DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1, 2026



"Independent journalism has faced pressure for many years, but these have intensified since Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

VOLKER TÜRK on closure of Russia's Novaya Gazeta newspaper

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The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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Only half the students pass

Unsuccessful HSC examinees may sit for retakes in 2 months; Milon says 'decline unacceptable'

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **ARAFAT RAHAMAN**

The pass rate in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination hit a 22-year low of 51.62 percent, down 5.5 percentage points year-on-year.

Unlike last year's shortened exams, this year's tests were held on the full syllabus, with full marks and duration. Students also said that the question paper was harder in this year's exam.

The number of GPA-5 achievers, the highest grade in the general boards, fell 43 percent to 35,948, while institutions with zero pass rose to 181 from 177. Those with a 100 percent pass rate fell to 61 from 80.

Overall, girls have outperformed boys in terms of pass rates for the sixth straight year.

"The further decline in the HSC pass rate from last year is unacceptable," said Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon while announcing the results yesterday.

He cited learning gaps, irregular classroom teaching. and teacher shortages as possible reasons.

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HSC RESULTS 2026: KEY FINDINGS

- HSC pass rate falls to 22-year low of **51.62%**
- More than **5** lakh students fail under **9** boards
- **GPA-5** achievers drop **43%** to **35,948**
- Majority fail in five boards
- Dhaka tops, Barishal finishes last
- ICT pass rates fall in all nine boards





Readymade garment workers block a road in Dhaka's Mirpur yesterday, demanding a monthly minimum wage of Tk 30,000. The protest caused heavy traffic congestion in the surrounding areas. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

LDC GRADUATION

Bangladesh sets reform targets for EU, UN to watch

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has submitted a time-bound reform roadmap to its development partners, especially the European Union, to improve banking, revenue collection and the business environment, as it secured a three-year delay to its graduation from the UN's list of least developed countries.

The EU and the United Nations will monitor the plan's implementation annually, a finance ministry official said.

The UN General Assembly on Thursday extended Bangladesh's preparatory period for leaving the LDC category to November 24, 2029, from November 24, 2026. The decision was adopted without a vote or an objection.

The EU, Bangladesh's largest export market, backed the extension but said it must be matched by action. Speaking for the EU at the General Assembly, Ireland

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New RMG wage board today

Minister urges workers to end agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A wage board will be formed today to review the minimum wage structure for garment workers, Labour and Employment Minister Ariful Haque Choudhury said yesterday, urging workers to end their agitation and return to work.

He made the announcement at a press briefing at Sromo Bhaban in Dhaka following a meeting with representatives of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

The minister said both associations had accepted the workers' demand for a wage board, leaving no reason for further disputes.

He said the BGMEA and BKMEA leaders had also agreed to coordinate with factory owners to clear outstanding wages as quickly as possible.

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RMG workers' protests shut factories, choke roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Readymade garment (RMG) workers blocked major roads and highways in the capital's Mirpur, Savar's Ashulia, and Gazipur's Kaliakoir yesterday demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000, while labour unrest forced around 50 factories in Ashulia and Gazipur and almost all in Mirpur to close for the day.

Protests turned violent as workers clashed with police in Ashulia and Kaliakoir, leaving several people injured on both sides. Besides, there were reports of vandalism carried out by protesters in Mirpur.

Commuters suffered immensely due to severe traffic throughout the day because of the demonstrations.

Several hundred workers from garment factories across Mirpur took to the streets around 10:45am, bringing traffic to a standstill in Mirpur-10, Mirpur-11, Mirpur-12, and around the Proshika intersection, said Md Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station.

While workers left the Mirpur-10 intersection and trunk roads of Mirpur-11 and Mirpur-12 around 2:30pm after nearly four hours, demonstrations continued at Mirpur-11.5 and Kalshi until 5:00pm.

Nearly all RMG factories in the greater

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ADVERTISEMENT

Rejoinder regarding reports published in two dailies on 30th and 31st October 2026

We write on behalf of our client, Mr. Abul Kashem, Chairman of Abul Khair Group, in response to the reports referred to above.

The reports present a materially inaccurate and misleading account of Mr. Abul Kashem's business history, his contribution to the establishment and growth of Abul Khair Group (AKG), and the circumstances surrounding his proposed separation from the Group. The reports have been prepared without proper verification of facts or a reliable evidentiary basis, raising serious questions about the accuracy and credibility of the information published.

Although the reports discuss Mr. Abul Kashem's alleged separation from the family business, his comments were not sought before publication. Instead, the narrative relies largely on unnamed bankers and unidentified persons said to know about the family's affairs. While bankers may lend money to a company, this does not necessarily mean they know how the business is run, who owns it, how family members relate to one another, or how business decisions are made.

Publishing unverified information based on anonymous and unreliable sources, without checking whether it is true or giving the person concerned an opportunity to respond, is unacceptable. It goes against the basic principles of fair, balanced and responsible journalism. This is particularly serious when such reporting can mislead readers and cause significant harm to Mr. Abul Kashem's dignity and reputation.

The factual position is materially different from what has been portrayed. Following his father's demise in 1978, Mr. Abul Kashem assumed responsibility for the family business while his younger brothers were still minors, aged 16, 10, 5 and 2.5 years respectively. To preserve family unity and promote a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, he voluntarily allocated equal shareholdings to his brothers in the Group's companies, including one brother who has been living abroad for the past 13 years and has never been involved in any of the Group's business activities.

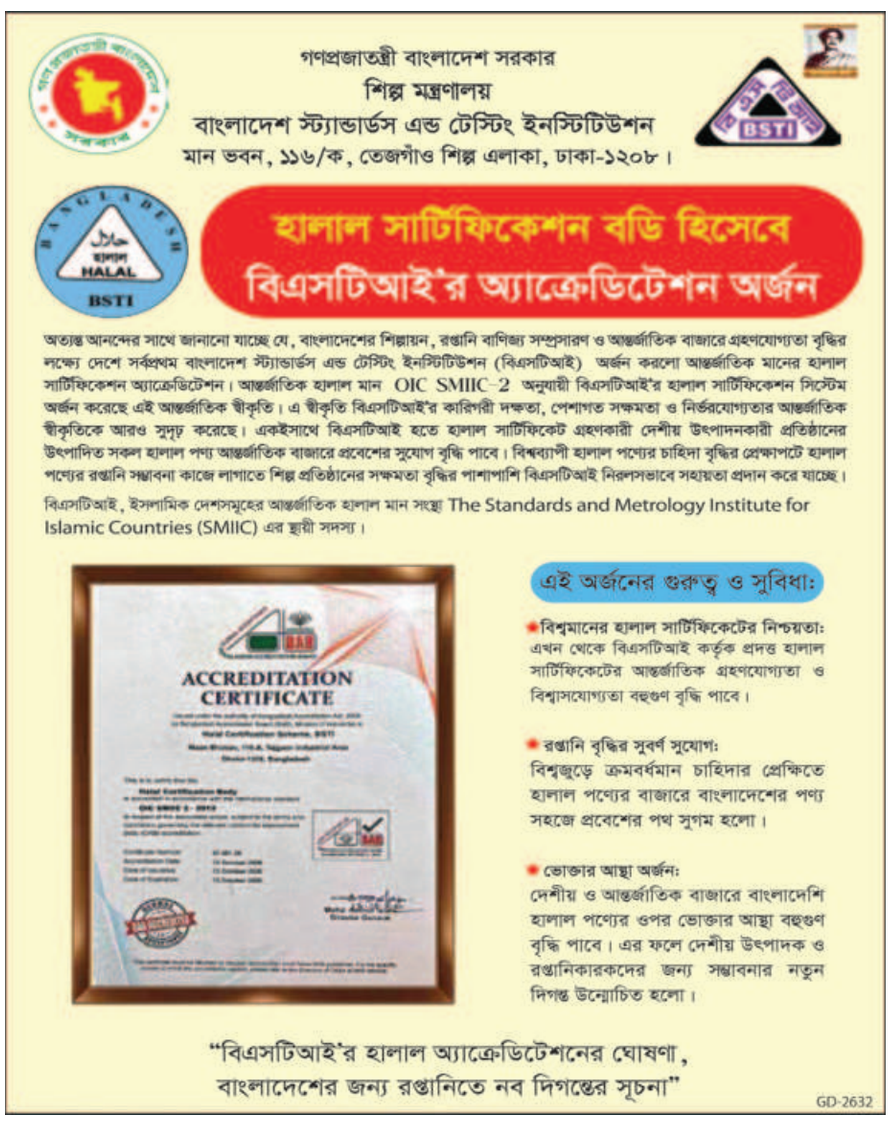
Between 1983 and 2018, under his leadership, vision and direct supervision, he established and developed AKG's major businesses and brands, including Vegetable Oil (1983), Goru Marka Dheu Tin (1994), AKS TMT Bar (2010), Shah Cement (2000), Marks Full Cream Milk Powder (2002), Starship Condensed Milk (1994) and Seylon Tea (2004). His contribution was instrumental, and he is the founder of Abul Khair Group.

The claim that Mr. Abul Kashem withdrew from the business after his brother's death in 2003 is completely false. He remained actively involved in the business until 2019, when he first proposed an amicable separation. The differences mainly arose over the involvement of the next generation and plans to expand into new ventures within existing companies and product lines. He considered these ventures commercially unviable, and most of them failed to achieve the expected results.

The portrayal of the Group's continued growth is equally misleading and unsupported by its actual financial performance. The Group's turnover has remained more or less unchanged since 2018, with no significant growth during this period.

Mr. Abul Kashem has exercised considerable restraint in the hope of preserving the enterprise which he built, its employees, business relationships and institutional standing. His efforts to reach an amicable separation should not be taken to mean that he has abandoned his contributions, given up his rights, or accepted being kept out of AKG's management and affairs, despite holding the position of its Chairman.

Dr. Sharif Bhuiyan
Senior Advocate, Bangladesh Supreme Court
Partner and Deputy Head, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates



TAHSIF'S DEATH

Police claim they found evidence against Dip

DIPAN NANDY

Police have reportedly found preliminary evidence of Ahmed Shahriar Reza Dip's involvement in the alleged murder of his friend and former airman KM Tahsif Souri.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Hasib Ullah Pias yesterday placed Dip on a four-day remand in a case over Tahsif's death after police produced Dip before the court, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

Police had sought seven days in a remand petition, which cited the preliminary findings.

"We have found preliminary evidence of Dip's involvement in Tahsif Souri's death. We will question him in greater detail during

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

ALIF MURDER

2 more suspects detained

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

Detectives early yesterday detained two more suspects in connection with the murder of journalist Lutfuzzaman Fakir, also known as Alif Fakir, in Netrokona's Durgapur upazila.

They are Imran Islam alias Imon, 24, of Moktarpara in Durgapur municipality, and Md Sabbir Ahmed, 25, of Teribazar in the same upazila.

The Detective Branch (DB) of Netrokona district police detained the two during a raid in the Dhanpur Bazar area of Sunamganj's Bishwambharpur upazila, said Netrokona Superintendent of Police Md Tarikul Islam.

He said the two were also accused in a case filed over an attack on Alif last year.

"Preliminary investigation suggests that they are associates of Tajul Islam, the prime suspect in the murder case. We suspect their involvement in the killing," the SP said.

With this, the number of people held in connection with the murder has risen to four.



Devotees take part in a procession during the final day of the three-day Kheturi Mahotsav, a centuries-old Vaishnav festival, at Premtoli in Godagari, Rajshahi, yesterday. The festival, held at the historic site associated with saint Narottam Das, draws devotees from home and abroad. PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Addl DIG Abdullah Al Jahir suspended over DJ party

85 held during DB raid at his Purbachal residence; of them, 21 secure bail from a Dhaka court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Abdullah Al Jahir has been suspended over allegations of hosting a drinks and DJ party at his house in the Police Housing Residential Area in Dhaka's Purbachal.

The Public Security Division issued a notification in this regard yesterday, signed by Senior Secretary Manzur Morshed Chowdhury.

He has been attached to the Police Special Training School (PSTS) in Rangamati's Betbunia.

Citing the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018, the ministry ordered Al Jahir's suspension with effect from October 25. He will receive a subsistence allowance during the suspension period in accordance with the rules.

According to the notification, a team of the Detective Branch (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Uttara division raided Al Jahir's residence on October 19.

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US midterm early voting hits record 48 million

AGENCIES

A record 47.9 million Americans have already voted in next week's US midterm elections, with participation surging in key battleground states and registered Democrats outpacing Republicans, figures showed Friday.

The University of Florida's Election Lab had recorded 47,922,669 early votes nationwide by midday, surpassing the previous midterm record of 45.9 million cast ahead of Election Day in 2022.

The surge is especially pronounced in states with fiercely contested Senate races that could determine control of the chamber during the final two years of President Donald Trump's presidency.

In states that record voters' party affiliation, registered Democrats have accounted for a substantially larger share of early ballots than Republicans.

Election Lab figures showed Democrats making up around 44 percent of early voters in those states, compared with 31 percent for Republicans and 25 percent for unaffiliated or minor-party voters.

University of Florida political scientist Michael McDonald, who oversees the Election Lab, has pointed to rising participation among Black and Hispanic voters in states that report racial and ethnic data, with particularly strong turnout in heavily Hispanic communities along the Texas-Mexico border.

But experts warn against interpreting the figures as a prediction of the election outcome.

A voter's party registration does not reveal which candidates they supported, and tens of millions more Americans are expected to cast ballots on Tuesday.

In recent elections Republicans have tended to turn out in greater numbers on Election Day, potentially narrowing or reversing the Democrats' early advantage.

And higher early participation does not necessarily translate into higher overall turnout, since some voters may simply be casting ballots sooner than in previous elections.

Bangladesh sets reform targets for EU, UN to watch

FROM PAGE 1

said the extension should be understood as an "exceptional time-bound" measure that must be "accompanied by concrete, measurable domestic actions, effective monitoring and continued engagement."

"A system in which countries remain in the category for prolonged periods, despite meeting the criteria, risks weakening the credibility of the framework," an EU delegate said at the assembly.

The EU also concurred with the view of the UN Committee for Development Policy that "domestic political transitions do not constitute grounds" for extending preparatory periods, though it said Bangladesh's recent political transition may merit an exception.

The finance ministry official said the finance and commerce ministers had sternly cautioned officials at a recent core group meeting. In the first phase, five ministries and departments must submit monthly progress reports, the official said.

The 2026-2029 roadmap aims to ensure a smooth, sustainable and permanent graduation and to make the economy competitive, production-oriented and institutionally strong by 2029. It places special emphasis on economic stability and restoring discipline in the banking sector, according to the document.

The roadmap aims to raise real GDP growth to 7 percent by 2029, from 4.14 percent in 2026, and to cut inflation to 6 percent from 9.16 percent over three years.

It targets raising foreign exchange reserves to cover six months of imports, from four months now, and lifting the tax-to-GDP ratio to at least 10 percent from below 7 percent. The investment-to-GDP ratio is targeted to rise to 32 percent from 27.93 percent.

The plan aims to cut non-performing loans to below 20 percent of total loans by 2029, from more than 30 percent now.

It calls for a new framework for managing distressed assets, regular stress tests of banks and comprehensive asset-quality reviews. Wilful defaulters will be identified and penalised, and single-borrower exposure limits will be strictly enforced.

AREA	2026 BASELINE	2029 TARGET
Real GDP growth	4.14%	7%
Inflation	9.16%	6%
Tax-to-GDP ratio	<7%	≥10%
NPL Ratio	30%	<20%
Non-RMG export share	~19%	≥25%
Average container dwell time	9.44 days	3-4 days
Private Sector Credit Growth	4.98%	>10%
Share of renewable energy	2.3%	16%

SOURCE: BBS, BB, FD, SREDA

The roadmap sets out yearly actions to improve the business environment, raise the industry's contribution to the economy and increase non-garment exports.

A national task force will monitor implementation of reforms to make doing business easier. The government plans to launch an integrated one-stop service, guarantee business start-up licences within 14 days, scrap unnecessary licences and introduce an investment aftercare mechanism.

New entrepreneurs and investors will need fewer documents and certificates, and online company registration will continue. Rules for faster profit repatriation will be framed, licence validity will be extended to five years, and a digital common application platform will be introduced for all approvals and renewals.

Customs, ports, bonded warehouses, banks and trade bodies will be fully integrated into the National Single Window system, bringing 39 ministries and departments under its coverage. All of these measures are to be completed by June, the end of the current fiscal year.

To improve trade facilitation and logistics, the government plans by June 2028 to develop an integrated industrial and logistics corridor, implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and put the National Logistics Policy 2025 into effect.

To protect investors, dedicated commercial courts, intellectual property courts and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms will be made operational to resolve investment, commercial and intellectual property disputes quickly.

To raise industrial productivity, the plan includes a technology modernisation fund, automation incentives and productivity programmes for small and medium enterprises.

The National Productivity Master Plan (2021-2030) will be updated and fully implemented, and will include women-led enterprises and other non-mainstream entrepreneurs.

To reduce reliance on ready-made garments, which account for more than 80 percent of exports, the roadmap promises policy support and incentives for high-potential sectors including pharmaceuticals, information technology, leather, jute, light engineering, shipbuilding and agro-processing.

A time-bound industrial energy security action plan aims to ensure uninterrupted gas and electricity supply to export-oriented factories, while the share of renewable energy is to rise to 16 percent by 2029.

Container dwell time at ports is to be cut to three to four days from 9.44 days, alongside broader improvements to port and transport connectivity.

As a result of these steps, private sector credit growth is expected to rise above 10 percent, from 4.98 percent.

A three-year, year-by-year plan for revenue collection calls for full end-to-end tax automation and bringing new taxpayers in 16 categories into the tax net. It also calls for a risk-based audit framework, using an Automated Risk Management System or Post-Clearance Audit, to end arbitrary audit selection.

VAT compliance will be strengthened, and unnecessary tax exemptions will be brought down to a rational level.

The Finance Division, Bangladesh Bank and other regulators will jointly implement the reforms.

Only half the students pass

FROM PAGE 1

"We must identify the gaps, reassess the situation and take necessary measures -- that is our responsibility," he said, adding that special examinations for students who failed one or two subjects will be held within two months.

Expressing concern over the results, he said a re-evaluation would help determine whether there were any errors in the published results.

Applications for re-scrutiny of answer scripts will be accepted online from November 1 to 7.

He also stressed the need for greater transparency in future examinations.

"The prime minister wants students to be assessed properly so that no one is unfairly marked down," he added.

In an unprecedented downturn, the pass rates fell across all nine general education boards this year, with more than half the candidates failing in five of them.

By comparison, only the Cumilla Board had a pass rate below 50 percent last year.

Dhaka Board recorded the highest pass rate at 61.80 percent, although it was down from 64.62 percent last year.

Barishal had the lowest pass rate at 44.84 percent, followed closely by Jashore (44.92 percent), Rajshahi (45.06 percent), Dinajpur (45.98 percent) and Cumilla (48.04 percent).

The pass rates in Chattogram, Mymensingh and Sylhet stood at 52.07 percent, 51.44 percent and 50.90 percent respectively.

Barishal saw the steepest decline, with its pass rate dropping 17.73 percentage points from last year's 62.57 percent. Rajshahi's pass rate fell by 14.34 percentage points, while Dinajpur recorded a decline of 11.51 points.

Irregular class attendance, inadequate classroom teaching, dependence on private coaching and students' excessive use of mobile phones are possible reasons for the results debacle, said Sharif Morshed Reza, controller of examinations of Barishal Education Board.

Teacher shortages were particularly acute in some areas of Bhola, where government teachers are reluctant to stay.

Humanities students had the lowest pass rate among the three major groups at 42.17 percent, compared with 73.12 percent for science and 50.77 percent for business studies.

ICT pass rates fell across all nine general boards, while English results deteriorated in six. Jashore saw a particularly sharp fall in ICT, where the ICT pass rate dropped to 67.84 percent from 88.63 percent last year.

English results also deteriorated in six boards. In Barishal, English pass rate dropped to 54.08 percent from 75.16 percent last year.

Rajshahi's English pass rate fell to 56.01 percent from 68.82 percent, while Dinajpur recorded 56.05 percent pass rate, down from 64.47 percent.

Poor performance in English was the main reason behind the board's low pass rate, while ICT results were also unsatisfactory, said Md Abdul Matin, secretary of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Jashore.

"The standard of English teaching in educational institutions is far from satisfactory. Teachers of other subjects often teach English despite lacking adequate proficiency in the language," he told The Daily Star.

Matin also cited the introduction of identical question papers across the nine general boards, stricter examination monitoring through CCTV cameras and improved answer-script evaluation as factors influencing this year's results.

Milon said teacher-training programmes have been undertaken to address weaknesses in English.

Girls outperformed boys in pass rates for the sixth straight year, with 55.45 percent passing compared with 47.14 percent of boys. Boys, however, accounted for 50.5 percent of GPA-5 achievers.

The poor results reflected several interconnected problems, including learning losses during the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent disruptions to education and persistent teacher shortages, said Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

She also raised concerns about inequalities between rural and urban students and between children from affluent and low-income families, saying access to educational resources continued to influence academic performance.

The sharp decline in pass rates required a thorough investigation rather than conclusions based on assumptions, said Siddiqur Rahman, former director of Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research.

He pointed to teacher shortages for the results debacle.

"In many institutions, ICT is taught by teachers of other subjects. Most of the teaching is theoretical, with very little practical work. Simply memorising theory is not enough to learn ICT."

He urged the government to examine why students continued to struggle in English and Humanities.

An analysis of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) data suggests this is the worst outcome since 2004, when the pass rate was 47.73 percent and a majority of the candidates failed.

For the next two decades, the country moved in the opposite direction, with the pass rates hitting 93.21 percent in 2021, when the Covid-19 pandemic forced major adjustments to the examination system.

Students sat tests in shorter syllabuses and fewer subjects with reduced marks. In 2020, no public examinations were held due to the pandemic, and students were evaluated based on previous academic records.

This year, of the 1,240,798 students who appeared in the examinations under 11 education boards; 646,685 passed while 594,113 failed.

RMG workers

FROM PAGE 1

Mirpur area closed for the day after the protests began.

Mohsina Begum, 45, protesting at Mirpur-11.5, told The Daily Star that in her 18 years working in the sector, her purchasing power had never fallen so sharply.

"I leave home at 7:30am and return after 8:00pm. Including overtime, I earn around Tk 18,000-20,000 a month. Of that, Tk 8,000 goes straight to house rent. It is impossible to get through the month with the remaining Tk 10,000-12,000," she said, demanding either lower prices of essentials or higher wages.

Another worker, requesting anonymity, said factory owners asked them around noon to resume work as wage discussions were ongoing with foreign buyers, the BGMEA, and government officials. "But what good are verbal assurances? We will continue our protest until a wage hike is officially announced."

Protesters also demanded worker representation on the wage board.

In the afternoon, some agitated workers on Kalshi Road struck vehicles with sticks, though no casualties or major damage were reported. Around 3:30pm, protesters vandalised a side gate and shattered windows at Wear Mag Limited in Kalshi, a security guard said, requesting anonymity.

The blockade caused immense suffering to commuters across Mirpur, forcing buses to take detours and many passengers to walk.

"Given the severe gridlock, I got off the bus. Now I have to walk at least half a kilometre to Mirpur-11 before I can take a rickshaw," said commuter Abdur Rahim in Senpara Parbata, carrying his child in one arm and a bag in the other.

Meanwhile, in Ashulia, at least 30 garment factories in and around Kathgara declared a holiday yesterday amid protests for similar wage demands.

Unrest began in the morning when Naim Knitwear workers stopped work and marched out, allegedly pelting bricks at nearby factories and triggering chases and counter-chases with police.

Syed Faysal Islam, additional superintendent of police (SP) of Ashulia Industrial Police-1, said brickbats injured at least 10 industrial police personnel in total.

A local labour leader, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that police baton charges and teargas injured several workers.

Around noon, industrial police also recovered three crude-bomb-like objects from the road outside a Nassa Group factory in Nishchintapur and informed the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU).

The demonstrations halted traffic at various times between 11:00am and 3:00pm on the Abdullahpur-Baipail and Zirabo-Bishmile roads.

In Gazipur, RMG workers abstained from work and blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway at Kaliakoir's Chandra Palli Bidyut area in the afternoon, creating long tailbacks on both sides. As nearby factories declared afternoon holidays, their workers also joined the blockade, said Nawjor Highway Police Outpost Inspector Abdul Karim.

Gazipur Industrial Police SP Amjad Hossain told The Daily Star that sporadic protests across 10 to 12 factories in the district triggered severe congestion on the highway, forcing 18 to 20 factories in Kaliakoir to close for the day.

Clashes erupted in the afternoon when law enforcers tried to disperse the protesters, who set fires on the highway and hurled brickbats. Police fired sound grenades to control the situation, said Gazipur Industrial Police Additional SP Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, adding around 7:30pm that traffic remained suspended as agitated workers still occupied the highway.

Khairul Mamun, legal affairs secretary of the Bangladesh Garments and Sweaters Workers Trade Union Centre, said the labour minister's unfulfilled promise to form a wage board by October fuelled the unrest.

New RMG wage board today

FROM PAGE 1

With steps being taken to address both demands, there was no justification for vandalism or factory closures, he said, warning that such actions could harm the garment industry.

The minister alleged that outsiders were instigating workers at some factories and urged the media to use video footage to distinguish workers from those participating in the agitation.

He said discussions had also covered payment of workers' salaries by the seventh of every month.

However, factory closures could disrupt production and supply chains, delaying shipments and payments from buyers, which could ultimately affect workers' wages, he warned.

He urged owners, workers and other stakeholders to act responsibly to maintain stability in the sector.

Welcoming the move, BGMEA Vice-president Md Rezwan Selim, who oversees labour issues, said, "We want the wage board to be formed and the salaries of garment workers to be reviewed because we want their wages to increase."

Nazma Akter, president of Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation, urged the government to form the wage board immediately to recommend a new pay structure.

She said workers' living costs had risen significantly due to high inflation, with increases in house rent, transport costs, gas bills and other expenses.

The latest minimum wage for garment workers was fixed in 2023 and took effect on December 1 that year, raising the monthly minimum from Tk 8,000 to Tk 12,500.

The wage structure is due for review this December, as the amended labour law requires wages across sectors to be reviewed every three years to account for inflation.



'Economic recovery foreign policy's biggest test'

Speakers tell BIPSS programme

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Reviving the economy and ensuring access to jobs, food and energy will be the biggest test of Bangladesh's foreign policy in the coming years, Zohra Adib Chowdhury, chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said yesterday.

She said Bangladesh was going through a transition and the next five years would be crucial in turning its geographical advantages and the changing geopolitical landscape into economic prosperity.

Zohra made the remarks at a discussion titled "Bangladesh Foreign Policy in a Changing World", organised by the Bangladesh Institute

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

A grieving relative breaks down beside the coffin of one of seven Bangladeshis killed in a fire at a sofa manufacturing factory in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as their bodies arrive at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday. The August 9 fire claimed the lives of 16 workers. The bodies of nine victims were brought home on August 27, while the remaining seven, identified through DNA tests, were first transported by road to Jeddah for repatriation as flights from Riyadh have remained suspended since October 10.

HSC RESULTS

Alim, technical pass rates hit 2-decade lows

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Pass rates in this year's Alim and higher secondary technical examinations fell to their lowest in more than two decades, with nearly 87,000 students failing under the two education boards.

The decline was also reflected in institutional performance, with 112 institutions recording zero percent pass rates, up from just 25 last year.

According to results published yesterday, the Madrasa Education Board recorded a pass rate of 61.07 percent, down from 75.61 percent last year, while the Technical Education Board posted 49.43 percent, compared with 62.67 percent in 2025.

An analysis of data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) shows that the Alim pass rate was the lowest since 2004, when it stood at 40.64 percent. The technical pass rate was the lowest since 2002, when it was 44.12 percent.

Together, the boards recorded 86,832 unsuccessful candidates, up by 27,207 from last year, accounting for nearly a third of the additional failures nationwide.

In 2023, the pass rates under the Madrasa and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

'Obstruction of freedom fighter's burial a criminal offence'

28 noted citizens demand probe, legal action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-eight prominent citizens have condemned the obstruction of the burial and state guard of honour of freedom fighter Manik Posari allegedly by local Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and activists in Pirojpur, terming the incident a violation of fundamental human rights and a criminal offence.

In a joint statement, they demanded a fair investigation and strict legal action against those responsible.

"Such a situation surrounding the final farewell of a valiant freedom fighter 55 years after independence raises questions and deep concerns about our state, society, and political culture," the citizens said.

They said the right to a proper burial was a fundamental human right that no individual, group or even the state could violate. They stressed that only the state had the authority to determine or verify the status of a state-recognised freedom fighter.

"A party that opposed independence can at no stage decide who is a freedom fighter and who is not," the statement said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Dhaka: from community to commodity

Unplanned growth, profit-driven development eroded capital's liveability, say speakers at Star Itihas Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unplanned development, profit motives and policy failures have turned Dhaka from a community-oriented capital into an increasingly unliveable city, urban planners and experts said yesterday.

They said the city's worsening traffic congestion, chaotic transport system and loss of open spaces were consequences of decades of unplanned growth, short-term measures and institutional inaction.

Restoring liveability requires curbing land commodification, protecting ecological zones and ensuring people-centred urban governance, they added.

The remarks came at the 35th edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Mohanagar Dhaka: Itihas and Rupantor", held at The Daily Star Centre.



Participants at the 35th edition of The Daily Star Itihas Adda, titled "Mohanagar Dhaka: Itihas and Rupantor", held at The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Shayer Ghafur, of the Department of Architecture at BUET, traced the evolution of Dhaka's housing policies from the pre-colonial to post-colonial periods.

He said Mughal rulers encouraged craftsmen and professionals to settle in Dhaka by granting tax-free land, helping develop its economy and civic life.

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Notre Dame outdoes 5 education boards in GPA-5 tally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Notre Dame College in Dhaka has produced more GPA-5 achievers than five of the country's 11 education boards individually in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations.

An analysis of results published yesterday shows that 2,229 students from the college secured GPA-5, surpassing the total number of top-grade achievers under four general education boards and the Technical Education Board.

Mymensingh Education Board recorded 2,137 GPA-5 achievers, followed by Cumilla with 1,313, Sylhet with 1,204, and Barishal with 950. The Technical Education Board recorded just 886.

In fact, Cumilla and Barishal boards together produced 2,263 GPA-5 achievers, only 34 more than Notre Dame College alone, found an analysis by this newspaper.

The college's tally accounted for 6.2 percent of the 35,948 GPA-5 achievers under the nine general education boards. It also represented 13.3 percent of the 16,714 students who secured the highest grade under Dhaka Education Board.

According to the college's result sheet issued by Dhaka Education Board, 3,272 students were registered for the exams. Of them, 3,256 appeared

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Harun, 7 other cops dismissed from service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has dismissed seven police officers, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police additional commissioner Mohammad Harun-or-Rashid, and sent another into compulsory retirement over prolonged unauthorised absence, defiance of official orders and misconduct.

The disciplinary actions were taken following departmental inquiries, recommendations from the Bangladesh Public Service Commission and approval from the president, according to home ministry notifications.

The six officers are former additional DIG Shyamal Kumar Mukherjee, former DIG Md Anisur Rahman, former assistant police commissioners Farhana Taskin and Md Moniruzzaman Sarkar, former additional superintendent of Police SM Jahangir Hasan and former Laxmipur SP Tarek Bin Rashid.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Kazi Mizanur Rahman has been sent into compulsory retirement.

According to a notification yesterday, Harun, who was also the former DB chief of DMP, was dismissed for remaining absent from his workplace without permission for an extended period.



PHOTO: STAR

Artistes perform at a cultural programme organised by the Mymensingh chapter of Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad yesterday to mark the centenary of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Mymensingh in 1926.

MALAYSIA-BOUND WORKERS

Medical test fee fixed at Tk 8,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has fixed the medical examination fee for Malaysia-bound workers at Tk 8,000, warning medical centres against overcharging or harassing jobseekers as medical tests began yesterday following the reopening of the labour market.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment said workers could undergo medical tests at any authorised centre, regardless of which recruiting agency was processing their employment. No medical centre would be allowed to operate under the exclusive control of any recruiting agency.

The ministry also barred recruiting agencies from obstructing workers wishing to switch agencies after obtaining medical slips.

The ministry clarified that obtaining a MiGRAMS slip requires no fee.

MiGRAMS, or Migrant Management System, is an online platform developed by Malaysian company Bestinet to manage foreign worker recruitment. Linked to Malaysia's Foreign Workers Centralised Management System (FWCMS), it facilitates worker registration and medical screening.

Workers facing overcharging, harassment or unnecessary delays at medical centres have been asked to lodge complaints at secretary@probashi.gov.bd.

The ministry said medical centres would be regularly monitored and inspected, warning of strict legal action against those involved in irregularities.

NOAKHALI TEXTILE ENGINEERING COLLEGE

Teacher shortage, poor facilities disrupt classes

ANWARUL HAIDAR, *Noakhali*

Academic activities at Noakhali Textile Engineering College have long been disrupted by an acute teacher shortage and dilapidated infrastructure, leaving students struggling to receive quality education.

Of the college's 35 sanctioned teaching posts, 18 have remained vacant for years, forcing the authorities to hire guest lecturers from Noakhali Science and Technology University to keep classes running.

Eight of the 11 administrative and technical posts are also vacant.

Students said irregular classes, inadequate residential facilities and poor infrastructure have severely affected their studies. They urged the authorities to address the problems immediately.

The college's academic and administrative activities are conducted in a building constructed in 1960, which is now in a precarious condition.

A faculty member, requesting anonymity, said rainwater leaks through the ceiling, while plaster frequently peels off the walls and ceiling.

There is no dormitory for male students, while the lone female dormitory lacks basic amenities and has limited capacity. The college bus remains idle due to the absence of a driver, and there are no staff quarters.

Pushpita Majumder, a student, said classes are not held regularly due to the teacher shortage. "Some classes are run with guest faculty, leaving us deprived of proper education."

"The only female dormitory on campus accommodates only 65 girls in overcrowded conditions, forcing the rest to manage accommodation outside campus," she added.

Another student, SM Moaj, said, "Since there is no residential hall for male students, we have to rent accommodation outside at high costs."

"Crucial subjects like Mathematics and Computer Programming do not have assigned teachers. Temporary teachers are brought in for some classes, but it offers little practical benefit," he added.

Khalid Hasan, a first-year student, said the campus also lacks sports and recreational facilities.

College Principal Md Abdur Rokib acknowledged the problems. "We have written to the higher authorities requesting recruitment of teachers and construction of a new infrastructure," he said.

Established in 1918 as a Weaving School, the institution was upgraded to a Textile Institute in 1994. It began offering degree courses in 2006 as a Textile Engineering College affiliated with the University of Chittagong under the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. It came under Bangladesh University of Textiles in 2013.

The college currently has 553 students, including 435 male and 118 female, enrolled in four-year BSc programmes in Yarn Engineering, Fabric Engineering, Wet Process Engineering and Apparel Engineering.



PHOTO: STAR

The college's academic building, constructed in 1960, is in a dilapidated condition.

Mob violence claims 32 lives in October: MSF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deaths from mob violence and incidents of gang rape increased sharply in October, according to monthly monitoring reports by the Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF).

Mob violence claimed 32 lives, up from 23 in September, while gang-rape incidents rose by 75 percent, from 12 to 21. The incidents were linked to allegations of theft, verbal altercations, extortion, land disputes, muggings and drug-related disputes, MSF said.

According to its separate report on gender-based violence and violence against women and children, gang-rape incidents rose by 75 percent, from 12 in September to 21 in October.

Overall, incidents of violence against women and children rose from 354 to 357, while sexual harassment and abuse cases increased from 16 to 25.

MSF recorded 84 women and children killed, including 20 children and adolescents.

Sexual abuse cases involving young boys rose from seven to 10, while illegal arbitration over criminal matters increased from one to six.

Six newborns were found abandoned, five of whom were rescued alive.

Incidents of vandalism or theft at minority places of worship surged from 10 to 35.

The reports also documented vandalism of minority homes in Rangpur and Pirojpur, while attacks on markets in Brahmanbaria and Kushtia left people injured.

Injuries in political violence fell from 384 to 88, although deaths in factional clashes involving the BNP and Awami League rose from one to five.

Attacks by unidentified assailants claimed nine lives.

The number of unidentified bodies recovered rose from 71 to 73, while bodies recovered after initial identification fell from 14 to four.

Along the border, one Bangladeshi was killed and three injured in gunfire attributed to India's Border Security Force. MSF also recorded 92 attempted push-ins.

Deaths in prison custody fell from 24 to 16, all involving male inmates or detainees. No deaths were reported in law-enforcement custody, although deaths during special operations rose from one to two.

Law-enforcement special operations led to 7,439 arrests, including 2,563 people described as juvenile gang members.



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A father has appealed for financial assistance to save his 19-month-old son, who needs urgent heart surgery.

Raiyan Ahmed has been diagnosed with a large ventricular septal defect (VSD), severe narrowing of the pathway through which blood flows to the lungs, and other complications, according to his echocardiogram report.

His father, Abu Soheb Sumon, said around Tk 5 lakh is needed for the treatment. He plans to have his son treated at the National Heart Foundation Hospital but is struggling to arrange the money on his own.

Sumon has appealed to affluent individuals, charitable organisations and people at home and abroad to help fund his son's treatment.

Those willing to help can send contributions through bKash or Nagad at 01837791513, or Rocket at 01718243481. Donations can also be sent to Abu Soheb Sumon, A/C No: 20501120207419600, routing No: 125100377, Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC, Bogura Sadar branch.

Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute
(Former Dhaka Shishu Hospital)
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207

Ref. No. LTM/e-GP/BSHI/2026-2027/01 Date: 1/11/2026

e-Tender Notice(LTM-Enlisted)

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

Sl No.	Description of Goods	Tender ID	Publication Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	Construction of MS Shade for Ambulance and MS Collapsible Gate & Aluminum Fixed & Sliding Works.	1330038	1/11/2026 10:00	16/11/2026 16:00	17/11/2026 12:00
2	Supply of Miscellaneous goods for various ward.	1354520	1/11/2026 10:00	16/11/2026 16:00	17/11/2026 12:00
3	Supply of Cleaning materials.	1355377	1/11/2026 10:00	16/11/2026 16:00	17/11/2026 12:00

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 (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. (Dr.) Mirza Md. Ziaul Islam
Director
Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute

GD-2634

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project
Department of Environment
E/16, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

e-GP Express of Interest (EoI) Notice

Sl. No.	Proposal ID & Method	EoI Reference, Package & Name of Service	EoI Publication Date & Time	EoI Closing Date & Time
1	1325355 QCBS	Ref : 22.02.0000.045.14.023.26-767 Package : SD-14 **Name of Service:** Consultancy on community mobilization for ecosystem-based management of Halda River and Morjat Baor ECA through beneficiary selection, VCG/Community biodiversity group formation, implementation and monitoring of AIG activities and providing training on AIG for the beneficiaries	01.11.2026 09:00 am	22.11.2026 10:00 am

This is an online EoI, where only EoI will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit EoI, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all EOIs.

Signed/-
Farhana Mustari
Project Director

GD-2633

US MIDTERMS

Why Bangladesh has a stake in the result

AYESHA TARIQ

Bangladesh has spent nearly two years paying for decisions made in Washington without having any say in them. US tariffs on its garments have been revised five times since April 2025, the war against Iran has sent the cost of its imported fuel soaring, and a strong dollar has made every foreign debt repayment more expensive. On 3 November, Americans will elect a new House of Representatives and about a third of the Senate. A Democratic Congress would not restore the America that Bangladesh dealt with for half a century, but it could restore some restraint on the administration it faces today, and Dhaka has every reason to welcome that restraint.

Nowhere has the absence of such restraint been clearer than in trade policy. Washington announced a 37 per cent tariff on Bangladeshi goods in April 2025, imposed 20 per cent in August and settled on 19 per cent under a trade agreement signed on 9 February this year. Eleven days later, the US Supreme Court ruled that the emergency law underpinning those duties gave the president no authority to impose them. A temporary 10 per cent tariff followed, replaced in July by a new measure under Section 301 of the Trade Act, and Dhaka is still seeking clarity on what its February agreement is worth.

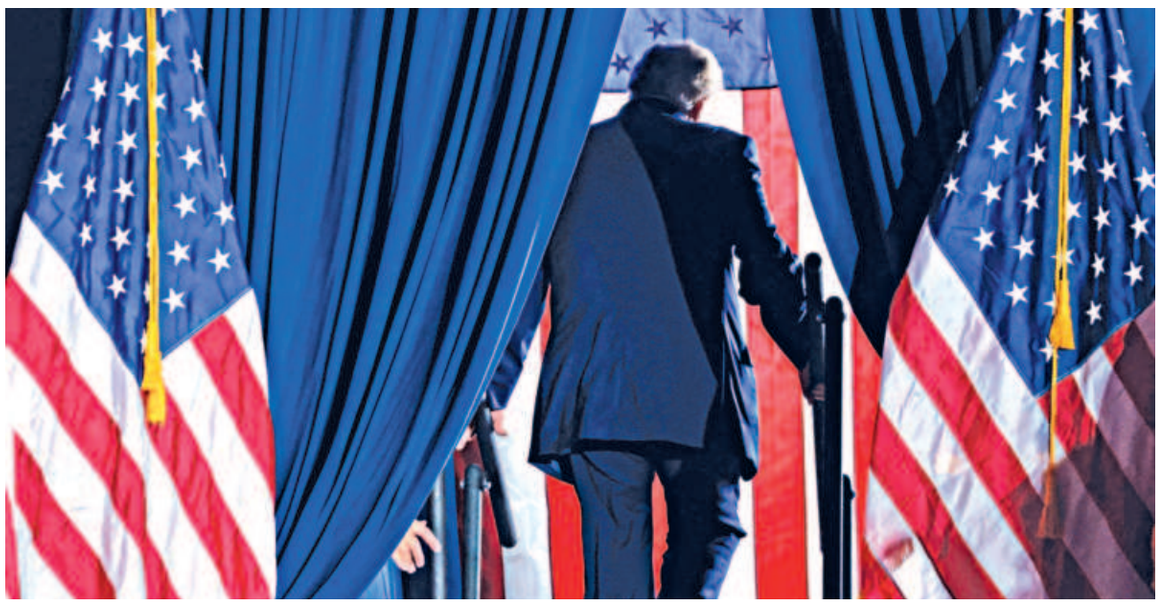
American voters appear ready to deliver their verdict. Polls and forecasters suggest that Democrats could win the House comfortably and gain a narrower advantage in the Senate, consistent with a long historical pattern in which the president's party has lost House seats in 20 of the 22 midterm elections since 1938. This time, discontent is driven primarily by the cost of living. The vote will also reflect whether Americans support an administration that treats alliances as transactions and shows little interest in the democratic partnerships that once defined American leadership. That is the broader question the rest of the world will be watching.

A Democratic victory would not, however, give Congress the power to reverse the administration's policies. Democrats are unlikely to secure two-thirds of either chamber, meaning a presidential veto would remain a significant obstacle. A War Powers Resolution aimed at ending the Iran conflict would struggle to overcome such a veto. Tariffs demonstrate how readily the White House can circumvent congressional constraints. The temporary 10 per cent levy required congressional approval to remain in force beyond 150 days; rather than seek it, the administration shifted to Section 301, which requires no such approval. What a Democratic majority could do is provide a check on executive power, challenging both the tariffs and the war while forcing officials to defend publicly decisions they currently make with limited scrutiny.

For Bangladesh, that counterweight matters first in trade. The US buys roughly a fifth of the country's garment exports, and the damage over the past 18 months has resulted less from any single tariff rate than from the uncertainty surrounding successive changes. An American buyer placing an order for spring delivery needs to know the final landed cost. The risk has not disappeared, as the administration has demonstrated its ability to impose new duties under Section 301 without seeking congressional approval. A Congress empowered to investigate cannot prevent such measures on its own, but it can raise the political cost of each escalation. For Bangladeshi exporters, predictability may be worth more than a percentage point or two in tariff reductions.

That predictability would, however, come with demands of its own. Democrats have traditionally pressed harder on labour standards, and it was the Obama administration that suspended Bangladesh's trade preferences in 2013 following the Rana Plaza collapse. A Democratic-controlled House would therefore be expected to scrutinise factory conditions and supply chains as closely as it scrutinises the president's trade policies.

In foreign affairs, Congress has less power to restrain the president, but its influence still matters. American presidents have traditionally enjoyed considerable latitude in foreign policy, and a president facing constraints at home may have greater incentives to exercise that authority abroad. This is one of the rare American elections in which foreign policy is a prominent electoral issue, as voters feel the economic consequences of the war against Iran whenever they fill their fuel tanks. The bigger question is how President Donald Trump will behave once the midterms are over and no further national election stands between him and 2028. For Bangladesh, the war has been the costliest American decision of all. When the Strait of Hormuz closed, all three of its long-term LNG suppliers declared force majeure. QatarEnergy later halved its scheduled deliveries for 2026, and Dhaka has had to purchase more than 30 cargoes on the spot market, some at twice their pre-war prices.



US President Donald Trump leaves the stage after a rally ahead of the midterm elections at the University of South Alabama's Mitchell Center in Mobile, Alabama, on October 2, 2026. PHOTO: REUTERS

No vote in Congress can reopen the strait, but a Democratic majority could at least seek to bring the war to an end. It could hold hearings on its costs, force repeated votes on war powers and seek to attach conditions to the funding a prolonged conflict requires. Such measures could raise the political cost of continuing the war and strengthen the case for a negotiated settlement. Even if the president vetoes the legislation Congress passes, that pressure would matter to Bangladesh, because a diplomatic resolution could help bring down the price of its imported gas.

The war also affects Bangladesh through the US dollar. The country repaid a record $4.49 billion in foreign debt in the 2025–26 fiscal year, mostly in dollars, and the government expects that bill to approach $7.6 billion annually by 2028–29. Expensive oil has kept American inflation high, and the Federal Reserve, which raised interest rates in September for the first time since 2023, has signalled that further increases may follow. Higher American interest rates attract capital into dollar-denominated assets, and each time the dollar strengthens, Bangladesh needs more taka to service the same debts and pay for the same fuel imports. Washington's own borrowing adds to the pressure, as the government must offer investors increasingly higher returns to sustain its borrowing. A dispute over the federal budget before funding expires on 11 December could intensify that pressure. A Democratic Congress could seek to restrain borrowing by challenging spending proposals it considers fiscally unsustainable. It cannot directly bring down oil prices, however, and the dollar could therefore remain strong for some time, regardless of the outcome on 3 November.

Above all, the war points to a broader loss. For 80 years, the US helped establish and largely uphold the rules on which smaller economies depended, including open markets, a rules-based trading system with an impartial dispute settlement mechanism and development finance through institutions it helped lead. Bangladesh built its garment industry within that system, on the assumption that market access, once negotiated, would remain relatively stable. The US once expected other countries to uphold those standards. It now appears increasingly willing to set them aside when they become inconvenient, imposing tariffs under a law the Supreme Court found did not authorise them, dismantling its aid agency within weeks and signing trade agreements whose legal foundations were subsequently challenged. A Democratic majority in Congress could signal renewed support among American voters for elements of that earlier approach.

The election could also influence the future of the concessional financing on which Bangladesh depends. Congress, rather than the White House alone, approves America's contributions to the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the Asian Development Fund, which provide financing to developing countries at low or no interest. Bangladesh is the largest borrower from IDA, with $22.7 billion outstanding in March this year. In July last year, the Republican-led House Appropriations Committee approved a spending bill that excluded contributions to both funds, while the administration's budget proposal for next year asks Congress to reduce the World Bank contribution from approximately $1.07 billion to $867 million. A Democratic-controlled House could be more inclined to protect such funding rather than support further reductions. If these funds shrink, Bangladesh may have to rely more heavily on financing from China, Gulf countries and lenders such as the BRICS New Development Bank, which it joined in 2021. Such financing could involve higher borrowing costs or different political and commercial conditions. Bangladesh would need to engage with these partners on terms consistent with its own interests, recognising that none can necessarily replace the role the US once claimed in supporting the international economic order.

Bangladesh cannot vote on 3 November, but it will live with the consequences of the result. A Democratic Congress would not necessarily make the United States more generous or even more consistent. It could, however, subject the administration to greater scrutiny and accountability. For an economy that can ill afford another two years of unpredictable decisions from Washington, greater institutional restraint could offer some much-needed stability.

Ayesha Tariq, *CFA, is the CEO and co-founder of MacroVisor, an independent global macroeconomic research and consulting firm.*

BEYOND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Japan's strategic long game in Bangladesh

MD. HIMEL RAHMAN

"See distant things as if they were close, and take a distanced view of close things." — Miyamoto Musashi, The Book of Five Rings (1645)

As Prime Minister Tarique Rahman becomes the first Bangladeshi head of government to visit Japan since the elevation of Japan–Bangladesh relations to a 'strategic partnership' in April 2023, it is tempting to view the expanding ties between Dhaka and Tokyo primarily from an economic perspective, particularly amid reports of possible economic agreements between the two countries. Dhaka seems primarily interested in boosting bilateral trade with Tokyo, securing increased Japanese investment and expanding access to the Japanese labour market. Japan is currently Bangladesh's ninth-largest export destination, but Bangladesh is not among Japan's top 25 trading partners. In fact, while Dhaka's approach to the bilateral partnership is largely focused on its economic dimensions, Tokyo's objectives in Bangladesh appear to be more strategic in nature and longer-term in scope.

SEEING DISTANT THINGS AS IF THEY WERE CLOSE

Japanese interest in South Asia and the Bay of Bengal, along with apprehensions about Japan's objectives in the region, dates back more than a century. After centuries of relative isolation, Japan underwent rapid modernisation in the late 19th century under Emperor Meiji and emerged as the only major Asian power capable of competing with the established Western powers. For anti-colonial activists in British India, including British-ruled Bengal, Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–1905 represented a triumph of Asia over a seemingly 'invincible' Europe and instilled renewed confidence in their anti-colonial aspirations. On the other hand, following the fall of Port Arthur, Russia's ice-free naval base on the Pacific coast, to Japan in 1905, British strategists became increasingly apprehensive about the security of Kolkata, then the capital of British India, in the face of possible naval attacks by hostile powers. This concern was one of the factors that reportedly motivated the British decision to shift the capital from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911.

During the Second World War, British apprehensions about Japanese military expansion towards South Asia eventually materialised. At that time, Japan envisioned South Asia, including the territory of present-day Bangladesh, as part of the Japanese-led Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Japan sponsored the pro-independence Indian National Army, which was led by a Bengali, Subhas Chandra Bose, and included numerous Bengali troops. Japanese forces also bombed Kolkata and Chattogram. The Japanese had plans to enter Bengal and advanced as far as Manipur and Nagaland, but their offensive was eventually halted by British victories at the Battles of Imphal and Kohima. Meanwhile, British authorities, apprehensive about a possible Japanese advance into British-ruled Bengal, destroyed or confiscated boats across Bengal, seriously disrupting the transportation of grain within the region. These policies contributed to the devastating Bengal famine of 1943, which killed an estimated two to three million people.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman shakes hands with his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi, upon arriving at the Japanese Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo for a bilateral summit on October 27, 2026.

After the Second World War, Japan recalibrated its foreign and security policies, aligned itself closely with the United States (US) and, supported by its growing economic, industrial and technological capabilities, began using its economic strength as an instrument for expanding its influence abroad. Interestingly, although the US backed Pakistan during Bangladesh's War of Independence, its ally Japan recognised Bangladesh soon after the war and subsequently became one of the country's principal aid donors and development partners. Since then, regardless of the political orientation or nature of the government in Dhaka, the partnership between Bangladesh and Japan has continued to expand. Between 1972 and 2022, Tokyo provided Bangladesh with $24.72 billion in grants and loans, primarily through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Numerous infrastructure projects, including major bridges, roads and other transport facilities, have been implemented in Bangladesh with Japanese financial and technological assistance. In 2014, Bangladesh and Japan elevated their bilateral relations to the level of a 'comprehensive partnership'. In 2023, they further upgraded their relationship to a 'strategic partnership'.

TAKING A DISTANCED VIEW OF CLOSE THINGS

During the Bangladeshi prime minister's recent visit to Japan, six agreements were signed between the two countries to expand cooperation in maritime security, investment, agriculture, fisheries, skills development and climate change. Japan also pledged two loans worth a combined $295.5 million to Bangladesh. In particular, Japan decided to provide Bangladesh with $13.44 million for the acquisition of a patrol vessel. Earlier, Japan had provided Bangladesh with five patrol boats under its Official Security Assistance (OSA) programme. According to the recent joint statement issued by the two countries, Japan has upgraded the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative to 'BIG-B for Shared Prosperity'. One of the stated objectives of this upgraded initiative is to strengthen resilience against risks arising from geopolitical uncertainties by integrating the development of power, energy, deep-sea port, industrial and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure.

This objective reflects what appears to be one of the principal motivations behind Japan's engagement with Bangladesh. While Dhaka values the partnership primarily for its economic benefits, Tokyo increasingly views it through the broader lenses of geopolitics and geostrategy, particularly in relation to regional connectivity, maritime security and the evolving strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific.

First, according to Japan's 2026 Diplomatic Bluebook, Japan seeks to strengthen the maritime order in the Indo-Pacific, where several "important sea lanes" are located. Bangladesh is a key littoral state of the Bay of Bengal and occupies a geographically significant position at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia. Japan is overwhelmingly dependent on imports of oil, gas, other minerals and food to sustain its economy. Nearly 50 per cent of Japan's seaborne trade is conducted through the Indian Ocean, and many of the vessels involved must traverse the Bay of Bengal. Consequently, the Bay of Bengal constitutes one of those "important sea lanes" for Japan. By developing closer ties with Dhaka, Tokyo is seeking to strengthen the existing maritime order in the Bay of Bengal, which facilitates Japan's unhindered maritime access, commercial connectivity and freedom of navigation.

Second, following Bangladesh's independence, Japan's decision to recognise the new state quickly and establish extensive relations with it was partly motivated by its Cold War policy of anti-communism. Bangladesh achieved its independence with considerable diplomatic and political support from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Eastern Bloc, creating the possibility that the newly independent country might align itself with the communist world. Accordingly, Japan moved to recognise Bangladesh and provide it with substantial economic assistance, partly to prevent the new state from moving into the Soviet sphere of influence.

The underlying motivation has not changed significantly in the 21st century. As the intensifying strategic rivalry between the US and China increasingly resembles a new Cold War, Japan seeks to counter the possibility of growing Chinese predominance in Bangladesh. It should be noted that opposition from Japan, along with the US and India, to the proposed Chinese-backed deep-sea port project on Sonadia Island contributed to Bangladesh's decision to shelve the project. Instead, Japan is now supporting the construction of a deep-sea port at Matarbari, which has become a major component of Japanese-backed infrastructure development in Bangladesh.

Third, following the Second World War, Japan was compelled to adopt a pacifist and largely non-interventionist foreign policy, and Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution formally renounced war as a sovereign right of the nation. However, Japan reinterpreted Article 9 in 2014 to allow for the limited exercise of collective self-defence under certain circumstances. Today, the Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) constitute one of the most technologically advanced military establishments in the world. Japan has acquired counterstrike capabilities, modified its Izumo-class destroyers to operate F-35B stealth aircraft, and approved a record $58 billion defence budget. Moreover, according to the 2025 JMSDF Capstone Doctrine, one of the core objectives of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) is to secure strategically important sea lanes. Thus, Japan is undergoing a gradual but significant process of military expansion and modernisation, and it increasingly views the security of important maritime routes, including those connected to the Bay of Bengal, as crucial to its national security.

Accordingly, Bangladesh's strategic importance to Japan has increased, and Tokyo is increasingly using military cooperation as a policy instrument in its engagement with Dhaka. Historically, Japan has refrained from supplying Bangladesh with military equipment. However, following the elevation of bilateral relations to a 'strategic partnership' in 2023, Japan supplied Bangladesh with four patrol boats, signed the landmark Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology in February 2026, and has now decided to provide Bangladesh with a patrol vessel. By enhancing military cooperation with Dhaka and strengthening Bangladesh's maritime capabilities, Tokyo is laying the foundations for stable and cooperative military-to-military relations between the two countries. At the same time, it is seeking to reduce, at least partially, Bangladesh's traditional dependence on Chinese military hardware and broaden the country's defence partnerships.

Finally, Tokyo seeks Bangladesh's diplomatic support for its initiatives and positions in global politics. In 2023, when bilateral ties were upgraded to a 'strategic partnership', Bangladesh effectively aligned itself with Japan's position on certain aspects of the Russia–Ukraine war and North Korea's military activities by expressing support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and concern about North Korean missile tests. In the recent joint statement, Bangladesh shared Japan's concerns about North Korea's nuclear programme and the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea, while also expressing support for Japan's aspiration to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). For its part, Tokyo commended Bangladesh for providing shelter to Rohingya refugees and agreed with Dhaka that a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis must be found in Myanmar.

Thus, taking a broader and more strategic view of the outcomes of the prime minister's recent visit to Japan, it becomes evident that Tokyo is seeking to expand its partnership with Bangladesh not merely for economic cooperation but also to enhance its strategic influence in the country, establish a stable foothold in the Bay of Bengal, secure important sea lanes, strengthen maritime cooperation, counter perceived Chinese predominance, and obtain Dhaka's diplomatic support for its regional and global policy objectives.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Bangladesh must look beyond the immediate economic dividends of its growing partnership with Japan and recognise the broader strategic calculations behind Tokyo's engagement. Japanese investment, infrastructure development and maritime assistance offer significant opportunities for Dhaka, but they also carry geopolitical implications amid intensifying Sino–US strategic competition. Dhaka's challenge is to translate this partnership into tangible national benefits without compromising its strategic autonomy or alienating other important partners. By combining economic pragmatism with geopolitical foresight, Bangladesh can strengthen its maritime security, diversify its defence relationships and expand its diplomatic leverage. The key is to recognise distant strategic interests clearly while managing immediate opportunities wisely, ensuring that the partnership serves Bangladesh's long-term national interests.

Md. Himel Rahman *is a lecturer in the Department of International Relations at Gopalganj Science and Technology University.*

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

A promising solution to post-harvest losses

New irradiation facility must deliver equitable access, reduce losses for farmers

The inauguration of an irradiation centre at the Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture's (Bina) Regional Research Station in Gazipur is encouraging as it is expected to extend the shelf life of produce, giving farmers greater flexibility in storing and marketing their harvest. The facility's non-invasive technology will use radiation to eliminate parasites, pathogens, and harmful microorganisms that limit produce's shelf life. It should be noted that the gamma radiation used in the process does not make food radioactive and is a highly regulated technology endorsed by major global organisations.

Every year, Bangladesh loses agricultural produce worth around Tk 20,000 crore during the post-harvest period, which is roughly 25 to 30 percent of our annual farm produce. Limited cold storage and bumper production often lead to huge losses for many farmers every year. Against this backdrop, this Tk-115-crore facility offers a limited but promising solution. It is estimated to process around 85,000 tonnes of produce annually, with a processing capacity of 8 to 10 tonnes of produce an hour, operating in three shifts each day. Experts hope that Bangladeshi producers too can use the technology at the Gazipur facility to meet quarantine requirements for exporting high-value agricultural products.

While the new facility offers reasons to be cautiously optimistic, the extent to which the technology can reduce post-harvest losses can only be evaluated through pilot operations and sustained data collection. This should be a particularly important step in evaluating the success of this technology. Also, the facility should cater to small-scale farmers alongside export-oriented firms, unlike the two existing gamma irradiation plants at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment in Savar, whose commercial services cater to export-oriented pharmaceuticals and spices.

While the new facility offers reasons to be cautiously optimistic, the extent to which the technology can reduce post-harvest losses can only be evaluated through pilot operations and sustained data collection. This should be a particularly important step in evaluating the success of this technology. Also, the facility should cater to small-scale farmers alongside export-oriented firms, unlike the two existing gamma irradiation plants at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment in Savar, whose commercial services cater to export-oriented pharmaceuticals and spices.

While the new centre is expected to benefit agricultural and food producers from the surrounding areas in Gazipur, similar facilities should be built in other locations to help small-scale producers and reduce transportation costs for agri businesses in other districts. The authorities should also rein in any unwanted involvement of syndicates and politically powerful groups. Equally important is ensuring that the facility operates with adequate safeguards and trained personnel, with workplace safety treated as a top priority. Furthermore, the radioactive material used in irradiation requires careful handling, storage, and eventual disposal. Proper ventilation, regular monitoring, and safeguards against leaks are also essential to protect workers and surrounding communities.

The government must ensure the facility plays an instrumental role in reducing farmers' losses and improving their livelihoods. The technology might have the potential to address the country's food insecurity, but for that, it must serve producers across the country and not become another establishment whose benefits remain out of reach for those who need it most.

Make public toilets women-friendly

Increase the number of toilets and ensure good hygiene and better access

That women in Dhaka suffer terribly when looking for a toilet in public places is telling of the capital's priorities, particularly given the city is also the geographic, cultural, economic, and sociological centre of our country. A report by this daily outlines how major bus terminals in Dhaka feature poorly maintained sanitation facilities, with services being inadequate or even absent for women commuters. At the Mohakhali Inter-District Bus Terminal, for instance, most of the women's toilets were reportedly converted into facilities for men a few years ago. Worse, the existing toilets, which women have to share with men, have broken doors, dirty floors, unclean toilet pans and urinals, and foul odours.

Public toilets supported by NGOs and private funding are usually better maintained, with many containing liquid soap and other basic hygiene elements. Meanwhile, facilities operated primarily by city corporations or their contractors tend to be in poorer conditions. Even among the NGO-supported facilities, though, many allow men to use women's facilities due to the infrequency of women users. But this should not be a reason to open women-only facilities for general use; rather, we should ask if the absence or impermanence of women-only toilets discourages women from drinking water during their commute or travelling at all. With most facilities prioritising men's needs, how can a female commuter feel assured that her hygiene, health, privacy, and dignity are being taken into consideration by authorities who build and maintain urban public toilets? As an earlier report mentioned, mothers often advise daughters not to drink water before travel because they may not find a suitable toilet. The health risks of this unfortunate practice include urinary tract infections, kidney stones, and even bladder dysfunction.

Women make up half of the population, and they are living increasingly public lives, with millions engaged in education and the workforce. The country's urban centres must catch up in terms of catering to women's sanitation needs in public spaces such as bus terminals, train stations, and major intersections. We urge city authorities in Dhaka and around the country to ensure that public toilets are easy to access and well-maintained, and that separate facilities of equal quality are available for women to use.

Rooppur's first electricity will be a milestone, not the finish line



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■ **MD. SHAFIQUL ISLAM**

If everything goes as planned, Bangladesh will soon do something it has never done before: transmit electricity from a nuclear reactor to the national grid. News headlines will call it historic, and rightly so. But that moment will only be the visible tip of a long, carefully ordered process called commissioning. During this process, every structure, system, component, item of equipment, and safety system at Unit 1 of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant is tested, inspected, and approved before the reactor can begin trial electricity generation. Rooppur has two VVER-1200 Generation III+ reactor units, each with an electrical capacity of 1,200 MW. The commissioning of Unit 2 is expected to begin next year.

There seem to be some misconceptions about Rooppur's electricity generation and transmission, so it is important to understand how the commissioning process works. Commissioning does not end when electricity first reaches the grid, nor does it follow a political calendar. Understanding how the work proceeds can help readers distinguish routine pauses from genuine problems in the weeks ahead. The project's contractual schedule divides the process into four stages, A to D, each with several sub-stages, followed by a guarantee period. The durations discussed below are planned figures, not actual elapsed times.

Stage A—pre-commissioning alignment—is the longest, accounting for 55 of the planned 68 months before commercial operation. Beginning with the first concrete pour for the Unit 1 reactor on November 30, 2017, it covers completing installations, training and licensing operators, testing every system individually and in combination, pressurising the containment building, and running the reactor circuit through cold and then hot (16.2 MPa, 329 °C) tests without fuel. The aim is to detect faults so they can be fixed inexpensively. Fuel for Unit 1 reached the site in October 2023 and has since been stored under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Stage B—physical start-up—began with fuel loading on April 28, 2026. The reactor is kept in a subcritical state while instruments and control rods are tested, then brought to first criticality: the start of a controlled, self-sustaining chain reaction at well under one percent of full power. Planned for two months, this stage took more than five in reality. Faults in the pressure-relief safety valves postponed regulatory approval until Russian specialists fixed them and the system passed high-pressure tests. Finally, the reactor reached criticality on October 11, 2026, and the minimum-power physical tests have since been completed.

Stage C—power start-up—has just begun after receiving regulatory approval from the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (BAERA). During this stage, heat generated by the reactor is used to produce steam, while the reactor's thermal power is gradually increased in controlled steps. The process has already begun at five percent of the reactor's rated power, with engineers progressively raising the output while closely monitoring the reactor instrumentation, cooling systems, turbine-generator synchronisation, and electrical transmission systems. Once the reactor safely reaches at least 30 percent of its capacity—a milestone expected in November/December 2026—sufficient steam will be available to drive the turbine-generator and begin trial electricity generation and transmission to the national grid. Initially, approximately 300 MW of electricity will be supplied against the unit's 1,200 MW capacity.

Stage D—pilot commercial operation—then runs for a planned ten months, testing the unit up to its full power, including at least three days of continuous full-capacity operation, with Bangladeshi operators working alongside Russian experts. A 12-month guarantee period follows. Theoretically, the whole sequence spans 80 months (six years and eight months). In practice, if Unit 1 connects to the grid in November/December, nine years will have passed since construction began.



'The proper test of Rooppur is whether every stage is completed correctly and safely.' FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

Grid connection is more than a switch-over. At 1,200 MW, Unit 1 is larger than any other power-generating unit supplying the national grid. If it trips suddenly, supply drops sharply and grid frequency falls, so the system must respond at once with spinning reserves or by shedding load to avoid a blackout. Nuclear plants run best at steady output, so other conventional plants must be flexible enough to follow daily swings in demand. The dependence also runs the other way: a reactor needs a reliable off-site power supply to keep its cooling systems running, even when shut down. Importantly, the electricity must be transmitted reliably from Rooppur to Dhaka and other major demand centres, such as Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram, through dedicated high-voltage (400 kV) lines strong enough to carry it. If a line is congested or unreliable, or trips, the unit may have to cut its output. This could cause heavy economic losses.

This matters because Bangladesh is in the middle of an energy crisis. This summer, load-shedding reached record levels, exceeding 3,600 MW at its peak in August as shortages of gas, LNG, coal and oil left power plants short of fuel, even though installed capacity exceeds demand. The weakness lies in fuel, not generating capacity. Domestic gas output is declining, and Bangladesh imports roughly two-thirds of its primary energy, so disruptions in global markets quickly result in power cuts at home while costly spot purchases strain public finances.

What, then, can Rooppur realistically deliver? Once both units operate, their combined 2,400 MW would equal about one-seventh of recent peak demand of 16,000 to 18,000 MW, or roughly the amount of power lost to load-shedding this summer. Unit 1 alone would supply about half of that amount. This is significant, but it will not end load-shedding by itself. Output will be modest at first, and a full, reliable contribution from Unit 1 is unlikely before pilot operation ends, probably in the second half of 2027. If Unit 2 starts operating in 2028, less load-shedding should be needed thereafter. A sensible expectation, therefore, is a gradual contribution that eases pressure on the system, not a sudden end to outages. The benefit should become clearer over the next few years as Unit 2 joins and the grid learns to operate alongside nuclear power.

What nuclear power offers is different in kind: steady, round-the-clock baseload supply; fuel delivered and stored in advance rather than bought cargo-by-cargo on volatile markets; and less dependence on fossil fuels. Realising these benefits will depend on matters beyond the reactor: a robust grid, secure fuel supply, loan repayment, a skilled workforce, a competent regulator, and long-term management of intermediate-level radioactive waste and spent fuel.

In short, we should not expect everything to change overnight. The first grid connection will be modest, brief pauses are normal during testing, and each step requires regulatory approval. So the proper test of Rooppur is not whether the first electricity reaches the grid on a promised day, but whether every stage is completed correctly and safely. Bangladesh will become the world's 33rd country to generate nuclear power. Rooppur can strengthen our energy security, but only as one part of a wider remedy for the fuel, grid and finance problems behind today's energy crisis.

How to make the jute industry thrive at last



Dr Md Al-Mamun is principal scientific officer in the breeding division of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Dhaka, specialising in plant breeding, quantitative genetics, and molecular biology.

■ **MD AL-MAMUN**

After the closure of 25 mills under the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) in 2020, the government several months ago initiated a leasing programme to bring selected facilities back into production under private management. According to a recent report, leases for 17 mills were completed as of early October, and production had resumed in nine, creating employment for approximately 9,500 people. The government expects the initiative to generate nearly 50,000 jobs as operations expand. These are encouraging developments, but the real test will be whether the mills can sustain production and employment over time.

Many of the mills have remained idle for years, leaving machinery and infrastructure in need of rehabilitation. Simply restarting old equipment may not ensure competitiveness. Investors should conduct thorough technical and financial assessments, modernise production facilities, adopt energy-efficient technologies, and introduce effective quality-control and digital management systems. Lease agreements should also specify investment milestones, production targets, employment commitments, and maintenance obligations. Additionally, routine performance reviews and appropriate corrective measures would help prevent renewed financial distress.

Transparency is equally important because these jute factories are public assets. Leasing does not transfer ownership; rather, it entrusts the mills' productive use to private operators under mutually agreed conditions. The government must therefore ensure transparent contracts, credible monitoring, and accountability for commitments made by operators. Public reporting on investment, production, employment, and compliance at the jute mills would strengthen confidence among citizens, workers and investors.

With the renewal of the industry, market diversification should be a priority. Growing interest in sustainable materials creates opportunities to expand beyond traditional jute sacks, yarn, and hessian. Jute bags, geotextiles, furniture, industrial textiles, and natural-fibre composites could open higher-value market segments. However, environmental appeal alone cannot guarantee commercial success. Competitive pricing, consistent quality, product certification, modern design, and reliable delivery are essential for Bangladesh to be able to access domestic and international markets.

Additionally, stronger collaboration among research institutions, universities, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs could accelerate the development of improved fibre-processing techniques, diversified products and commercially viable applications. Research should respond to existing industrial needs, with greater emphasis on technology transfer, product testing, and commercialisation.

Stronger collaboration among research institutions, universities, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs could accelerate the development of improved fibre-processing techniques, diversified products and commercially viable applications. Research should respond to existing industrial needs, with greater emphasis on technology transfer, product testing, and commercialisation.

To protect the interests of jute farmers, mills need a reliable supply of quality raw jute, while farmers require fair prices and dependable markets. Quality-based pricing, transparent procurement, and better coordination between producing areas and mills could strengthen the supply chain while improving farmers' returns. Industrial buyers must recognise that sustainable production depends partly on the economic wellbeing of raw material suppliers.

Workers deserve equal consideration. Safe working conditions, fair wages, timely salary payments, social protection, and skills development must accompany the revival of production. Experienced workers possess valuable technical knowledge that should be retained wherever possible, while retraining can prepare employees for modern machinery and production methods. Industrial revitalisation should improve livelihoods, not merely restore factory operations.

The government should also adopt a differentiated strategy for the remaining BJMC assets. Not every site will necessarily be viable under the same business model. Decisions should reflect infrastructure conditions, location, raw material access, market prospects, and financial feasibility. Some mills may suit diversified jute manufacturing, while other sites may support alternative productive uses consistent with national industrial priorities. Legal disputes that keep valuable assets idle should be resolved promptly.

A unified monitoring framework could track actual investment against commitments, production, capacity utilisation, sales, exports, employment conditions, wage compliance, and environmental performance. Periodic assessments can help identify problems early and help replicate successful management practices. Such oversight should combine accountability with practical support for technology adoption, market development, and industrial efficiency.

Reopening Bangladesh's jute mills is important, but keeping them productive and helping them thrive will be the real test. The government must safeguard public assets, entrepreneurs must honour investment commitments, workers must receive fair treatment, and farmers must be given reasonable returns. By combining responsible private management with technological innovation, transparent oversight, and market-oriented production, Bangladesh can turn idle industrial assets into a foundation for a more competitive and sustainable jute industry.

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Awami League and Jamaat: Strange turns in the history of political alliances



Mohiuddin Ahmad is a writer and researcher of Bangladesh's political history.

■ MOHIUDDIN AHMAD

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman recently advanced a striking allegation, claiming that Awami League, whose activities remain banned, and Jamaat-e-Islami, now leading the opposition, have entered into a covert understanding, united not by shared ideals but by a common political purpose. Speaking at a public gathering a few days ago, he asserted that intelligence reports indicated an emerging nexus between the two groups.

What lends particular force to the accusation is the historical irony it invokes. For decades, Awami League and Jamaat have represented opposing narratives of Bangladesh's national identity. Their deepest divide lies in the memory of 1971, the year of Bangladesh's birth. Yet Tarique Rahman argues that beneath this public hostility there has often existed a less visible history of accommodation. Whether this allegation reflects political reality or rhetoric remains a matter of debate. Importantly, reports carrying his remarks also note that these claims have not been independently verified. No conclusive public evidence has yet been presented to substantiate the existence of such a secret arrangement.

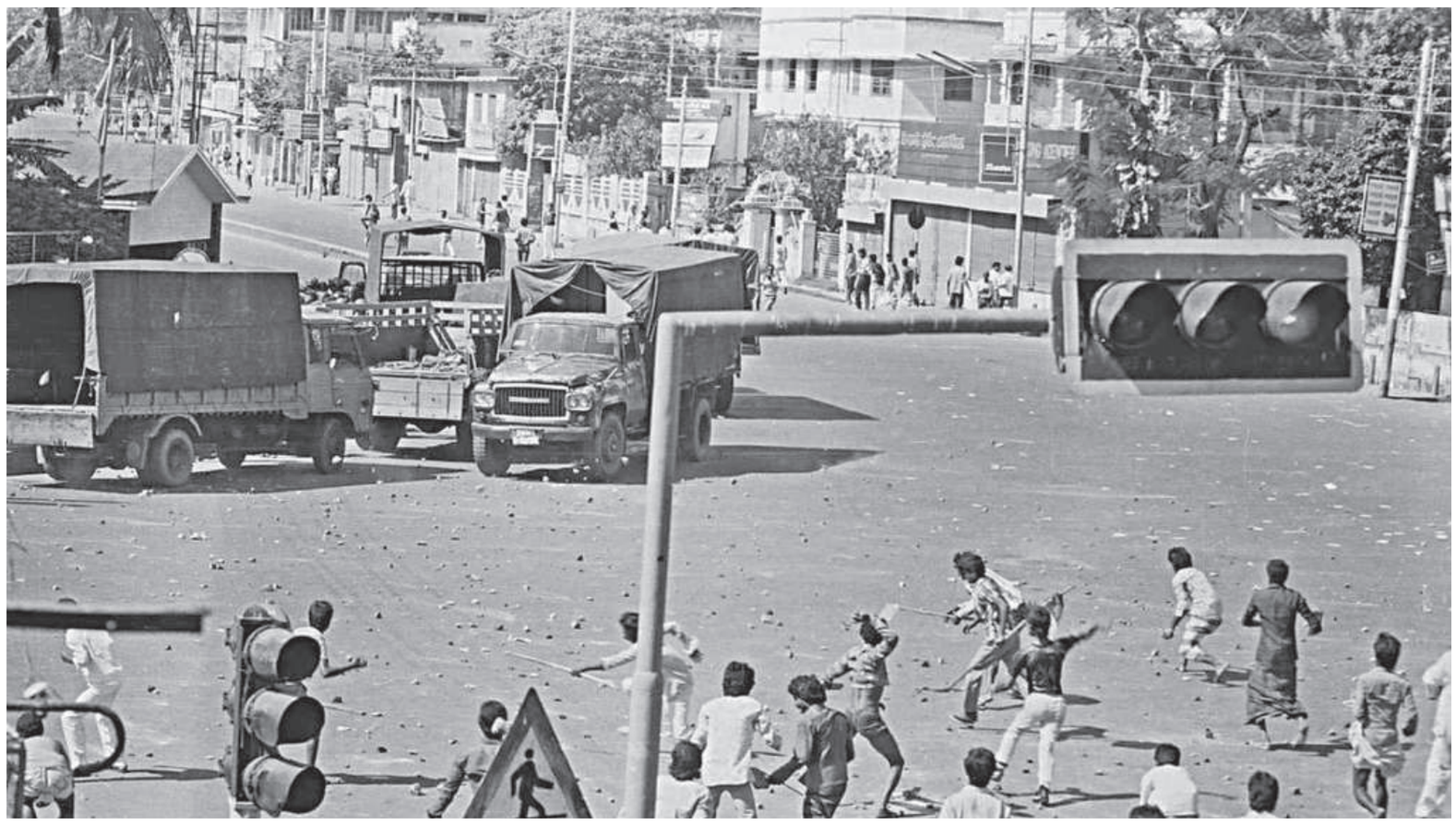
In *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare famously observed that "misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows." In modern political discourse, this sentiment has evolved into the maxim that "politics makes strange bedfellows," a phrase that captures the tendency of political necessity to transcend ideological boundaries. The relationship between Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami offers a striking illustration of this phenomenon.

Though separated by profound differences in political philosophy and worldview, the two parties found common ground during the 1960s in their opposition to the autocratic rule of Field Marshal Ayub Khan. In 1964, united by the broader cause of restoring democratic governance, they joined other opposition forces under the banner of the Combined Opposition Party (COP). In 1969, Awami League and Jamaat also joined several other parties to form the Democratic Action Committee (DAC).

The general election of 1970 dramatically altered Pakistan's political landscape. Awami League secured an overwhelming mandate, while Jamaat-e-Islami failed to win a single seat. Yet electoral defeat did not immediately sever the relationship. Jamaat leaders publicly congratulated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his historic victory and expressed their willingness to cooperate. As the national crisis deepened following the postponement of the inaugural National Assembly session scheduled for March 3, 1971, in Dhaka, Ghulam Azam, the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, met Sheikh Mujib and voiced support for the latter's programme of non-cooperation with the central government. For a brief moment, both parties appeared to stand on the same side of a growing constitutional struggle.

That fragile convergence, however, would not survive the seismic events that followed. The military crackdown launched by the Pakistan Army on the night of March 25, 1971, transformed the political reality, while the paths of Awami League and Jamaat diverged irrevocably because of the latter's opposition to the liberation movement.

Following independence, the Awami League government led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sought to establish a secular state. The 1972 constitution barred religious political parties, including Jamaat, from operating. Many of its leaders went into exile or remained politically marginalised. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's assassination in August 1975 marked a turning point. In the years that followed, constitutional restrictions on religion-based parties were lifted, enabling Jamaat to re-emerge. Although Awami League and Jamaat continued to regard each other with deep suspicion and remained ideological adversaries, the changing political climate gradually created conditions that would draw them into an unlikely, albeit temporary, partnership.



FILE PHOTO: **DINU ALAM**

'One of the most notable chapters in the history of Awami League-Jamaat relations unfolded during the anti-Ershad movement of the 1980s.'

History seldom moves in straight lines, however. Political relationships are rarely fixed, and alliances that seem inconceivable in one era often emerge as necessities in another. The historical record demonstrates that, despite profound ideological differences, Awami League and Jamaat have repeatedly found themselves on the same side of political struggles.

One of the most notable chapters in the history of Awami League-Jamaat relations unfolded during the anti-Ershad movement of the 1980s. This convergence became evident in the parliamentary elections of 1986. Although they contested under separate banners, both parties entered the Jatiya Sangsad, with Jamaat securing ten seats and thus gaining a degree of political legitimacy and institutional recognition that had eluded it since the country's independence. Later, the two parties also found themselves on the same side of the intensifying opposition movement against Ershad.

The 1990s witnessed yet another phase in the complex and often paradoxical relationship between Awami League and Jamaat. At the heart of the political struggle of the decade lay a crucial constitutional question: the establishment of a neutral caretaker government to oversee parliamentary elections. In pursuit of this objective, Jamaat joined Awami League and other opposition forces in a sustained movement against Khaleda Zia's BNP government. The pressure generated by this broad-based agitation eventually compelled the government to accept constitutional reforms, paving the way for the caretaker system.

Although Awami League and Jamaat did not enter into a formal governing alliance following the 1996 general election, subsequent political developments elevated Jamaat's parliamentary significance. In a fragmented political environment, its presence acquired a degree of importance that exceeded its numerical strength, enabling it to exert influence disproportionate to its representation.

The political landscape shifted dramatically once again when Awami League returned to office in 2009. Among the defining initiatives of Sheikh Hasina's government was the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed during the Liberation War of 1971. The International Crimes Tribunal emerged as the principal institution through which these proceedings were conducted. Several top Jamaat leaders were prosecuted, convicted and, in some instances, executed following judicial verdicts.

The tensions reached a new intensity in 2013 with the emergence of the Shahbag Movement, a campaign demanding harsher punishment for individuals accused of wartime atrocities. Many supporters of Awami League regarded the movement as a continuation of the unfinished moral struggle of the Liberation War. Jamaat, however, viewed it through a fundamentally different lens and mounted vigorous opposition. The result was a period marked by escalating street protests, violent confrontations, and deepening political animosity.

Bangladesh found itself increasingly polarised between competing visions of history, justice, and national identity. The prospect of any meaningful reconciliation between Awami League and Jamaat appeared more distant than at any previous moment in their shared political history.

History seldom moves in straight lines, however. Political relationships are rarely fixed, and alliances that seem inconceivable in one era often emerge as necessities in another. The historical record demonstrates that, despite profound ideological differences, Awami League and Jamaat have repeatedly found themselves on the same side of political struggles. These episodes offer a lesson: political friendships are often strategic rather than permanent, while ideological divisions may persist beneath the surface, awaiting the moment when circumstances once again bring them into conflict.

Today, the political landscape is once again in flux. Jamaat has emerged as a significant opposition force and harbours ambitions of expanding its influence in future elections. Meanwhile, relationships once thought durable have evolved in unexpected ways. Political allies have become adversaries, and old antagonists have occasionally discovered areas of overlapping interest. In such circumstances, the calculations of political survival often acquire greater significance than the certainties of ideology.

Whether future developments will produce new alignments remains uncertain. As Awami League seeks to reclaim political relevance and its opponents compete for influence, every actor will inevitably weigh where its interests lie and whose support may prove most valuable. In that enduring contest between principle and pragmatism, Bangladesh's political future remains unwritten, waiting for the next turn of history's wheel.

Is Britain's MI6 trying to save Pakistani media from death?



Hamid Mir is a Pakistani journalist and member of the International Jury for RSF World Press Freedom Award. His Twitter handle is @HamidMirPAK.

■ HAMID MIR

The title of Mazhar Abbas's new book tells the whole story of Pakistani media. *Media Under the Shadow of Death* comes from one of Pakistan's best-known journalists, and its cover shows journalists, with their pens and cameras, imprisoned by censorship. The book was launched recently in Islamabad at an event hosted by the well-known anchor Absa Komal. Some time ago, Absa spoke outside the National Press Club in Islamabad against the non-payment of salaries at various TV channels and newspapers, and she was dismissed from her job as a consequence. For journalists like us, losing a job or being banned from the screen is nothing new. What is worrying is that a journalist as senior as Mazhar Abbas is warning the world that Pakistani media is close to death and must be saved. In his book, he also mentions the petition I filed in the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2012 with my colleague Absar Alam.

Mazhar Abbas, Asma Shirazi, and the late Arshad Sharif, who was mysteriously assassinated in Kenya while in exile, later joined me as petitioners. We went to court against the spread of corruption in the media by some state institutions and non-state actors, and we were the first to submit ourselves for accountability. We demanded that the Federal Ministry of Information's secret fund be abolished and that all the benefits given to journalists by the property tycoon Malik Riaz, owner of Bahria Town, be made public. We also asked that his accounts be investigated and that the names of all the politicians and retired military officials who benefited from him be exposed. Nothing happened. Finally, we demanded that the media adopt a code of conduct to protect its own credibility.

Malik Riaz was once very close to Imran Khan, and he faces cases over allegedly bribing him. Pakistani courts have since declared him an absconder and proclaimed offender. In 2016, he bought a luxury London property at 1 Hyde Park Place for 42.5 million pounds from Hasan Nawaz Sharif, son of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He lives in the United Arab Emirates, yet it remains very difficult to write against him in mainstream Pakistani newspapers. Anything written against him in Pakistan is often censored. He is a classic example of censorship by non-state actors.

The 2012 petition was heard over more than a hundred hearings across several years. One success was the freezing of the Ministry of Information's secret fund, once used to bribe journalists. In consultation with the petitioners and other stakeholders, the Supreme Court also drew up a code of conduct for Pakistan's electronic media, and Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) enforced it in 2015. Sadly, it was never fully implemented. The Supreme Court had imposed the code, and responsibility for its oversight also lay with the court. But some of its judges became part of politics, and their politics weakened the institution.

I have faced many fake cases masterminded by intelligence bosses and registered on the orders of some high court judges. All those judges were forced to resign after the regime change. I must say that I always got relief from the lower courts, while my problems came from the higher judiciary, which is more politicised. Today, in international rankings, Pakistan ranks among the lowest globally on everything from press freedom to the rule of law, and from governance to democracy. Mazhar Abbas's book is not only a lament for press freedom in Pakistan but also a mourning for the independence of the judiciary and parliament.

After my remarks at the launch, I was asked why I had said that media's conditions today are worse than they were under General Musharraf's military rule. I replied that during Musharraf's era, only five TV anchors, including myself, were banned, and only for a few months. As soon as he resigned from the presidency, the ban was lifted. In today's so-called democratic era, 15 TV anchors have been taken off the air. One famous anchor, Kashif Abbasi, has been missing from the screen of ARY for the last one year. This regime has even broken the record of Imran Khan's government, which banned me for more than nine months in 2021. Even those who are not banned face many restrictions. At that time, only the government or its coalition partner, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), threatened the media. Now, along with the government, various non-state elements, including some terrorist organisations, are also working against media freedom.

A few days after the book launch, I attended an important meeting in Lahore. The invitation came from Munizae Jahangir, who was removed from Aaj News only a few weeks ago because, like her mother Asma Jahangir, she remains active in defending human rights. Representatives of journalists' organisations from across Pakistan, as well as lawyers and civil society members, attended the meeting. Senior journalists, including Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami, Suhail Warraich, Najam Sethi, Asma Shirazi, and Arifa Noor, heard about the problems journalists face in Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.



Pakistani journalists continue to face bans and other kinds of restrictions even during the current democratic era. FILE PHOTO: **AFP**

Saleem Shahid, from Quetta, told us that Pakistan's major TV channels and newspapers are laying off and shuttering their offices in Balochistan. Many of districts there have become no-go areas for the media. Tahir Hasan, president of one faction of the Karachi Union of Journalists, said protests outside the Karachi Press Club have been banned and cameras have been installed around the club to identify protesters. He added that the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act (PECA), 2025 is being used against journalists in Sindh. Nasir Hussain of the Khyber Union of Journalists described several measures the previous PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took to curb media freedom. He said that 30 journalists have been martyred in his province since 9/11 and that the Peshawar Press Club has also been attacked by suicide bombers.

Qamar Bhatti, secretary general of the Punjab Union of Journalists, said that PECA has been used against several journalists in Punjab, including Imran Shafqat and Sajjad Anwar, and that 60 percent of the province's journalists are now unemployed. He claimed that conditions in Punjab are worse than under martial law. Arif Bahar from Muzaffarabad said that the media in Pakistan-administered Kashmir faces the same situation as in the rest of Pakistan. Author and human rights activist Farhatullah Babar spoke about a Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report on Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Israruddin Israr from Gilgit said that Gilgit-Baltistan has no internet, so people depend on TV channels, but the channels do not cover the region.

Arshad Ansari, secretary general of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and president of the Lahore Press Club, called the PECA Act 2025 a black law and declared all the major political parties guilty of crimes against press freedom. He said that only Maulana Fazlur Rehman's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman's Jamaat-e-Islami had no share in the sin of passing this law, and that everyone else's hands are stained. He announced that journalists would very soon take to the streets to save the media from death.

The good news was that Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar joined the meeting by video link and assured participants that the application of the PECA Act, 2025 against journalists would be discouraged. He said the law would be used only against terrorist organisations active on social media and people spreading fake news. Nasir Zaidi, the senior journalist who hosted the meeting, repeatedly stressed that we have no political agenda and that we want to protect our freedom within the framework of Pakistan's constitution.

The day after this important meeting, however, fake news accompanied by a forged MI6 document spread on social media, claiming that the Lahore meeting had been organised on the orders of the British intelligence agency. The document listed Munizae Jahangir, Farhatullah Babar and me as MI6 assets, and many known proxies of the sitting government claimed that the meeting was held on the orders of our "bosses in London."

This fake news alerted British officials, who began asking why MI6 is under fire in Pakistan. In 2012, we offered ourselves for accountability, and we are ready to do so again. Everything we have is declared in our tax returns. If the authorities truly believe that speaking about media freedom is MI6's agenda, they should read the speeches of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who always supported a free press and, before 1947, defended many journalists booked on treason charges as a lawyer. By all means, MI6 agents in Pakistan should be found and made public. Besides, if MI6 agents want to save Pakistan's media from death, we would like to thank them, despite our criticism of many British policies.







How 'Peripheral Imaginaries' brought together landless communities and artists

AISHWARYA RAIHAN



PHOTOS: AISHWARYA RAIHAN

Stuffed dolls and a bioscope, an almost-extinct art form involving miniature theatrical presentations using images, greet visitors upon entering the ethnically adorned Bengal Shilpalay.

Inside the gallery, an assortment of soft, squishy, colourful handmade sculptures stands in the middle. Their frankness attracts both young visitors and adults. The walls feature hand-embroidered sheets on which all the artists come together to showcase their folk-art styles, along with their names. These are bright, vibrant and eye-catching. Alongside embroidery, they also feature applique work.

The walls also display sarees, the primary attire of women in South Asia, including the Bengal region. These feature tiny appliqued poems written against injustice and religious blindness. One of the other two walls displays flat, stuffed sculptures of butterflies, traditional Bengali fans called *pankha*, peacocks, village houses, sweets, trees and more. All these are created by 25 members of a special community belonging to the struggling landless population of Bangladesh, in collaboration with artists from Britto Arts Trust. The final wall features framed folk art on paper, created with great simplicity.

Titled ***Peripheral Imaginaries***, the special exhibition opened on October 29 at Bengal Shilpalay, celebrating 45 years of resilience by landless people and rights organisation Nijera Kori. The exhibition brings together the artistic efforts of members of landless communities and artists from Britto Arts Trust, exploring the relationship between land, everyday life, collective struggles and the ability to imagine better futures.

The exhibition was formally inaugurated by artist Professor Syed Abul Barq Alvi and landless leader from Khulna, Rahela Begum. Hosted by prominent activist Khushi Kabir, the ceremony is also attended by the Director General of Bengal Foundation, Luva Nahid Choudhury. Founded in 1980 by Khushi Kabir, Nijera Kori works to support landless communities in Bangladesh in creating autonomous organisations through which they can collectively assert their rights.

By 2025, the Nijera Kori initiative encompasses 11,583 landless communities with 233,917 members, including 6,757 women's groups. Through collective organising and mobilisation, these groups pursue rights over natural resources, demand accountability from public institutions, advance women's rights and challenge fundamentalism.

Curated by Mahbubur Rahman, the exhibition features works using printed fabrics, applique and soft sculptures, the latter created by younger members of the landless groups. These participants from Paikgachha, Khulna; Bagatipara, Natore; Char Jabbar, Noakhali; and Dhanbari, Tangail, give wonderful forms to ideas generated by their lived experiences of land, their labour, the little things that make them happy and their fight for survival.

A workshop takes place ahead of the exhibition, during which these artists exchange ideas and methods with urban artists. The results are remarkable. The exhibition also features performances of landless women's theatre, music and bioscope.

Peripheral Imaginaries is not just an art exhibition. It is an echo of the lives of our landless population – the silent work force that runs the country. Bengal Shilpalay will continue this event till November 7, daily from 4 pm to 8 pm.

Cubic Art School showcases young artists at annual exhibition

Cubic Art School is showcasing artworks by young artists at its annual ***Children's Art Exhibition***, which opened at Safiuddin Shilpalay in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area on October 30.

Running until November 1, the exhibition brings together artworks reflecting children's emotions, dreams, curiosity and individual perspectives. Through colours, lines and forms, the young artists explore their imagination while demonstrating the role of art in nurturing creativity, confidence and independent thinking.

Established in 2003, Cubic Art School has been working to nurture children's creativity through art education, exhibitions, workshops and other artistic activities. The exhibition aims to encourage children to explore, imagine and create with confidence while promoting a greater appreciation of art among parents, educators and the wider community.



Netflix adapts 'PUBG' into live-action series with Donald Glover

Netflix is developing a live-action series based on the popular battle royale video game ***PUBG***, with Emmy-winning actor and filmmaker Donald Glover set to direct and star in the adaptation.

Glover will also write and executive produce the series alongside his brother Stephen Glover. Other executive producers include Michael Schaefer, Fam Udeorji, and Krafton's LV3H executives Taeseok Jang and Sujin Lee.

Known for ***Community*** and ***Atlanta***, Donald Glover previously collaborated with his brother on the latter, earning two Emmy Awards for his acting and directing.

Originally titled ***Player Unknown's Battlegrounds***, ***PUBG*** debuted in 2017. No release date or production schedule has been announced for the series.



NEWS

Scrapping caretaker system

FROM PAGE 12

Asif Nazrul, law adviser to the interim government, called for forming an upper house of parliament based on proportional representation (PR).

"If the upper house is not formed on the basis of proportional representation, then do not form one. There is no need to spend public money on it."

Referring to debates in the 1972 Constituent Assembly, he said then-MP Hafiz Ahmed had proposed a 60-member upper house based on PR.

Under the proposal, bills other than money bills would go to the upper house, with disagreements between the two chambers settled through a vote at a joint sitting.

Asif also proposed that upper house members receive no salaries, cars or houses, saying this would attract "genuine people" willing to work for the country.

He further suggested that opposition lawmakers chair key parliamentary standing committees on public accounts, home affairs, public administration and local government to strengthen government accountability.

"Two institutions can ensure genuine accountability from the government. The higher judiciary must be independent and strong, and the parliamentary standing committees must also be empowered," he said.

Salahuddin called on the opposition to join parliamentary discussions on the proposed upper house. If formed under the PR system, its powers, scope and jurisdiction would need to be determined, he said.

"The opposition must come to parliament for these discussions."

The issues on which the opposition had submitted notes of dissent to the July Charter should be discussed in parliament.

"That is not going to happen through a long march," said Salahuddin, while stressing the need to set a deadline for the upper house to review bills passed by the lower house to prevent delays in lawmaking from disrupting state affairs.

He agreed that the upper house members should not receive salaries or official perks.

The drafting of the 1972 Constitution did not adequately reflect people's aspirations, which had changed through the Liberation War, said Firoz Ahmed, a former member of the Constitution Reform Commission.

The failure to accommodate those aspirations created a disconnect between the people and the state.

The Constituent Assembly did not function as a parliament alongside its role in drafting the Constitution, leaving little scope for debate and scrutiny of government actions, he said.

Firoz went on to describe the Constitution's power structure as centralised and authoritarian despite its democratic philosophy.

Calling for greater transparency and public participation in the current constitutional amendment process, Firoz said public confidence would grow through debate, criticism and consultation.

Fulfil people's mandate or pay

FROM PAGE 12

and order, and an end to narrow partisan politics.

The Jamaat chief vowed to continue the movement until the demands were met, saying these were the people's demands rather than personal or party interests.

Accusing the BNP government of betraying the people, he said the party had failed to learn from the past and was creating fresh problems.

Shafiqur also questioned the government's position on the proposed Matarbari deep-sea port, referring to discussions during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's recent four-day Japan trip.

The nation must be informed about the purpose and outcome of the visit, he said, adding that Bangladesh could not be leased out to anyone in the name of connectivity.

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam and Member Secretary Akhter Hossen did not attend the rally, although the party is part of the alliance.

Other alliance leaders also criticised the government. Liberal Democratic Party Chairman Col (retd) Oli Ahmed alleged that district administrations, city corporations and other institutions had turned into BNP offices since the party came to power, with tenders being controlled through these bodies.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis chief Mamunul Haque said if the referendum was illegal, the legitimacy of the government and parliament would also come into question. He alleged that law and order had deteriorated, extortion and terrorism had increased, and shortages of gas and fuel were causing public suffering.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar accused the BNP government of moving towards fascism, saying the formation of a committee to amend the constitution instead of undertaking reforms was a step towards one-party rule.

Addl DIG Abdullah

FROM PAGE 2

The DB informed the ministry that illegal drug consumption and a DJ party were underway at the house during the raid.

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 DMP'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 notification said the incident had created a negative public perception of the force and tarnished the image of Bangladesh Police.

It described the alleged conduct as contrary to proper discipline, indicative of inefficiency and a violation of departmental rules.

According to court sources, 21 people, including 12 women, have secured bail from a Dhaka court since October 25.

'Form minority govt with Palestinians'

FROM PAGE 12

from office and pave the way for an alternative government.

The veteran politician dismissed proposals for a national unity government. Such an arrangement could bring Netanyahu's Likud, the largest party in parliament, together with opposition parties to secure a majority, while excluding far-right figures such as Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir.

"We prefer a new government by Eisenkot, as a minority government, and we are ready to help," he added.

Tibi hailed the Palestinian vote as decisive, saying unprecedented turnout had prevented Netanyahu from securing another majority.

'Graft in judiciary now an open secret'

FROM PAGE 12

government's tenure, some judges were allegedly influenced by the prospect of promotions or preferred postings, he said.

"When allegations of this nature are made about such an important institution as the judiciary, the most important thing is to establish the facts through a proper investigation and take action against those found responsible," he said, adding that it must be acknowledged that there are many good, honest and responsible judges.

He also said that SC judges, like those in the lower courts, should be required to submit wealth statements to the relevant authorities.

"To ensure transparency, there should be a clear system for judges to disclose their assets or submit statements to a designated authority. There must be a clear and effective rule or law so that the matter can be handled institutionally."

Referring to the backlog of around 4.8 million cases across the country, Khokon said that very few effective initiatives to reduce the backlog have been observed so far.

Delays in delivering justice are not only overcrowding prisons, but also leading to human rights violations, he noted.

"First of all, politically motivated cases and politically influenced prosecutions must be stopped."

Due to false cases and delays in ensuring justice, young people may lose opportunities for education, employment and a normal life. Under such circumstances, they may become frustrated and be drawn into criminal activities, he said.

Khokon further said the chief justice, as the head of the judiciary, can play a crucial role in addressing allegations of corruption in the judiciary.

"By collecting information from different sectors, it is possible to identify where and what types of irregularities and corruption are taking place. Necessary action can then be taken against those found responsible."

He said litigants, lawyers and the SCBA can also play an important role in eliminating corruption and restoring public trust in the judicial system by raising their voices.

Asked about his remarks on the decline in lawyers' income, which led the CJ and also four judges of the Appellate Division to leave the courtroom in September, Khokon said his remarks were not targeted at any individual.

"There are supposed to be three benches in the Appellate Division. But judicial proceedings are now being conducted by only one bench. Moreover, the cause lists are not being published on time."

As a result, lawyers who primarily practise in the Appellate Division are suffering financially. "What I meant was that when the number of cases being heard and disposed of declines, lawyers' income will naturally fall as well," he added.

Jamaat, NCP face 'growing rift over local elections'

FROM PAGE 12

with NCP Convener Nahid Islam's absence at the opening rally of the alliance's Dhaka-Khulna-Kushtia long march.

Three NCP leaders, Senior Joint Convener Sarjis Alam, Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adeeb, and lawmaker Abdul Hannan Masud, attended the programme, although none addressed the rally.

NCP leaders linked Nahid's absence to disagreements over local elections and to dissatisfaction within the party over Jamaat's response to alleged irregularities in Thursday's Thakurgaon-1 parliamentary by-election.

The shift was also reflected in the party's protest rally at Shahbagh on Friday and in remarks by senior leader Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain, which several party insiders interpreted as a signal that the NCP is seeking a more independent political identity.

Speaking about the Thakurgaon-1 by-election at the programme, Asif Mahmud said, "We have even seen the ruling party's candidate and the opposition candidates feeding each other sweets when we are going through a very critical and dire time for democracy."

Several leaders told The Daily Star that prolonged political dependence on Jamaat could hinder the NCP's ambition of emerging as a major opposition force.

Speculation about the future of the alliance intensified after Rashed Khan, political assistant to the prime minister, claimed in a Facebook post on Friday night that the NCP was preparing for a "peaceful divorce" from Jamaat.

He said some NCP leaders had informed him that the party was likely to leave the alliance soon, although no formal decision had been announced.

NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tusher dismissed the speculation.

"It is [decision to hold separate programmes] part of the alliance's strategy. The rumours being spread about our relationship with the alliance are propaganda.

"If we ever decide to leave the alliance, it will be our own decision. We will announce it formally through a press conference," he told The Daily Star.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told The Daily Star that the NCP's senior leaders did not disclose their strategy despite their leaders attending the alliance programme.

"Many of our senior leaders could not attend today's programme due to work commitments and health reasons. We believe the same may be true for the NCP leaders. Every party has its own strategy, and we have no problem with that," he said.

According to NCP leaders, tensions first emerged during discussions over seat-sharing in union parishad, municipality, ward and city corporation elections.

The differences became more visible after the two parties failed to reach an understanding over mayoral races in Dhaka, Cumilla, and Mymensingh.

NCP leaders, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Jamaat was unwilling to give up either of the two Dhaka mayoral contests, prompting the parties to move ahead with separate candidates.

The NCP nominated Nasiruddin Patwary for Dhaka South City Corporation and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain for Dhaka North City Corporation, while Jamaat identified Abu Sadiq Kayem and Selim Uddin as its prospective candidates for the two posts.

One NCP leader, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the party had always viewed local government elections as an opportunity to build its own electoral machinery, including polling agents and ward-level committees, ahead of future national elections. He alleged that Jamaat opposed the NCP's efforts to contest the local elections independently and gradually reduce its reliance on joint alliance programmes.

Another senior Political Council member said the party would now place greater emphasis on organisational expansion while maintaining ties with its allies.

"That does not mean we are leaving the alliance," he said. "Our representatives will continue to attend alliance programmes. However, our organisational development must remain our primary focus."

Another senior leader said the renewed focus on independent political activities should not be viewed solely through the lens of local government elections.

He said the move was part of a broader political strategy, although differences remained within the party over the extent of participation in alliance programmes.

The NCP would continue working with its allies against what it described as unilateral actions by the BNP government while simultaneously strengthening its own organisation, he added.

The NCP recently reorganised its central committee and is preparing to restructure its Dhaka North and Dhaka South metropolitan units, including committees at the thana level.

The party also plans to hold rallies in Narayanganj, Gazipur, and divisional cities to mobilise supporters and strengthen its grassroots network.

Notre Dame outdoes 5 education boards in GPA-5 tally

FROM PAGE 3

and 3,218 passed, giving the institution a pass rate of 98.83 percent.

A total of 38 examinees failed, while 16 registered students did not sit for the exams.

Science students accounted for the overwhelming majority of GPA-5 achievers at the college. Of the 2,097 students, who passed from the Science group, 1,807 secured GPA-5.

This figure alone was higher than the total number of GPA-5 achievers under Cumilla, Sylhet, Barishal, and Technical boards individually.

However, Notre Dame College's own performance declined compared with last year. In 2025, the college recorded 2,454 GPA-5 achievers, 225 more than this year. Its pass rate also fell from 99.60 percent to 98.83 percent.

The results came amid a sharp nationwide decline in HSC performance. Across the nine general education boards, the pass rate dropped to a 22-year low of 51.62 percent from 57.12 percent last year. The number of GPA-5 achievers under those boards also fell from 63,219 to 35,948.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 01

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-55	12-45	4-00	5-30	7-15
JAMAAT	5-30	1-15	4-15	5-34	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Alim, technical pass rates

FROM PAGE 3

Technical boards were 90.75 percent and 91.25 percent, respectively.

Prof Khondaker Mohammad Sadequr Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, cited declining classroom attendance as a major concern.

He said students' growing dependence on private tuition, often focused on selected topics, could leave gaps in learning. Students also had to sit for examinations covering the full syllabus this year.

"The main point is that we have to bring students back to educational institutions," he said.

He suggested debates, sports and language clubs to encourage attendance, alongside closer monitoring, particularly in classes IX to XII.

District-wise, Dhaka recorded the highest Alim pass rate at 89.20 percent and Narail the lowest at 25.59 percent. Fifteen districts recorded rates below 50 percent.

Girls outperformed boys, with pass rates of 64.90 percent and 58.10 percent, respectively. The number of GPA-5 achievers fell to 3,250 from 4,268 last year.

- Alim pass rate drops to 61.07%, lowest since 2004
- Technical pass rate falls to 49.43%, lowest since 2002
- 86,832 students fail under 2 boards
- 112 institutions record zero pass rates, up from 25

Under the Technical Education Board, HSC (Vocational) students performed worst, with only 2,731 of 8,371 candidates passing. The pass rate fell to 32.62 percent from 58.18 percent last year.

Teacher shortages remain a concern in technical education. In June, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon told parliament that 8,486 of the 15,844 approved teaching posts in technical education institutions were vacant. The figures cover institutions at different levels.

Of the 112 institutions where no students passed, 55 were under the madrasa board and 57 under the technical board. Last year, 25 madrasa board institutions had recorded zero pass rates, while the technical board had none.

Meanwhile, the number of institutions achieving 100 percent pass rates fell to 78 from 265 last year. The figure dropped from 196 to 52 under madrasa and from 69 to 26 under the technical board.

Economic recovery

FROM PAGE 3

of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) at a Dhaka hotel.

"At present, our people are suffering. The economic situation is not helping them. So, we have to ensure an environment where people have jobs, food on their plates, and do not have to suffer from energy crises. We have to solve these problems," she said.

Asked whether Bangladeshi diplomats were prepared for the changing global landscape, Zohra said the country had skilled and knowledgeable officials whose capabilities needed to be properly utilised.

"The 'Bangladesh First' approach gives us flexibility. While navigating relations, we need to check whether they serve the interests of our people or not," she said.

Zohra also called for greater protection of migrant workers, stronger consular services and increased parliamentary engagement in foreign policy.

She said illegal migration, visa cancellations and challenges faced by Bangladeshi workers abroad required greater attention.

In his opening remarks, BIPSS President and Founder Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman said the post-Cold War consensus had fragmented, giving way to a complex, multipolar world where supply chains were increasingly shaped by geopolitical risks rather than efficiency.

"The Bay of Bengal, once viewed primarily through the lens of regional transit, has emerged as a focal point of global maritime security and economic competition," he said.

He described climate change as an existential threat to vulnerable coastlines, saying shifting global dynamics presented both challenges and strategic opportunities for Bangladesh.

"Situated at the structural intersection of South and Southeast Asia, our nation stands as a vital bridge across the Indo-Pacific corridor," he added.

BIPSS Vice-President and Senior Fellow Shafqat Munir, who moderated the discussion, said foreign policy was no longer confined to diplomatic cables and missions.

"It is now felt directly in our supply chains, our energy grids, our trade corridors, and our national security calculations," he said.

He called for institutional depth, bipartisan foresight and rigorous parliamentary oversight alongside executive-led diplomacy to navigate the increasingly contested multipolar world.

Police claim they found evidence against Dip

FROM PAGE 1

remand. We cannot disclose anything further at this stage in the interest of the investigation," Abdullah Al Mamun, superintendent of police (Dhaka region) of the River Police, told The Daily Star.

A police official involved in the investigation, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said CCTV footage collected from different locations showed Dip accompanying Tahsif between 6:30pm and 1:30am.

Investigators also found that Dip had accompanied Tahsif to the Mazar Basti area in Tongi but returned alone, the official said.

"This has raised questions among the investigators," the official added, saying information from preliminary questioning also pointed to Dip's involvement.

The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) picked up Dip from his residence on Babar Road in Mohammadpur late Thursday night. He was shown arrested after Tahsif's father, KM Enayetul Karim, filed the case against unidentified people with Uttarkhan Police Station late Friday night.

Although registered as a murder case, the father's written complaint did not directly allege murder. He asked the authorities to establish the actual cause of his son's death and take necessary action.

Tahsif, 28, left his Uttara residence on Tuesday evening and went missing. His body was recovered from the Turag river near Rajabari Ghat in Tongi the following afternoon.

'CONFLICTING STATEMENTS'

Speaking to reporters at his Uttara residence yesterday, Enayetul said he did not know who was responsible for his son's death and wanted a fair investigation.

Dip frequently visited the family's home and was in regular contact with Tahsif, he said.

"Dip admitted during the PBI investigation that they had gone to Tongi. But Dip had told me that he had dropped Tahsif off at the compound [where Tahsif lived]. This raises questions. I do not know who was involved or who did what," he said.

Describing his son as someone who got along with everyone and readily helped others in trouble, he said the family was struggling to come to terms with the death.

"We cannot accept such an incident involving a son like him. We hope the actual truth will come out," he said, urging the authorities to investigate thoroughly and bring those responsible to justice.

CALL FOR THOROUGH PROBE

Meanwhile, the Retired Armed Forces Officers' Welfare Association (RAOWA) has called for a thorough investigation into the circumstances of Tahsif's death.

A delegation led by its Joint Secretary Lt Col (retd) Abu Nawroz Khurshid Alam visited the family in Uttara yesterday. He said Tahsif's father had told them that several law enforcement agencies were investigating, including by examining eyewitness accounts and CCTV footage.

"We hope they will uncover the actual truth very soon and take appropriate measures," he said.

Major (retd) Al Amin, another delegation member, said RAOWA would continue monitoring the investigation. "We will not let this matter go. We want a thorough investigation and justice for those found responsible," he said.

The Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) also demanded an independent, impartial and transparent investigation, citing several unanswered questions. In a statement signed by its Executive Director Ijazul Islam, it said inconsistencies in statements by those concerned and information emerging after the death warranted an impartial probe rather than speculation.

The statement said an account by a person in custody, referring to a chase by several people in police uniforms, differed from the police explanation. It also raised questions about Tahsif's identification, injury marks on his body and the post-mortem report, and called for an investigation into the family's allegation that he had earlier been under intelligence agency surveillance.

Dhaka: from community to commodity

FROM PAGE 3

After the provincial capital shifted to Murshidabad, Dhaka experienced economic stagnation and population decline. Under British rule, it was largely treated as a hinterland of Kolkata, while trade monopolies hurt local producers.

However, initiatives such as the 1880 Wari site-and-service scheme for middle-class professionals and municipal platforms for citizen engagement helped shape urban development, he said.

After independence, the government developed public housing in Azimpur and Motijheel and planned residential areas in Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Banani. But political and economic changes after 1975 accelerated privatisation and land commodification.

"We have lost liveability due to the unabated commodification of urban land," Ghafur said, adding that authorities had tacitly supported the process.

"It is a paradox to talk about restoring liveability while taking no stand against land commodification. Liveability will not simply descend upon us on its own," he said.

He said older neighbourhoods offered human empathy, child-friendly environments and a sense of community increasingly missing from modern Dhaka.

Jahangirnagar University Prof Adil Mohammed Khan said Dhaka's most significant transformation over the past three decades had been its emergence as a commercial commodity.

"We have turned the city into a product. Planning means business, buildings mean business, infrastructure means business. Corporate profit has taken precedence over public interest," he said.

Khan said Sir Patrick Geddes's 1917 report and the 1958 Master Plan had emphasised protecting natural ecosystems, water retention areas and community life.

However, Dhaka had no updated master plan between 1958 and 1995. Although the 1995 Structure Plan identified floodplains and retention zones across 1,590 square kilometres, detailed enforcement came only with the 2010 Detailed Area Plan (DAP).

By then, pressure from private developers had prompted the government to form a cabinet review committee, which weakened land protection measures, he said.

In the 1990s, Dhaka had over 30 percent green cover and 2,000-3,000 neighbourhood ponds that served as water retention areas, firefighting water sources and community spaces. Many disappeared due to unchecked land filling.

Khan also criticised changes to building regulations. While the 1996 rules linked building heights to road widths, the 2008 Building Construction Rules allowed 9-14-storey buildings along narrow residential roads, affecting light, ventilation and access to open skies.

He said the spread of commercial and industrial establishments in residential areas, including Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar and Mirpur, raised safety concerns.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority Deputy Transport Planner Dhrubo Alam said the capital's transport development had long depended on ad hoc measures rather than systematic planning and enforcement.

"Whether 100 years ago or today, Dhaka has repeatedly relied on trial and error and stop-gap measures instead of structured urban planning," he said.

He said pre-Mughal and Mughal Dhaka developed along the Buriganga, relying on boats, footpaths, palkis and horses for transport.

Several historic bridges, including Pagla Pool, Khaja Amber and Tongi, were later lost or altered. Natural waterways linking Hatirjheel, Panthapath and Dhanmondi Lake to the Buriganga were also filled for roads and real estate development.

Horse-drawn hackney carriages, introduced around 1790 and commercialised in 1856, increased from 10 to 600 by the 1880s, contributing to congestion. Trucks fitted with wooden seats served as buses in the 1920s and 1930s, while registered rickshaws grew from around 41 in 1940-41 to an estimated 15 lakh today, including battery-run variants.

Alam said pedestrian infrastructure remained neglected despite the National Urban Transport Policy's "pedestrians first" approach. Less than 1 percent of the capital's transport planning budget was allocated to pedestrian facilities.

He called for institutional reforms, stronger enforcement and better coordination among utility and development agencies to address traffic congestion.

The event was moderated by The Daily Star's Emran Mahfuz.

Obstruction of freedom fighter's burial a criminal offence

FROM PAGE 3

The party not only opposed independence and the Liberation War in 1971 but also has documented allegations of war crimes, including the killing of intellectuals, against many of its leaders. Yet it has neither acknowledged responsibility for those crimes nor offered even a public apology for opposing the Liberation War, the statement added.

They further said obstructing anyone's janaza or burial over their political beliefs or past activities was unacceptable and went against the teachings of Islam and other religions.

The statement was signed by rights activist Advocate Sultana Kamal; Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam; Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir; Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman; Supreme Court senior lawyers Advocate ZI Khan Panna, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury and Advocate Tabarak Hossain; and Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury.

Other signatories were photographer Shahidul Alam; Association for Land Reform and Development Executive Director Shamsul Huda; Dhaka University professors Dr Samina Luthfa, Dr Sumaiya Khair, Dr Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, Dr Zobaida Nasreen and Robaet Ferdous; London School of Economics and Political Science Visiting Professor Dr Shapan Adnan; North South University Professor Dr Nova Ahmed; writers and researchers Rahnuma Ahmed and Pavel Partha; Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association Executive Director Advocate Salma Ali; Nagorik Uddyog Chief Executive Zakir Hossain; MSF Chief Executive Advocate Saidur Rahman; and rights activists Md Nur Khan, Rozina Begum, Saeed Ahmed, Dipayan Khisa, Dr Hana Shams Ahmed, and Muktasree Chakma.

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৩১তম ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা (ডিআইটিএফ)-২০২৭-এর পণ্য, সংশ্লিষ্ট সেবা ও ভৌত কাজের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।

আগামী ০১ জানুয়ারি ২০২৭ খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে মাসব্যাপী অনুষ্ঠিতব্য ৩১তম ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা (ডিআইটিএফ)–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত পণ্য, সংশ্লিষ্ট সেবা ও কার্য এবং ভৌত কাজের জন্য লটভিত্তিকভাবে রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো (ইপিবি), ঢাকার অনুকূলে সরবরাহ ও সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে যোগ্য সরবরাহকারী/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

লট	পণ্য ও সংশ্লিষ্ট সেবা/কার্য ও ভৌত সেবা/কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ
লট-১	**(ক) উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানের আমন্ত্রণপত্র (অনুষ্ঠানসূচি ও খামসহ), স্যুভেনির, গাড়ির স্টিকার (ডি আই পি ও রেগুলার), ডিউটি পাস, ভিআইপি পাস, ফোল্ডার, কলম, নোট প্যাড, খাম ইত্যাদি ডিজাইন, মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭-এর উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় আমন্ত্রণপত্র (অনুষ্ঠানসূচি ও খামসহ), স্যুভেনির, গাড়ির স্টিকার (ডি আই পি ও রেগুলার), ডিউটি পাস, ভিআইপি পাস, ফোল্ডার, কলম, লেটার হেড প্যাড, খাম এবং অন্যান্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সামগ্রীর ডিজাইন প্রণয়ন, কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত ডিজাইন অনুযায়ী মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহকরণ (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(খ) নগরসজ্জা ও সিটি ব্র্যান্ডিং কার্যক্রম:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭-এর উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকার বিভিন্ন গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থান ও স্পট, সড়ক ও সড়কদ্বীপ, বিভিন্ন চত্বর, ফুটওভারব্রিজসহ অন্যান্য নির্ধারিত স্থানে সাজসজ্জা, ব্র্যান্ডিং সামগ্রী স্থাপন এবং সিটি ব্র্যান্ডিং কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়ন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(গ) উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানস্থল প্রস্তুতকরণ, সাউন্ড সিস্টেম-লাইটিং, সাজসজ্জা ও আলোকচিত্র ধারণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭-এর উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশ-চায়না ফ্রেন্ডশিপ এক্সিবিশন সেন্টার (বিসিএফইসি)-এ অনুষ্ঠানের মঞ্চ ও ব্যাকড্রপ নির্মাণ, আসনব্যবস্থা, অনুষ্ঠানস্থলের সাজসজ্জা, বিসিএফইসি-এর অভ্যন্তরীণ ও বহিরাঙ্গন এবং সীমানাপ্রাচীরের সাজসজ্জা, স্থিরচিত্র ধারণ, ভিডিওগ্রাফি এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট আনুষঙ্গিক কার্যক্রম সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(ঘ) দেশি-বিদেশি গণ্যমান্য অতিথিদের জন্য উপহারসামগ্রী সরবরাহ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ পরিদর্শনকারী দেশি-বিদেশি বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিবর্গ ও গণ্যমান্য অতিথিদের উপহার হিসেবে প্রদানের জন্য নির্ধারিত মান ও বিবরণ অনুযায়ী উপহারসামগ্রী (গিফট আইটেম) সংগ্রহ, সরবরাহ ও প্রয়োজনীয় প্যাকেজিং সম্পন্নকরণ (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।
লট-২	**(ক) এক্সিবিশন হল, মেলা প্রাঙ্গণ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট অস্থায়ী অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ এবং সাজসজ্জাকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশ-চায়না ফ্রেন্ডশিপ এক্সিবিশন সেন্টার (বিসিএফইসি)-এর এক্সিবিশন হল (Hall-A ও Hall-B)-এর অভ্যন্তরে ও বহিরাঙ্গনে কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী শেল স্কিম প্রণয়ন ও বাস্তবায়ন; ত্রিপল দ্বারা মিনি প্যাভিলিয়ন, স্টল, ফুড স্টল, ইউটিলিটি বুথ এবং পুরুষ ও মহিলাদের জন্য পৃথক অস্থায়ী নামাজের স্থান নির্মাণ ও বিদ্যুতায়ন; অস্থায়ী মেলা সচিবালয়ের সাজসজ্জা; প্রয়োজনীয় টেবিল ও চেয়ার সরবরাহ; বিসিএফইসি-এর সীমানাপ্রাচীর টিন দ্বারা আবৃতকরণ এবং মেলা প্রাঙ্গণ ও পার্কিং এলাকায় প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী শোভাবর্ধক আলোকসজ্জা ও ঝাড়বাতি স্থাপনসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট আনুষঙ্গিক কাজ সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(খ) 'Export Enclave' নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি পণ্যের প্রচার-প্রচারণা, রপ্তানি বাণিজ্যের প্রসার এবং রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো (ইপিবি)-এর বিভিন্ন কার্যক্রম ও সেবা প্রদর্শনের লক্ষ্যে কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী 'Export Enclave' নির্মাণ। উক্ত এনক্লেভের অভ্যন্তরীণ ও বহিরাঙ্গন স্থিরচিত্র, গ্রাফিতি, ভিডিও, ডিজিটাল কনটেন্ট ও অন্যান্য দৃষ্টিনন্দন প্রদর্শনসামগ্রীর মাধ্যমে সজ্জিতকরণ এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট আনুষঙ্গিক কাজ সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(গ) "সবার আগে বাংলাদেশ" স্কয়ার/প্যাভিলিয়ন, সিনিয়র সিটিজেন সিটিং কর্নার ও কফি কর্নার, সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্র নির্মাণ এবং সজ্জিতকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে বিসিএফইসি প্রাঙ্গণে নিম্নবর্ণিত স্থাপনা ও সুবিধাসমূহের নান্দনিক নকশা প্রণয়ন এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ: ১। **"সবার আগে বাংলাদেশ" স্কয়ার/প্যাভিলিয়ন:** বাংলাদেশের ভাষা আন্দোলন (১৯৫২), মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধ এবং ২০২৪ সালের জুলাই আন্দোলনে আহত ও শহীদদের স্মরণে স্থিরচিত্র ও প্রাসঙ্গিক তথ্য প্রদর্শনের উপযোগী প্যাভিলিয়ন নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ। ২। **সিনিয়র সিটিজেন সিটিং কর্নার ও কফি কর্নার:** বয়োজ্যেষ্ঠ দর্শনার্থীদের বিশ্রাম ও বসার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় আসবাবপত্র ও আনুষঙ্গিক সুবিধাসহ একটি দৃষ্টিনন্দন ও ব্যবহারবান্ধব বসার স্থান ও কফি কর্নার নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ। ৩। **সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্র (Cultural Centre):** মেলার সাংস্কৃতিক কার্যক্রম আয়োজন ও প্রদর্শনের উপযোগী একটি দৃষ্টিনন্দন কেন্দ্রের নকশা প্রণয়ন, নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ। উপর্যুক্ত সকল স্থাপনার নির্মাণ ও সজ্জাসংক্রান্ত কাজ অনুমোদিত নকশা, নির্ধারিত কারিগরি স্পেসিফিকেশন এবং দরপত্র দলিলের শর্ত অনুযায়ী সম্পাদন করতে হবে (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(ঘ) মেলার মেইন গেট ও ভিআইপি গেটের নকশা প্রণয়ন, নির্মাণ ও সজ্জিতকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে তরুণ সমাজকে রপ্তানি বাণিজ্য ও বিনিয়োগে উদ্বুদ্ধকরণ এবং ইপিবি-এর বিভিন্ন সেবা ও কার্যক্রমসহ বাংলাদেশের রপ্তানি বাণিজ্যের অগ্রগতি ও সম্ভাবনা তুলে ধরার লক্ষ্যে মেলার মেইন গেট ও ভিআইপি গেটের নান্দনিক নকশা প্রণয়ন। কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী উভয় গেট নির্মাণ, আলোকসজ্জা, ব্র্যান্ডিং ও অন্যান্য আনুষঙ্গিক উপকরণের মাধ্যমে সজ্জিতকরণ এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজ সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(ঙ) ফোয়ারা, উন্মুক্ত স্থান ও সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার সৌন্দর্যবর্ধন এবং আলোকসজ্জাকরণ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে বিসিএফইসি-এর সামগ্রিক সৌন্দর্যবর্ধনের লক্ষ্যে ফোয়ারার চারপাশে টবে প্রাকৃতিক ফুলের গাছ ও পাতাবাহার স্থাপন এবং প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী এলইডি ফিতা লাইট সংযোজন; বিসিএফইসি-এর উন্মুক্ত স্থানে কৃত্রিম ঘাস ও ফুল, প্রাকৃতিক ফুলের গাছ, এলইডি পারগোলা লাইট ও ব্যানার স্থাপন; এবং কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী প্রয়োজনীয় অস্থায়ী অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ, আলোকসজ্জা ও নান্দনিক সাজসজ্জার মাধ্যমে মেলা প্রাঙ্গণের সৌন্দর্যবর্ধন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।
লট-৩	**(ক) এক্সিবিশন হলের অভ্যন্তরীণ পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা, টয়লেট ব্যবস্থাপনা ও ডিপ ক্লিনিং সেবা:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ চলাকালীন বাংলাদেশ-চায়না ফ্রেন্ডশিপ এক্সিবিশন সেন্টার (বিসিএফইসি)-এর এক্সিবিশন হল (Hall-A ও Hall-B)-এর অভ্যন্তরীণ পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা; এক্সিবিশন সেন্টারের সকল টয়লেটের দৈনিক পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা ও স্বাস্থ্যসম্মত পরিবেশ বজায় রাখা; মেলা চলাকালীন ও মেলা সমাপ্তির পর উৎপন্ন আবর্জনা সংগ্রহ, অপসারণ ও নির্ধারিত স্থানে স্থানান্তর; এক্সিবিশন হল ও সংশ্লিষ্ট স্থানের ডিপ ক্লিনিং (Deep Cleaning) সেবা প্রদান এবং প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক প্লাস্টিকের বিন সরবরাহ ও স্থাপন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(খ) এক্সিবিশন হলের বহিরাঙ্গন, উন্মুক্ত প্রাঙ্গণ, সামনের সড়ক ও কার পার্কিং এলাকার পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা এবং ডিপ ক্লিনিং সেবা:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ চলাকালীন বিসিএফইসি-এর এক্সিবিশন হলের বহিরাঙ্গন, উন্মুক্ত প্রাঙ্গণ, সামনের সড়ক ও অন্যান্য সংশ্লিষ্ট স্থানের পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা; কার পার্কিং–১ ও কার পার্কিং–২ এলাকা ও উন্মুক্ত এলাকার টয়লেটসমূহের দৈনিক পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা ও স্বাস্থ্যসম্মত পরিবেশ বজায় রাখা; মেলা চলাকালীন ও মেলা সমাপ্তির পর উৎপন্ন আবর্জনা সংগ্রহ ও অপসারণ; মেলা প্রাঙ্গণের সংশ্লিষ্ট উন্মুক্ত স্থান ও পার্কিং এলাকার ডিপ ক্লিনিং (Deep Cleaning) সেবা প্রদান এবং প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক প্লাস্টিকের বিন সরবরাহ ও স্থাপন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।
লট-৪	**৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭ উপলক্ষ্যে প্রামাণ্যচিত্র, ডিজিটাল কনটেন্ট নির্মাণ ও সরবরাহ এবং ই-প্ল্যাটফর্মে প্রচার-প্রচারণা:** ৩১তম ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা (ডিআইটিএফ)–২০২৭-এর উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠান ও মেলার প্রচার-প্রচারণার লক্ষ্যে স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য প্রামাণ্যচিত্র/ডকুমেন্টারি ফিল্ম, প্রচারমূলক ভিডিও, টেলিভিশন কমার্শিয়াল (TVC) এবং অন্যান্য ডিজিটাল কনটেন্টের পরিকল্পনা, চিত্রনাট্য প্রণয়ন, নির্মাণ, সম্পাদনা ও সরবরাহ; কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে সংশ্লিষ্ট কনটেন্টের ডিজিটাল সংস্করণ প্রস্তুত এবং ফেসবুক, এক্স (সাবেক টুইটার), ইউটিউব, ইনস্টাগ্রাম, লিংকডইনসহ প্রাসঙ্গিক ই-প্ল্যাটফর্মে অর্থের বিনিময়ে প্রচার (Paid Promotion/Boosting) ও সম্প্রচার কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা; নির্ধারিত লক্ষ্যগোষ্ঠীর কাছে কনটেন্ট পৌঁছানো এবং প্রচার কার্যক্রমের ফলাফল ও পরিসংখ্যান প্রতিবেদন প্রস্তুত ও দাখিল (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।
লট-৫	**৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭-এর নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থাপনা, নিরাপত্তাকর্মী নিয়োগ ও নিরাপত্তা সরঞ্জাম স্থাপন:** ৩১তম ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা (ডিআইটিএফ)–২০২৭ চলাকালীন মেলার দর্শনার্থী, অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান, কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারী, প্রদর্শিত পণ্যসামগ্রী ও অন্যান্য সম্পদের সার্বিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় সংখ্যক প্রশিক্ষিত বেসরকারি নিরাপত্তাকর্মী নিয়োগ ও দায়িত্ব পালন; মেলা প্রাঙ্গণ ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থানে সিসিটিভি সার্ভিল্যান্স সিস্টেম স্থাপন, পরিচালনা ও পর্যবেক্ষণ; অপারেটরসহ আর্চওয়ে মেটাল ডিটেকটর ও হ্যান্ডহেল্ড মেটাল ডিটেকটর স্থাপন ও পরিচালনা; যানবাহন তল্লাশির জন্য ভেহিকল সার্চিং মিরর সরবরাহ ও ব্যবহার এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃপক্ষের নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী পুলিশ ওয়াচ টাওয়ার স্থাপনসহ প্রয়োজনীয় নিরাপত্তা সরঞ্জাম, জনবল ও আনুষঙ্গিক সেবা নিশ্চিতকরণ (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।
লট-৬	**(ক) সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠান আয়োজন, অনুষ্ঠানস্থল সজ্জিতকরণ ও কারিগরি সেবা প্রদান:** ৩১তম ঢাকা আন্তর্জাতিক বাণিজ্য মেলা (ডিআইটিএফ)–২০২৭-এর সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশ-চায়না ফ্রেন্ডশিপ এক্সিবিশন সেন্টার (বিসিএফইসি)-এর মাল্টিপারপাস হলে অনুষ্ঠানের মঞ্চ/স্টেজ ও স্টেজ ব্যাকড্রপ নির্মাণ, ব্যানার, ফেস্টুন, কাটআউট ও অন্যান্য প্রচারসামগ্রীর মাধ্যমে অনুষ্ঠানস্থল সজ্জিতকরণ, আলোকসজ্জা এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের নকশা প্রণয়ন; কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী প্রয়োজনীয় উপকরণ প্রস্তুত, স্থাপন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা; অনুষ্ঠানের জন্য এলইডি ডিসপ্লে, সাউন্ড সিস্টেম, মাল্টিমিডিয়া সরঞ্জাম ও আনুষঙ্গিক কারিগরি সুবিধা সরবরাহ, স্থাপন ও পরিচালনা; এবং সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠানের স্থিরচিত্র ধারণ (ফটোগ্রাফি), ভিডিওগ্রাফি, প্রয়োজনীয় সম্পাদনা ও সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিজিটাল কনটেন্ট সরবরাহসহ আনুষঙ্গিক কার্যক্রম সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)। **(খ) সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠানের আমন্ত্রণপত্র (অনুষ্ঠানসূচি ও খামসহ), ক্রেস্ট/ট্রফি ও সনদপত্র প্রস্তুত এবং সরবরাহ:** ৩১তম ডিআইটিএফ–২০২৭-এর সমাপনী অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় আমন্ত্রণপত্রের নকশা প্রণয়ন, কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নকশা অনুযায়ী মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহ; এবং মেলায় অংশগ্রহণকারী শ্রেষ্ঠ প্যাভিলিয়ন, স্টল ও রেস্টুরেন্টের জন্য পুরস্কার হিসেবে বিতরণের লক্ষ্যে নির্ধারিত নকশা, মান ও বিবরণ অনুযায়ী ক্রেস্ট/ট্রফি এবং সনদপত্র প্রস্তুত, মুদ্রণ/খোদাই, প্যাকেজিং ও সরবরাহসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট আনুষঙ্গিক কার্যক্রম সম্পাদন (দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল মোতাবেক)।

১) লট নং-১ হতে লট নং-৬ এর দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ০৩-১১-২০২৬ হতে ১৭-১১-২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো, ঢাকা-এর প্রশাসন শাখা (টিসিবি ভবন, ৫ম তলা, ১, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫) হতে উক্ত পণ্য ও সংশ্লিষ্ট সেবা/কার্য ও ভৌত সেবা/কাজের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী সম্বলিত দরপত্র সিডিউল/দরপত্র দলিল (প্রতি লটের প্রতিটি) (লট নং-১ হতে লট নং-৬) টাঃ ১০০০/-(এক হাজার) মূল্যে (অফেরতযোগ্য) সংগ্রহ করা যাবে এবং এ বিষয়ে বিস্তারিত জানা যাবে।

২) লট নং-১ হতে লট নং-৬ এর দরপত্রসমূহ আগামী ১৭-১১-২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ০৪:০০ টার মধ্যে রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো, ঢাকা-এর প্রশাসন শাখায় রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বক্সে দাখিল করতে হবে। একটি লটের জন্য একটি মাত্র দরপত্র দাখিল এবং দরপত্র খামে সংশ্লিষ্ট লট নম্বর লিখে অবশ্যই সুস্পষ্টভাবে চিহ্নিত করতে হবে।

৩) লট নং-১ হতে লট নং-৬ এর দরপত্র আগামী ১৮-১১-২০২৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১১:০০ টায় রপ্তানি উন্নয়ন ব্যুরো, ঢাকা-এর কনফারেন্স রুমে উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

৪) লট নং-১, ২, ৪, ৬ এর প



The hidden price of being poor and sick in Bangladesh

AI-generated illustration



UMMAY FERHIN SULTANA

In Bangladesh, falling ill is not always the greatest worry. For millions, the bigger question is whether they can afford to get better. A blood pressure test, a month's diabetes medicine or a journey to the nearest hospital can become a financial burden that many families struggle to bear.

A new World Health Organisation (WHO) report, published on 20 October 2026, reveals a troubling reality: where people live, how much they earn and how far they have studied can determine their chances of staying healthy and receiving treatment.

The report, examining inequalities within countries worldwide, highlights how disadvantaged communities face greater risks from heart disease, cancer, diabetes and long-term breathing problems. They also encounter more obstacles in getting tested, diagnosed and treated.

THE PRICE OF STAYING HEALTHY

In Bangladesh, diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease account for approximately 71 per cent of all deaths. Meanwhile, patients pay 79.31 per cent of healthcare costs directly from their own pockets, according to World Bank figures cited in the source material.

Imagine a rickshaw puller who develops high blood pressure without knowing it. Feeling perfectly healthy, he continues working until a sudden medical emergency changes everything.

Or consider a garment worker diagnosed with diabetes. She understands the importance of regular medicines but must choose between buying them and meeting her family's daily expenses.

These are illustrative situations, but they reflect the difficult choices financial hardship can create.

WHEN YOUR POSTCODE DETERMINES YOUR HEALTH

The WHO findings reveal that poorer communities often struggle to access basic healthcare. People living in rural areas may have fewer opportunities to check and treat high blood pressure, while disadvantaged women are less likely to receive screening for cervical cancer.

The inequalities begin even before illness develops. Healthy food may be unaffordable. Safe spaces for exercise may be unavailable. Tobacco exposure and polluted surroundings can further increase health risks.

Simply telling people to eat better, exercise more or visit doctors regularly cannot solve problems rooted in poverty and limited access.

HEALTHCARE SHOULD NOT DEPEND ON INCOME

Experts emphasise that preventing disease is only half the battle. Ensuring affordable and continuous treatment is equally important.

For Bangladesh, this means making blood pressure and diabetes checks more accessible, keeping essential medicines available and strengthening healthcare services closer to communities.

Financial protection is crucial so that families are not forced to sacrifice food, education or household necessities to pay medical bills.

Health authorities must also look beyond national averages and identify which communities are being left behind.

Ultimately, a healthier Bangladesh cannot be measured by hospitals built or awareness campaigns launched. Its real achievement will be ensuring that everyone, regardless of income, education or address, has a fair chance to live a healthy life.

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The heatwave threat begins in the womb

As temperatures soar and heatwaves become increasingly intense, extreme heat is emerging as more than just a seasonal discomfort. Beyond dehydration and exhaustion, rising temperatures pose a silent but growing threat to human health, particularly for those least able to protect themselves. Pregnant women, newborns and young children are especially vulnerable, raising concerns about how a warming planet could affect health even before birth.

On 21 October, the World Health Organisation (WHO), Unicef and two other United Nations agencies unveiled the first global framework to track how extreme heat affects mothers and children.

The warning is alarming. Research suggests extreme heat exposure is associated with a 26 per cent increase in the odds of premature birth. Babies under one experienced 389 per cent more heatwave days in 2024 compared with the 1986–2005 average.

Worldwide, approximately 1.5 billion children face increasingly frequent, prolonged or intense heatwaves.

The new framework encourages countries to monitor premature births, stillbirths, low birthweight, pregnancy complications and childhood deaths during extreme heat. Even school attendance could reveal how rising



temperatures disrupt children's lives.

For Bangladesh, the findings highlight the importance of heat warnings, accessible healthcare and protecting vulnerable families, particularly those living in overcrowded homes or working outdoors.

Experts stress that tracking heat-related illnesses alongside temperature changes could help authorities identify dangers earlier and prevent avoidable deaths.

As temperatures climb, protecting the next generation must begin before birth.



Why the kindest people sometimes explode



DR SUMAIYA KHALED

Some people spend their entire lives being understanding. They forgive easily, avoid arguments, apologise even when they are hurt and put everyone else's happiness before their own. Then, one ordinary day, something insignificant happens, and they explode.

Why does someone who has always been so patient suddenly become so angry?

Psychologists suggest that years of suppressing emotions, avoiding confrontation and constantly pleasing others can gradually build resentment. What appears to be an overreaction to a small incident may actually reflect years of unexpressed frustration.

A 2025 international review published in Nature Human Behaviour examined 249 articles involving more than 150,000 participants across 37 countries and regions. Researchers explored how hiding or controlling emotional expressions relates to mental health. Their findings showed that these relationships differ across cultures, highlighting how emotional suppression can affect wellbeing in different ways.

The brain also plays an important role. When someone experiences prolonged stress, the brain becomes more alert to perceived threats, while its ability to manage strong emotions may weaken. Consequently, minor disagreements can feel overwhelming, triggering anger that seems disproportionate to the situation.

Mental health experts explain that repeatedly ignoring personal needs can contribute to emotional exhaustion. People who struggle to establish boundaries may eventually feel invisible, unappreciated or taken for granted.

Interestingly, anger is not always the primary emotion. Beneath it may lie sadness, disappointment, rejection or years of feeling unheard. A seemingly harmless comment can become the final trigger for feelings accumulated over time.

However, occasional anger does not necessarily indicate a mental health condition. Frequent, uncontrollable outbursts, particularly those affecting relationships or everyday life, may require professional support.

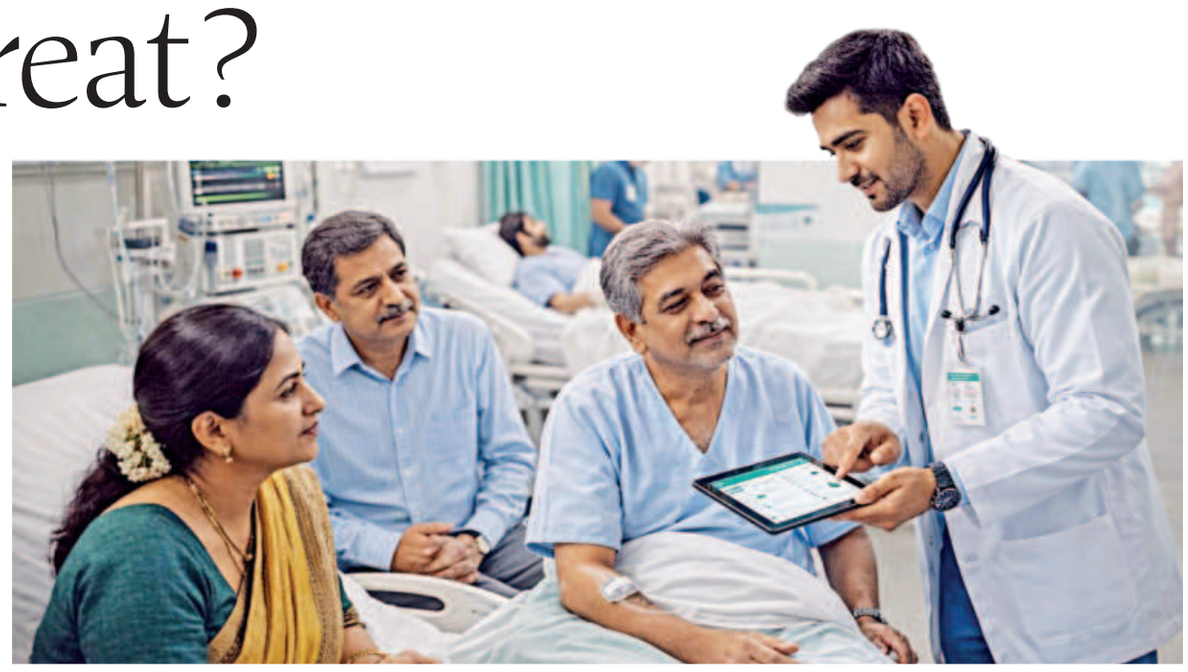
The solution is not to stop being kind, but to stop confusing kindness with self-sacrifice. Learning to say no, expressing disappointment early and recognising personal limits can prevent resentment from accumulating.

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What makes a hospital truly great?



DR MD ABU KAUSAR SHAPON



In Bangladesh, walking into a hospital can be overwhelming. Long queues, unfamiliar procedures, unexpected expenses and unanswered questions often leave patients feeling helpless. While modern equipment and experienced doctors matter, something equally important determines whether patients feel safe and respected: how they are treated.

A truly successful hospital rests on three simple principles: care, communication and commitment.

Care begins with kindness. Patients are not merely bed numbers or medical reports. They are individuals carrying pain, fear and uncertainty. A reassuring smile, a nurse who listens patiently or a staff member helping an elderly visitor can transform an otherwise frightening experience. Clean surroundings, shorter waiting times and respect for privacy are equally essential.

Communication builds confidence. Imagine waiting anxiously for test results without knowing when they will arrive. Or agreeing to treatment without understanding its cost. Such experiences can create frustration and mistrust. Doctors and hospital staff must explain procedures, expenses and treatment plans clearly, allowing patients and families to ask questions without hesitation.

Commitment turns promises into practice. Hospitals must consistently uphold safety, honesty and accountability. When mistakes happen, identifying their causes and preventing repetition matters more than simply assigning blame. Every employee, from senior doctors to reception staff, shares this responsibility.

These three principles cannot work independently. Kindness without clear explanations creates confusion. Good communication without responsibility produces empty promises. Efficiency without compassion makes healthcare feel cold and impersonal.

For Bangladesh's growing healthcare sector, the message is simple: better hospitals are built not only with investment, but also with humanity.

Ultimately, patients may forget the machines they saw, but they rarely forget how a hospital made them feel during their most vulnerable moments.

The writer is the Joint General Secretary of the Association of Bangladesh China Alumni (ABCA) and Managing Director of Long Life Hospital, Dhaka. Email: shapon.ch2000@gmail.com

Obesity on the rise: A global wake-up call

Obesity is no longer just a matter of appearance or personal lifestyle choices. It is a growing global health concern, affecting people of all ages and placing increasing pressure on healthcare systems. From unhealthy food environments to increasingly inactive lifestyles, the causes go far beyond individual habits. As the world grapples with this expanding challenge, the urgent question is whether governments can turn promises into meaningful action.



The Madrid Global Obesity Summit, held from 26 to 28 October 2026, brings together governments, health organisations, young people and individuals living with obesity to explore practical solutions.

Co-hosted by Spain's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO), in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Bank, the summit aims to accelerate worldwide efforts to tackle obesity by 2030.

Discussions focus on what countries have achieved, which strategies have worked and how governments can make prevention and treatment more accessible.

The summit concludes on 28 October with a global call for stronger political commitments and coordinated action over the next four years.

For Bangladesh, the message is particularly relevant. Preventing obesity requires more than advising people to eat less or exercise more. Affordable nutritious food, healthier schools, safer walking spaces and accessible healthcare all matter.

As global leaders renew their promises, the real challenge remains turning ambitious declarations into healthier everyday lives for millions.

DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1, 2026, KARTIK 16, 1433 BS

SPORT



"I've seen a lot of responsibility from a club which, at this level, is a club of great class, and as far as we're concerned, that's it, we've done our part, there's nothing more for us to do.

Real Madrid coach **JOSE MOURINHO** on Kylian Mbappe's recent China issue.



Harmer's heroics reshape WTC table

Bangladesh slip to fifth

SPORTS REPORTER

Simon Harmer's career-best 10 for 120 powered South Africa to a 2-1 series victory over Australia on Saturday, triggering a major reshuffle in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings. Harmer became only the third spinner to claim a 10-wicket haul in a Test against Australia, and the first South African spinner to achieve the feat in Cape Town.

Bangladesh also suffered a setback in the standings after their eight-wicket defeat to West Indies in Mirpur. They dropped from fourth to fifth as India moved up from fifth to fourth, despite not playing. Bangladesh's points percentage dropped from 55.56 to 47.62, while India remained on 51.52. West Indies improved from 20.83 to 26.92 per cent.

At the top, Australia surrendered their first position and dropped to third, allowing New Zealand to move from second to first and South Africa to climb from third to second. The Proteas also reclaimed the number one spot in the ICC Test team rankings.

WTC STANDINGS

Teams	Matches	Points	Percentage
New Zealand	6	52	72.22
South Africa	7	60	71.43
Australia	13	108	69.23
India	11	68	51.52
Bangladesh	7	40	47.62
England	16	74	38.54
Sri Lanka	6	24	33.33
West Indies	13	42	26.92
Pakistan	9	5	4.63

Concussion protocol leaves Mominul out of Sylhet Test

Mominul Haque will miss Bangladesh's second Test against West Indies in Sylhet due to the mandatory seven-day restriction under the ICC's concussion protocol. Batsman Amite Hasan has replaced him in the squad.



The southpaw was struck on the head while attempting a catch at silly point on the third day of the first Test in Mirpur. Unable to bat later in the match, he was replaced by concussion substitute Jaker Ali Anik on October 30.

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





Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto signalling for a DRS review was a common sight on Day 4 of their first Test against West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. However, Bangladesh were denied four lbw decisions -- three against West Indies opener Brandon King and one against his opening partner John Campbell -- as the on-field calls remained not out. While Shanto rued the umpire's calls after the day's play, his team had plenty of shortcomings of their own, as King remained unbeaten on 81 and Kavem Hodge on 31 not out to guide the visitors to a comfortable eight-wicket victory in pursuit of a 170-run target, taking a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

When approach and ambitions fail to align

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

- Bangladesh went looking to exploit West Indies' weakness against spin but failed to account for their own struggles against the turning ball.
- The Tigers' spin trio managed just eight wickets, while Windies' spinners accounted for 16.
- Leaving out a proven pacer like Kemar Roach demonstrated a hard-nosed tactical flexibility of West Indies. The Bangladesh think tank, in contrast, was found wanting.

Bangladesh's Test aspirations have soared in recent times, particularly after victories over Pakistan at home and Australia away. Despite those wins coming through pace prominence, their preference for falling back on tried-and-tested yet archaic spin strategies showed that while their ambitions had grown, the mindset required to turn them into reality was still lacking.

Bangladesh went into the just-concluded first Test in Mirpur looking to exploit West Indies' weakness against spin. However, they failed to account for their own struggles against the turning ball. In the last five years, the Tigers have won just one of six Tests against top opponents in Mirpur -- against Pakistan earlier this year. That victory came courtesy of pacer Nahid Rana's late burst with the old ball.



Spin has long been a difficult proposition for Bangladesh batters. Over the last five years in Mirpur, they have lost 80 wickets to spin, compared to 73 to pace. In this Test alone, West Indies' spinners accounted for 16 wickets. Left-arm spinners claimed 11, with Jomel Warrican taking nine of them. The hosts' spin trio, meanwhile, managed just eight wickets.

The visitors triggered two batting collapses in two days. The repeated failures showed that Bangladesh batters have not learned from past mistakes, allowing opposition spinners to get on top of them.

When going for big targets in the World Test championship (WTC), relying on familiar methods seemed disastrous to begin with. "Wicket was prepared considering strengths and weaknesses of West Indies and how we can dominate the game," Bangladesh skipper Shanto said at the press conference, explaining how they had sought to use home advantage.

"Spinners have won us the game in the past so we had that confidence [in their abilities] and still do. I don't think we made any mistake with the conditions."

The Tigers had utilised rank turners at home to beat England and Australia during 2016-2017, and went on to brush aside West Indies similarly. But since 2021, Kyle Mayers' onslaught and the effectiveness of other West Indies batters against spin have contributed to three consecutive home Test defeats. Even in the recent drawn one-off Test against Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi, Bangladesh's spinners failed to deliver at important moments. Yet, changes in tactics were not sought and it proved costly.

Shanto identified the first innings as the point at which Bangladesh had made their "mistake". A collapse saw them bowled out for 272, losing their last seven wickets for 51 runs. His assessment suggested that the team had failed to adjust its approach to counter spin in the second innings.

The presence of mind required in Test cricket was evident in Roston Chase's team selection. Shanto had avoided commenting on the pitch a day before the game, lest Chase gets a wind of the conditions. The West Indies skipper, however, was far ahead of that level of thinking.

"It was shocking for us... to see that much grass off," Chase said. "I didn't think it was going to go that low, but then when that did happen, we actually changed at the last minute, leaving out [Kemar] Roach and bringing in [Joshua] Bishop."

Leaving out a proven pacer like Roach demonstrated a hard-nosed tactical flexibility. The Bangladesh think tank, in contrast, was found wanting amid the competitive atmosphere of the WTC.

Mushfiqur Rahim's absence had made the task difficult in Dhaka, and without Mominul Haque in the second Test in Sylhet, containing West Indies' spin attack becomes an even greater challenge.

Shanto admitted their "poor batting played a bigger role than the quality of opponents' bowling". But whose fault is that, really?

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
NCL GT20
Semi-final 1 (1st vs 4th)
Live from 11:00 pm
Semi-final 2 (2nd vs 3rd)
Live from 5:00 am (Monday)
LA LIGA
Getafe CF vs Sevilla FC
Live from 7:00 pm
Racing Santander vs Real Madrid
Live from 9:15 pm

RAJDHANI TV
Premier League
Liverpool vs Arsenal
Live from 10:30 pm
Newcastle vs Everton
Live from 2:00 am

Chelsea leave United on the brink

Chelsea midfielder Morgan Rogers celebrates after opening the scoring in their 2-0 Premier League home win over Manchester United at Stamford Bridge yesterday, piling further misery on Red Devils head coach Michael Carrick. Rogers broke the deadlock in the 50th minute before Cole Palmer converted a penalty 14 minutes later to extend United's winless run to nine games, their longest winless run since 1988. The defeat also leaves the 20-time English champions just one point above the relegation zone, with the prospect of ending the weekend in the bottom three. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

SHORT CORNER

Mithun, Sohan lead Khulna recovery

Mohammad Mithun and Nurul Hasan Sohan struck centuries to help Khulna Division recover from early trouble and reach 280 for eight on the opening day of their fifth-round National Cricket League match against Mymensingh Division in Khulna on Saturday.

Navy rule the pool

Bangladesh Navy dominated the Max Group 35th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Competition, finishing atop the medal table with 34 gold, 24 silver and 15 bronze medals at the four-day meet that concluded at Syed Nazrul Islam National Swimming Complex in Dhaka on Saturday.



A total of 20 national records were set during the competition, with four falling on the final day across nine events.

Bangladesh Army finished second with 16 gold, 22 silver and 26 bronze medals, while BKSP came third with two silver and six bronze.

India name second-string SAFF squad

Defending champions India have announced a 28-member squad for the upcoming SAFF Championship in Dhaka, with their Under-23 head coach Naushad Moosa set to take charge of a largely second-string side as the senior team prepares for two friendlies against New Zealand.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced the squad on Friday for the November 5-17 tournament, which will see India attempt to defend the title they won in 2023 for a record-extending ninth time.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website





Fulfil people's mandate or pay a 'heavy price'

Says Shafiqur during 11-party long march

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday warned that the BNP government would have to pay a "heavy price" if it failed to implement the February 12 referendum verdict.

"Do not fall for anyone's deception. Another revolution is knocking at our door," he said at the opening rally of the 11-Party Alliance's Dhaka-Khulna-Jhenaidah-Kushtia long march at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital.



Shafiqur, who is the leader of the opposition, said 70 percent of voters had voted "Yes" in the referendum, adding that the BNP and 32 other political parties had pledged before the election to accept the outcome.

"Implementation of the referendum verdict is the main among our seven demands. Had it been implemented, the other six demands would not have come to the fore," he said.

The alliance's seven-point demands include implementation of the referendum verdict and the July charter, trial of the July killings, resolution of shortages of electricity, fuel, gas and fertiliser, control of essential commodity prices, action against corruption, extortion and land grabbing, improvement of law

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Supporters listen to Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman's speech at a street rally in Shibbari, Khulna, yesterday, during the 11-Party Alliance's Dhaka-Khulna-Kushtia long march over several demands, including implementation of the referendum verdict and measures to control rising prices.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Jamaat, NCP face 'growing rift over local elections'

Leaders deny any plan to quit alliance

SHAMIMA RITA

The 11-Party Alliance is showing signs of growing strain as the Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party (NCP) differ over their approach to the upcoming local government elections.

The NCP has decided to scale back its participation in programmes organised by the Jamaat-led alliance and instead focus on strengthening its own organisational base, according to members of the party's Political Council.

At least five senior party leaders told The Daily Star that while the NCP would maintain a limited presence at alliance activities, it planned to expand its independent political programmes across districts and metropolitan areas.

The apparent unease drew further attention yesterday

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

INTERVIEW

'Graft in judiciary now an open secret'

SCBA President Mahbub Uddin tells Star

ASHUTOSH SARKAR



Allegations of corruption in both divisions of the apex court and in lower courts must be investigated and action taken against those responsible to restore people's trust in the justice system, Supreme Court Bar Association President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon has said.

"There are certain things in society, which are called 'open secrets'. Corruption in the judiciary has, in many respects, become an open secret," he told The Daily Star in a recent interview.

There are allegations from lawyers and plaintiffs about having to pay money at several stages in the High Court and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and lower courts, he said.

He referred to allegations of corruption in the process of seeking adjournments, filing bail petitions and getting documents processed, among others.

"Work does not move forward unless money is paid... There are allegations that even some judges may be aware [of these practices]. But nobody speaks openly about them," Khokon said.

These practices have been normalised over many years, and as a result the "judicial process is affected, and justice is undermined," he said.

There are also allegations of irregularities in the appointment of judges. To ensure that judges are impartial and immune from political or personal influence in their decisions, there is a need for a comprehensive law laying down detailed criteria for judicial appointments, he noted.

During the Awami League

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Scrapping caretaker system triggered democratic crisis

Says Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 15th amendment to the Constitution undermined political stability and democracy in Bangladesh, said Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday.

The amendment in 2011 abolished the caretaker government system, creating a climate of political instability and democratic crisis that eventually led to the July uprising, he said at the seminar titled "Constitutional Crises in Post-Independence Bangladesh and Baksal".

It was the biggest constitutional crisis since Baksal, he said at the seminar, which was the first of the "Democratic Journey Seminar Series" held at the Monsoon Theatre of the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum.

The constitutional amendments are necessary to ensure good governance, build strong institutions and provide democratic safeguards to prevent the rise of authoritarian or fascist rule.

Salahuddin, also the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on constitutional amendment, called for institutional checks and balances, independent watchdog bodies, press and judicial freedom, an independent Election Commission and a caretaker government system.

"We want democratic amendments, and we have a significant responsibility in this regard."

The amendments should reflect the expectations of the July Uprising, people's aspirations and the demands of the present generation.

"We seek everyone's cooperation in this regard. We do not want political divisions, divisions on religious grounds or divisions arising from the interests of any group. Bangladesh comes first for all of us," he added.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

France protests turn violent; 290 arrested

AGENCIES

More than 290 people were arrested across France yesterday as hundreds of thousands joined a third consecutive weekend of protests over soaring living costs, inequality and police violence.

Authorities said the demonstrations were largely peaceful, but clashes erupted in Paris and several other cities later in the day. The interior ministry said "radical elements" in cities including Bordeaux, Toulouse and Marseille attempted to enter city centres to carry out vandalism and looting.

In Paris, police fired tear gas and charged protesters after some demonstrators at the rear of a march hurled paving stones and at least one Molotov cocktail at officers, according to the police prefecture. Police said a "hard core of several hundred rioters" was responsible for the violence.

Similar clashes were reported in Lyon, while police in Toulouse used water cannon against an unauthorised protest involving several thousand mostly young demonstrators.

Earlier, thousands of people, some dressed as clowns, witches and other Halloween characters, marched through eastern Paris carrying placards denouncing rising prices and police tactics.

Authorities put nationwide turnout at 320,000, including 70,000 in Paris, while organisers claimed nearly half a million people participated.

The movement, bringing together Yellow Vest activists, trade unions and students, began as a protest against the cost of living and inequality but has since expanded to include demands for greater civil liberties and the right to protest.

The demonstrations come in a febrile political climate, with presidential elections less than six months away and far-right leader Marine Le Pen leading opinion polls.

Thousands also rallied across Germany in demonstrations organised by youth campaign group Gen Z regelt, which is calling for greater investment in education and opposing compulsory military service.

Thousands also rallied across Germany in demonstrations organised by youth campaign group Gen Z regelt, which is calling for greater investment in education and opposing compulsory military service.

German authorities said the protests were largely peaceful, although some barricades were set on fire in Hamburg. Businesses in several cities boarded up shopfronts ahead of the rallies amid concerns they could mirror recent unrest in France.

Official numbers yesterday afternoon suggested participant turnout was below the 182,000 organisers initially expected. Police in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin reported as many as 18,000 protesters, half the roughly 36,000 on the organisers' website.



People paddle their boats in a traditional race on the Sandhya river in Barishal's Uzirpur upazila yesterday, as hundreds of spectators watch from the Sector Commander Major MA Jalil Bridge and the riverbanks. Eight teams took part in the competition, organised by the upazila administration and a development organisation.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

'Form minority govt with Palestinians'

Palestinian lawmaker Tibi urges opposition leader Eisenkot

AGENCIES

Palestinian lawmaker Ahmad Tibi has urged Israeli opposition leader Gadi Eisenkot to show political courage and work with Arab parties to end Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule.

In an interview with Middle East Eye on Friday, Tibi called on Eisenkot to summon "the courage of [former prime minister] Yitzhak Rabin".

In 1993, Rabin's minority government of 56 seats relied on Palestinian-led parties for parliamentary support, amid the push to advance the Oslo Accords.

Tibi, founder and leader of the Ta'al party (Arab Movement for Renewal), said there was no democratic justification for ruling out cooperation with Palestinian representatives in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, this time around.

"I hope Eisenkot will be courageous enough to go forward and form a minority government, which will end this government of Netanyahu immediately," Tibi said.

A minority government occurs when the ruling coalition holds fewer than 61 of the Knesset's 120 seats. It survives by securing a "safety net" agreement, relying on outside parties to vote against opposition no-confidence motions without officially joining the cabinet.

Tibi's party is part of the Joint List, alongside two other Palestinian-led parties, Hadash and Balad. Together, they won 11 seats.

The results mean that neither a Netanyahu-led nor an Eisenkot-led bloc can secure a 61-seat majority without Palestinian parties.

Another Palestinian party, Ra'am, secured eight, giving the two slates a combined 19 seats - a record for Palestinian parties in parliament.

The results mean that neither a Netanyahu-led nor an Eisenkot-led bloc can secure a 61-seat majority without Palestinian parties.

Tibi said the Joint List's strategy was to support anyone willing to remove Netanyahu

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