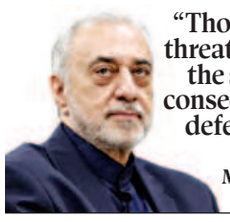
DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2026



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

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The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXVI NO. 278 | KARTIK 17, 1433 BS | www.thedailystar.net | JAMADIUL AWAL 21, 1448 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

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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.

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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,

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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.

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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.

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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,

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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

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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

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