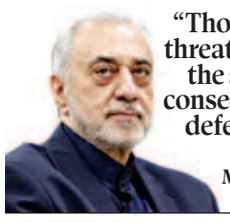
DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2026



"Those [US] who pose threats will not dictate the scope, timing, or consequences of Iran's defensive response."
Iran's Defense Minister
MEHRDAD AKHLAGHI

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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Wage unrest paralyses RMG hubs

Clashes, arson mark the day new wage board is formed; 30 detained; 529 factories 'declare holiday'

- Last RMG wage hike was in 2023
- No deadline set for new wage recommendations
- 5 BGB platoons deployed in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protests by garment workers demanding higher wages sparked clashes, arson, and highway blockades in Dhaka and its outskirts, as well as in Gazipur yesterday, the day the government formed a new wage board.

A police vehicle was set on fire in the capital's Mirpur-11, fires broke out at several spots in Gazipur, including a factory warehouse. Demonstrators also torched a security booth of a garment factory in Savar.

By evening, at least 529 garment factories in Mirpur, Savar, Ashulia, Gazipur, and Mymensingh declared a holiday yesterday, according to a situation report shared by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The workers have been demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000, an end to blacklisting, and reinstatement of dismissed employees.

The last minimum wage increase, from Tk 8,000 to Tk 12,500, took effect on December 1, 2023.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Roaring flames and thick black smoke engulf a police vehicle set ablaze during clashes between law enforcers and readymade garment workers who blocked roads in Dhaka's Mirpur yesterday for the second day to press for a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000. The photo was taken near Pallabi Metro Rail Station around noon. PHOTO: STAR



Keep factories running, protect workers

PM tells ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed authorities to ensure uninterrupted operations at factories nationwide and safeguard lives and property amid ongoing garment workers' protests.

"The premier has instructed authorities concerned to take steps that protect workers' interests, improve their living standards, and keep production and development activities running," Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters at the Secretariat after a meeting with Tarique.

He said law enforcement agencies had been instructed to take strict action against anyone involved in violence,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Int'l Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

A climate of fear, a constant for journalists

KEERO ADHNAN AHMED

On November 30 last year, Lutfuzzaman Fakir Alif, known for reporting on cross-border drugs and arms smuggling for an IP television channel, spoke at a meeting with the Netrakona superintendent of police about the mortal danger he was facing.

"If I go out, they will shoot me," he told a room full of police officers and fellow journalists.

They did, 10 months later.

He was murdered by assailants allegedly linked to the smuggling syndicates he had warned, raising questions about the actions the police took since Alif's plea.

Alif was one of two journalists who were shot dead over the past 12 months, all of them outside Dhaka.

Emdadul Haque Milon, 45, who ran the online portal Bartaman Somoy and headed the Sholua Press Club, was gunned down at a tea stall in Khulna's Aranghata on December 18 last year.

Amid this backdrop, Bangladesh observes the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists today.

Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), which tracks 16 news outlets alongside its own fact-finding, recorded 32 attacks on journalists in 2017. That figure has climbed almost every year since, reaching 318 in 2025.

In the first nine months of 2026, HRSS recorded 288 attacks in which 518 journalists were assaulted or harassed and 297 were injured.

In the first nine months of 2026, HRSS recorded 288 attacks in which 518 journalists were assaulted or harassed and 297 were injured.

The upward trend did not ease after an elected government assumed office in February: between July and September, the latest quarter with available data, HRSS documented 88 attacks, nearly matching the 84 recorded in the same period last year

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

A wage board that could've come sooner

TANIM AHMED

While it is encouraging that the government has finally convened a wage board for garment sector workers, it should still be pointed out that such initiatives -- ones that serve the interest of the workers -- seldom materialise on their own or systemically.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Garment workers have been taking to the streets for quite a few days, pressing for a review of their minimum wage which is due by December 2026. Hence, pressing for the formulation of this wage board was inevitable, more so considering the steady rise of living cost that has been eroding the income throughout Bangladesh.

Inflation has been hurting the poorer sections harder and hence a demand for Tk 30,000 as minimum wage up from Tk 12,500 might seem steep but perhaps worthy of a sympathetic audience.

Thus, an acceptable outcome of the wage board, a recommendation that will be palatable by both the workers and the owners, which has never been an easy task, will be particularly challenging this time considering the downturn of garment exports, rising energy costs, global recession and the internal inflation.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

3 more years, no room for complacency

CPD urges reforms in public finance, energy, social protection and logistics before LDC graduation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) yesterday called for reforms in four key areas to ensure a smooth graduation from the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs): public finance, energy, social protection and logistics.

In public finance, it suggested lowering banks' non-performing loans and reforming public spending and revenue. It came up with the recommendations at a press conference at its office in Dhaka.

It also called for reliable, affordable energy with subsidy reform, removal of exclusion errors, more inclusive coverage in social protection, and lower logistics costs to improve trade competitiveness.

These reforms, the CPD said, would drive diversification beyond the readymade garment (RMG) sector, open new markets, raise labour productivity, and make trade more competitive.

Bangladesh's deferment is exceptional and irreversible, with no chance of seeking another after three years, said Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the CPD and a member of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP).



"An 'exceptional' decision demands 'exceptional' performance. The extension is not a precedent; the UNCDP has said it will not support another request."
DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA, distinguished fellow of the CPD

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has deferred the country's graduation by three years to November 24, 2029, and the reforms must be completed within that time.

Welcoming the decision, Debapriya said,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi arrives to join a "Save Democracy" march towards Ramlila Maidan, alongside other leaders of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc, amid calls for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation, in New Delhi, India, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN FOCUS

Thousands join opposition protest in Delhi

BJP stages counter rally

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Thousands protested in New Delhi yesterday to demand the resignation of India's election chief over a revision of voter lists, the latest in more than a month of opposition demonstrations challenging Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Led by Rahul Gandhi, a leader of the opposition Congress Party, protesters say the revision benefits Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

The protests and growing support for the opposition form the worst crisis for Modi since he came to power in 2014, though his government remains stable and the next general election is not due until 2029.

Authorities tightened security and warned of traffic diversions before protesters began a march from

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Another friend of Tahsif placed on remand

Police claim she has links to his death

DIPAN NANDY

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Jerika Tasnim Disha, a friend of former Bangladesh Air Force officer KM Tahsif Souri, on a four-day remand in a murder case filed over his death.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Ripon Hossain passed the order after police produced Disha before the court seeking a seven-day remand, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

Earlier in the day, Disha, 19, was arrested from her Kafrul home.

Investigators have reportedly found preliminary evidence suggesting her involvement in the murder case.

A day earlier, police said it had found similar evidence against Tahsif's friend, Ahmed Shahriar Reza

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Exercise restraint, act responsibly

Urges Editors' Council after PM aide tears up Amar Desh copy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council yesterday called for restraint and responsible conduct in expressing differences of opinion after a Facebook video clip showed PM's Political Assistant Rashed Khan tearing up a copy of the daily Amar Desh.

In a statement signed by its President Nurul Kabir and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud, the organisation said disagreeing with news reports or editorial opinions was a democratic right, but such differences should be expressed with responsibility, decency, and mutual respect.

Rashed posted the video clip on his Facebook page on Saturday, alleging that the newspaper had published misleading reports about him.

The council said Rashed, the PM's political assistant with the rank of secretary, was expected to exercise restraint and act responsibly in his statements and conduct.

"At the same time, it is equally important to ensure the professional standards, objectivity, ethics, and accountability of journalism," it added.

108 chortens, one extraordinary act of faith and unity

Over 40,000 volunteers unite in historic effort to advance Gelephu Mindfulness City

NAZIBA BASHER, *from GMC, Bhutan*

As wars rage, violence claims lives and unrest divides communities across the world, the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan yesterday offered a strikingly different picture -- one of thousands coming together in peace, prayer and shared purpose.

In Gelephu, near the Indian border, more than 40,000 volunteers built 108 sacred Buddhist chortens, or stupas, in a single day, in an extraordinary display of collective faith and determination.

The undertaking saw the completion of 15-metre-high chortens, spaced 108 metres apart, along a 12-kilometre stretch of the Mau Chhu river at Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC).

The work was completed in nine hours. Around 20-24 people worked on each chorten. Materials were kept ready from beforehand and formal construction began at 3:00am and ended at 12:00pm. Announced by King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on February 21, the project involved months of preparations, including clearing land, laying foundations at 108 sites, assembling materials and training volunteers.



Workers put the finishing touches on one of the 108 jangchub chortens built and consecrated in Bhutan's GMC yesterday. PHOTOS: BHUTAN BROADCASTING SERVICE

The work was carried out through zhabto, Bhutan's tradition of voluntary community service, involving students, farmers, doctors, monks, retirees and others.

Around 200,000 people gathered for the occasion, according to officials cited by AFP.

Holding glowing orbs against the darkness, spectators sat quietly on the ground and inside tents, chanting Om Mani Padme Hum, a six-syllable Sanskrit mantra associated with Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Widely recited in Tibetan Buddhism, it invokes compassion, wisdom and freedom from suffering. As the chanting continued into the evening, thousands of voices became one collective prayer.

The King, who spearheaded GMC, credited generations of Bhutanese, particularly the Fourth King, for preserving the nation's values.

"That is the Bhutanese spirit. That is the greatest accomplishment of this day and it is something we should all hold with great pride."

In Buddhist tradition, 108 symbolises spiritual completeness and enlightenment, reflected in prayer malas and the 108 volumes of the Kangyur, a collection of the Buddha's translated teachings. Each chorten contains sacred relics, scriptures, statues and offerings, collectively known as zung, within seven traditional architectural elements. These include Buddha relics from India and offerings from spiritual leaders, including the 12th Tai Situpa.

Estimated to cost $21 million, the structures embody the spiritual values guiding GMC's development.

Wage unrest paralyses RMG hubs

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, police detained 30 people in Mirpur, alleging that leaders and activists of the Awami League, political activities of which are banned, and its affiliated bodies were exploiting the workers' protest.

Labour and Employment Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury also alleged that several political organisations were instigating workers to destabilise the government and cause public suffering.

In Mirpur, several hundred RMG workers blocked roads in Mirpur-10, Mirpur-11, and Mirpur-14 from around 9:00am. Clashes erupted around 11:45am when police tried to disperse them, leading to chases, counter-chases, and exchanges of brick chunks.

Police fired teargas and sound grenades.

The unrest also forced the closure of Mirpur-10, Mirpur-11, and Pallabi metro stations for around two hours. Services resumed around 2:00pm.

Many pedestrians, including women and children, ran for safety, while shops remained closed and commuters struggled to reach their destinations. A three-month-old child in her mother's lap lost consciousness due to the teargas.

DMP Joint Commissioner Md Mohidul Islam alleged that anti-government elements had infiltrated the protests to create unrest.

He denied using truncheons and said nobody was detained during the operation to clear the roads.

However, police officials later confirmed that 30 people were detained in the Mirpur area.

Deputy Commissioner Hasan Mohammad Nasher Rikabdar said multiple cases would be filed over the torching of vehicles and attacks on police personnel.

In Gazipur, protesters blocked both sides of the Dhaka-Mymensingh and Gazipur-Chattogram highways near Bhogra Bypass around 1:00pm, triggering clashes with police.

They chased police personnel, forcing several to take shelter inside a factory. The workers also vandalised vehicles and smashed windowpanes of an office.

Belayet Hossain, additional commissioner of Gazipur Metropolitan Police, said police fired four to five sound grenades at several points to drive the demonstrators away.

Fires broke out at three locations, including a factory warehouse, in the Kaliakair's Palli Bidyut area around noon.

A police box was also torched at Konabari, while traffic on the Dhaka-Tangail highway came to a standstill.

Amjad Hossain, superintendent of Gazipur Industrial Police, said 45 garment factories declared holidays yesterday.

Five BGB platoons were deployed, with personnel instructed to remain stationed at seven locations, Chandra, Palli Bidyut, Safipur, Konabari, Mouchak, Naojor, and Bhogra Bypass, until November 7 under the supervision of five executive magistrates.

In Savar and Ashulia, the unrest forced at least 177 factories to declare holidays, said Mohammad Mominul Islam Bhuiyan, superintendent of Ashulia Industrial Police-1.

Around 11:00am, protesters gathered on the Abdullahpur-Baipail road in Narsinghpur to press for their demand.

The authorities of several factories, including those belonging to Sharmin Group, Ha-Meem Group, and Newage Group, subsequently declared holidays. Police and protesters also engaged in chases and counter-chases near Ananta Garments around noon.

In Hemayetpur, demonstrators blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway around 3:00pm, causing long tailbacks. At one stage, they set fire to a security booth at the main gate of an AKH Group factory.

Police cleared the highway around 5:00pm.

Announcing the wage board formation at the Secretariat, Labour Minister Ariful questioned why RMG workers continued blocking roads despite the government's commitment to forming the board.

He said the government had held several meetings with workers, labour leaders, and factory owners over the preceding three days and had assured them that the board would be formed yesterday.

The minister claimed that an organising secretary of a banned student organisation had joined the protests posing as a worker.

However, when journalists asked him to identify the individual, he referred to photographs circulating on social media without providing a name.

The minister also questioned the decision to declare holidays at several factories, despite appeals from labour leaders for workers to continue working.

He also urged workers to return to their factories, saying the new board would now discuss and determine their wages.

He warned that factory closures could disrupt production and supply chains, delay shipments and payments from buyers, and ultimately affect workers' wages.

While the government and police blamed politically motivated outsiders for the violence, labour representatives pointed to workers' longstanding grievances over wages and employment practices.

Talking to The Daily Star, Khairul Mamun Mintu, legal affairs secretary of Bangladesh Garment and Sweater Workers' Trade Union Centre, said workers had three key demands, including a minimum wage of Tk 30,000.

He earlier attributed the unrest partly to the failure to form the wage board by October, as previously promised.

At Comfort Collection, operator Raju Ahmed said helpers at his factory received only Tk 8,000 to Tk 8,500 a month.

Workers also alleged that factories blacklist employees and dismiss them arbitrarily.

Nazma Akter, president of Sommilito Garments' Sramik Federation, said rising house rents, transport costs, gas bills, and other expenses had significantly increased workers' living costs.

BGMEA Vice-President Md Rezwan Selim and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Mohammad Hatem welcomed the initiative to review wages.

Hatem, however, said the industry was facing challenges from the global economic slowdown, energy shortages, rising production costs, and declining export orders.

He urged the new wage board to recommend a realistic wage structure through discussions, ensuring fair pay while maintaining the industry's competitiveness.



Garment workers block the Dhaka-Tangail Highway in Gazipur's Kaliakair around noon yesterday. The workers' unrest in the area triggered arson at at least three locations, including a factory warehouse, sparked clashes with police, and caused long tailbacks on major highways. PHOTO: STAR

NEW BOARD

The government formed a six-member wage board, led by Senior District and Sessions Judge Sheikh Ashfaqur Rahman.

The other members are Dhaka University Prof Mosleh Uddin Ahmed as the independent representative; Asif Ayub of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation and ABM Shamsuddin of the BGMEA as employers' representatives; and Anwar Hossain of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and Babul Akhter of Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Sramik Federation as workers' representatives.

The appointments were made under the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, as amended in 2026.

The labour minister urged the members to complete the process quickly, but no deadline was set for submitting wage recommendations.

Under the amended labour law, wages across sectors are to be reviewed every three years to account for inflation. The garment sector's wage structure is due for review this December.

[Our Savar and Gazipur correspondents contributed to this report.]

A wage board that could've come sooner

FROM PAGE 1

Notwithstanding the typical excuse of the garment factory owners that "business is bad", this time there may be some truth to it -- a point that they will very likely exploit. At the same time, garment factory workers' demand, which may be considered as their initial negotiating position, will likely have room for negotiation but not very much since they have actually seen their real income erode over the last three years, when a new wage structure had been implemented.

As for the government, it appears to have got off on the wrong foot, responding decisively only after workers began blocking roads and factories were forced to shut down. With many factories having already shut down for numerous reasons, leaving thousands of unemployed RMG workers, the situation can be said to have been ripe for an outburst that this delay triggered. Reports of growing unrest had been circulating for some time, yet there seemed to be little sense of urgency in addressing the situation.

Earlier intervention could well have prevented the closure of hundreds of factories, spared commuters in and around Dhaka considerable inconvenience, and averted unnecessary production losses at an already difficult time. The government had announced plans to form a new wage board two weeks earlier, on October 15. There is little justification for delaying the final decision until unrest had escalated to this point.

The government would be particularly pressed to come with a pay hike befitting these difficult times since it has only recently given its own employees a most generous raise, which will surely lead to inflation further.

3 more years, no room for complacency

FROM PAGE 1

"Reforms are the centre point for Bangladesh. If the reforms are not completed, the country's trustworthiness will be under question."

"An 'exceptional' decision demands 'exceptional' performance. The extension is not a precedent; the CDP has said it will not support another request," he said.

Mustafizur Rahman, also a distinguished fellow of the CPD, likewise said there would be no further deferment. He added that under the criteria adopted in 1990, a country with a population of 75 million is not allowed deferment.

The CPD pointed to several indicators showing how much remains to be done.

The tax revenue-to-GDP ratio stands at 6.9 percent, having met 80.7 percent of the annual target, while the target for FY27 is to take the ratio to 9.2 percent.

In the banking sector, non-performing loans account for 32.8 percent of all loans, and private investment is still only 21.5 percent of GDP.

RMG continues to account for 80.6 percent of exports, and load shedding reached a record high on August 10 this year.

In logistics, Bangladesh ranks 88th out of 139 countries in the Logistics Performance Index, which covers port turnaround time, transportation and warehousing.

Only around 1 percent of GDP is spent on social protection.

Debapriya said the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) needs a clear reform pathway in which public finance, energy, social protection, and logistics reforms drive diversification, productivity, and competitiveness.

He said the strategy should include a plan to phase out non-allowable fiscal measures. The government should identify every measure Bangladesh can use only as an LDC, such as export cash incentives, and set a timeline to phase each out before November 2029.

On implementation, he said, "Strong on documents, weaker on delivery. Bangladesh has been more adept at drafting commitments than at delivering them; the final STS came only in 2025."

He said the political transition had been recognised, which is a rare acceptance under the graduation rules, and that the issue is capacity, not political will.

He called the government's press note welcome but incomplete, as it left out the exceptional basis for the deferment and the reform expectation. The action plan should be published, he said.

Debapriya suggested that the prime minister's office, rather than the Economic Relations Division (ERD) or other agencies, monitor the reforms so that they happen in real terms.

The STS needs coordination by the prime minister's office, as it is beyond the ERD's mandate and competence, he said.

He proposed that the government launch a dashboard there on progress of the graduation reform agenda and revisit the structure of the National Graduation Monitoring and Coordination Committee.

Graduation is a whole-of-government task, he said, and should proceed in partnership with the private sector, domestic and foreign, and with development partners.

Lawmakers, technical experts and analysts should also be engaged in the reform process, and the need for a special parliamentary committee on LDC graduation should be assessed.

Mustafizur said the deferment should be seen as an opportunity to make graduation sustainable after 2029, and graduation should be inclusive, covering small and medium enterprises, not only big companies.

Export diversification is possible even within textiles and garments, he said, as the global market is worth more than $1.2 trillion and Bangladesh can raise its share in the garment segment.

CPD Executive Director Nazneen Ahmed said the think tank has been tracking progress on the reforms in key areas as a citizens' platform.

She stressed three issues for a smooth graduation: preparedness, macroeconomic stability, and maintaining an environment conducive to investment and business.

In his keynote paper on trade reforms, CPD Additional Director (Research) Towfiqul Islam Khan said engagement with the EU has advanced, but GSP+ with relief from the textile and clothing safeguard remains unresolved.

The UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) now allows single-stage transformation for apparel, but no comparable relaxation has been confirmed under the EU's GSP+.

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Japan was signed on February 6, 2026 but is not yet in force, pending approval by Japan's parliament and domestic legal procedures.

A comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) has been discussed as a way to retain South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) benefits, but no progress on continued duty-free access has been confirmed.

No formal negotiating rounds have been confirmed, and less-than-full reciprocity has not yet been adopted as a negotiating principle, Towfiqul said.

Bangladesh's accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is under way, and a CEPA has been signed with South Korea. RCEP admission needs full consensus, he said.

Another friend of Tahsif placed on remand

FROM PAGE 1

Dip, 23. He was placed on a four-day remand on Saturday.

Dip and Disha were with Tahsif on the night of October 27, when he went missing.

The three had visited several places and had food together before Disha was dropped off at her home.

"Two people have been arrested in connection with the incident. We have both in custody for further questioning. We hope to solve the case soon," said Inspector Firoz Alam of the Tongi river police outpost, who is the investigating officer in the case.

In a forwarding report submitted to the court, police said investigators examining CCTV footage from several locations in Uttara found that Tahsif had visited Nest Bar and Restaurant on his motorcycle with Disha riding in the pillion on the night of October 27. Dip also arrived shortly on another motorcycle.

They also visited a fast food chain several times that evening, it added.

The footage further showed Disha accompanying Tahsif to a motorcycle garage, the report said.

A police source said Disha was later dropped off at her home, after which Tahsif and Dip went to the Mazar Basti area of Tongi.

Samples have been sent for viscera and toxicological tests to determine whether any poison, drugs or alcohol were present in the victim's body, the source added.

"Dip is currently in police custody on remand. It is necessary to cross-check the statements of Disha and Dip," the forwarding report said.

Investigators also found evidence of multiple phone conversations between Tahsif and Disha after examining his call records, it added.

Investigators said Dip had called Tahsif around 6:00am on October 27 and taken him out of his house.

On October 28, around 4:30pm, police received information through the National Emergency Service 999 that a body was floating in the Turag near Rajabari Ghat in Uttarkhan, Dhaka.

"While preparing the inquest report, the deceased was identified from an iPhone found in the pocket of his trousers. It was learned that the deceased was a former Bangladesh Air Force officer," a police forwarding report said.

Tahsif's father, KM Eneyetul Karim, filed a murder case against unknown persons with Uttarkhan Police Station on Saturday, alleging that his son had been killed and his body dumped in the river to conceal the crime.

A climate of fear

FROM PAGE 1

and double the 44 recorded in the third quarter of 2023.

Data from Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), which tracks individual victims rather than incidents, reflects a similar pattern.

ASK recorded that 531 journalists were harassed in 2024 and 381 in 2025, surpassing any single year between 2017 and 2023.

In the first nine months of this year, 315 journalists faced harassment.

Notably, harassment by law enforcers has risen every year since 2024, from 15 cases that year to 23 in 2025 and 42 in the first nine months of 2026 alone, already exceeding any full year since at least 2017, according to ASK.

Harassment by political activists, meanwhile, has shifted with the change in power.

From 2017 to 2024, ASK attributed most of such incidents to Awami League activists, peaking at 70 in 2018.

In 2025 and 2026, almost all political attacks were blamed on activists of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, who accounted for 27 and 22 cases respectively between January and September this year.

Including the February national election period, the combined tally of attacks by political activists is on track to reach around 67 this year, the highest since 2018.

Physical assaults on journalists while on duty also more than doubled after 2024, jumping from 54 that year to 118 in 2025, and remaining high at 88 in the first nine months of 2026.

Journalists in the districts are always more vulnerable, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

"One of the main reasons journalists in this country face harassment and violence is that our political culture lacks the courage to tolerate dissent. It is worse at the grassroots, where there is less protection."

While political freedom has increased since the uprising, the culture of tolerating criticism remains absent from the country's politics.

"It was lost, and you could say it has not been restored. The mindset that 'my critic is always my enemy' is what we are seeing here," he added.

Meanwhile, more than 10 months after mobs vandalised and set fire to the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, investigators have yet to submit a charge sheet.

Visiting the fire-ravaged Prothom Alo building on February 28, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed announced that he had instructed police to submit the charge sheets within two months, calling for "exemplary punishment" for the perpetrators.

That April 28 deadline came and went.

By June, police had arrested 37 suspects across the two cases, with no new arrests made in the preceding months.

According to an earlier Daily Star report, at least 17 of those arrested in the Prothom Alo case secured bail, including controversial speaker Ataur Rahman Bikrampuri, who obtained bail in both cases, as courts noted that the accused were neither named in the initial complaints nor apprehended from the scene.

Submission deadlines for the probe reports were repeatedly pushed back. The last deadline was October 25, which the police failed to comply with.

"It is truly surprising and unacceptable as well that the probe into the criminal act of arson against two newspapers has stalled," said Nurul Kabir, president of the Editors' Council and editor of New Age.

Bus franchise takes off with ageing fleet

Service launched on 6 routes amid concerns over vehicle fitness, route disputes

SHAMIMA RITA

Dhaka's long-discussed franchise-based bus service was launched on six routes yesterday, amid concerns over ageing and unfit vehicles and unresolved disputes over route allocations.

After two postponements, Pabna-5 lawmaker and Transport Owners-Workers Unity Council Chief Coordinator Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas inaugurated the service at Manik Mia Avenue around 11:30am.

At an October 8 meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, authorities decided to launch the service on two routes within seven working days. The deadline was later extended to October 25.

During a visit to the inauguration site, this correspondent saw buses operated by Paristhan, Projapoti, VIP and several other companies lined up for the launch. Many appeared old and poorly maintained, while some seemed to have been freshly painted despite their deteriorating condition.

Liakot, a driver and operator of Paristhan Paribahan's Route

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Buses operated by several companies line up on Manik Mia Avenue ahead of the launch of a franchise-based bus service on six Dhaka routes yesterday.

IN FOCUS

PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM

Showkat Aziz Russell sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday sent Amber Group Chairman Showkat Aziz Russell to jail following his conviction on October 13 in a corruption case involving irregularities in plot allocations under the Purbachal Residential Project.

Judge Abdus Salam of Special Judge Court-9 passed the order, rejecting Russell's bail petition, said ACC Public Prosecutor Khandaker Shamim Hossen.

Russell surrendered before the court yesterday and sought bail in the case, he said.

On October 13, the court sentenced Russell, Partex Group Managing Director Ashfaq Aziz Rubel and six former Rajuk officials to 14 years' imprisonment each in their absence. It also issued

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

Zero passes, twice in a row

At least 32 institutions record repeated failures; minister orders action within a week

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

At an institution in Narail, 35 candidates appeared in last year's HSC examinations. None passed. This year, 43 candidates sat for the examinations. Again, not a single student passed.

Makrail Karim Khalek Solaiman Institution in Lohagara upazila is not an isolated case.

A preliminary comparison of the 2025 and 2026 results by The Daily Star identified 32 institutions that appear to have recorded zero passes for two consecutive years.

Of these, 19 were under Dinajpur Board, five under Jashore, four under Cumilla, two under Barishal and one each under Chattogram and Mymensingh.

Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon yesterday directed officials to take steps within a week to hold institutions with zero or exceptionally low pass rates accountable, according to a post on his verified Facebook account.

A day earlier, he said the government was considering merging poorly performing colleges with nearby institutions, many of which had been established without sufficient demand.

Across the country's 11 education

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Over half of children lack basic learning skills

Speakers call for all-party caucus, stronger oversight to fix primary education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than half of the country's children aged five to 15 cannot read Bangla properly or perform basic arithmetic, while the dropout rate exceeds 33 percent by the secondary level, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

Lawmakers and policy analysts blamed parallel education streams, corruption and poor monitoring for deepening inequalities and weakening primary education, particularly in rural areas.

They called for an all-party parliamentary caucus, stronger grassroots oversight and increased education funding to address the crisis.

The observations came at a roundtable titled "Parliamentarians for Equality: Building a Country of Equal Opportunity", jointly organised by the Institute for Informed

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Participants at the roundtable organised by Institute for Informed Development and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Ex-army officer Hafiz arrested in sedition case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday placed Major (retd) Khondokar Abdul Hafiz on a four-day remand in a sedition case.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rakibul Hasan passed the order after the Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police produced him before the court with a seven-day remand prayer, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

A DB team arrested Abdul Hafiz, 56, from Dhaka's Banani area early yesterday after his name surfaced during the investigation, the investigator said.

On October 12, Lt (retd) Kazi Gulshan Ara and Lt Col (retd) Debashish were placed on a four-day remand in the same case.

According to a forwarding report submitted to the court, Abdul Hafiz, along with Gulshan Ara and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

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যোগাযোগঃ ০১৯১২-৮১৯৩৭৮

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NOTICE FOR ANNUAL VENDOR ENLISTMENT 2027

BRAC Bank PLC is seeking potential **vendors for the Annual Enlistment purpose for the year 2027**. A detailed requirement is provided in the link below.

Interested and eligible vendors are requested to submit their profile with necessary documents to **enlistment@bracbank.com** within **05:00 PM, November 20, 2026**.

Please visit our website:
https://www.bracbank.com/en/page/e-tender to get details of the enlistment process.

BRAC BANK
আস্থা অর্জিত

BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
National Science & Technology Complex, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207

Date: 2 November 2026

BAS-USDA Endowment Program

CALL FOR PRELIMINARY PROJECT PROPOSAL (6th phase)

The BAS-USDA Endowment Program could not fund and implement one project approved under the 6th Phase due to certain special circumstances. Accordingly, only one project will be funded under this call. The BAS-USDA Endowment Program hereby invites Preliminary Research Project Proposal, limited to 1,500 words, from scientists of relevant public and private organizations for undertaking priority research on cancer and cancer related field. The total budget of a project should not exceed Tk. 60,00,000 (Taka sixty lakh). Capital cost should not exceed 25% of the total project cost. For developing a Preliminary Project Proposal, you are being requested to follow the Article 4.1.1 and Annex III of the BAS-USDA Operation Manual.

One can obtain the Operation Manual, BAS-USDA Endowment Program (Fourth revised edition, October 2026) from the Academy Office or download from: **(https://www.bas.org.bd/bas-usda/usda-operation-manual)**.

Preliminary project proposal should reach the Office of Secretary, BAS on or before **17 November 2026** through email: **basusda.info@gmail.com** in MS Word & PDF and by Post (3 hard copies).

Professor Dr. Yearul Kabir
Secretary, BAS

বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল ষ্টাডিজ এন্ড রিসার্চ ইনষ্টিটিউট
বাড়ী নং- ৩৩-৩৫, রোড নং-১৪/এ, ধানমন্ডি আ/এ, ঢাকা-১২০৯।

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়ঃ হাসপাতাল ইন্টিগ্রেটেড ম্যানেজমেন্ট সফটওয়্যার (IHMS) সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে তথ্যাদি আহ্বান প্রসঙ্গে।

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল স্টাডিজ এন্ড রিসার্চ ইনস্টিটিউট এর অধীনস্থ সকল ইউনিট (বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল কলেজ, বাংলাদেশ ডেন্টাল কলেজ, উত্তরা আধুনিক মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, উত্তরা আধুনিক মেডিকেল কলেজ) এর কার্যক্রম সফটওয়্যারভিত্তিক করার লক্ষ্যে হাসপাতাল ইন্টিগ্রেটেড ম্যানেজমেন্ট সফটওয়্যার (IHMS) প্রস্তুত ও সরবরাহে অভিজ্ঞ আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে তথ্যাদি আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, এটি কোনো মূল্য প্রস্তাব বা সরবরাহ নয়।

আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে তথ্যাদির সাথে নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্র অবশ্যই সংযিল করতে হবেঃ

১. প্রতিষ্ঠানের কার্যক্রম শুরুর তারিখঃ
২. হাসপাতাল ইন্টিগ্রেটেড ম্যানেজমেন্ট সফটওয়্যার (IHMS) প্রস্তুত, স্থাপন ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণে প্রতিষ্ঠানের অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ।
৩. যেসকল হাসপাতাল বা স্বাস্থ্যসেবা প্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রতিষ্ঠানটির উপরিল্লিখিত সফটওয়্যার চালু রয়েছে, তার পূর্ণাঙ্গ ক্লায়েন্ট তালিকা (প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম, ঠিকানা ও যোগাযোগের নম্বরসহ)। (ন্যূনতম একটি হাসপাতালে পূর্ণাঙ্গ সফটওয়্যার থাকতে হবে)।

আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে ০৭ (সাত) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে, অর্থাৎ আগামী ০৯/১১/২০২৬ইং, বেলা ০২:৩০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে উপরোক্ত কাগজপত্রসহ প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক প্রোফাইল মুখবন্ধ খামে বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল স্টাডিজ এন্ড রিসার্চ ইনস্টিটিউট এর কার্যালয়ে দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। খামের উপর "হাসপাতাল ইন্টিগ্রেটেড ম্যানেজমেন্ট সফটওয়্যার" কথাটি স্পষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

নির্ধারিত সময়ের পরে প্রাপ্ত অথবা অসম্পূর্ণ প্রোফাইল বিবেচনা করা হবে না। দাখিলকৃত তথ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ সরাসরি যাচাই করতে পারবে। কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোনো বা সকল তথ্যাদি গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।

অনাজারী সেক্রেটারী
ইসি, বিএমএসআরআই।

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF COMMANDANT (SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE)
IN-SERVICE TRAINING CENTER (ITC),
NETROKONA.

Memo No: 1083 /(ITC) Dated: 01.11.2026.

e-TENDER NOTICE NO-01/2026-2027
(Open Tendering Method)

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

Sl No	Tender ID	Name of Works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing/ Opening Date & Time
01	1363023	Repair And Maintenance works of Inservice Training Center (ITC), Netrokona.	16-Nov-2026 16:00	17-Nov-2026 11:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline /Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

01-11-26
(Kanai Lal Sarkar)
BP-7708121599
Commandant (Superintendent of Police)
In-service Training Center (ITC), Netrokona.
Phone: 02-998827341, Fax-02-9966514407
Email-comistcnetrokona@police.gov.bd

GD-2646



Myakchhi Chhara Canal in Bandarban town has been reduced to a narrow ditch along much of its stretch due to encroachment and obstruction of its natural flow. PHOTO: STAR

MYAKCHHI CHHARA

Grabbers push Bandarban canal to the brink

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Myakchhi Chhara Canal, a key drainage channel in Bandarban town, has been shrinking due to years of alleged encroachment, disrupting its natural flow and causing waterlogging in surrounding areas.

Residents alleged that influential individuals and businesspeople have been illegally occupying the canal's land along a four-kilometre stretch from Hafezghona through Islampur to the Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institute, constructing residential buildings, shops, hotels and resorts.

The canal once played a vital role in draining rainwater from surrounding hills and neighbourhoods during the monsoon. However, encroachment has reduced parts of it to narrow ditches.

Following residents' complaints, an executive magistrate of the district administration recently visited the area and ordered a halt to construction and the removal of illegal structures. However, residents said construction continued at several locations.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found several establishments occupying the canal's land.

Residents also reported encroachment near Hafezghona Steel Bridge, Sangu Junior High School, Armypara, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and DC Office.

Chandan Biswas, a Hafezghona resident, said, "Roads adjacent to the canal often become submerged after rains since the canal can no longer drain rainwater. Students of Sangu Junior High School and Hafezghona Government Primary School become the worst sufferers."

Residents Sathi Rani and Sufia Begum said the canal previously supplied water for daily needs during the dry season when tube wells and hilly streams dried up. Encroachment and obstruction of water flow have now caused water shortages, they added.

Mohammad Rakib, a district electricity office employee constructing a three-storey building on the canal's land, claimed that the land was under the jurisdiction of Bandarban Hill District Council and had been obtained from the council.

Jamir Uddin, who is constructing a hotel nearby, said the land belonged to Mohammad Shaheen and that he had leased it for five years.

Ward councillor Kamrul Islam Bachchu said many property owners had extended their boundaries onto the canal's land. The matter had been reported to the administration, he added.

Contacted, SM Manzurul Haque, administrator of Bandarban municipality, said a project had been undertaken to reclaim a three-kilometre stretch of the canal and construct walkways on both sides.

"Once the tender process is completed and work begins, drives will be conducted to free the canal from encroachment. Legal action will be taken against encroachers," he said.

'Students out on streets after dusk will face arrest'

Says Ctg Range DIG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*



Chattogram Range Deputy Inspector General of Police Abdul Quddus Chowdhury has warned that school and college students found roaming the streets after dusk will be detained and arrested.

"If school or college students are found outside after dusk, they will be picked up and arrested. Even if there is no sufficient evidence against them, those with a previous criminal record will be handed over under legal procedures. Parents will also have to explain why their children are roaming around on the streets after dusk," the DIG said while speaking at an event in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Urging parents to ensure their children's safety and discourage unnecessary outings after dusk, he said the "nation's future would be in darkness" if they failed to do so.

Juvenile gangs and drug addiction among young people were no longer problems confined to individual families but had become collective social concerns, he said.

Eight more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight dengue patients died and 1,929 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Of the deaths, three were reported in Dhaka, two in Mymensingh division, and one each in Chattogram, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions.

The total death toll rose to 427, while the number of cases reached 1,36,929.

Currently, 6,114 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals.

FOOD SAFETY VIOLATIONS

Three businesses fined Tk 1.15 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) in Chattogram conducted a drive in the port city's Aturar Depot area yesterday and fined three businesses Tk 1,15,000 for food safety violations.

"Tripti Foods Products was fined Tk 1,00,000, New Khaja Ajmir Store was fined Tk 7,000, and Mabia Bakery was fined Tk 8,000," said Faiz Ullah, DNCRP deputy director in Chattogram. The violations included using harmful chemicals in food preparation, operating in an unhygienic environment, producing items without necessary approvals, and packaging products without mentioning production and expiry dates, he added.

EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO BANGLADESH

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh is looking for a suitable candidate for the function of **"Project Officer"**.

The full job description, job requirements and application guidelines (how to apply) can be found on our website: **https://bit.ly/eu-jobs-1126**

The deadline for receiving applications is **Monday, 23 November 2026 at 16:00 Hours.**

Please note that only electronic applications received within the deadline will be accepted. Paper and late applications will be disregarded.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Any form of persuasion, telephone call, or other form of contact during the selection process will automatically disqualify the applicant.

Man stabbed to death in Khulna city

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A 35-year-old man was found dead with stab injuries in Khulna city on Saturday.

Police recovered the body of Shahidul Islam Kolin from a road near Kashemia Jame Mosque in the city's Labanchara area around 11:00pm.

He was taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital, where a physician declared him dead.

Syed Mosharref Hossain, OC of Labanchara Police Station, said Kolin had seven cases filed against him under drug laws and one murder case. "He often stayed away from home and occasionally visited his parents. He returned home on Saturday and left in the evening," the OC said.

Police are investigating the incident, he added.

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Center of Excellence in Higher Education

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Tender No. NSU/26-27-T07

North South University is inviting sealed offer from bona fide/reputed organization/Authorized Importer for Supplying **01 nos. Brand-New built-in Ambulance.**

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender within banking hours from Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, on all working days until **November 10, 2026** by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 1,000.00 (One Thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **November 11, 2026** by 2:15 PM at the office of the undersigned. **The offers will be opened at 2:30 PM on the same day.** Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Procurement
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202
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www.northsouth.edu

Russian strikes cut power to thousands in Ukraine

Drones damage Russian industrial facility

REUTERS

Russian strikes left hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians without power yesterday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said, while Russian authorities reported major damage to an industrial site following Ukrainian drone attacks on Nizhny Novgorod region.

Even as a six-day local ceasefire held on its final day around the Russian-controlled Ukrainian town of Oleshky, there was no letup in fighting elsewhere along the front line and both sides kept up long-range air attacks.

Zelensky said Russia had hit power infrastructure in four Ukrainian regions overnight, cutting electricity to hundreds of thousands of households.

"The intensity of the strikes is very high, and the Russians are seeking to maximally exploit the deficit of ballistic missile interceptors," he said on Telegram.

He said Ukraine, meanwhile, had hit the Kamensky plant in Russia's Rostov region, which he said was involved in the manufacture of Russian missiles.

Overall, Russia's Defence Ministry said its forces had downed 235 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions overnight. Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 371 of 433 long-range drones launched by Russia since Saturday evening.

Moscow did not comment on the reported attack in Rostov. In Nizhny Novgorod region, however, Governor Gleb Nikitin said a large-scale overnight Ukrainian drone attack caused "significant damage" to an industrial facility.

He did not identify the site that was hit. The region is home to the NORSI oil refinery, one of Russia's largest.

Russian forces down 235 Ukrainian drones

Ukraine's air force downs 371 of 433 drones



Riot police officers clash with protestors during a demonstration denouncing the housing crisis in Rossio Square, central Lisbon, Portugal early yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Ally with Arab parties to oust Netanyahu

Israeli protesters urge opposition alliance after polls stalemate

AFP, *Tel Aviv*

Hundreds of Israelis took to the streets on Saturday evening to urge the opposition to ally with Arab parties to oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has gone on the offensive against the minority group's leaders.

Arab-majority parties made major gains in Tuesday's election, fuelled by anger over rhetoric targeting the community from Netanyahu's hard-right government, but opposition chief Gadi Eisenkot has not decided whether to seek a coalition with them.

Joining a rally in Tel Aviv, Ayelet Raz said that the Arab community, which accounts for around 20 percent of Israel's population, had a right to political participation.

"It's the last chance for real change," the 60-year-old psychologist said, warning that Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, was a "great manipulator".

"We need to give peace a chance," she said. "Otherwise we'll have this bloodshed forever," she added.

US still has 'one or two targets' in Iran: Trump

Tehran warns Washington of reprisals if attacked

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump said on Saturday evening that the United States has knocked out much of Iran's military but still has to "take care of" one or two targets, as Tehran warned of reprisals if attacked.

Trump maintained that negotiations with Iran to end the war, which was started by the United States and Israel in February, were "going fine but you know they're not very reliable."

The Republican president said the United States is not in a hurry to take offensive action because it had already decimated Iran's military and nuclear program.

"We've knocked out their nuclear. We still have to take care of, I would say one or two sites, but we can do that in 10 minutes," Trump told reporters at his Florida residence.

"You probably could look at Pickaxe Mountain, and you have to take care of that. We can do that all very quickly," he added, referring to a suspected underground nuclear complex.

Iran earlier said the tone of the United States had "completely changed" as Washington seeks to restart negotiations with the Islamic republic, reports AFP.

While the US and Israel have upped their threats to order fresh strikes, Vice President JD Vance also sent a letter to Iranian officials in recent days in a bid to revive talks.

"I read the letter. I haven't yet responded. Their tone has completely changed," Mohsen Rezaei, the head of Iran's supreme national security council, said in a video broadcast on Iranian television.

Tone of US has 'completely changed': Iran security chief

Qatari tanker hit with 'unidentified objects' in Gulf

Meanwhile, a Qatari tanker has been attacked with "unidentified objects" while transiting Gulf waters, the country's state news agency reported yesterday.

The attack on Friday evening struck a liquefied natural gas carrier, Al Mayeda, which belongs to the Qatar Gas Transport Company, Qatar News Agency said.

Iran has designated Britain's Royal Navy and Royal Air Force as "terrorist organisations" and its foreign intelligence agency MI6 as a "hostile group", according to state-run news agency IRNA yesterday.

"A potential future war could last longer than previous conflict, and the American president would not be in a position to dictate the timing or the conditions of its conclusion," said Iran's army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia.

Iran's Defense Minister Mehrdad Akhlaghi yesterday warned of a "proportionate, decisive, and impactful response" to any attack on the country.

In a separate development, Iranian negotiators were in Doha yesterday for a third consecutive day of talks with Qatari mediators aimed at pushing for a deal to end the US-Israeli war on Iran, an official briefed on the discussions told Reuters.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei issued a statement on Saturday ordering the armed forces to be prepared to respond to any attacks. The Iranian military later announced it was taking steps to improve its readiness.

IN BRIEF

Israeli strikes kill 8 in Gaza

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Israeli strikes killed at least eight Palestinians, including five police officers, in the Gaza Strip in two separate attacks yesterday, according to medics and the Hamas-run interior ministry.

Medics said three people were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City. The interior ministry said the five police officers were killed in another strike in western Khan Younis, in the south of the enclave.

The Israeli military said it struck "several militants" in Khan Younis, without giving further information.

Last year's US-brokered ceasefire calls for eventual reconstruction of the territory. But little progress has been made as negotiators have failed to agree terms for Hamas to disarm or Israel to withdraw its troops, who control about two-thirds of the territory where they have ordered residents out.



ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Five killed in India's Manipur

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Five people were killed in two separate incidents in India's northeastern state of Manipur, police said yesterday, as fresh ethnic violence erupted.

Three men from the Kuki group were killed in an exchange of gunfire between "armed miscreants" in Noney district on Saturday. The bodies of two other men from the same community, who had gone missing earlier this week, were recovered in Kangpokpi district yesterday morning.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Ferry Division
Shiromony, Khulna
Email: eefdkhu@rhd.gov.bd

Memo:-603 Date:-01/11/2026.

Notice for e-GP Tender

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of Goods/Works of RHD, Ferry Division, Shiromony, Khulna(Tender ID No: 1360731, 1360732, 1360733, 1360734, 1360735, 1360736, 1360737, 1360738, 1360739, 1360740, 1360741, 1360742, 1360743, 1360744, 1360745, 1360746, 1360747, 1360748, 1360749, 1360750, 1360751, 1361095, 1360752, 1360753, 1360754, 1360755, 1360756, 1360757, 1360758, 1360759, 1360760, 1360761, 1360762, 1360763, 1360764, 1360765, 1360766, 1360767 & 1360768) 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.

Gunjan Barua
Id No.602263,
Executive Engineer, RHD,
Ferry Division, Khulna.

GD-2640

Thousands join opposition

FROM PAGE 1

central Delhi to the designated rally site, where thousands had already assembled.

Hundreds of security personnel, some of them carrying batons and shields and accompanied by riot-control vehicles, surrounded the historic Ramlila Maidan ground as hundreds of people, many waving national and party flags, began moving towards it.

The ruling BJP and the INDIA bloc also held rival marches in west Delhi yesterday. Opposition party leaders led the march in an open-top jeep.

Speaking at the rally, Rahul Gandhi said Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar would have to vacate his post, and his removal would be the first step towards bringing the country "back on the right track".

The voter roll purge "is the theft of the voice of every single citizen of India. It is the theft of every citizen's right to expression," Gandhi said from the stage. "This is an act of betrayal against the nation. This is treason."

Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, however, called the protest a "carefully orchestrated drama".

"What is unfolding today at Ramlila Maidan is not an act of respect for democracy. It is a calculated conspiracy to plunge the nation into anarchy, all in the name of democracy," he told news agency ANI.

Among the protesters listening to Rahul Gandhi was Reena Mahto, a member of the Congress' student wing, who said four people from her family had been deleted from the voter list due to a false record that they had moved elsewhere.

She told Reuters the family had long lived in Jagdalpur in the central state of Chhattisgarh, but "now all of a sudden we have been marked as shifted from our own house," adding, "There should be accountability, and we are here to seek that."

The change to voter rolls removed over 130 million names – more than the population of Japan. Opposition parties allege the deletions disproportionately affected Muslim voters and members of other minorities who are unlikely to support the BJP.

The Election Commission says the aim of the voter revision is to update voter lists to remove duplicate and ineligible voters. It has denied favouring any party and said wrongly deleted voters can re-enrol. The BJP has accused rivals of trying to undermine democracy by questioning legitimate electoral processes.

The demonstration is the latest in a series of near-daily protests that opposition parties, student organisations and the youth-led Cockroach Janta Party have held since late September demanding the resignation of the election chief.

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"নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

বাংলাদেশের মহা হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয় এবং এর আওতাধীন ফিন্যান্সিয়াল ম্যানেজমেন্ট একাডেমি (ফিমা) ও অডিট অধিদপ্তরসমূহের জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০২৬ এর ১৬ তম এবং ২০ তম গ্রেডভুক্ত নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে সরাসরি নিয়োগের জন্য পদের পাশে বর্ণিত শর্তে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে (https://cag.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে) আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোনো আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

ক্রমিক নম্বর	পদের নাম, গ্রেড ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০২৬ অনুযায়ী)	শূন্য পদের সংখ্যা	প্রয়োজনীয় শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
(১)	(২)	(৩)	(৪)
১.	জুনিয়র অডিটর (গ্রেড-১৬) টাকা ২১,৯০০- ৫২,৯০০/-	৭০ (সত্তর)টি	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে অন্যূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএ-তে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরে প্রতি মিনিটে ইংরেজিতে ২০ এবং বাংলায় ২০ শব্দের সর্বনিম্ন গতিসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে Standard Aptitude Test -এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে।
২.	কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক (গ্রেড-১৬) টাকা ২১,৯০০- ৫২,৯০০/-	৬২ (বাষট্টি)টি	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে অন্যূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের জিপিএ-তে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) কম্পিউটার চালনায় দক্ষতা। (গ) কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরে প্রতি মিনিটে ইংরেজিতে ৩০ এবং বাংলায় ২৫ শব্দের সর্বনিম্ন গতিসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে Standard Aptitude Test -এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে।
৩.	অফিস সহায়ক (গ্রেড-২০) টাকা ২০,০০০- ৪৮,৪০০/-	২০৯ (দুইশত নয়)টি	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।

২। বাংলাদেশের মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট www.cag.org.bd এবং বাংলাদেশের মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয়ের টেলিটক পোর্টাল https://cag.teletalk.com.bd এ বিজ্ঞপ্তিসহ এতদসংক্রান্ত সকল তথ্য দেখা যাবে অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তিটির বিস্তারিত পাওয়া যাবে।

৩। উল্লেখ্য, অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ০৩/১১/২০২৬খ্রি. সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা এবং আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ২৫/১১/২০২৬খ্রি. বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।

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(তাসলিমা সুলতানা)
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ও
সদস্য সচিব
বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি

GD-2638

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

HSC results a wake-up call for edu sector

Govt must address learning gaps, teacher shortages, growing inequalities

This year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) results should serve as a wake-up call for the government regarding the state of our education system. With only 51.62 percent of candidates passing, the success rate has fallen to its lowest level in 22 years. The number of GPA-5 achievers has also dropped sharply, while the number of institutions with zero pass rate has increased. This is the second consecutive year of a steep decline in HSC pass rates, and must prompt a serious examination of what has gone wrong.

This year, the exams were held on the full syllabus, with full marks and duration, unlike last year's shortened versions. The assessment standards were also stricter. But these factors don't explain the poor results. Educationists have indicated some deep-rooted problems behind this year's performance: for instance, the candidates have experienced repeated disruptions over the past six years, beginning with the prolonged school closure during the pandemic. During that time, many students from low-income families could not participate in online classes, which widened the existing learning gaps.

The July uprising in 2024 and the subsequent instability in educational institutions further disrupted their studies. The abrupt reversal of national curriculum, teacher harassment and forced resignations, campus unrest, and deteriorating teacher-student relationships have also impacted the learning environment. Moreover, rising living costs and declining purchasing power have forced many families to cut back on their children's education spending.

This year's results have also exposed the urban-rural divide and inequalities among educational institutions. While leading colleges in Dhaka recorded pass rates of 95-100 percent, some colleges in rural and small town areas performed extremely poorly. At Kishoreganj Model College, for instance, only 6.71 percent of candidates passed, compared with 98.83 percent at Notre Dame College in Dhaka. This is concerning.

The candidates have experienced repeated disruptions over the past six years, beginning with the prolonged school closure during the pandemic. During that time, many students from low-income families could not participate in online classes, which widened the existing learning gaps.

For years, successive governments have invested in buildings and infrastructure without giving enough attention to recruiting competent teachers, providing them with regular training, and improving their salaries and benefits. The consequences are evident in subjects such as English and ICT, where pass rates have deteriorated across the country. In many institutions, teachers of other subjects are assigned to teach English despite lacking adequate proficiency, while ICT lessons remain largely theoretical. This must change.

We urge the government to investigate the reasons behind this year's poor results rather than rely on assumptions. It must conduct a thorough assessment of institutions with low/zero pass rates, examining everything from classroom teaching and teacher recruitment to institutional management and facilities. Institutions with high failure rates must be held accountable, and the struggling ones should be provided with targeted support to improve teaching quality. The government must also address the wider learning gaps that leave students in rural and under-resourced institutions at a disadvantage. Last but not the least, parents must not be harsh on their children who have failed this time and instead should support them through this difficult time.

Fix staffing gaps in govt vet services

Prolonged crisis is compromising animal healthcare

The chronic staff shortages at the country's government livestock facilities that are hindering healthcare facilities for animals is deeply frustrating. According to a report by this daily, more than half of the sanctioned posts for veterinary surgeons, field workers, artificial insemination workers, laboratory staff, and support staff in at least eight districts are vacant. These shortages are disrupting treatment, vaccination drives, disease prevention, artificial insemination, farm inspections, and advisory services, affecting farmers' livelihoods and the country's agricultural economy.

A short survey of more than two dozen livestock farmers from those districts highlighted persistent inadequacy in service delivery, which can be correlated to the 301 vacant posts among 677 sanctioned ones for veterinary personnel. The shortage is equally worrying nationwide. According to the September 2026 report of the Department of Livestock Services, only 7,261 employees are working against 12,915 sanctioned veterinary posts, leaving nearly half of the positions empty. Nearly 60 percent of the veterinary field assistant posts also remain unfilled. A livestock official said recruitment for these posts had remained suspended for nearly a decade, which is difficult to justify in a sector that depends heavily on timely intervention. The government must investigate this without delay, especially because the consequences are no longer abstract ideas.

The persistent shortage of staffers results in farmers having to make repeated trips to understaffed government facilities. Not only is this financially challenging for small-scale farmers, but such repeated, often long travels take a toll on the ailing animals as well. What perhaps contributes to unnecessary affliction is that in many cases, even existing diagnostic facilities remain underutilised because there are not enough personnel to operate them. Such shortcomings are particularly ironic considering the expansion of the livestock sector in recent times. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 43.64 percent of households across the country are involved in livestock and poultry rearing, contributing around 1.81 percent to national GDP and 16.56 percent to agricultural GDP. Leaving such a crucial sector's well-being at risk is neither wise, nor desirable.

While we welcome the Department of Livestock Services' aim to fill at least half of the vacant posts by next year, we strongly urge the government to prioritise recruitment, resolve procedural bottlenecks, and ensure that the existing laboratories and other facilities are fully functional. After all, while private veterinary services have become increasingly available in major cities, they are not a substitute for affordable public services.

The red-to-orange shift must not weaken safeguards in shipbreaking



Ahamedul Karim Chowdhury is former head of Kamalapur Inland Container Depot and Pangaon Inland Container Terminal, and an adjunct faculty member at Bangladesh Maritime University.

■ **AHAMEDUL KARIM CHOWDHURY**

Bangladesh's latest shipbreaking controversy is being framed as a choice between faster industrial approvals and stronger environmental protection. On September 29, a government committee reportedly decided to move shipbreaking from "red" to "orange" environmental category. Industry leaders point to an approval process lasting around 90 days; by contrast, environment experts fear that a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may cease to be mandatory for new yards. Both concerns deserve attention, but the more fundamental weakness is that decisions made before a yard opens, before a ship is dismantled, and before workers enter a hazardous space are not reliably connected.

That broken chain cannot be repaired just with a simpler colour code. The shipbreaking industry needs three distinct, enforceable safeguards: i) environmental clearance for the facility; ii) technical clearance for each incoming vessel; and iii) and operational authorisation for hazardous work. These safeguards serve different purposes, and treating one as a substitute for another creates precisely the gaps in which preventable disasters occur.

The first safeguard is site-specific environmental assessment. A ship recycling yard is not merely a steel-processing factory. Its footprint extends to tidal land, coastal water, sediment, hazardous waste storage, and the nearby communities. The EIA for a new facility or significant expansion should examine drainage, impermeable working surfaces, runoff, pollution containment, emergency access, waste disposal, and cumulative pressure on the coast. Public consultation matters because the surrounding communities live with these consequences. While the government should reduce duplicated paperwork and impose transparent processing deadlines, it should not make a serious assessment optional simply by lowering the industry's risk classification.

The second safeguard begins with the vessel. Every obsolete ship arrives with a different history of cargo, fuel, coatings, residues and enclosed spaces. Its Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) must inform a ship-specific recycling plan, a verified sequence of dismantling, and the equipment and trained personnel needed. The Bangladesh Ship Recycling Board (BSRB) already describes separate approval requirements for facility plans and ship recycling plans. Their implementation should become a meaningful technical examination, rather than a formality repeated for each application.

One further gap concerns ships flying the flag of a state outside the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (HKC). The government inquiry into the toxic gas exposure during the cutting of scrap vessel *MT Rasi* in Ferdous Steel Ship Recycling Yard on August 14 this year reported that the ship had lacked an International Ready for Recycling Certificate because its flag state was not a party to the HKC. Bangladesh should require equivalent verified hazard documentation and risk assessments before authorising such a vessel for dismantling. An absent international certificate must never mean an absent safety check.

The third safeguard is the most immediate: no dangerous task should start without conditions being checked at the workplace. The August incident killed 10 workers, despite the yard's green status. The subsequent official inquiry reported that the gas-free certificate had not included hydrogen sulphide testing, and that critical safety supervision and emergency arrangements were absent. This was not simply a question of whether the site once qualified for a certificate. This was a failure to verify the risks of the particular compartment and operation on the particular day.

A permit-to-work system for confined-space entry, tank draining and hot work must require gas tests appropriate to the actual hazard, competent supervision, continuous or repeated monitoring when conditions may change, available rescue equipment, and named responsibility for authorisation. Workers should be able to refuse unsafe entry without losing their livelihood. If a certificate does not address the space or substance involved, the work must not proceed. These requirements need inspection at the site, not merely upload of documents.

The HKC, which came into force in June 2025, supports this distinction. It requires authorised facilities and ship-specific recycling plans, but does not make Bangladesh's domestic EIA process redundant. Nor does a green designation guarantee continuous compliance. Indeed, a facility can satisfy design requirements while an individual operation may breach basic safety practice. International standards and national environmental law should reinforce one another.

A practical solution is already on the government's agenda. In July, it announced plans for a single online service for ship recycling approvals, alongside JICA-supported work on capacity, training and better plans. That initiative should become more than an electronic application counter. It should link the Department of Environment's site approval, the BSRB's facility and vessel plans, the factory inspectorate's safety notices, and the competent authority's gas clearance records through one traceable workflow. Each organisation would retain its statutory powers, while decisions, deadlines and unresolved deficiencies become visible to other regulators.

Crucially, an unresolved serious safety notice should automatically flag the facility for the authorities responsible for operations and clearance. Inspectors need clear escalation rules, including stop-work directions where legally warranted, deadlines for correction, and documented reinspection before hazardous work resumes. Certification bodies, consultants and testing organisations should also face transparent review when their assessments prove materially incomplete. This would prevent one agency's warning from disappearing in another agency's file.

Regulation should continue after steel-cutting begins. Yards should keep verifiable records of where asbestos, oily residues, contaminated sediment and other hazardous material are transferred, and whether authorised waste facilities actually receive them. Periodic coastal water and sediment monitoring would help distinguish compliance on paper from environmental performance. Publishing a concise yard-level record of serious incidents, inspection findings, and corrective actions would also reward responsible operators and help shipowners choose credible recyclers.

This is also an issue of industrial competitiveness. Investors benefit from predictable approval times, clear technical requirements, and consistent enforcement; responsible yards lose when shortcuts become a cheaper business model. A well-designed system can give complete applications' fixed review milestones and enable parallel assessments where the law permits, without dispensing with environmental scrutiny or physical inspections. Speed should come from better coordination, not weaker tests.

Before implementing the proposed reclassification, the government should publish the legal and technical rationale, consult workers, environmental specialists and yard operators, and demonstrate that mandatory site-level scrutiny will be preserved. It should simultaneously publish a time-bound implementation plan for the integrated approval and compliance system, with measurable targets for inspection follow-up, injury reduction, and waste accountability.

Bangladesh does not need to choose between a competitive ship recycling industry and a safe one. The meaningful distinction is between certificates issued at separate desks and safeguards that remain connected until the last hazardous material leaves the yard. That is the reform the industry and its workers deserve.



A ship recycling yard is not about steel-processing only; its footprint extends to tidal land, coastal water, sediment and hazardous waste storage, not to mention the nearby communities. FILE PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

HSC results should prompt a rethink of how we teach and assess



MM Shahidul Hassan is distinguished professor at Eastern University and former professor at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

■ **MM SHAHIDUL HASSAN**

This year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination results have shaken parents, educationists, and policymakers. The pass rate has fallen to a 22-year low, and the number of students securing GPA-5 across all 11 education boards is at an eight-year low. What's telling is that the failure rate has been rising for several years now.

Acknowledging the unsatisfactory results, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon announced that failed students will get a chance to retake the exams within a month. The gesture is humane, but it raises a hard question: how can students learn in a few weeks what they could not learn in two years? Realistically, this can happen only by memorising answers from question banks, the very habit that largely contributed to the deterioration in our education system.

After more than 40 years of teaching at a university, I see these results as a mirror held up to our education system. They do not prove that students are getting weaker. They warn of deeper problems in how we teach, examine, and assess.

High-stakes exams reward memorisation. Students spend their time learning answers rather than understanding ideas. In the past, rote learning could easily carry a student through to the tertiary levels. Since then, courses have multiplied, and their content has expanded, but assessment has barely changed. Good results largely depend on questions coming from the question bank. Today we live in a world of artificial intelligence, automation, and rapid change, which demands critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability. Sadly, our examination system has not kept pace.

At universities, many students suddenly face a different kind of learning. They have to analyse complex problems, question assumptions, apply knowledge to unfamiliar situations, and develop their own solutions. I have seen capable students struggle not for lack of intelligence, but because no one ever asked them to think without a model answer in hand.

Because success is measured by marks in primary and secondary levels, the whole system is built around marks. Teachers rush through the syllabus, coaching centres drill likely questions, and guidebooks replace textbooks. Anxious parents reinforce the pattern. As a result, the system produces students who can repeat information but cannot use it.

But in today's world memorising and reproducing information is exactly what machines do faster and more accurately than people. What machines cannot easily replace is judgement: asking the right question, weighing conflicting evidence, adapting to the unexpected, and taking responsibility for decisions. A graduate who can only recall answers is competing with a technology that never forgets.

This holds even for students who pass with high GPAs. And a quick exam retake cannot fix this problem. In fact, a retake within one or two months mainly tests cramming. Thus, it should be paired with remedial classes in the weakest subjects and guidance on how to learn, not just what to memorise.

Change must start in primary school, where children first learn whether education means understanding or memorising. A child encouraged to wonder, ask questions, and explain ideas in Class 1 will reach the HSC with strong foundations. A child taught only to copy and recite will not be rescued by reform in Class 11.

The most powerful lever is the examination itself, because exams shape what teachers teach and what students study. If questions can be answered from a guidebook, students will study those. Papers should therefore include more questions that ask students to explain why, compare options, interpret unfamiliar information, or apply an idea to a new situation. Classroom assessment, projects, and practical work should also count, so that a student's future does not rest on three hours in one exam hall.

Better exams, however, will achieve little without better teaching. Since many teachers were trained in the same memorisation culture, they need ongoing training in teaching for understanding, and in setting and marking questions that test reasoning. They also need manageable class sizes and a lighter syllabus, because an overloaded syllabus pushes teachers and students towards speed and memorisation. A leaner curriculum leaves time for discussion, experiments, reading and writing. Once exams change and classroom teaching improves, families will rely less on coaching centres and guidebooks.

This year's results should be treated as information, not only as bad news. Which subjects had the highest failure rates? Did poorly resourced institutions do worse? Honest, public answers would turn a bad result into a guide for reform.

A system built to reward only what students can recall fails both those who fall short and those who succeed, at a time when the world needs curiosity, judgement, and adaptability. Our objective should be to develop people who can think. The sooner we make that choice, the less we will need such a harsh mirror to show us what is wrong.

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Making the most of Japan's investment opportunity will take more than incentives



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■ KHAN KHALID ADNAN

Japan's projection of up to $6.35 billion in private investment in Bangladesh over five years, potentially creating two lakh jobs, deserves serious attention. Announced after the October 27 bilateral summit in Tokyo, it is strictly a projection, not money already secured, a distinction worth keeping in mind. However, Japan will separately provide around $317 million in loans to help Bangladesh address volatility in global energy markets, support broader economic reforms, etc. Overall, Bangladesh should treat the latest opening as an opportunity to earn investor confidence, not an achievement to be booked before factories are built and workers employed.

The significance of the latest development could extend beyond Japanese capital. Successfully delivering projects, resolving systemic difficulties fairly and enforcing rules consistently could reassure investors from other developed and developing countries. The expanded development partnership with Japan—which also saw upgrading of the flagship bilateral initiative, the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B), to "BIG-B for Shared Prosperity"—should smoothly connect infrastructure with skills, technology, and domestic suppliers. But special treatment for a favoured partner would prove little about the wider investment climate unless we take it as an opportunity to improve our institutions rather than simply negotiating exceptions to overcome their weaknesses.

Creating an investment-friendly framework should mean predictable taxation, efficient customs, dependable utilities, and timely, reasoned administrative decisions. "Flexibility" must not become discretion available only to well-connected businesses. Fiscal incentives should have published costs, clear expiry dates, and measurable development objectives. Excessive concessions to certain industries or businesses risk weakening the revenue base needed to finance the infrastructure that investors require. Bangladesh should compete through reliable institutions and productive opportunities, not by transferring commercial risks to taxpayers.

But improving the business environment is only half the task. Bangladesh must also examine the international commitments governing how it treats investors. Investment treaties concern enforceable obligations that can expose the state to international arbitration. The pending S Alam arbitration case highlights why this is necessary. The registry of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) confirms that Mohammed Saiful Alam and others invoked the 2004 Bangladesh-Singapore bilateral investment treaty, with proceedings registered on November 25, 2025. Registration establishes neither Bangladesh's liability nor the merits of the claim. While the case should not be prejudged, it demonstrates that commitments drafted decades earlier remain relevant to contemporary disputes over investment and state action.

The treaty's broad treatment guarantees for investors appear in Articles 3 and 4, while Article 7 provides consent to international arbitration. The concern is not that investors possess enforceable rights. They should. The concern is whether those rights and their limits have been defined carefully enough. Waiting for a tribunal to interpret broad language is an expensive substitute for deciding what Bangladesh intended to promise.

Regional experience offers further lessons. India approved a revised model treaty in 2015, including limits on coverage and requirements concerning domestic remedies. Pakistan, too, has pursued treaty renegotiations based on a new model, as its official performance report records. These are deliberate policy responses, not proof that every resulting choice is optimal or that their existing treaty networks have been comprehensively transformed.

Indeed, India subsequently acknowledged the need to reconsider its Model Bilateral Investment Treaty to balance investor confidence with the state's regulatory powers, as confirmed by the Indian state minister for commerce and industry in the country's parliament on April 1, 2025. Bangladesh should learn from that willingness to reassess. Simply copying restrictive provisions could undermine the confidence reform is supposed to create. The objective should be calibrated protection, not maximal protection for either investors or governments.

However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Bangladesh has done nothing. The Japan-Bangladesh Economic Partnership Agreement, signed in February 2026, contains meaningful safeguards. Article 9.10(2)(b) generally excludes non-discriminatory public-welfare regulation from indirect expropriation, subject to rare circumstances. This helps distinguish legitimate government regulation from measures that effectively take away an investor's investment or deprive them of control over it. It does not, however, automatically answer claims alleging breaches of other treaty protections.

The same agreement exposes the limits of reform. Article 9.21 terminates the 1998 investment treaty when the new agreement enters into force, but preserves the older treaty's substantive and dispute-settlement provisions for previously acquired investments and returns for another 15 years. Modernising the agreement therefore does not immediately modernise every protected investment. Whatever the justification for this transition, its implications deserve public explanation. New safeguards cannot simply be assumed to displace old exposure.

Bangladesh needs a published review of its treaty network, domestic investment legislation, and major investment contracts. That review should identify imprecise guarantees, overlapping remedies, and restrictions on legitimate public-interest regulation. It should distinguish genuine investment protection from opportunistic arrangements designed to manufacture treaty access. Clear rules on qualifying investors, unlawful investments, and abusive restructuring would be preferable to accusations improvised after disputes arise.

Future negotiations should define protection standards precisely and safeguard legitimate health, environmental, climate, taxation, and financial-stability measures. These protections should operate in the relevant clauses, rather than remain aspirations in a preamble. Investor obligations and lawful state counterclaims also deserve consideration. Equally, invoking the public interest must not excuse discriminatory confiscation, political retaliation, or denial of justice. Regulatory autonomy should protect responsible government, not arbitrary government.

The review should lead to prioritised negotiations over existing treaties, not stop at producing another model document. Amendments, replacements, and appropriate joint interpretations should be assessed treaty by treaty, with careful attention to transitional arrangements and outstanding commitments. Reform must be legally effective, rather than merely reassuring in a policy announcement.

This work requires a permanent institutional home. Invest Bangladesh Authority, the relevant ministries, and regulators should work with specialists in foreign investment law and public international law, alongside fiscal and environmental experts. Their involvement should begin before commitments are negotiated, not after an arbitration notice arrives. Selection should turn on demonstrated expertise, with conflicts of interest disclosed. Published proposals and meaningful parliamentary scrutiny would help prevent reform becoming another closed-door exercise.

The same team should improve dispute prevention, preserve records, and coordinate regulatory decisions. Investors need accessible complaint mechanisms and effective remedies; officials need guidance on acting lawfully without abandoning necessary regulation. Progress should be measured through actual investment, jobs, and domestic business linkages, rather than announcements alone.

Japan's opening is too valuable to squander through administrative inertia or legally careless generosity. Bangladesh need not choose between welcoming investment and protecting the public. A credible investment framework should make the country easier to do business in, without making it harder to govern in the public interest.

Creating an investment-friendly framework should mean predictable taxation, efficient customs, dependable utilities, and timely, reasoned administrative decisions. "Flexibility" must not become discretion available only to well-connected businesses. Fiscal incentives should have published costs, clear expiry dates, and measurable development objectives. Excessive concessions to certain industries or businesses risk weakening the revenue base needed to finance the infrastructure that investors require.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman met with several Japanese business leaders during his four-day state visit to the economic giant. FILE PHOTO: PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Health reform can't be left to the ministry alone



Dr Syed Abdul Hamid is professor at the Institute of Health Economics of the University of Dhaka, and convener of Alliance for Health Reforms Bangladesh.

■ SYED ABDUL HAMID

It is hard to find anyone who doesn't want change in Bangladesh's health sector. Patients want affordable, quality healthcare; doctors want a conducive working environment; health workers seek adequate facilities and support; and ordinary citizens want protection from financial hardship when illness strikes. The government has also expressed its commitment to reform. We have recommendations from the Health Sector Reform Commission, electoral pledges, and reform proposals from experts. Most encouragingly, the prime minister has expressed interest in transforming the sector. This recognition of the need for reform is also shared by the health minister, state ministers for health, the prime minister's special assistants, the secretary, and other officials of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

Their goodwill, however genuine, may not be enough to bring about fundamental structural changes because they operate within an established administrative framework shaped by rules, hierarchical decision-making, institutional interests, and longstanding practices. The lack of visible progress may be due to how we approach reform. Perhaps we are entrusting the task of transforming the system to an institution that is itself constrained by structural and bureaucratic complexities.

Consider what is required to strengthen healthcare at the upazila level. This would involve changing recruitment and deployment policies, decentralising financial authority, and reforming financing arrangements. Yet these decisions do not all fall within the MoHFW's jurisdiction. Some require approval from the Ministry of Public Administration, others from the Ministry of Finance, the Planning Commission, or other government institutions. Thus, the MoHFW is expected to implement changes over which it does not have full authority. Even reforms within its own jurisdiction can be delayed by administrative procedures, multiple layers of approval, and institutional interests.

This is not about blaming individuals. The fundamental question is whether an institution can transform a system when it is itself deeply embedded in that system. Over time, institutions may become more accustomed to preserving existing arrangements than initiating fundamental change. As a result, support for reform often fails to translate into implementation.

Lessons from other countries

In 2001, Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made universal health coverage a major political priority. Determined to fulfil an electoral commitment, his government acted swiftly, engaging reform-oriented experts and introducing fundamental changes in healthcare financing and purchasing. The National Health Security Act was enacted in 2002, establishing the National Health Security Office (NHSO). Operating outside the conventional administrative structure of the Ministry of Public Health, the NHSO was entrusted with responsibility for healthcare financing and strategic purchasing. Strong political leadership, expert preparedness, and a dedicated institutional structure helped Thailand achieve universal health coverage within a relatively short period.

Turkey offers a similar example. In 2003, the government launched the Health Transformation Programme, making health sector restructuring a major national priority under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Social Security Institution (SSI) emerged through the consolidation of existing social security institutions, and coordinated reforms followed, including the consolidation of health insurance arrangements, introduction of family medicine, greater administrative and financial autonomy for hospitals, and improvements in health workforce performance.

India's experience also demonstrates the importance of political leadership. Ayushman Bharat was launched as a flagship national programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. The National Health Authority (NHA) was established in January 2019, as the successor to the National Health Agency, a specialised implementing agency outside the conventional departmental structure of the Union Ministry of Health. It coordinates implementation involving central and state governments, public and private hospitals, and technology providers.

Despite differences in their political and administrative contexts, these countries share an important lesson: health reform was not treated merely as a routine responsibility of the health ministry. It was elevated to a national priority through leadership at the highest level, supported by dedicated institutions and implementation mechanisms. Bangladesh must adapt these lessons to its own context.

Bangladesh now needs a strong national health transformation initiative operating beyond the conventional administrative structure of the MoHFW, led by the prime minister himself. This should not be an alternative ministry but a mechanism to provide the political authority and coordination needed to implement reforms across the health ministry and other relevant institutions. A national health reform taskforce or transformation team could be established under the PM. It should include representatives from the ministries of health, finance, public administration, and planning, alongside experts in health economics, public health, administration, financing, and management. A small, professional, full-time implementation unit should support the task force and report directly to the PM.

Its first responsibility should be to develop a clear roadmap for health transformation by aligning the Health Sector Reform Commission's recommendations with the government's electoral commitments. Priority should be given to structural reforms in health financing, human resource management, primary healthcare, hospital management, medicine supply, and accountability for service delivery. Second, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) should facilitate decisions and remove bottlenecks where reforms require coordination among multiple ministries and institutions. Issuing recommendations or instructions alone will not be enough. Each reform must have a designated responsible institution, a clear timeline, an allocated budget and measurable outcomes.

Third, the initiative should receive appropriate authority and administrative and financial flexibility to overcome conventional bureaucratic constraints and accelerate implementation. Such powers, however, must be accompanied by transparency, auditing, and accountability for results. Otherwise, the new structure could gradually become another bureaucratic institution. Fourth, reform must produce visible improvements in people's lives. The availability of essential doctors, nurses, and medicines at upazila health facilities; access to diagnostic services in public hospitals and improvements in the quality of care should be among the principal indicators of progress.

Bangladesh does not lack discussions, expert opinions, and recommendations on health sector reform. What is missing is a strong state-led initiative capable of overcoming administrative constraints and translating proposals into action. The PM's interest in the sector and his efforts to seek information are certainly encouraging. However, if his involvement remains limited to receiving updates or issuing instructions, the desired transformation is unlikely to happen. He must become the direct champion and driving force behind the reform process.

Health sector transformation is not merely the health ministry's responsibility; it is the responsibility of the state. When essential changes remain trapped in the administrative structure, they require the active engagement of the country's highest political leadership.

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"নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

বাংলাদেশের মহা হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয় এবং এর আওতাধীন ফিনান্সিয়াল ম্যানেজমেন্ট একাডেমি (ফিমা) ও অডিট অধিদপ্তরসমূহের জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০২৬ এর ১৬ তম গ্রেডভুক্ত নিম্নোক্ত পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের জন্য পদের পাশে বর্ণিত শর্তে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে (https://cag.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে) আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোনো আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

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২। বাংলাদেশের মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট www.cag.org.bd এবং বাংলাদেশের মহা-হিসাব নিরীক্ষক ও নিয়ন্ত্রক এর কার্যালয়ের টেলিটক পোর্টাল https://cag.teletalk.com.bd এ বিজ্ঞপ্তিসহ এতদসংক্রান্ত সকল তথ্য দেখা যাবে অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তিটির বিস্তারিত পাওয়া যাবে।

৩। উল্লেখ্য, অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ০৩/১১/২০২৬খ্রি. সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা এবং আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ২৫/১১/২০২৬খ্রি. বিকাল ৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।

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সিএজি কার্যালয়ের টেলিটক পোর্টালে প্রবেশের QR Code

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Prantar paves new path in his career

SHARMIN JOYA

"Artistic growth means deliberately stepping outside the comfort zone," says Prantar Dastider, who recently ventured beyond acting to explore a new side of his career. Having long been the "answerable guy" at press interactions, he was drawn to experience things from the interviewer's perspective. Inspired by red-carpet formats across Hollywood, Bollywood, Korea and BAFTA, he took up the opportunity to host Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT Awards red carpet, testing his spontaneity through live, unpredictable interactions.

Behind the scenes, the assignment required intense script preparation and guest research alongside co-host, actor Priyontee Urbee. Yet on event day, Prantar deliberately entered the venue with a blank slate. "After entering the venue, I intentionally decided to clear my mind so I could remain completely spontaneous," he shares. Beyond managing the floor, the experience brought the thrill of direct networking. "I am grateful to my co-host for supporting me throughout."

"It was an unmatched excitement to talk directly with acclaimed directors and colleagues whose work I had long admired from afar but had never spoken to face-to-face," he notes.

Addressing discussions of an OTT industry slowdown following its initial post-2022 surge, the ***Antonagar*** actor remains resolutely optimistic. "I am not frustrated at all," Prantar emphasises. "A down phase doesn't mean something is going to be worse; rather, it means something better is coming. Audiences are already familiar with streaming platforms, so this is our scope to experiment with deeper story arcs that we hadn't thought about before".

On the acting front, Prantar speaks passionately about his upcoming project ***Separation***, directed by Giasuddin Selim, sharing the screen with Pori Moni and Imtiaz Barshon. "Selim *bhai* is a complete house of energy—he is the biggest charger on set," Prantar describes enthusiastically. "He makes sure every single character graph holds purpose". Rooted in human drama, the story explores the subtle realities of everyday relationships across spouses, siblings, and colleagues. "When contemporary stories reflect regular life, people deeply connect with the content," he explains.

Looking ahead, Prantar's artistic footprint continues to expand across multiple formats. He has recently finished dubbing for director Rashed Chowdhury's government-grant feature ***Sokhi Rongomala***, which is entering post-production ahead of international film festival circuits. He also shared that he is also working on projects to be released on the upcoming Valentine's and Eid.

Adding another major dimension to his hosting career, Prantar is set to anchor the main stage at the Bangladesh Achievers Awards 2026. Recognising the distinct shift from red carpet interviewing, he approaches the main stage with a measured mindset. "On the red carpet, you have the room to be spontaneous, but the main stage demands a strictly composed demeanour," Prantar reflects. "It is a whole lot of a bigger responsibility".



PHOTO: CREATENT



Sanjoy to perform at SAFF Championship opening ceremony

Bangladeshi-origin American DJ and producer Sanjoy Deb is set to headline the opening ceremony of the TECNO SAFF Championship Bangladesh 2026 on November 5.

Having previously performed at the FIFA World Cup 2026 opening ceremony in Toronto, the international artiste expressed his excitement about returning to perform in his home country. Organised in partnership with iSmartu Technology BD Limited, the performance marks a major highlight for the regional football spectacle.

The SAFF Championship will run from November 5 to 17 in Bangladesh, featuring national teams from across South Asia competing for the regional title.

Ferdausi Rahman reflects on her musical journey in new BTV show



Legendary singer Ferdausi Rahman appeared as the first guest on Bangladesh Television's (BTV) new programme ***Kingbodontir Sannidhye***, which premiered yesterday.

The inaugural episode explored different aspects of her long musical career, artistic journey and achievements, offering insights into her experiences and reflections from a lifetime dedicated to music.

The programme aims to highlight the lives, struggles and achievements of distinguished personalities from various fields and share their experiences and values with the younger generation.

Kingbodontir Sannidhye will air on the first and third Sundays of every month at 10 pm. Produced by Tanvir Ahmed Khan, the programme is presented by Ferdausi Ahmed Chowdhury.

EVENTS

'Invisible Stories'



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy hosts l***nvisible Stories***, a cross-cultural theatrical production blending Bengali folklore with modern mystery. Combining body puppetry, live Sundarbans folk music, and a French-Bangladeshi creative partnership, the performance brings ancient spirits to life, offering an evocative exploration of myth, memory, and local storytelling traditions.

Date: Friday–Saturday | November 6–7, 2026
Time: 6 pm onwards
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

Parties run on power-centric business model

FROM PAGE 12

Except for the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), no party constitution limits how many terms an individual can serve as chief.

Although party constitutions provide for leadership elections, most parties choose chiefs by voice vote instead of secret ballot. Only the CPB and Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party) were found to have had multiple candidates competing for the top position.

National councils were irregular in 16 parties, while decisions often came from individual leaders rather than elected forums. Grassroots committees mainly implemented central decisions, with little say in policy or strategy.

The study said most parties bypassed the Representation of the People Order (RPO) requirement to consider candidate panels proposed by local committees.

Instead, nomination boards interviewed aspirants and gave party chiefs' preferences the greatest weight.

Many party constitutions lacked clear eligibility criteria. Wealth, muscle power, and unquestioning loyalty influenced selections, particularly in influential parties. TIB reported allegations of awarding nominations in exchange for money in three of these parties.

Businesspeople made up 48.5 percent of candidates and 59.9 percent of elected MPs in the 2026 parliamentary election, according to the study. The corresponding figures in 2024 were 57.6 percent and 65.3 percent.

FINANCES QUESTIONED

TIB found a huge difference between the income and expenditure accounts parties officially provided, and the figures estimated in the research.

"In the existing political culture, huge amounts of money are required to conduct the activities of parties; the management of that money is carried out completely through informal and non-transparent processes," said the report.

TIB estimated that a party maintaining offices and regular activities nationwide down to union ward level could spend Tk 1,532 crore to Tk 2,188 crore annually, excluding election expenses.

By contrast, the highest expenditure reported in the published 2025 accounts of four parties was Tk 23.91 crore, by Jamaat-e-Islami.

The BNP reported Tk 15.26 crore.

The estimate is a model based on organisational reach, not verified spending by any party, so comparing these figures cannot establish undeclared expenditure.

The study said parties lacked clear financial policies and annual budgets.

Local activities were often financed informally by individuals and omitted from central accounts.

None of the 16 active party websites reviewed published financial reports or election expenditure accounts.

TIB also alleged coercive fundraising in some cases, and donations from wealthy people seeking positions, nominations or future benefits.

It further alleged that many parties submitted nominal audit reports prepared for payment, while neither the parties nor the Election Commission published the audited accounts.

Iftekharuzzaman said such personal dependence and financial opacity created a large gap between official accounts and reality.

The study also presented statements from party leaders on election expenditure. One said, "In some areas, Tk 25 lakh is spent in a single day on election expenses."

Another, referring to election spending, said, "In the election field, the Tk 1,000 note is the smallest denomination."

A district-level leader said a candidate from a major party spent more than Tk 50 crore in the 12th parliamentary election.

TIB estimated that candidates in the 2026 election spent, on average, 169.5 percent above the permitted limit.

Meeting the organisational requirements for registering a new party could cost Tk 33 lakh to Tk 76 lakh, TIB estimated. This is not a government registration fee but the cost of maintaining the offices and documents the rules require.

Citing Ain o Salish Kendra data, it reported 4,280 incidents of intra- and inter-party political violence between January 2013 and August 2026, leaving 746 dead and 46,351 injured.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Despite commitments to nominate at least five percent women candidates in the 2026 election, 13 of the studied parties fielded none.

Women made up only 3.1 percent of the nominees of the 12 other participating parties that nominated women, compared with 7.9 percent among independent candidates.

Across the election, women were 83 of 2,028 candidates, or 4.09 percent.

Only two of the 32 parties had women in at least 33 percent of central committee positions, the level parties are required to work towards by 2030.

Jamaat and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis had none.

TIB said loyalty and family connections often outweighed merit when women were nominated to reserved parliamentary seats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TIB recommended amending the RPO and party registration rules, publishing independently audited accounts, and empowering the Election Commission to scrutinise finances.

It also recommended holding regular secret-ballot leadership elections, defining tenure limits, expanding women's and grassroots participation, and introducing effective disciplinary safeguards.

Iftekharuzzaman said internal reforms were essential to ensure good governance within political parties, which he described as key institutions of democracy.

Khulna Tanti Dal leader hacked to death

FROM PAGE 12

Rahman said the killing apparently stemmed from a dispute over payment for a refrigerator bought on credit.

"A Chhatra Dal leader owns a refrigerator shop, while the deceased ran a computer shop. Humayun had bought a refrigerator from his shop on credit. A dispute arose over the outstanding payment," the OC said, quoting locals.

Gopi Kishore Roy, assistant commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said police received information about the attack around 7:00pm and rescued Humayun from the scene.

"There were several sharp-weapon injury marks on his body. We have collected CCTV footage. We have initially identified some suspects, but we cannot disclose their identities at this stage due to the ongoing investigation," he said.

Police were conducting raids to arrest those involved, he added.

France begins

FROM PAGE 12

Portugal's housing crisis.

On Saturday evening, hooded rioters looted stores in Frankfurt after tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets across Germany's biggest cities to demand better education and lower living costs.

Official numbers suggested turnout was below the 182,000 participants that 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.

German authorities said Saturday's demonstrations, which coincide with Halloween festivities, had been largely peaceful, but warned of attempts by extremist groups to exploit the movement.

Two confess in journalist Alif murder case

FROM PAGE 12

Police earlier produced them before the Durgapur Chowki Court last evening, General Recording Officer Kamrul Hasan of the court told The Daily Star.

Detective Branch of Netrokona arrested Emon and Sabbir during a raid in the Dhanpur Bazar area of Sunamganj's Bishwambharpur upazila on Saturday. They were later handed over to Durgapur police.

Contacted, Durgapur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Khondokar Shaker Ahmed said both suspects admitted their involvement in the killing.

He declined to give details of the statements in the interest of the investigation.

Police were now verifying the names, addresses and alleged involvement of individuals identified by the accused during interrogation, he said.

The OC also said multiple cases, including on murder charges, were pending against Emon and Sabbir.

According to investigators, Emon was the prime accused in a case filed over an attack on Alif on November 10 last year. Sabbir was also named as an accused.

On the night of October 15 this year, Alif was shot dead in the Telanjiya area near Uttrail Bazar on the Shyamganj-Birishiri road in Durgapur.

He was the Netrokona correspondent of private IP television channel Ruposhi Bangla, and ran a Facebook page named "Detective Article", where he published reports on border smuggling, crime, and other irregularities.

A tale of two systems

FROM PAGE 12

rooted weaknesses.

Many schools continue to suffer from a shortage of qualified teachers. Laboratories remain inadequate, ICT facilities are unevenly distributed and sometimes non-existent. And practical science education is very limited.

Particularly concerning is the poor performance in English, mathematics and ICT -- the subjects that form the foundation for higher education, employability and participation in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Reliance on private tuition demonstrates the ineffectiveness of classroom instruction, another systemic failure of our system.

Education quality is also linked to the quality of teachers.

In Bangladesh, teachers are relatively low-paid, discouraging many talented and high-achieving students from choosing it as a career.

Many begin their careers without adequate training in pedagogy or classroom management. Even when training is provided, inadequate as it is, teachers face challenges in applying what they learn in overcrowded classrooms with limited resources.

Bringing about these changes in skills and resources requires substantial public investment, which remains deficient.

Bangladesh's education spending hovers around 2 percent of GDP, well below UNESCO's recommended 4 to 6 percent, or 15 to 20 percent of total government expenditure.

But unlike physical infrastructure, which generates immediate and visible political dividends, investment in education takes years, often up to a decade, to bear fruit. As a result, education has rarely received the priority it deserves.

The stark contrast between the outstanding performance of cadet colleges and the poor results in mainstream education demonstrates a simple reality: educational achievement is shaped not only by students' abilities, but also by the quality of the opportunities and support they receive.

Until those opportunities are distributed more equitably, disparities in outcomes are likely to persist.

Keep factories running

FROM PAGE 1

vandalism or attempts to create unrest during the protests.

Labour Minister Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who also attended the meeting, alleged that a political group was trying to destabilise the government.

"It is clear that, with December approaching, members of a political party and its affiliated organisations are engaged in efforts to destabilise the government. We will confront these politically," he said.

Salahuddin also alleged that the unrest was being instigated from across the border, with some groups exploiting garment workers to disrupt production and exports.

"Based on the information available to us, our analysis suggests that elements from across the border are attempting to create instability by using innocent garment workers," he said.

The home minister further alleged that masked individuals had infiltrated the protests to pursue vested interests. He said those involved in violence had already been brought under the law and warned that authorities would take a firm stance against any unlawful activities.

Asked about the government's response if workers resumed protests today, Salahuddin said genuine workers and labour organisations were not involved in violence and stressed that workers' demands should be resolved through dialogue.

He said a wage board was already in place to determine minimum wages and that the prime minister had instructed relevant agencies to protect workers' rights and improve their living standards.

The minister also urged factory owners to keep their plants operating, resolve disputes through discussions with workers and avoid disruptions to exports.

Earlier in the day, garment workers blocked roads in Mirpur, Savar-Ashulia, and Gazipur, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000. The protests disrupted traffic and were marred by clashes with police and incidents of vandalism and arson.

Son's HSC success costs Chuadanga JCD chief committee

FROM PAGE 12

secretary Mominur Rahman Malita told Prothom Alo that the unit had long been urging the central leadership to form a new committee as its term had expired.

However, he said he had not expected the committee to be dissolved under such circumstances and criticised Shahjahan for publicising his son's results.

Shahjahan said he had no objection to the decision.

He said he had been involved in JCD politics for 28 years and hoped to join Jubo Dal if the central leadership approved.

Over half of children

FROM PAGE 3

Development (IID) and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Prof Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, adviser to the prime minister on the ministries of finance and planning, attended as chief guest alongside lawmakers from different parties and development partners.

Presenting the keynote, IID Founder and CEO Syeed Ahamed said, "Our survey shows more than half of the children aged 5 to 15 cannot read or do basic math properly. Even those who can read fail to comprehend the text due to rote learning. Previously, the commute to school was unsafe for girls; now, even schools, madrasas, and residential institutions are no longer safe."

He stressed joint accountability by lawmakers and civil society.

BNP MP Mahmuda Habiba, chair of the parliamentary standing committee on the primary and mass education ministry, criticised parallel education streams for creating inequality from childhood.

"Through kindergartens, we ensure inequality from the very beginning. Bangladesh will truly achieve equality the day we pass a law mandating that every child -- whether yours, mine, or the prime minister's -- attends a government primary school up to class two."

She said school midday meals had been reintroduced and committee members would divide into zones to monitor education officers down to the union level.

She said over 6 percent of children never attended school, while child marriage remained near 48 percent.

BNP lawmaker Fazley Huda Babul (Naogaon-3) also called for uniform primary education.

"A primary teacher joins at a salary of Tk 12,000, whereas a driver earning over Tk 20,000 sends his child to a kindergarten. Primary education must be uniform for all."

Citing Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data, Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mardia Mumtaz said only a third of children from the poorest 20 percent of families could read.

"In at least 60 percent of institutions, one teacher theoretically conducts four classes simultaneously, and many sign attendance registers in advance," she said.

She also raised concerns over unmonitored English-medium schools and madrasas operating as alternative day-care centres in industrial zones.

BNP MP ABM Mosharrof Hossain (Patuakhali-4) alleged that an education officer in his upazila had offered to overlook teacher absenteeism if each of the 176 government primary schools paid Tk 1,000 monthly.

BNP MP Ashraf Uddin (Narsingdi-5), chair of the parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry, criticised poor monitoring, citing an incident in which officials spent three days at the Narsingdi circuit house to inspect a school 90 minutes from Dhaka.

Questioning the quality of local engineering diploma colleges, he said diploma graduates made 100 spelling mistakes on a single page of Bangla.

NCP lawmaker Atiqur Rahman Mujahid demanded special allowances for teachers in riverine char areas.

Independent MP Sultana Jesmen called for counselling and makeshift learning spaces at coastal cyclone shelters, where education remained suspended for months after disasters.

Sara L Taylor, team leader of the Building State Effectiveness and Accountability Programme at The Asia Foundation, welcomed the increased education budget and urged lawmakers to bring local findings to policymakers and question education officers directly.

International Republican Institute Resident Program Director John Fluharty called for cross-party consensus on education standards and monitoring, suggesting employers be included in discussions as many graduates lacked basic maths skills.

Prof Titumir said the government had inherited severe problems in education and the economy, with funds spent mainly on constructing buildings while 51 percent of students remained innumerate.

"We have raised the education allocation to 2 percent of GDP and will gradually take it to 5 percent," he said.

He said academic, sports and cultural calendars would be introduced in schools this November to make learning more engaging.

Discussions were also underway with Google on accelerated teacher training and digital classroom tools, while comprehensive textbook and curriculum revisions were scheduled for January, he added.

Democracy International Chief of Party Md Aminul Ehsan, Md Jahedul Alam Hitu, assistant private secretary to the political adviser at the Prime Minister's Office, and Khelafat Majlis MP Mahbuba Hakim also spoke.

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

Zero passes, twice in a row

FROM PAGE 3

boards, 293 institutions recorded zero passes this year, up from 202 last year. Of these, 181 were under the nine general boards.

Dinajpur Board had the highest number of zero-pass institutions among the general boards, with 49 this year, up from 43 last year.

At Char Shoulmari Adorsho Mohila College in Kurigram, all 15 candidates failed last year and all 24 this year. At Kabiraj Hat College in Dinajpur, the figures were 10 and eight.

Under Jashore Board, the number of zero-pass institutions fell from 20 to 16, but five appeared on both years' lists.

At Buzruk Sreekundi College in Magura, eight candidates failed last year and 15 this year. At Kapilmuni Sahachari Vidyamandir in Khulna's Paikgachha, the figures were five and three.

Islamia Mohila College in Satkhira and Model Mohila College in Khulna were also repeat cases.

Under Cumilla Board, four institutions appeared on both lists, including Cambridge City College and Torabganj High School and College in Lakshmipur. At Cambridge City, four candidates failed last year and one this year. At Torabganj, the figures were four and two.

Under Barishal Board, Medua College in Bhola and Auliapur Sabina Akter High School and College in Patuakhali appeared on both lists. Five of Medua's seven registered candidates sat this year's examinations, but none passed.

Both candidates at Meron Sun College in Chattogram's Chandgaon failed this year, the same as in 2025.

Some institutions had only one or two examinees.

Under Rajshahi Board, at least 31 of the 39 zero-pass institutions had 10 or fewer examinees. Seven had one candidate each and six had two.

Rajshahi Commerce College and Bholahat College had one examinee each, while Sarkutia School and College in Natore had two. None passed.

Under Jashore Board, Jagannathpur Ideal College in Kushtia and Morka Jagoron College in Meherpur had one examinee each, while Gopinathpur MA Khaleque School and College in Magura had two. All failed.

Others had considerably more examinees. All 49 candidates from AK Fazlul Haque MCA College in Satkhira and all 27 from Koyra Shakbaria School and College in Khulna failed.

At Majidbaria College in Patuakhali's Mirzaganj, the sole examinee failed. Established in 2002, the college has eight teachers and holds classes in dilapidated tin-shed rooms.

Principal Faruk Mallik said the college had yet to secure monthly pay order enlistment, while poor infrastructure had contributed to low enrolment.

At Kadbhanu Memorial Secondary Girls' School and College in Barguna's Betagi, neither of the two examinees passed.

Principal Shamima Nasrin said admissions to its higher secondary section had been suspended after 2024 due to a classroom shortage. The institution had applied to close the college section.

Assistant Headmaster Saiful Islam said many students have enrolled at another college established nearby.

The figures refer to HSC examinees, not total enrolment, which may include Class XI students and pupils in school sections.

Jashore Board Secretary Prof Abdul Matin said show-cause notices had been issued to heads of zero-pass institutions last year. Fresh notices would follow this year's results, he said.

Dinajpur Board Secretary Prof Nur Abdur Razzaq said principals of zero-pass colleges would be summoned to explain their results. The board might recommend cancellation of their registration.

Barishal Board Examination Controller Sharif Morshed Reza said some institutions had been established under political influence despite insufficient demand, leaving them struggling to attract students.

Showkat Aziz

FROM PAGE 3

conviction warrants against all eight, as none were present when the verdict was delivered.

Russell and Rubel were each sentenced to seven years in prison and fined Tk 10 lakh for abetting criminal misconduct. They were also sentenced to seven more years and fined Tk 10 lakh each for abetting criminal breach of trust.

The court also ordered the cancellation of the plot allotments to Russell and Rubel, sons of Partex Group founder MA Hashem, and the confiscation of the plots in favour of the state.

জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
প্রকিউরমেন্ট ডিপার্টমেন্ট
প্রধান কার্যালয়
৪৮, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০ ।

সূত্রঃ ডিজিএম/পিডি/তালিকাভুক্তি/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস/বিজ্ঞপ্তি/২০২৬ তারিখঃ ০১.১১.২০২৬

কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস তালিকাভূক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তিঃ

জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা এর দৈনন্দিন চিঠিপত্র, ডকুমেন্টস, পার্সেল ইত্যাদি দেশের অভ্যন্তরে বিভিন্ন গন্তব্যে প্রেরণের জন্য স্থানীয় কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তির লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত ও প্রতিষ্ঠিত কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে প্রকিউরমেন্ট ডিপার্টমেন্ট-এর নির্ধারিত ফর্ম-এ দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

বিস্তারিত নিয়মাবলী তালিকাভুক্তির দরপত্র সিডিউল নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস হতে জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি. প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে আবেদনপত্র বাবদ ২০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা ও ১৫% ভ্যাট ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকাসহ মোট ২৩০০/-(দুই হাজার তিনশত) টাকার পে-অর্ডার জমা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে আবেদনপত্র অফিস চলাকালীন ১২.১১.২০২৬ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০টার মধ্যে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। দরপত্র সিডিউল মোতাবেক প্রস্তুতকৃত দরপত্র আগামী ১২.১১.২০২৬ তারিখে বিকাল ৩.০০ টার মধ্যে অত্র ডিপার্টমেন্ট-এ রক্ষিত দরপত্র বক্সে ফেলতে হবে এবং একই দিনে বিকাল ৩.৩০ টায় দরপত্র খোলা হবে। তালিকাভুক্তির কার্যক্রম পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে।

ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করা ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং সর্বশেষ দরদাতার দরপত্র গ্রহণে বাধ্য নয়।

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তারিখ: ১৬ কার্তিক, ১৪৩৩ / ০১ নভেম্বর, ২০২৬

আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা ক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ তাঁত বোর্ডের আওতাধীন "০৫টি বেসিক সেন্টারে ০৫টি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র ,০১টি ফ্যাশন ডিজাইন ইনস্টিটিউট এবং ০২টি মার্কেট প্রমোশন কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" প্রকল্পের জন্য আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবা ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত অর্থ বিভাগের আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবাগ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০২৫ ও অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়ের ২১-০৯-২০২৬ তারিখের ০৭.০০.০০০০.০০০.১৫৩.৯৯.০০০১.১৯-৭৭৩ নং স্মারকের পরিপত্র অনুযায়ী সরাসরি চুক্তি সম্পাদনের মাধ্যমে নিম্নবর্ণিত ক্যাটাগরি ও শর্তসাপেক্ষে সেবাসমূহ ক্রয়ের জন্য বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে আগ্রহপত্র/দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও সেবামূল্য	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (নূন্যতম)	অভিজ্ঞতা
০১.	পাম্প (অপারেটর) সেবা (ক্যাটাগরি-২) টাঃ ১৭,৯৯২/-	০১ (এক) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা
০২.	গার্ডেনার (বাগানকর্মী) সেবা (ক্যাটাগরি-৪) টাঃ ১৭,১০৮/-	০১ (এক) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা
০৩.	বাবুর্চি (কুক) সেবা (ক্যাটাগরি-৪) টাঃ ১৭,১০৮/-	০১ (এক) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা
০৪.	সহকারী বাবুর্চি(কুক) সেবা (ক্যাটাগরি-৫) টাঃ ১৬,৬৭৩/-	০১ (এক) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা
০৫.	সিকিউরিটি গার্ড (নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী) সেবা(ক্যাটাগরি-৫) টাঃ ১৬,৬৭৩/-	০৬ (ছয়) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা
০৬.	ক্লিনার (পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী) সেবা (ক্যাটাগরি-৫) টাঃ ১৬,৬৭৩/-	০৬ (ছয়) জন	৮ম শ্রেণি পাস	০১ (এক) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা

নিয়োগের শর্তাবলি:

০১. আবেদনপত্র ২৬ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ তারিখে বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে চেয়ারম্যান, বাংলাদেশ তাঁত বোর্ড বরাবর সরাসরি বা ডাকযোগে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।
০২. আবেদন পত্রের সাথে সদ্য তোলা ১ (এক) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদের কপি, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি, নিবন্ধিত মোবাইল নম্বর এবং যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদ প্রদান করতে হবে।
০৩. বয়সসীমা: বর্ণিত পদসমূহের ক্ষেত্রে জারিকৃত বিজ্ঞপ্তির তারিখে বয়সসীমা ১৮ হতে ৬০ বছর এবং শারীরিক সক্ষমতা থাকতে হবে (আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবাগ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০২৫ অনুযায়ী)।
০৪. উল্লেখিত সেবা ক্রয়ের মেয়াদ ০১ জানুয়ারি ২০২৭ অথবা চুক্তির তারিখ হতে ৩০ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৯ পর্যন্ত কার্যকর থাকবে।
০৫. অসদাচরণ বা কর্মে অবহেলা করলে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে চুক্তি বাতিল করা যাবে।
০৬. আউটসোর্সিং সেবাকর্মীগণ বাংলাদেশ তাঁত বোর্ডের কোন স্থায়ী পদে নিয়োগের জন্য অগ্রাধিকার পাবে না।
০৭. সেবা ক্রয়ের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের বিদ্যমান বিধি-বিধান এবং পরবর্তীতে এ সংক্রান্ত বিধি-বিধানে কোন সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
০৮. প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।
০৯. প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়সূচি এসএমএস এর মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে এবং বিস্তারিত তথ্য www.bhb.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশ করা হবে।
১০. ইতঃপূর্বে সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবাপ্রদানকৃত সেবাকর্মীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।
১১. ক্রমিক নং ০৬ এ উল্লিখিত ক্লিনার (পরিচ্ছন্নতা কর্মী) সেবা ক্রয়ে হরিজন সম্প্রদায়ের প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।
১২. একই ব্যক্তি একাধিক পদে আবেদন করতে পারবে না।
১৩. সর্বক্ষেত্রে আউটসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় সেবাগ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০২৫ ও সংশোধিত ২০২৬ এর শর্তাবলি অনুসরণ করা হবে।
১৪. কর্তৃপক্ষ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

০১/১১/২৬
(কে এম আবুল কালাম আজাদ)
পরিচালক (প্রশাসন) (উপসচিব)
ফোন: ০২-৫৮১৫২৮৯৮

GD-2644

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রাজবাড়ী
স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা
www.rajbari.gov.bd

নম্বর ০৫.৩০.৮২০০.০০০.০১৮.১১.০০০১.২০২৬-৩৪৩

তারিখ : ১৩ কার্তিক ১৪৩৩ / ২৯ অক্টোবর ২০২৬

"নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়ের স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগের স্মারক নং-৪৬.০০.০০০০.০১৮.১১.০০৮.২৬-১৫৭২, তারিখ: ০৭/০৭/২০২৬ খ্রি. মূলে জারিকৃত ছাড়পত্রের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী এর অধীন ইউনিয়ন পরিষদসমূহের নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদসমূহ পূরণের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৬ সনের জাতীয় বেতন স্কেলে প্রদত্ত বেতন ভাতায় অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে জনবল নিয়োগের জন্য রাজবাড়ী জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাদের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে (https://dcrajbari.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে) নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রম	পদের নাম	বেতন গ্রেড ও স্কেল	শূন্যপদের সংখ্যা	যোগ্যতা	মন্তব্য
১	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ প্রশাসনিক কর্মকর্তা	১৪তম গ্রেড ২৩৫০০-৫৬৮০০	০৫ (পাঁচ)টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অন্যূন দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-সহ স্নাতক বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	সরকার কর্তৃক ৭৫% এবং ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ কর্তৃক ২৫% হারে বেতন ভাতা প্রাপ্য হবেন

আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলি অবশ্যই প্রেরণ করতে হবে:

১। ০১ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়স ন্যূনতম ১৮ বছর এবং সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর এর মধ্যে থাকতে হবে। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
২। সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের সকল শর্ত পূরণসাপেক্ষে আবেদনপত্র পূরণের সময় Departmental Candidate এর ঘরে টিক (√) চিহ্ন দিতে হবে। অন্যদের ক্ষেত্রে এ শর্ত প্রযোজ্য নয়। তবে সকল চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদেরকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তি ছাড়পত্রের মূলকপি জমা দিতে হবে।
৩। এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত শূন্যপদ পূরণের ক্ষেত্রে স্থানীয় সরকার (ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ) কর্মচারী চাকরি বিধিমালা, ২০১১ ও এতদ্‌সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় সরকারি নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
৪। চাকরির জন্য আবেদন আগামী ০৩/১১/২০২৬ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে ৩০/১১/২০২৬ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:০০ টা পর্যন্ত অনলাইনে দাখিল করা যাবে। **সরাসরি/ডাকযোগে কোন দরখাস্ত গ্রহণ করা হবে না। সরাসরি বা ডাকযোগে প্রেরিত সকল দরখাস্ত বাতিল মর্মে গণ্য হবে।**
৫। নিয়োগের জন্য প্রার্থী নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে নিয়োগ বিধি মোতাবেক লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। কেবল লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীগণ মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
৬। নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের বিদ্যমান বিধি-বিধান ও কোটা সম্পর্কিত সর্বশেষ সরকারি নীতিমালা প্রযোজ্য হবে এবং পরবর্তীতে এ সংক্রান্ত বিধি-বিধানে কোন সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
৭। লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।
৮। লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল সনদ/অনাপত্তিপত্র/কাগজপত্রাদির মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে এবং পূরণকৃত Application formসহ প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত একসেট ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। দাখিল/ উপস্থাপনযোগ্য সকল সনদ/অনাপত্তিপত্র/কাগজপত্রাদির তালিকা নিম্নরূপ:
ক) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার মূল/সাময়িক সনদপত্র;
খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট পৌরসভার মেয়র/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/প্রশাসক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র;
গ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র ও অনলাইন জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ;
ঘ) প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক (নাম ও আইডিযুক্ত) প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র;
ঙ) কোটার ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ/প্রমাণপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে;
চ) চাকরিরত প্রার্থীদের সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তিপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
৯। আবেদন গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে;
১০। অসত্য/ত্রুটিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোন তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র নিয়োগ কার্যক্রমের যে কোন পর্যায়ে বা নিয়োগদানের পরেও অসত্য/ত্রুটিপূর্ণ/ভুয়া প্রমাণিত হলে বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করা হলে তার দরখাস্ত/নির্বাচন/নিয়োগ সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
১১। সন্তোষজনক পুলিশ ভেরিফিকেশন রিপোর্ট এবং সিভিল সার্জনের স্বাস্থ্যগত প্রত্যয়ন চাকরিতে নিয়োগের অন্যতম প্রধান শর্ত।
১২। বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি পত্রিকা ছাড়াও জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী এর ওয়েবসাইট www.rajbari.gov.bd এবং https://dcrajbari.teletalk.com.bd অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জব পোর্টাল https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও পাওয়া যাবে।
১৩। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও অন্যান্য তথ্য www.rajbari.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইট হতে জানা যাবে। এছাড়াও নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত তথ্যসমূহ জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী ও রাজবাড়ী জেলার সকল উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয়ের নোটিশ বোর্ডে পাওয়া যাবে।
১৪। **অনলাইনে আবেদন পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলি ও শর্তাবলি:**
(ক) আগ্রহী প্রার্থীগণ https://dcrajbari.teletalk.com.bd এই ওয়েবসাইটে প্রবেশ করে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ:
i) Online এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন ফি জমাদান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়: ০৩/১১/২০২৬ সকাল ১০:০০ টা
ii) Online এ আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ৩০/১১/২০২৬ বিকাল ০৪:০০ টা
উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে Teletalk Pre-paid Mobile নম্বর থেকে SMS এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
(খ) Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার রঙিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য 300× প্রস্থ 300) pixel এবং স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য 300× প্রস্থ 80) pixel স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 100 kB এবং স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60 kB হবে।
(গ) Online আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে নিশ্চিত হবেন।
(ঘ) প্রার্থী Online এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি রঙিন প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং ব্যবহারিক ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।
(ঙ) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান:
Online এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষর Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। যদি Applicant's Copy তে কোন তথ্য ভুল থাকে বা অস্পষ্ট ছবি (সম্পূর্ণ কালো/সম্পূর্ণ সাদা/ঘোলা) বা ছবি/স্বাক্ষর সঠিক না থাকে তাহলে পুনরায় আবেদন করতে পারবেন। তবে আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পরে আর কোন পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন/পরিবর্ধন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় বিধায় আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পূর্বে প্রার্থী অবশ্যই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন। Applicant's Copy তে তার সাম্প্রতিক তোলা রঙিন ছবি, নির্ভুল তথ্য ও স্বাক্ষর নিশ্চিত হয়ে PDF Copy ডাউনলোডপূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's Copy-তে একটি User ID নম্বর দেয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk Pre-paid মোবাইল নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই)টি SMS করে আবেদন ফি বাবদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত)/ অনগ্রসর নাগরিকের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা, Teletalk এর সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ (ভ্যাটসহ অফেরতযোগ্য) ১২/-(বারো)/ অনগ্রসর নাগরিকের ক্ষেত্রে ৬/- (ছয়) টাকাসহ মোট ১১২/- (একশত বারো)/৫৬/- (ছাপ্পান্ন) টাকা অনধিক ৭২ (বাহাত্তর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে, **"Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেওয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবে না"।**
ফি জমা প্রদানের পদ্ধতি:
প্রথম SMS: DCRAJBARI<space>**User ID** লিখে 16222 নম্বরে send করতে হবে।
Example: DCRAJBARI ABCDEF & send to 16222.
Reply: Applicant's Name, Tk. 112/- or 56/- will be charged as application fee, Your PIN is XXXXXXXX
To pay fee Type DCRAJBARI<space> Yes<space>PIN and send to 16222.
দ্বিতীয় SMS: DCRAJBARI<space>**Yes**<space>**PIN** লিখে 16222 নম্বরে send করতে হবে।
Example: DCRAJBARI Yes 12345678 & send to 16222
Reply: Congratulations! Applicant's Name, Payment completed successfully for DCRAJBARI Application for (post name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and password (××××××××).
(চ) SMS-এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সংবলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত ও ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময় এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।
(ছ) প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহের নোটিশ https://dcrajbari.teletalk.com.bd এবং জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী এর ওয়েবসাইট (www.rajbari.gov.bd) এ পাওয়া যাবে। এছাড়া প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ সংক্রান্ত SMS শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের মোবাইল ফোন নম্বরে প্রেরণ করা হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোন নম্বরে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় বিষয়ে যোগাযোগ করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত মোবাইল ফোন নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।
(জ) শুধুমাত্র Teletalk Pre-paid মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।
i) User ID জানা থাকলে:
DCRAJBARI<space>**Help**<space>**User**<space>**UserID & send to 16222**
Example: DCRAJBARI Help User ABCDEF & send to 16222
ii) PIN Number জানা থাকলে:
DCRAJBARI<space>**Help**<space>**PIN**<space>**PIN Number & send to 16222**
Example: DCRAJBARI Help PIN 12345678 & send to 16222
(ঝ) Online এ আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে যে কোন টেলিটক নম্বর থেকে 121 নম্বর অথবা alljobs.query@teletalk.com.bd বা dcrajbari@mopa.gov.bd ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে। e-mail এর Subject-এ Organization Name: DCRAJBARI, Post Name, Applicant's User ID ও Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে)।
(ঞ) ডিক্লারেশন: প্রার্থীকে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের ডিক্লারেশন অংশে এই মর্মে ঘোষণা দিতে হবে যে, প্রার্থী কর্তৃক আবেদনপত্রের প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং সত্য। প্রদত্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন অযোগ্যতা ধরা পড়লে বা কোন প্রতারণা বা দুর্নীতির আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে, পরীক্ষার পূর্বে বা পরে এমন কি নিয়োগের পরে যে কোন পর্যায়ে প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা যাবে।
১৫। নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত কোন শর্ত বা অনুচ্ছেদ সংশোধন/পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন বা বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।
*** শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে আবেদনকারীকে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করতে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয় রাজবাড়ী এ

How Sufism shaped Bengal's cultural stage

Sufi appropriation of the indigenous performance tradition in pre-modern Bengal

SYED JAMIL AHMED



Mānik and his twin brother Gopta appear at King Jayanūr Bādśāh's palace gate during a Mānik jātrā performance by the Śobhnā Mānik Jātrā troupe in Khulna, 2–3 November 2007. PHOTO: **SYED JAMIL AHMED.**

For about a century and a half after the beginning of the Muslim conquest of Bengal in 1204, the region was torn by strife and tumult. Hence, no serious initiatives could be undertaken by the Muslim rulers in the field of performing arts. However, with the rise of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah in 1352 and the consequent independence of Bengal from the Sultanate of Delhi, sufficient political stability gradually emerged for the land to prosper through its natural produce, manufacturing and trade. As a result, Bengal emerged as a land of prosperity and abundance. It was in this Bengal that a court poet named Shāh Muhammad Sagīr composed a verse narrative titled *Yousuf-Zolekhā* at the behest of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1389–1410), the reigning king of Gauda (north-eastern and northern Bengal). At its core is a simple message that only through unquestioning surrender to Allah and His commands can human passion, such as Zolekha's, find fulfilment in union with divine beauty embodied in Yousuf (Muhammad Enamul Huq, ed., *Yousuf-Zoleka by Shah Muhammad Sagir*, University of Dhaka, 1984).

Based on the Qur'an (Surah al-Yousuf, Chapter 12) and retold numerous times throughout the Muslim world, most famously by the Persian poet Jami (1414–1492), Sagir's composition is indeed inclined towards Sufism in the underlying struggle between Islamic 'orthodoxy' and Sufi 'heterodoxy' in medieval Bengal. For it upholds the teachings of Islam, Islamic ethics and the greatness of the religion through the love story of Yousuf and Zolekha. Here, it is worth remembering that, for the Sufi mystics, Zolekha "simply represented someone purely and madly in love", although, throughout the history of Islamic cultures, she has repeatedly been "blamed, condemned, and vilified by conservative religious authorities in the Islamic world" (Elif Shafak, "Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulaikha", *Words Without Borders*, December 2005).

In contrast to the exoteric *(zāhir)* interpretation of the Qur'an, the Sufis insist on an esoteric *(bātin)* interpretation, and the narrative of *Yousuf-Zolekha* arguably exemplifies a veiled Sufi effort to interpret Zolekha's love for Yousuf in the Qur'an as human love for the divine.

In order to understand how, if at all, Sagir's *Yousuf-Zolekha* was performed, it is necessary to examine the text, the testimonies of contemporary Chinese diplomats visiting Bengal and evidence relating to an older text named *Gīta-govinda*.

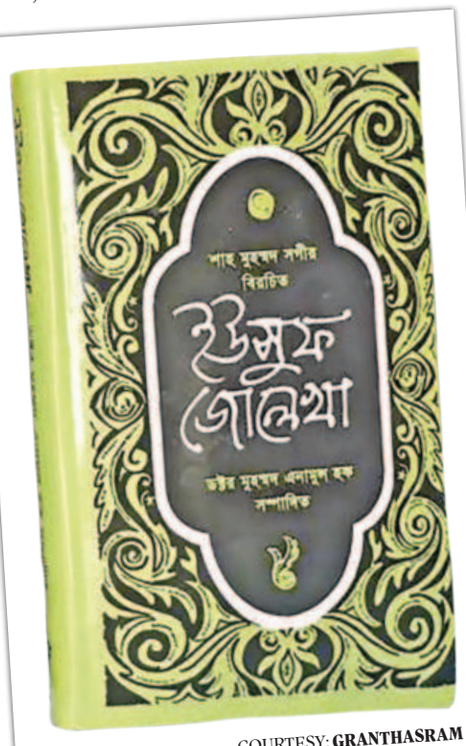
Firstly, an examination of Sagir's text shows that many of its chapters begin with a note specifying a particular *raga* and *tala* (melodic mode and rhythmic pattern in South Asian classical music), indicating that the text was intended to be sung with musical accompaniment. Besides, numerous references to the elite cultural practice of hosting dances performed by courtesans can be found in *Yousuf-Zolekha* (this practice is also evident in medieval Bengali Muslim literary works such as *Saiful Muluk-Badiujjamal* by Dona Gazi, *Lalmati-Saiful Mulk* by Abdul Hakim and *Gul-e-Bakawali* by Nawajish). Moreover, some chapters of the text are composed partly as verse narratives and partly as operatic librettos.

Secondly, the literary account provided by the famous Chinese diplomat Ma Huan shortly after Sagir composed his text demonstrates that, among the various professional classes found in Bengal, one class skilled in singing and dancing was often called upon by the elites to enliven their feasts (Ma Huan, *Ying Yai sheng lan*, cited in P. C. Bagchi, "Political Relations between Bangal and China in the Pathan Period", *Visva-Bharati Annals*, Vol. 1, 1945, pp. 117–118; Ma Huan visited Bengal with Ming expeditions in 1413–15, 1421–23 and 1431–33, and compiled his record between 1425 and 1432).

In another record of Chinese missions to Bengal, compiled by Huang Sing-ts'eng in 1520, it is further observed that when the people of Bengal "invite guests to a formal feast there is dancing and songs by actresses and dancing girls for the amusement of the guests" (Huang Sing-ts'eng, *Si yang ch'ao kung tien lu*, cited in Bagchi, "Political Relations", pp. 124–125).

Thirdly, *Gīta-govinda*, composed in 1200 CE (during the reign of the preceding Hindu Sena dynasty), demonstrates some similarities with *Yousuf-Zolekha*, in that the beginning of each of *Gīta-govinda*'s chapters is also marked with *raga* and *tala*, and that it is composed partly as an operatic libretto and partly as "narrative verses identifying the singer of a song or elaborating its context" (Barbara Stoler Miller, ed. and trans., *Gitagovinda of Jayadeva: Love Song of the Dark Lord, Motilal Banarsidass*, 1984, p. 9).

Bringing these three strands of evidence together, it can reasonably be concluded that the courts of the



COURTESY: **GRANTHASRAM**

The cover of the seventh edition of Yousuf-Zoleka by Shah Muhammad Sagir, edited by Muhammad Enamul Huq and published by Mowla Brothers in 2021.

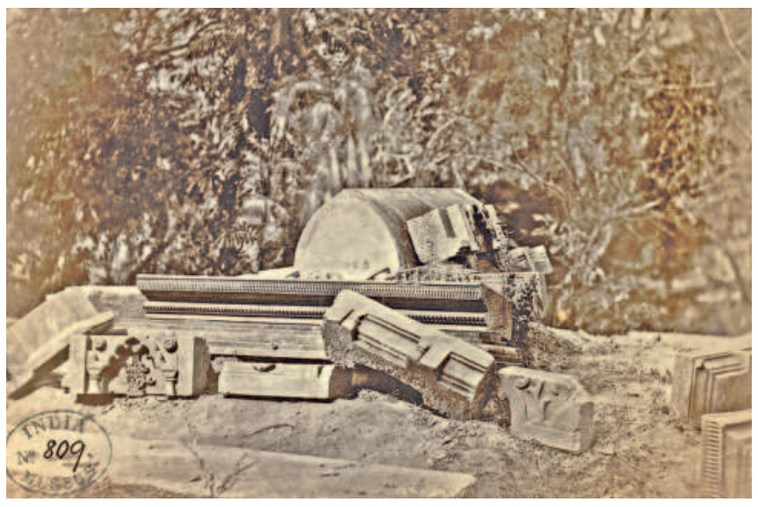
Muslim sultans of Bengal had borrowed the performance idiom of Gīta-govinda by synthesising poetry, music and dance with new metaphorical content harmonised with the belief system of the Muslim rulers. This was similar to the process adopted by the Mughals and the north Indian Muslim feudal lords, through which a form of performance based on the theme of the divine love of Rādhā and Krishna was assimilated to give shape to what is today known as *Kathak* (Gayatri Chattopadhyaya, *Bharater Nrittakala*, Calcutta: Navapatra, 1385 Bengali Era, pp. 251–265).

In a form close to the performance mechanics, if not the idiom, of *Kathak* and *Odissi*, the performance of *Yousuf-Zolekha* in Bengal was possibly presented as a song-and-dance *(nāt-gīt)* performance by a group of dancers representing characters (who mimetically enacted the narrative), accompanied by singers rendering the narrative and instrumentalists providing rhythm and music. The part of the text composed as an operatic libretto may have been presented as a rendition of songs by the dancers in character, accompanied by instrumental musicians. The dancers belonged to the same class as the *deva-dāsis* (temple danseuses), about whom one frequently reads in literature from and about the Sena dynasty in the 12th century, most famously in *Sekasubhodaya (R. C. Majumdar and R. C. Hazra, "Society", in R. C. Majumdar, ed., The History of Bengal, Vol. 1, Hindu Period, University of Dacca, 1943, p. 619; Halayudha Misra, Sekasubhodaya, ed. Sukumar Sen, Asiatic Society, 1963)*.

The point not to be missed here is that Huang Sing-ts'eng's observations on the costumes of actresses in 15th-century Bengal are remarkably similar to those of *Odissi* dancers today. In the Chinese record, the actresses are described as having worn "lined cloth in light red colour with decorations of flowers", while "the lower part of their body" was "wrapped" with a "coloured silken sash". They also adorned themselves with pendants, necklaces and bangles richly decorated with precious stones (Huang Sing-ts'eng, *Si yang ch'ao kung tien lu, cited in P. C. Bagchi, "Political Relations between Bangal and China in the Pathan Period", Visva-Bharati Annals, Vol. 1, 1945, p. 125)*.

If Shah Muhammad Sagir's Yousuf-Zolekha is a veiled exposition of the Sufi philosophy of the human relationship with the Divine, Lāili-Majnu by Bahram Khan is explicitly and unambiguously oriented in the same direction. For Laili-Majnu (or Layli wa-Majnun, as it is known in Persian literature) is widely recognised among Muslims as a foundational paradigm of the human relationship with the Divine. Popularly known in the 'West' as "the Romeo and Juliet of the East" (*George Gordon Byron, The Giaour:* A Fragment of a Turkish Tale, London: John Murray, 1814, p. 61, note 3), the narrative of Laili-Majnu recounts the legendary love of Layli and Qayes, who face numerous tribulations because of their love, so much so that Qayes becomes obsessed with his beloved and earns the epithet Majnu (*'crazy'*). The narrative ends with the heart-rending deaths of both lovers.

In Bengal, Bahram Khan composed *Laili-Majnu* between 1543 and 1553, when the poet was a high official under the feudal ruler of Chittagong (south-eastern Bangladesh), and the territory was under Arakanese rule (Ahmad Sharif, *Laili-Majnu by Daulat Wazir Bahram Khan*, Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1992, p. 17).



The ruins of the tomb of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (r. 1389–1410) in Sonargaon, near Dhaka. During his reign, Shah Muhammad Sagir composed Yousuf-Zolekha. Photograph: W. Brennand, 1872, Archaeological Survey of India Collections.

The performance idiom of *Laili-Majnu* (16th century) appears to have been similar to that of Shah Muhammad Sagir's *Yousuf-Zolekha* (15th century), because most of the text is composed as narration in verse, with a small part as an operatic libretto, and raga and/or tala is mentioned at the beginning of each episode. In all probability, these song-and-dance performances were presented in *rang-mahals* (performance mansions), where spectators would be seated on rugs and cushions along three sides of a hall, the musicians and singers on the fourth, and the dancers would perform in the space thus enclosed.

This, then, was the song-and-dance performance that the Muslim elites of medieval Bengal had devised in the 15th century: by appropriating an earlier tradition, they had fashioned a means of envisioning the Sufi principle of love (ishq) of the created (asheq, "lover") for the Creator (mashooq, "Beloved"). If religion is "a system of symbols which acts to [...] formulating conceptions of a general order of existence", then it follows that the acquisition of an Islamic identity by the incipient Muslim society of the period under review would have entailed an assertion of a new system of symbols against the previous system of the Hindus. By devising song-and-dance performances based on the Sufi principle of love, the Muslim elites had attempted to displace the conception of existence encapsulated in Radha-Krishna lore, initially with Islamic lore encapsulated in a partly similar 'illicit' relationship, as in *Yousuf-Zolekha*, and then with an altogether different Islamic lore of 'insane' passion, as in *Laili-Majnu*.

Soon after Emperor Akbar's invasion of Bengal in 1575 and its subsequent subjugation by the end of the century, the region was reduced to the status of a province of the Mughal Empire. Consequently, Bengali literary works lost royal patronage, a loss that contributed to the reduction of the song-and-dance performances of the Sultani era to the erotic dances of courtesans (citing contemporary accounts, including *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* and *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, M. A. Rahim observes that "it was the practice of subadars and nawabs to maintain many songstresses and dancing girls"; Muhammad Abdur Rahim, Social and Cultural History of Bengal, Vol. I, Pakistan Historical Society, 1963, pp. 151–152).

As a result, the song-and-dance performances of the independent sultans of Bengal became extinct, surviving today only occasionally in the form of *puñthi pāth* performances, in which a man recites the text in a melodic tune before an audience, in a manner not too dissimilar from the style in which Urdu poets attending poetic symposia recite in *tarannum* (Regula Qureshi, "The Chanting of Urdu Poetry", *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 13, № 3, September 1969, pp. 425–468).

The future course of Islamic performance in Bengal was further affected by an exceptional turn of events, namely the rise of the peasant cultivators of eastern Bengal. Spurred by the phenomenal levels of agrarian and demographic expansion in the region, the peasant cultivators had, by the 17th and 18th centuries, uniquely assimilated Islam as a system of symbols originating in the Arab world into their agrarian worldview, giving rise to their distinct system for formulating conceptions of their general order of existence. Thus, it was the peasant cultivators who emerged as "the dominant carriers of Islamic civilization" in the Bengal delta (Richard Eaton, "Who are the Bengal Muslims? Conversion and Islamization in Bengal", in Rafiuddin Ahmad, ed., *Understanding the Bengal Muslims: Interpretative Essays*, University Press Limited, 2001, p. 43). The notion of the *pirs* is inextricably enmeshed with this class.

The significance of the pirs needs to be understood not only by identifying them as "holy men" but also as "saints whose lives served as metaphors for the expansion of both religion and agriculture" (Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 207). Some of them, such as Shah Jalal al-Din Tabrizi, Shah Jalal Mujarrad and Khan Jahan Ali, metaphorically linked Islam with the economy of the hinterland and the politics of the state.



A performance of the indigenous Potuya Gan tradition narrating the stories of Gazi Pir. PHOTO: **SYED JAMIL AHMED.**

Other pirs served the grassroots, the peasant cultivators and the entire range of professions associated with them, in shaping the conceptual framework of their existence, their struggle for subsistence and their culture.

It was around this latter group of *pirs* that the peasant cultivators fashioned an extraordinary corpus of narratives seeking to promulgate their miracles, and performances were mobilised to extol their efficacy. Most important among these *pirs*, who are still venerated through performances in Bangladesh today, are Gāzī Pīr, Mādār Pīr, Khwāj Khizir, Satya Pīr, Mānik Pīr, Sonā Pīr, Ek-dil Shāh, Gorāchānd Shāh, Mā Māi Champā and Bana Bibi.

Satya Pīr, Mānik Pīr, Sonā Pīr and Bana Bibi are also mythical figures, but, as their names indicate, they present a curious anomaly in that all of them combine Bengali names with the appellation of a Muslim *pir*. These *pirs* were created through what Eaton terms 'the process of identification', by which Islamic superhuman agencies actually merged with local Bengali agencies (Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*, p. 269).

As part of the process of identification, the Bengali Muslim peasant cultivators began to devise their distinct forms of performance from the 17th century by appropriating the mode of performance eulogising Hindu deities and transplanting their own narratives extolling the efficacy of the *pirs. Suffixed with the nomenclature of gān (literally, "song"), these performances can still be seen in Bangladesh today. Based on a long narrative composition in verse, these performances are presented through song, music, dance and explanatory interjections in pro*se. Most of the narratives are sung by a lead narrator, who portrays the actions of the characters in the third Hindu Vaishnava performance known as *krishna jātrā* (*jātrā* performance based on Krishna lore).

Each of these forms of performance, sung narration (*gān*) as well as character impersonation *(jātrā)*, presents a repertoire of tales extolling the *pir* to whom the form is dedicated. One of these is invariably a hagiography of the *pir,* while the remaining tales recount his or her miraculous deeds in rescuing followers in times of crisis. The objective, thus, is to instil faith in the spectators in the efficacious powers of the *pir* and win followers.

Invariably, all these performances extolling the miracles of the *pirs* were challenged by Islamic 'orthodoxy', most prominently with the rise of the Faraizi movement led by Haji Shariatullah in 1818. Consequently, many of the performances based on the miracles of the pirs faced serious challenges and even extinction. Nevertheless, as the Faraizi movement began to lose momentum by the fourth quarter of the 19th century, performances extolling the *pirs* re-emerged with vigour.

More recently, towards the end of the 20th century, all these performances have faced another wave of extreme intolerance from puritanical Wahhabi Islamists. More importantly, with the rise of globalisation and the onslaught of digital technology, all the performances discussed in this brief review may undergo a tectonic shift in terms of their spectatorship, and may eventually die out or metamorphose into vastly different performance vocabularies.

Dr Syed Jamil Ahmed *is a founding member of Spardha Independent Theatre Collective and Honorary Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Dhaka.*

SPORT



"I am really happy about this. 100 wins, it's great. When we started, we hoped we would have 100 games for Barca, so 100 victories is a great achievement."

HANSI FLICK
after recording his 100th victory as Barcelona manager, following Saturday's 6-1 win over Alaves.



With Ronan Sullivan ruled out due to injury, the focus will be on Mahe Khan and what he can bring to Thomas Dooley's Bangladesh side in the upcoming SAFF Championship. PHOTO: BFF

SHAMIT confident despite Ronan setback

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh are hoping to end their 23-year wait for a SAFF Championship title when the next edition kicks off in Dhaka on November 5. Much of the optimism surrounding Thomas Dooley's side stems from the growing presence of overseas-based players, particularly in attack, where the team have long struggled for goals.

Dooley included US-based Ronan Sullivan and UK-based Mohammad Mahe Khan in his 28-member squad to address that shortage. However, a knee injury to Sullivan dealt a blow to those plans yesterday, with the forward pulling out just days before Bangladesh's opening match against Bhutan.

"He [Sullivan] told me last Thursday that he wouldn't be able to come and sincerely apologised," BFF vice-president Fahad Karim, who usually communicates with overseas players, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sullivan was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Tuesday after departing the United States on Sunday.

Canada-based midfielder Shamit Shome, however, believes Bangladesh have enough attacking options to cope with the setback.

"It's too bad, you know, he is a good player, a good young talent. But anyway, we have a lot more quality, more attacking options. We have to try and adjust with that," Shamit told reporters at an event in the capital yesterday.

The midfielder also felt Sullivan's absence might not be too difficult to manage.

"He hasn't even arrived yet, so we haven't really got that chemistry, we haven't been able to build that understanding. We still have people in the team who can contribute, so hopefully we won't miss Sullivan that much. I have confidence that the team we have now will be able to adapt," he added.

Shamit himself is returning from an injury that kept him out of action for the last four to five weeks, a period he described as challenging.

"Today [Sunday] in training, everything felt more or less okay. So now the main thing is to build up the fitness. We have two-three more days before the Bhutan game to increase the load. But I feel good. And it's SAFF, right? Everyone can have a little bit of pain, but you have to play, right?" he said.

Bangladesh will also miss Hamza Chowdhury and Farhaan Ali Wahid for their opener, but Shamit insisted the squad had enough depth to cope with their absence.

"Obviously we are missing Hamza and Farhaan, who are very big players who help us. But still, the way I see it, it's the same as Ronan not coming. We have players, I trust in those players," he said.

WHAT TO WATCH

T Sports
NCL GT20
Semifinal
Live from 6:00 am
LaLiga
Deportivo vs Osasuna
Live from 2:00 am (Tuesday)

Star Sports Select HD1
Premier League
Newcastle vs Everton
Live from 2:00 am
(Tuesday)

INDIA'S U-23 MOVE
Priorities beyond SAFF

ANISUR RAHMAN

The All India Football Federation's (AIFF) decision to send an U-23 developmental squad to the upcoming SAFF Championship raises a pertinent question: are India undermining South Asia's premier football competition, or simply prioritising their long-term ambitions?

While other participating nations are expected to field their senior sides, India's approach has sparked debate over the championship's competitiveness. Former national footballer and coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, however, believes the absence of India's senior stars does not necessarily lower the standard.

"To be honest, when India send their U-23 squad, it seems the standard of the championship will fall, but the past record does not suggest so. It is psychological," Manik said.

"However, the participation of India's main team changes everything in the SAFF Championship because every participant dreams of clinching the title by beating India."

History lends weight to part of Manik's argument. India fielded developmental squads in the 2009 and 2018 editions, winning the 2009 title in Dhaka by defeating Maldives before finishing runners-up in 2018 after losing to the same opponents in a penalty shootout.

India's dominance is undeniable. Of the championship's 14 editions, they have won nine titles, while Maldives have triumphed twice. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan have won once each, leaving Nepal, Pakistan and Bhutan still searching for their maiden crowns.

Yet, India's decision cannot be viewed solely through the lens of regional competition. Ranked considerably higher than their South Asian rivals, India have ambitions beyond SAFF. Their primary structural objective is to break into the FIFA top 100 and improve their seeding in Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup qualifiers and FIFA World Cup qualifying draws.

From that perspective, the championship presents a complicated equation. Wins against lower-ranked opponents offer relatively modest FIFA ranking points, while a draw or defeat could prove costly. For a team seeking to establish itself



more firmly in Asian football, the risk-reward calculation differs from that facing its regional rivals.

There are practical considerations, too. Reports suggest India are considering two international friendlies against New Zealand during the November 9-17 FIFA window, which overlaps with the SAFF Championship schedule from November 5-17.

The timing also creates complications for the Indian Super League (ISL), where clubs may be reluctant to release their first-choice players for a two-week regional tournament. Sending an U-23 squad therefore offers AIFF a compromise: honouring regional commitments without disrupting the domestic calendar or sacrificing opportunities for the senior team to face stronger opposition.

More importantly, the approach serves India's player-development strategy. The transition from age-group football to senior international competition is difficult, and domestic league performances cannot replicate the pressure of international knockouts, hostile away crowds and regional rivalries.

India's 2018 campaign demonstrated the potential benefits. Under coach Stephen Constantine, emerging players such as Anirudh Thapa, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Ashique Kuruniyan and Subhasish Bose gained valuable tournament experience, while established figures including Sunil Chhetri, Sandesh Jhingan and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu were left out. Several of those youngsters subsequently became important members of India's senior setup.

India may therefore have sound reasons for taking this route. But a decision that makes sense for Indian football does not necessarily serve the interests of the SAFF Championship.

For the region's other contenders, beating India remains a major ambition. Their absence of senior stars may not make the tournament uncompetitive, but it undeniably changes the stakes. India may see SAFF as a platform for developing its next generation; for the rest of the region, it remains a chance to measure themselves against the best.



Ahead of the SAFF Championship on November 5, Bangladesh's 2003 SAFF-winning and 2010 SA Games gold-winning squads played a nostalgic friendly match at the National Stadium yesterday to inspire the current team. Aminul Haque, who guarded the goal in both histoirc campaigns, also laced up his boots to play alongside his former teammates, including Alfaz Ahmed, Arman Mia, and Mamunul Islam. PHOTO: BFF

Time to rethink home formula

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh's eight-wicket defeat to West Indies in the first of the two-Test series in Mirpur on Saturday once again exposed the batters' inability to handle spin, raising a pertinent question: what should the Tigers' approach to home conditions be?

"Our biggest problem is our batters. We must pay attention to which wickets our batters feel comfortable playing on," former national captain Akram Khan said bluntly.

"Focusing solely on what to do to win shouldn't be the approach right now, because Bangladeshi batters are unable to score consistently on any wicket," Akram added.

Bangladesh enjoyed home success between 2014 and 2018 on spin-friendly pitches, recording memorable Test victories against England and Australia. However, Akram believes reverting to that formula is no longer working because the team lacks both capable batters and quality spinners.

"In the past, we always prepared spinning wickets at home because we had two advantages: first, our batters could score runs on those wickets, which they cannot do now. Second, we had top-quality spinners like Shakib [Al Hasan], and we currently lack spinners of that calibre. That is why the issue stands out much more now," Akram said.

Before the Mirpur Test, Bangladesh had won five consecutive home Tests since April 2025, all on sporting surfaces where their batters made significant contributions.

Between December 2023 and April 2025, however, they lost six consecutive Tests, repeatedly struggling against spin-friendly conditions.

The warning signs were already there in November 2023, when Bangladesh, having won the opening Test against New Zealand in Sylhet on a decent surface, opted for a turning track in Mirpur for the second Test. The visitors' spin trio of Ajaz Patel, Mitchell Santner and Glenn Phillips shared 17 wickets to secure a four-wicket victory.

South Africa's Keshav Maharaj and Senuran Muthusamy claimed 18 wickets between them across two Tests the following year, outplaying Bangladesh in both matches.

Even Zimbabwe's Wellington Masakadza and Wesley Madhevere played significant roles with eight wickets between them in their side's opening-Test victory in Sylhet last year, although pacer Blessing Muzarabani was the chief architect with nine scalps.

The pattern was also evident during West Indies' 2-0 Test series win in Bangladesh in 2021, when Jomel Warrican and Rahkeem Cornwall shared 24 wickets.

Against that backdrop, Bangladesh's decision to return to the same formula in Mirpur was baffling. The defeat has also all but ended their prospects of qualifying for next year's ICC World Test Championship final at The Oval.



Bangladesh's best result in the current WTC cycle came with their away victory over Australia in Darwin, where a sporting surface and strong batting performances proved decisive. Akram believes that should be the way forward.

"At this point, we shouldn't focus on the opponent's strengths or weaknesses. Our core problem is our batters scoring runs. After all, we defeated Australia because our batters performed well. Our pace attack is also in a solid position," Akram added.

Bangladesh travel to Sylhet today for the second Test, starting on November 5. With little time left, the Tigers must decide whether to persist with a formula that has repeatedly backfired or prepare a sporting surface.

SAFF tickets fail to fly

TANVIR AHMED PRANTO

Bangladesh have waited 23 years to reclaim the SAFF Championship title they last won in 2003. With arguably their strongest squad since that triumph, the tournament should have sparked huge demand. Instead, sluggish sales raise questions over whether high ticket prices are alienating supporters.

The contrast with last year is stark. When Bangladesh hosted AFC qualifiers, tickets reportedly sold out within six minutes, overwhelming the online platform as fans scrambled for seats.

Sales for opening matchday, featuring Bangladesh against Bhutan and India against Pakistan, began last Thursday. One ticket covers both matches. Prices start at Tk 999, or Tk 1,070 including VAT, rising to Tk 3,999 for Club House and Tk 6,999 for VIP galleries, before VAT.

A check of selected sections on the Tickify website found that an estimated 85 percent of



tickets remained unsold, with just three days before kick-off. The figures were particularly stark in several sections.

In the Southwest Gallery's lower tier, only 15 of more than 1,000 seats across blocks C and D had been sold. In the Northwest Gallery, all 275 seats in lower F block remained available. The East Gallery also saw little demand, with no tickets sold in E block and just four of 539 sold in lower C block.

Organisers might argue that one ticket covers two matches. But how attractive is that proposition? The weekday fixtures require supporters to spend more than eight hours at the stadium. How many working fans can sacrifice an entire day to watch both matches, particularly when Bangladesh feature only in the evening fixture?

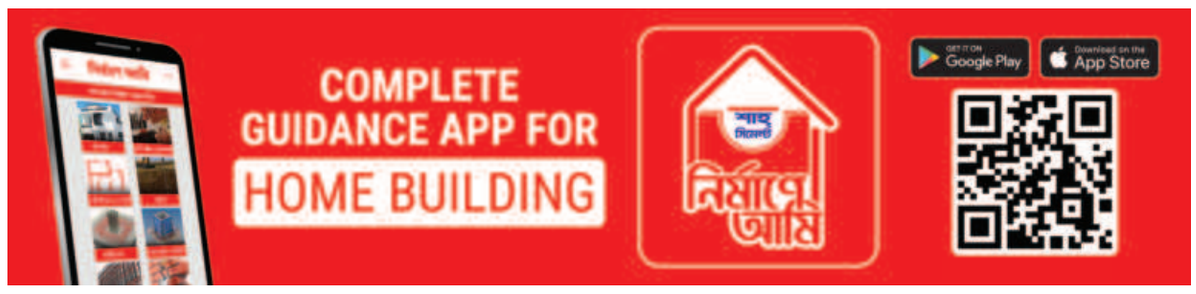
Supporters' groups protested the prices yesterday, demanding affordable access to the stands. Rafi Iqbal, founder of Red & Green Army and Voice of BD, said ordinary fans were being priced out and called for tickets to be reduced to Tk 300-500.

"A middle-class person in Bangladesh earns, at most, Tk 20,000 to Tk 30,000 a month. That means their daily income is less than Tk 1,000, around Tk 800. Is someone supposed to work an entire day just to buy a ticket for one match?" he asked.

He also warned: "A ticket is just a piece of paper. A ticket cannot stop us. We will break through the gates and enter the stadium."

The BFF previously said ticketing arrangements were entirely in SAFF's hands. However, as the host federation, questions remain over whether it did enough to push for prices local supporters could afford. With the tournament approaching, the prospect of empty stands is an uncomfortable one for a country hoping to reclaim the title on home soil.





NEWS IN FOCUS

Khulna Tanti Dal leader hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A leader of the BNP-affiliated Tanti Dal was hacked to death by assailants at his business establishment in Khulna city yesterday.

The deceased, Syed Humayun Kabir, was joint convener of the Khulna city unit of Tanti Dal, the BNP's affiliated organisation of handloom weavers, said Mizanur Rahman Milton, convener of Khulna city BNP's media cell.

The attack took place around 6:30pm at Hill Canteen, behind Rayermohol Boro Mosque.

According to police and witnesses, a group armed with sharp weapons attacked Humayun, leaving him with multiple injuries, including to his chest.

He was taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, said his relative Syed Didarul Alam Biplob.

Aranghata Police Station Officer-in-Charge Halimur

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Two confess in journalist Alif murder case



OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrokona*

Two suspects arrested in connection with the murder of journalist Lutfuzzaman Fakir, also known as Alif Fakir, in Netrokona's Durgapur upazila gave confessional statements before a court yesterday.

Judge Nurul Kabir Bhuiyan recorded the statements of Imran Islam alias Emon, 24, of Moktarpada in Durgapur municipality, and Md Sabbir Ahmed, 25, of Teribazar in the same upazila under Section 164 of Code of Criminal Procedure.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



The Buriganga river continues to be polluted by untreated chemical waste from printing, knitting and dyeing factories near Dhaleshwar Gudara Ghat in Shyampur, Dhaka. Toxic waste from more than a hundred factories in the area is discharged into the river, posing a serious threat to aquatic life and the environment.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

HSC RESULT SHOCK

A tale of two systems

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

One needs to look only at the performance of cadet college students in the board exams to understand what is wrong with Bangladesh's mainstream government schools.

In this year's HSC exams, 536 of 569 students of all 12 cadet colleges secured GPA-5, meaning 94 percent students got a perfect GPA. In SSC, 607 of 618 (98.22 percent) cadets got a perfect score. Not a single one failed in either exam.

But in the rest of the country, just about half managed to pass the HSC (51.62 percent), the lowest rate in over two decades. Almost 600,000 students failed, and at 181 institutions, every student failed.

In SSC, the pass rate stood at 64.05 percent, the lowest since 2007, and the number of institutions firing all blanks was 312.

Now, if it were one student or even a few thousand out of almost 1.2 million examinees, it might have been put down to individual failure or lack of effort. But when half the students fail, the problem must be systemic.

Looking at the resources spent on an average student and a cadet, the reason behind this systemic failure should become obvious.

As former education minister Dipu Moni told the parliament, the government spends about Tk 5.34 lakh annually on each cadet college student -- 10 times more than the public expenditure per student at the higher-secondary level.

But it is not just the quantum of funds that makes the difference.

Cadet college students, living in a residential environment, are under constant supervision and kept under strict discipline. They have three proper meals and two snacks every day.

Cadet colleges rarely, if ever, face teacher shortages and have excellent facilities, strong institutional management and a stable learning environment.

The difference in outcomes is not due to merit; it reflects starkly different environments, resource allocation and prioritisation.

Cadet colleges show what is possible when schools have adequate funding, qualified teachers, strong leadership, effective supervision, and an environment that nurtures both academic excellence and personal development.

The worst SSC and HSC results in decades have exposed exactly those deep-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

NEWS ANALYSIS

WEEKEND PROTEST

France begins 'attempted murder' probe

Over 770 arrested; school blockades resume today

AGENCIES

France has launched an attempted murder investigation after a petrol bomb was thrown at security forces during a weekend protest in Paris, prosecutors told AFP yesterday.

On Saturday, clashes erupted in Paris and some other cities after hundreds of thousands of people staged a third weekend of protests against soaring living costs. More than 770 people were arrested in the protests, the interior ministry said yesterday.

The protests followed a wave of Gen Z-led demonstrations across Europe this year. In Serbia, student-led activism helped unseat the country's longtime leader at the ballot box, while protests in France have descended into rioting and looting.

The Paris police prefecture said that several hundred rioters had attacked security forces with projectiles, including a Molotov cocktail, reports AFP. "Explosive devices were thrown at around fifteen gendarmes as well as police officers," the prosecutor's office said yesterday.

The head of a student group confirmed a campaign of high school blockades would restart from today, adding the government's proposals did not go far enough.

Meanwhile, riot police with dogs stormed protest camps in Lisbon and Porto early yesterday, charging demonstrators with batons, arresting 13 people and leaving dozens injured in the latest confrontation over

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Parties run on power-centric business model

TIB study of 32 parties finds lack of transparency, accountability and internal democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abuse of power, black money and political criminalisation are fuelling internal conflict and turning political participation or party positions into a "power-centric business model", TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman has said.

He made the remarks at the publication of a report titled "The Institutional Governance of Political Parties in Bangladesh", yesterday at the office of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in Dhaka.

The study has found a serious lack of good governance, transparency, accountability, and democratic practice in the activities of the country's political parties.

They also lack internal democratic practices and accountability in political financing, TIB said in the study covering 32 parties. It reviewed activities from the start of party registration in 2008 through December 2025, using updated data up to August 2026 where relevant.

"The lack of democratic practice, participation and inclusion in party activities has led to the creation of a one-person-centered leadership, familyism, authoritarianism, elitism, majoritarianism and patriarchal culture within the parties," said the report.

The exclusion of grassroots members, women, and people from diverse backgrounds allowed dynastic politics and elitism to dominate, depriving capable local leaders of opportunities.

TIB Executive Director **Iftekharuzzaman**

Iftekharuzzaman said the exclusion of grassroots members, women, and people from diverse backgrounds allowed dynastic politics and elitism to dominate, depriving capable local leaders of opportunities.

Weak prevention and accountability were normalising the use of money, muscle power and political violence, he added.

TIB's study found family-centred succession in 10 parties, including the BNP, the Awami League (whose political activities are currently banned), and the Jatiya Party.

The chiefs of 12 parties had served for at least 10 years, seven of them for more than 20.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



People gather at Novi Sad railway station in Serbia yesterday during a memorial marking the second anniversary of the deadly canopy collapse that sparked a protest movement and ultimately helped unseat long-time President Aleksandar Vucic, after an opposition bloc led by student activists won last week's election.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Son's HSC success costs Chuadanga JCD chief committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Facebook post celebrating his son's HSC success has sparked controversy over Chuadanga district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president Shahjahan Khan Mia's continued leadership of a student political organisation.

Questions have also been raised on social media about him holding a senior position in the organisation, despite being married.

Amid the controversy, the JCD central committee dissolved its Chuadanga district unit yesterday.

The central body also dissolved its Meherpur district committee, citing the expiry of both committees' terms, reports Prothom Alo.

The controversy began after the HSC and equivalent examination results were published on Saturday. Shahjahan shared a photograph of his son on Facebook, congratulating him on passing the examinations.

The post prompted widespread discussion about his age, which could not be confirmed, and continued involvement in student politics.

The Chuadanga district committee was formed on June 5, 2018, for a two-year term.

In a statement signed by JCD central office secretary Md Jahangir Alam, the organisation said its President Rakibul Islam Rakib and General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir had approved the dissolution of the two committees. New committees would be announced soon, it added.

The immediate-past Chuadanga district general

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Alaska, California ballot fights heat up

REUTERS, *Washington*

President Donald Trump's administration pressed a criminal investigation into Alaska's pivotal US Senate race and said on Saturday it would likely take its fight over thousands of California mail-in ballots to the Supreme Court, as the midterm campaign for control of Congress entered its final weekend.

In Alaska, federal prosecutors are investigating whether aides to Democratic challenger Mary Peltola helped to recruit a retired schoolteacher, Daniel J Sullivan Jr, to run because his name is similar to the Republican incumbent, Senator Dan S Sullivan. The closely contested race is seen as crucial to Democrats' hopes of taking the Senate in Tuesday's vote.