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"The US has been dealing with Iran for 47 years, and I promise you that Donald Trump is not going to let Iran become a forever war."

US Vice President **JD VANCE**



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Govt to recruit one lakh health workers in 3yrs

Three categories of grassroots workers to be brought under unified system

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

In a major push to expand grassroots healthcare, the government plans to create nearly 1 lakh health worker posts over the next three years, bringing three categories of field-level caregivers under a unified system.

The plan envisages a workforce of around 1.5 lakh health workers across the country, combining more than 40,000 existing health assistants, family welfare assistants and community health care providers (CHCPs) with the new recruits.

The integrated workforce will operate through proposed health and wellbeing centres at the union level in rural areas and at the ward level in city corporation areas. The workers will be designated as health and wellbeing assistants.

They will be trained to provide a common set of basic health services instead of working separately under different programmes and departments.

When contacted, State Minister for Health MA Muhit said that strengthening primary healthcare was a key commitment in the ruling BNP's election manifesto and that the plan to recruit 1 lakh health workers is a step in that direction.

The manifesto also pledged 80 percent of them will be women.

Muhit said the new recruits will be integrated with health workers currently operating under three separate management structures, a system that can lead to duplication of services, with multiple caregivers visiting the same household while others receive none.

"Our plan is to bring all these workers under a single primary healthcare cadre. Existing workers will receive refresher training, while new recruits will be trained and assigned specific duties," Muhit told this newspaper recently.

Under the existing arrangement, health assistants who are mainly responsible for vaccination work under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), while family welfare assistants, who primarily distribute contraceptives, are under the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). CHCPs, who provide medicines and services at community clinics, operate under the Community Clinic Health Support Trust.

Of the 58,000 available posts in the three services, 42,900 are currently filled, with about 15,000 remaining vacant.

Health ministry officials said the plan aims to ensure that health workers visit every household at regular intervals, at least once every two months, conduct basic health checkups and provide health advice, while carrying out existing responsibilities, including vaccination and the distribution of contraceptives and medicines.

NEW WORKFORCE PLAN

In March, the Prime Minister's Office formed a committee, led by the cabinet secretary, to oversee the integration of primary healthcare services.

Later, the Cabinet Division formed a technical committee comprising government officials and health experts, which submitted a report to the division, proposing the creation of 99,657 posts to support the integration, said division sources.

The Health Services Division (HSD) in September decided to follow the committee's recommendations though DGHS had earlier submitted a proposal to it in August, seeking the creation of 45,711 posts based on its assessment of primary healthcare needs, they said.

The committee recommended creating 99,657 posts of health and wellbeing assistants -- 49,945 in urban areas and 49,712 in rural areas -- in three phases, according to an HSD document.

In the first year, 9,989 posts will be created in urban areas, according to the minutes of an HSD meeting chaired by HSD Secretary ANM Bazlur Rashid on September 22.

Another 19,978 posts in urban areas

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RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR HEALTH WORKERS

	POSTS IN URBAN AREAS	POSTS IN RURAL AREAS
Phase 1 (1ST YEAR)	9,989	
Phase 2 (2ND YEAR)	19,978	24,856
Phase 3 (3RD YEAR)	19,978	24,856
TOTAL	49,945	49,712





PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

The Bhairab river in Jashore, once a vital waterway for the southwest, is now covered by water hyacinths as its flow comes to a standstill under the weight of pollution, encroachment, and unplanned infrastructure. Dozens of low-clearance concrete bridges, such as the one captured in the photo, render the river unnavigable for standard vessels, while severe siltation causes waterlogging in adjacent areas because the river cannot properly carry or discharge water during monsoon. The photo was taken recently near the Doratana bridge in Jashore town.

Rooppur Unit 1 begins test to generate power

Supply to national grid expected by year end

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Unit 1 of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant yesterday entered a key operational phase, beginning the process of generating electricity a day after receiving regulatory approval.

The process started around noon with a gradual increase in the reactor's pressure and temperature, marking the beginning of a series of tests leading to electricity generation, said Dr Md Zahedul Hasan, managing director of the Nuclear Power Plant Company Bangladesh Ltd (NPCBL).

"Unit 1 has been undergoing a systematic programme of operational testing," he told The Daily Star.

The programme includes testing and coordinating the reactor, primary and secondary systems, turbine-generator, electrical systems, instrumentation and control

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LDC GRADUATION

Three more years to finish homework

Delaying the LDC exit is easy to celebrate. Now govt must justify it with genuine reform

ARUN DEVNATH

Graduation days are supposed to be proud moments. Bangladesh's graduation was less than four weeks away. Instead, on Thursday afternoon in New York, the country was told it could stay back for three more years, and the whole class agreed.

The UN General Assembly, without a vote or a single objection, pushed Bangladesh's exit from the list of least developed countries to November 24, 2029. Nepal, its classmate, got the same reprieve. Laos, which faces economic troubles of its own, is graduating on schedule. It has treated departure from the LDC club as a national goal for decades, and it relies far less than Bangladesh on trade preferences in Western markets.

In Dhaka, the mood is relief. Garment bosses had warned that losing LDC perks next month could cost billions in exports. Economists had fretted about dropping the WTO flexibilities that let the poorest countries subsidise exports. Bangladesh spent months lobbying countries, flying delegations to New York and courting the members of the UN's Economic and Social Council. It worked.

So far, so good. But anyone who listened to the whole meeting, not just the gavel, heard something less cosy. The extension came with a smile, and the smile came with conditions.

ANALYSIS

Start with the case for delay, which was perfectly understandable. Uruguay, presenting the resolution for the Group of 77 and China, ran through the shocks that hit Bangladesh and Nepal. It cited "the lingering effects of the pandemic, climate-related disasters, geopolitical

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Global leaders urge Dhaka to speed up reforms

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Global leaders at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) have urged Bangladesh to expedite reforms in key areas after granting the country three more years before it graduates from the least developed country (LDC) group.

The 30th plenary meeting of the 81st UNGA yesterday approved the extension for Bangladesh and Nepal, citing economic vulnerabilities stemming from domestic and international crises in the two countries. Bangladesh's graduation is now set for November 24, 2029.

The decision followed intensive lobbying by the government and the private sector. Businesses had pressed for deferment for the past few years, saying they needed more time to prepare.

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No reference to third country, Bay in talks with Japan

Says Humaiun Kobir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No reference to any third country came up for discussion during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's just-concluded official visit to Japan, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir said yesterday.

"We didn't go there to discuss the Bay of Bengal because the Bay of Bengal doesn't belong to us only. We went there to discuss bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Japan, particularly economic relations.

"If you look at the joint communiqué, you will see that there is no reference to any third country. We will not discuss third countries in our discussions. That is clear. We didn't do that," Humaiun said in response to a journalist's question during a press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Traders and fishermen sort freshly caught hilsa at the Port Road fish landing centre in Barishal city yesterday as boats carrying the prized catch pour into the wholesale market from rivers across the region following the end of a 22-day fishing ban. PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

'We were chased, Tahsif jumped into Turag, I fled'

His friend Dip tells investigators, according to PBI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Tahsif Souri

The Police Bureau of Investigation yesterday recovered a motorcycle from Mazar Basti in Tongi, about three kilometres from the spot where the body of former airman KM Tahsif Souri was found in the Turag.

Investigators are yet to establish whether the black motorcycle belongs to the 28-year-old Tahsif or is the same one he was seen riding when he left home on Tuesday evening, as captured in CCTV footage.

The bike was seized based on information provided by Tahsif's friend Ahmed Shahriar Reza Dip, whom his family described as being like a younger brother and friend to him.

Investigators said the two visited Mazar Basti on the night he went missing.

Seeking anonymity, a PBI official involved in the probe told The Daily Star yesterday that Dip told the investigators that he and Tahsif were chased by some people in the area. While fleeing, Tahsif jumped into the river, but Dip managed to escape.

Additional Deputy Inspector General Enayet Rahman Manna of PBI's Dhaka Metro North told reporters after visiting the area that Dip had provided them with several pieces of information, all of which were being cross-checked.

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