husband receives his salary.

"He knows when money's tight," she said. "I couldn't ask a supermarket to wait."

This flexibility matters to households without regular incomes. Supershops suit families with predictable earnings and weekly shopping routines, while daily-wage earners may prefer buying small quantities as money becomes available.

Zakir Hossain, general secretary of the Bangladesh Supermarket Owners' Association, said in an earlier report in The Daily Star that chains struggled in their early years because customers were unfamiliar with the concept. That has changed, although not evenly.

Meanwhile, neighbourhood shops are adapting by adding shelves that let customers browse, accepting mobile payments and stocking packaged products commonly found in supermarkets. Others have changed little and continue to do well.

Back on the main road, Rumana Akter swipes her card, packs her bag and says she will return next Thursday. On Saturday, though, she will still be at the vegetable market, bargaining amiably over the price of bottle gourd.



IMAGE: MAGNIFIC

**Bangladesh's retail landscape is evolving as supershops introduce more organised shopping experiences and wider product ranges. However, traditional markets remain competitive by offering lower prices, familiar service and the flexibility many households need.**



# Making supershops part of everyday shopping

**GALIB FARROKH BAKHT**

Daily Shopping

As households weigh every purchase, supershops face pressure to keep prices affordable while meeting rising operating costs. In an interview with The Daily Star, Galib Farrokh Bakht, chief operating officer of Daily Shopping, discusses changing shopping habits, expansion beyond major cities and the policies needed to support organised retail.

**THE DAILY STAR (TDS): How do you assess the current state of Bangladesh's supershop sector?**

**GALIB FARROKH BAKHT (GFB):** Consumers want quality products, accurate weights, a clean environment and convenient shopping alongside affordable prices. This demand is growing beyond major cities. Organised retail still accounts for a small share of the market, leaving room for growth. We see its future in becoming a dependable place for ordinary families to shop.

**TDS: How are inflation and operating costs affecting your business?**

**GFB:** Families are considering more carefully what to buy, how much they need and where they can save. Meanwhile, rent, wages, electricity, transport and storage costs are putting pressure on retailers.

We are increasing direct sourcing and reducing waste. Our priority is customers' total savings on regular shopping, beyond individual discounts. Expansion is also bringing more customers, helping cover costs.

**TDS: How has the removal of separately charged VAT affected customer interest and sales?**

**GFB:** It has helped address the perception that buying the same product at a supershop necessarily means paying extra. We see signs of greater interest, but sales also depend on prices, availability, promotions and outlet locations. Affordable prices and consistently good service must turn that interest into regular shopping.

> **Modernisation should deliver affordable, quality products to consumers and fair prices to farmers.**
>
> **Galib Farrokh Bakht**
> Chief Operating Officer
> Daily Shopping

**TDS: What government support would help the sector grow?**

**GFB:** We need fair competition and stable policies. Customers should not face additional tax simply because of where they choose to shop. A one-stop service for licences and approvals would reduce costs and delays. Food safety, quality and weight regulations should apply equally to all retailers. Better cold storage, direct sourcing and farmer training in Good Agricultural Practices would help reduce waste.

**TDS: How many outlets do you operate, and where could you expand?**

**GFB:** Daily Shopping currently has 150 outlets in Bangladesh. We see opportunities in residential neighbourhoods, district towns, upazila headquarters and communities near industrial areas. Purchasing power, local needs, accessibility and supply arrangements guide expansion. We particularly see potential in densely populated areas with limited access to organised retail. Each outlet must remain viable.

**TDS: How can supershops make retail more accountable?**

**GFB:** Clear prices, accurate weights, receipts, expiry checks and complaint handling build trust. Direct producer links help trace products and maintain quality. Supershops can support small businesses, create jobs and encourage digital payments. Greater accountability can help curb market manipulation.

Modernisation should deliver affordable, quality products to consumers and fair prices to farmers.

# FOLLOWING THE SUPERSHOP TRAIL



**Agora opens** — 2001
Rahimafrooz launches Agora as Bangladesh's first modern supershop chain.



**ACI enters retail** — 2008
ACI Logistics enters with Fresh and Near, the business behind Shwapno.



**Agora acquires PQS** — 2011
Five PQS stores in Dhaka are set to take the Agora name.



**Daily Shopping begins** — 2014
Pran launches the chain in January with seven Dhaka outlets.



**Delivery gains ground** — 2020
Pandemic restrictions accelerate online ordering and home delivery.

**2002 Meena Bazar joins**
Gemcon Group launches another early name in Bangladesh's organised grocery retail.



**2010 Agora goes beyond Dhaka**
The chain opens its first store outside the capital, in Chattogram.



**2013 Unimart arrives**
United Group introduces a larger format with a 40,000-square-foot store.

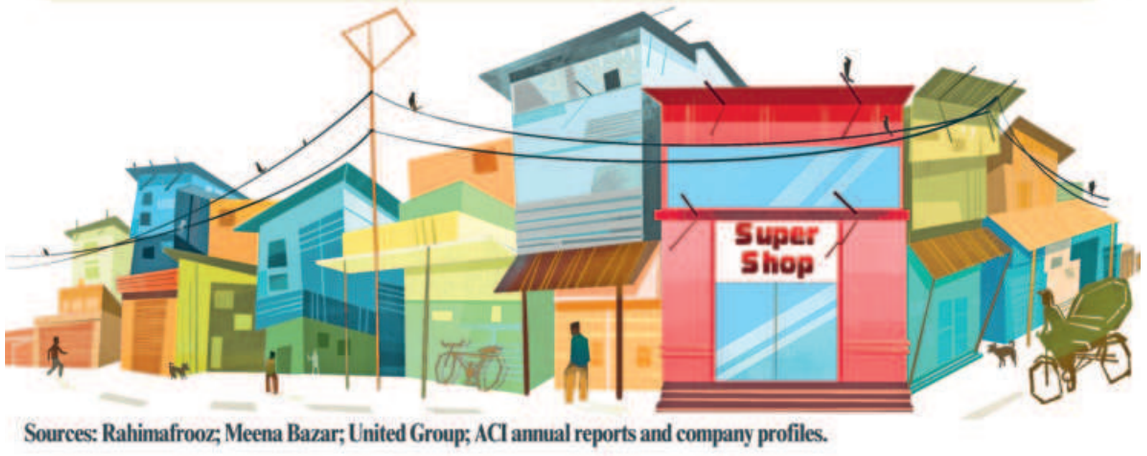


**2017-18 Franchising takes hold**
Shwapno introduces a franchise model that later drives expansion.



**2026 Shwapno crosses 1,000 outlets**
The chain reports 1,001 outlets nationwide in August.






Sources: Rahimafrooz; Meena Bazar; United Group; ACI annual reports and company profiles.

INFOGRAPHICS: S. M. TAHMID | ILLUSTRATION: TANVIR MALEK



The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 29, 2026
KARTIK 13, 1433 BS
SUPPLEMENT S4

# SHIFTING shelves



# Building a career in modern retail

TASHAHUD AHAMED RAFIM

For many young jobseekers, a supermarket cashier or sales assistant position offers a first step into employment. With experience, training and strong performance, it can also lead to supervisory, managerial or specialist roles.

Cashiers process payments and answer customer queries, while sales assistants replenish shelves, arrange displays and help shoppers. Entry requirements and pay vary by employer. A September advertisement for a point-of-sale executive at Bandhon Departmental Shop offered Tk 12,000–15,000 monthly, requiring HSC in commerce and at least one year's experience. Such figures illustrate individual vacancies, rather than an industry-wide pay scale.

Employees may progress to senior cashier, team leader or floor supervisor, coordinating staff, monitoring stock and resolving complaints. However, experience alone may not meet every employer's requirements. A September Meena Bazar advertisement offered Tk 20,000–30,000 for an officer/supervisor, seeking a bachelor's or master's degree and two to five years of relevant experience.

"Someone who starts as a cashier or sales assistant can develop the skills needed for supervisory roles. We look for people who understand customers, manage responsibilities efficiently and demonstrate leadership potential," said Shafik Alam, an area manager at a supermarket chain.

Further steps may include assistant outlet manager and outlet manager, responsible for staffing, sales, inventory and customer experience. Area or regional managers oversee several stores. Progression depends on vacancies, performance and company policy; it is not guaranteed by years of service.

Retail careers also extend into merchandising, procurement, supply chain management, e-commerce, marketing and human resources. Moving into these functions may require additional qualifications or specialist training.

For employees seeking advancement, useful skills include accurate cash handling, stock control, spreadsheet use and familiarity with point-of-sale systems. Handling complaints and coordinating colleagues also provide preparation for supervisory work.

Before accepting an offer, applicants should clarify shift lengths, weekly days off, overtime arrangements, benefits and training opportunities. Asking how promotions are assessed can help distinguish a clear career pathway from a general promise of growth.

## SUPERSHOP CAREER PATHWAY

**Higher-level role**
Outlet Manager / In-Charge
**Tk 22,000–50,000**
Leads an outlet, staff, stock and sales

**Possible mid-career route**
Floor / Outlet Supervisor
**Tk 18,000–30,000**
Sales-floor operations and staff coordination

**Possible mid-career route**
Chief Cashier
**Tk 16,000–22,000**
Cash handling and cashier-team oversight

**Entry role**
Cashier / Salesman
**Tk 8,000–14,000**
Customer service, checkout and shelf support

**Source:** Meena Bazar, Universal Mart, Daily Shopping (PRAN Group) and Apon Family Mart, 2025–2026; Dohaj, Bdjobs and Meena Bazar HR LinkedIn posts (2025–2026).

## Notes

- The ranges combine the lowest and highest advertised amounts across separate postings for each role. They are not averages, a standard salary scale or confirmed take-home pay.
- Chief Cashier and Floor / Outlet Supervisor are parallel routes, not compulsory successive promotions.
- Job titles and reporting lines vary by employer. Progression depends on vacancies, experience and company policy.
- The chart uses vacancies from 2025–2026, despite the broader 2020–2026 search window.
- Salary ranges reflect selected advertised vacancies, not industry averages.

# Customer-first convenience at superstores

Just two decades ago, there was little noticeable difference between village traditional markets (hat-bazaars) and urban retail shops for household groceries. A culture of bargaining while sweltering in the heat or wading through mud and rainwater was deeply established. Against this backdrop, chain superstores have played a remarkably positive role in creating a comfortable, modern alternative for citizens.

The convenience of buying a variety of quality products under one roof, in a hygienic environment, with well-planned displays and fixed prices, has brought fantastic ease to city dwellers. Urban consumers are also happily embracing the added convenience of card payments. This transformation in shopping habits has added a brand-new dimension to urban culture.

Turning specifically to Shwapno, it holds a leading position within the country's superstore community. By practising globally recognised agricultural standards, committing to food safety, and upholding a zero-compromise policy on health protection and environmental standards, the organisation has earned widespread public trust in a short time. Furthermore, establishing 1,000 stores nationwide has given it a distinct status, making it the undisputed market leader in terms of individual achievement. Taking everything into account, it is clear that Shwapno is the largest superstore chain in the country.

In 2012, Shwapno began developing its proprietary direct sourcing model. Through this initiative, the company sought to work closer to farmers, including smallholder and marginal farmers, reducing unnecessary intermediaries between producers and consumers. The goal was never merely to purchase products at lower prices, but rather to create a value chain where farmers gain better market access and consumers receive fresher produce at competitive prices.



**It goes without saying that superstores have brought citizen convenience to urban culture.**

Internationally recognised Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) were integrated into Shwapno's sourcing ecosystem. Shwapno takes pride in standing out from other superstore chains, as more than 1,500 farmers have been trained under GLOBALG.A.P. protocols. Among them, 100 farmers across 15 crops have achieved GLOBALG.A.P. certification. The organisation's emphasis on safe sourcing extends to commodities like poultry and beef, where food safety is of paramount importance.

Given factors like novelty, modernity, and urban culture, establishing superstores in the country was initially a significant challenge. Shwapno was a key pioneer in accepting this challenge, gradually evolving into the nation's largest chain store. Looking ahead, it remains part of Shwapno's strategic vision to demonstrate how much further it can expand its professionalism, reach, and scope of customer service as a market leader.

Furthermore, amid inflation and the sudden disappearance of essential food items (such as oil and sugar) from open markets, Shwapno, guided by its social responsibility, takes immediate proactive steps to protect consumer interests. In this regard, Shwapno stands distinct and unique.

It goes without saying that superstores have brought citizen convenience to urban culture. Earning customer trust and satisfaction is crucial for any business venture. Just how far Shwapno succeeds on this journey will become even clearer in the days to come.

# Opening a supershop through a franchise



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

S M TAHMID

Opening a supershop does not always mean building a retail brand from scratch. In Bangladesh, entrepreneurs can partner with established chains through franchise arrangements, investing in an outlet while drawing on the company's brand, supply network and operating experience. However, who runs the shop, pays its bills and bears its risks depends on the agreement.

Shwapno introduced its expansion-focused franchise model in 2017–2018. Meena Bazar announced franchising in April 2022, signing its first partner for an outlet in Shanir Akhra. Agora followed with its first franchise outlet in Tangail in August 2024. These arrangements have opened a route for investors to participate in organised grocery retail.

### WHO RUNS THE SHOP?

A franchise partner does not necessarily manage the checkout counter, recruit employees or purchase stock. Some arrangements divide responsibilities between the investor and the retail chain.

Shwapno Managing Director Sabbir Hasan Nasir explained that franchise partners financed lease advances, civil works, interiors and equipment. Shwapno controlled operations and inventory, bearing staffing and supply-chain costs. Partners covered rent, utilities and maintenance.

The model described divided gross profit between Shwapno and the investor in a 60:40 ratio. That distinction matters: receiving 40 percent of gross profit does not mean keeping 40 percent of sales. The partner still has expenses to meet from that allocation. These published terms describe Shwapno's arrangement at the time; applicants should obtain its current offer in writing.

### WHAT SHOULD AN INVESTOR CALCULATE?

The first question is the total investment required. A useful proposal should separately identify any franchise fee or deposit, advance rent, renovation, shelving, refrigeration, equipment and working capital. It should also explain who finances stock and pays for damaged, expired or missing goods.

Location deserves equally close attention. Nearby households, pedestrian traffic, competing stores, delivery access and rent all need consideration. A busy address can still be difficult to sustain if occupancy costs absorb too much of the outlet's earnings.

Ask the chain for a financial projection showing expected sales, gross margin, monthly expenses and the point at which the outlet covers its costs. Test what happens if sales fall below expectations. Any estimated return should be assessed alongside the assumptions behind it.

### READ THE AGREEMENT CAREFULLY

Before committing money, clarify the contract period, renewal conditions, responsibility for losses and the process for leaving the partnership. Establish who owns the equipment and what happens to deposits and unsold stock when an outlet closes.

An established name can provide a starting point. Whether the outlet becomes a viable business will depend on its location, costs, sales and the responsibilities each partner agrees to carry.