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.

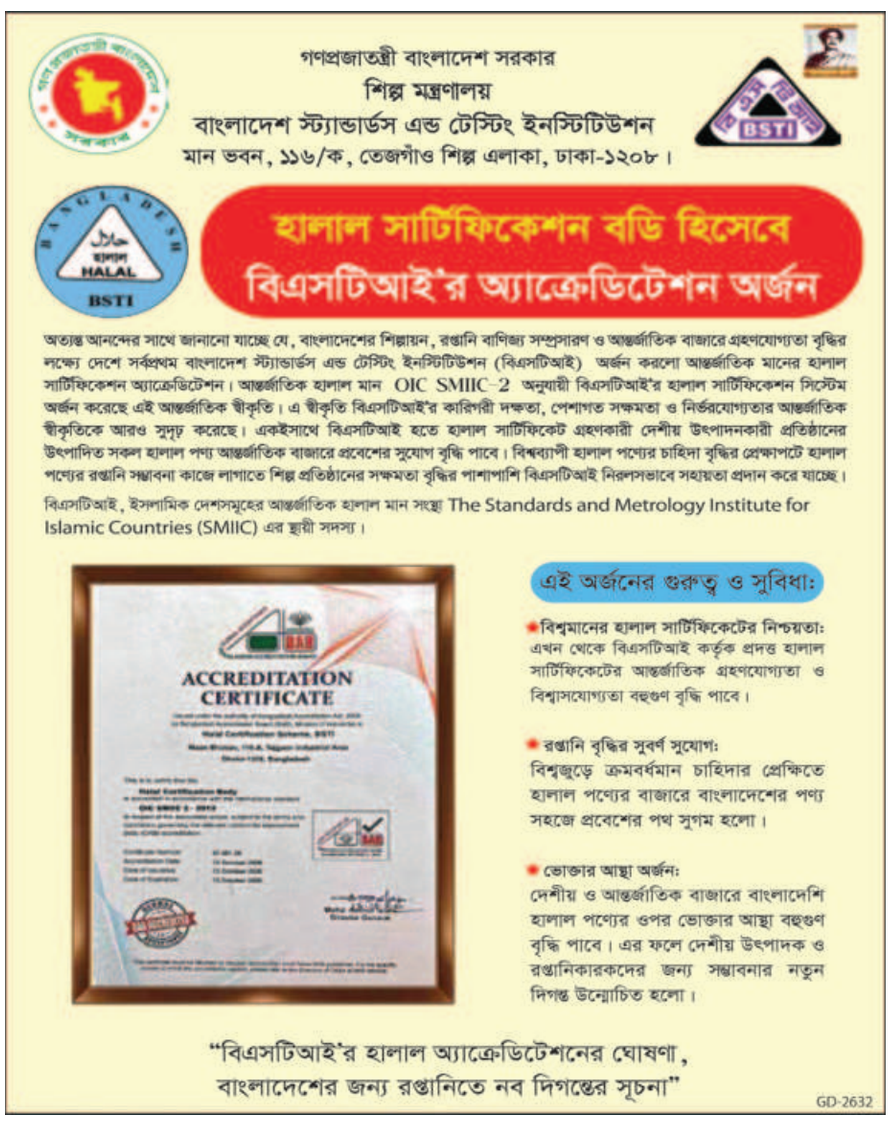
Between 1983 and 2018, under his leadership, vision and direct supervision, he established and developed AKG's major businesses and brands, including Vegetable Oil (1983), Goru Marka Dheu Tin (1994), AKS TMT Bar (2010), Shah Cement (2000), Marks Full Cream Milk Powder (2002), Starship Condensed Milk (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

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