

DHAKA WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2026

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXVI NO. 280 | KARTIK 19, 1433 BS | www.thedailystar.net | JAMADIUL AWAL 23, 1448 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

Demographic dividend fading

WB warns weak jobs, healthcare, pensions leave Bangladesh ill-prepared

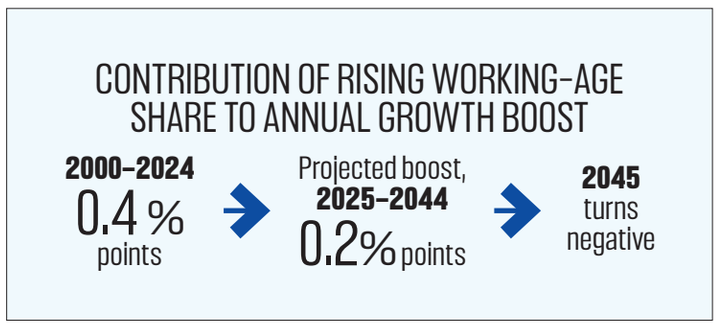
REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY**

Bangladesh's growing share of working-age people has supported economic growth over the past two decades, but that share is shrinking and will turn into a drag on growth from 2045, the World Bank has warned in a new report.

Between 2000 and 2024, the rise in working-age people translated to a favourable demographic change and added about 0.4 percentage points a year to per capita real GDP growth, or economic output per person.

That contribution is expected to halve to 0.2 percentage points a year between 2025 and 2044 before turning negative from 2045, as the population ages, according to the report titled "Demographic Change in South Asia: From Tailwinds to Headwinds for Development".

"Bangladesh's transition from 'ageing' to 'aged' will start next year and will end in this generation," Franziska Ohnsorge, the WB's chief economist for Asia, said while presenting the report in Dhaka yesterday. "Policy response is urgent ... ."



When Bangladesh enters the "ageing" stage next year, people aged 65 and above will account for 7 percent of the population.

Their share is projected to double to 14 percent by 2051, making the country an "aged" society.

The transition will take just 24 years, much faster than the average of 32 years for other emerging markets and developing economies and 46 years for advanced economies.

France took 126 years and the United States 72 years for the shift.

The challenge is not simply how quickly Bangladesh is ageing, but how little time it has to prepare.

Most South Asian countries will become aged societies at lower income levels than other emerging and developing economies did. Bangladesh is slightly better placed than its neighbours regarding income level but is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Readymade garment workers hurl brick chunks as law enforcers fire tear gas and stun grenades to disperse demonstrators in the capital's Mirpur-11 area yesterday. The workers took to the streets for a fourth consecutive day, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000. PHOTO: STAR

RMG workers fear being short-changed

Wage board meeting likely today; violence rages; several roads, highways blocked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers demanding higher wages took to the streets for the fourth consecutive day yesterday, clashing with police in Mirpur, Ashulia, and Gazipur.

The protests disrupted traffic in Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Mirpur, forced at least 200 factories to remain closed in Savar and Ashulia, and prompted 15 factories in Gazipur to declare holidays.

Meanwhile, the newly formed wage board is expected to hold its first meeting today.

Workers, who currently receive a minimum monthly wage of Tk 12,500, are demanding Tk 30,000.

Many said they were protesting to put pressure on the wage board, fearing it might

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Tk 822cr profit, unpaid bills Tk 7,000cr

JS bodies scrutinise Biman's financial state

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

Biman Bangladesh Airlines reported a net profit of Tk 822.34 crore last fiscal year, up 4.75 percent year-on-year, driven by an improved passenger load factor.

In fiscal 2025-26, the national flag carrier earned Tk 11,753 crore against an expenditure of Tk 10,930.66 crore, according to financial statements presented at the November 1 meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism.

The reported profit of Tk 822.34 crore remains subject to audit.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



TONGI MADRASA CASE

HC asks Rumi to surrender within four weeks

UNB, *Dhaka*



The High Court yesterday directed Shahjalal Rumi, the father of a seven-year-old girl who was allegedly sexually harassed at a madrasa in Tongi, Gazipur, to surrender before a Gazipur court within four weeks in a case filed over the assault of a teacher and vandalism at the institution.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim and Justice Md Asif Hasan passed the order after Rumi appeared before it seeking anticipatory bail.

Lawyers Mahbubur Rahman Khan, Bellal Hossain and Ruhul Amin Mollah (Hasan) represented Rumi during the hearing.

On October 24, madrasa principal Mohammad Almas Hossain filed a case against Rumi and 14 others, accusing them of entering Qari-ul-

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Garment workers block the Dhaka-Tangail Highway in Gazipur's Kaliakoir for the fourth day yesterday, demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

AL leader dies in jail custody

Son alleges negligence in treatment; authorities refute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*



Zakir Hossain

Zakir Hossain Nawab, 63, organising secretary of the Bogura district unit of Awami League, whose activities are banned, died yesterday morning in the custody of Naogaon District Jail.

His son alleged negligence in his treatment, which the jail authorities denied.

Ratna Roy, superintendent of the jail, told The Daily Star that Zakir fell ill and was sent to Naogaon General Hospital around 11:00am. He died there around 11:45am.

Asked about the cause of death, she said she did not yet know whether he had any chronic illnesses but had heard he suffered a heart attack in the morning.

"His inquest has been completed, and the post-mortem examination is underway," she said, adding that the body would be handed over to the family afterwards.

According to the jail authorities, Zakir was transferred from Bogura District Jail to Naogaon District Jail a year ago in an explosives case and had remained there since.

Dr Rehnuma Munmun, medical officer at Naogaon General Hospital, told local journalists that Zakir died between 11:00am and 12:00pm. He was brought in in a very critical condition, she said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Demographic dividend fading

FROM PAGE 1

marginally above the benchmark.

This raises questions about whether the country will have the resources and institutional capacity to support a growing elderly population.

Unlike richer economies, which could strengthen labour markets before building pension systems, Bangladesh must tackle both challenges at once, while its employment and human capital foundations remain weak.

WEAK FOUNDATION

About 84 percent of workers in Bangladesh are informally employed, while female labour-force participation stands at just 38 percent. Informal workers tend to be less productive and earn 45 to 84 percent less than their counterparts in formal jobs.

The problem extends even to educated workers. More than 60 percent of those with post-secondary education in Bangladesh, India and Nepal are employed informally, the report says.

Meanwhile, learning poverty -- the inability of a child to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10 -- stands at 51 percent in Bangladesh.

These gaps limit the country's ability to turn its working-age population into a more productive workforce just as the demographic advantage begins to fade.

Healthcare and old-age security present another set of challenges.

Life expectancy at birth in Bangladesh exceeds healthy life expectancy by about 10 years, meaning people spend a substantial part of their lives in poor health.

Healthcare access is also sharply unequal. Urban areas have 18 times the doctor density of rural areas, even though rural communities account for 70 percent of the population and receive the services of fewer than 20 percent of health workers.

The country is also poorly prepared to support people financially in old age.

Citing 2018 data, Ohnsorge said only 3 percent of adults in Bangladesh save specifically for old age, compared with the South Asian average of 6 percent.

Only about 1 percent of the working-age population contributes to a formal pension scheme, against a regional average of 17 percent.

Social pensions cover about half of older people, but the benefits are meagre, amounting to less than 5 percent of per capita income.

Healthcare costs could further erode the savings of elderly people. Bangladesh has South Asia's highest out-of-pocket share of health expenditure, at around 79 percent.

The government's ability to respond is constrained by its weak revenue base. Tax collection, relative to GDP, is only about a third of the average for emerging market economies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create jobs
- Raise female participation
- Build skills
- Improve healthcare
- Reform pensions
- Extend working lives
- Expand social protection
- Use technology & AI

"Future prosperity will depend increasingly on employment, productivity, human capital, and institutions rather than demographic structure alone," Ohnsorge said.

WAKE-UP CALL

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre, described the report as a "big wake-up call".

"The warning was not new but had become more urgent given the short time available," he said at the publication event.

The demographic transition, he said, goes beyond population issues, affecting social, economic, institutional and fiscal policies. It should therefore feature prominently in policy discussions.

Nazneen Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said discussions on the demographic dividend over the past decade had largely focused on young people, with little attention to the consequences of an ageing population.

"The report shifts the focus to using today's dividend to prepare for an ageing society," she said.

Zonayed Abdur Rahim Saki, state minister for planning, said Bangladesh needed proper planning and must prepare young people for jobs both at home and abroad.

He identified healthcare as a key priority, saying the government planned to raise health spending to 5 percent of GDP and had allocated more than 1 percent in its first year.

Social Welfare Minister Abu Zafar Md Zahid Hossain said Bangladesh has only 24 years to prepare.

"The government must act early and mobilise resources," he said.

TRANSITION FROM AN AGEING SOCIETY TO AGED ONE

- Bangladesh: **24** years
- Other emerging markets/developing economies: **32** years
- Advanced economies: **46** years
- France: **126** years
- US: **72** years

Pointing to initiatives such as the family card scheme, he said the programme had already started working.

Govt expects up to 4,000MW solar power by summer

Says Tarique, announces initial allocation

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday said the government expects to add 3,000-4,000 megawatts of solar power to the national grid before the next summer, as it pursues a plan to reduce dependence on imported energy and ensure a reliable electricity supply.

He made the remarks while inaugurating the first-ever Bangladesh Solar Expo 2026 in the capital's Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

The government has set a target of generating 20 percent of the country's electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and 30 percent by 2040, the PM said.

He said the government allocated Tk 1,500 crore initially to facilitate financing for solar power expansion, adding that further funds would be arranged in phases to ensure that entrepreneurs and investors in the renewable energy sector were not held back by a lack of finance.

Tarique said the government also introduced the Special Solar Power Installation Ordinance 2026 and taken various policy, tax and duty measures to encourage investment in the sector.

Under a special net-metering arrangement, the government will purchase surplus electricity supplied to the national grid from rooftop solar systems at Tk 10.50 per unit, including incentives, by February 2027, he said.

The premier called on public and private offices, educational institutions, hospitals, industries, commercial establishments, and households to use their unused rooftops for solar power generation.



He said he had also installed solar panels at his residence and was already able to supply some surplus electricity to the national grid after meeting household needs.

The PM said Bangladesh had been turned into a country heavily dependent on energy imports, leaving it vulnerable to disruptions in global supply chains caused by international conflicts.

He said the government provided Tk 43,000 crore in subsidies to the power sector in the 2025-26 fiscal year to keep the country's energy and electricity situation as normal as possible.

Instead of spending time debating the failures or roles of previous governments in the power sector, the current government's priority was to meet future electricity demand and ensure uninterrupted supply to households and businesses, he said.

Referring Sfuron, a national sustainable energy idea contest, the PM said the government wanted to make sure that innovative ideas from young people did not disappear because of a lack of funding.

Tarique said Tk 500 crore had been allocated annually in the current budget for startups.

He said over 8,000 new service-provider companies were involved in the solar power sector and urged them to ensure proper installation, regular maintenance, and quality services for customers.

Tarique said the government is aware of the hardships people, particularly those in marginalised communities, are facing due to the country's energy and power situation.

"To address the challenges, it is working simultaneously to stabilise fuel and electricity supplies, review power-sector expenditure and contracts, increase domestic gas exploration, diversify energy sources, and accelerate solar power expansion. The government is taking comprehensive measures to ensure long-term energy security and a reliable electricity supply."

RMG workers fear being short-changed

FROM PAGE 1

recommend an increase of only Tk 1,000 or Tk 2,000, which would not be enough to meet household expenses.

"We expect the wage board's first meeting to take place tomorrow [Wednesday]," BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the board might announce a timeline for finalising the new wage structure and urged workers to return to their factories, adding that it had already started work on determining a revised pay scale.

Babul Akhter, the workers' representative on the wage board, said the situation appeared to be improving gradually, with many workers returning to work after several days of demonstrations.

Factory owners, however, have warned that they may invoke Section 13(1) of the Bangladesh Labour Act, commonly known as the "no work, no pay" provision, as repeated protests continue to disrupt production.

A worker in Mirpur-11, requesting anonymity, said the Tk 30,000 demand also left room for negotiations, but an increase of only Tk 1,000 or Tk 2,000 would not be enough to support a household.

The worker also said police action was making it difficult to hold peaceful protests.

Rezaul, a worker at a knitting mill in Fatullah, Narayanganj, feared that wages might eventually be fixed at Tk 15,000–16,000, which he said would still be inadequate given current prices.

"We want wages of Tk 30,000. Otherwise, prices of everything, including gas and electricity, should be reduced," he said.

"We don't want wages that are just enough to survive. We have survived long enough. Now we want to live like regular people," said Taslim, another worker in Narayanganj.

Speaking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting at the Secretariat yesterday, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed warned of legal action against anyone instigating unrest for political purposes.

He said the wage board had begun its work and that representatives of workers and employers would negotiate the new wage. The government had asked the board to consider ways to improve workers' living standards, he added, while steps would be taken to reopen closed factories.

Salahuddin claimed he had spoken to labour leaders and factory owners and that "all sides were satisfied".

He alleged that politically motivated groups were trying to create instability and warned that such attempts would be dealt with firmly.

Abul Hossain, a worker protesting in Gazipur's Naojor, however, said workers wanted a clear timeline for a wage increase. "If they don't increase our wages, we will continue the movement."

VIOLENCE

In Mirpur, police were deployed from the morning to prevent road blockades. Workers from several factories tried to gather in Mirpur-11, while others from sections 2, 13 and 14 marched towards the Mirpur-11 metro station after encountering police.

Around 10:30am, protesters gathered beneath the station and on Kalshi Road. Police chased them, and some demonstrators hurled chunks of bricks and stones. Police responded with tear gas and sound grenades. Chases and counter-chases continued for about half an hour.

In Mirpur-7, demonstrators entered several factories after 9:00am and brought workers outside. Some joined the protests, while others returned home.

Two female workers alleged that outsiders were responsible for sabotage and that police were arresting workers indiscriminately.

Police officials said protesters beat up constable Md Simon on Kalshi Road around 11:00am after he became separated from a police team. He was admitted to Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

Trains did not stop at Mirpur-11 metro station from 10:22am to 12:50pm, said MRT Police Inspector (Operations) Md Mohsin Sheikh.

Following the clashes, more than 100 Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal leaders and activists took position along Mirpur-11 main road.

Nur Salam, convener of Pallabi thana Jubo Dal, alleged that people linked to the Awami League had infiltrated the protests to create unrest. DMP Deputy Commissioner (POM-South) Touhidul Arif also alleged that outsiders with ulterior motives were behind the violence.

In Ashulia, intermittent clashes broke out along the Baipail-Abdullahpur road from around 9:00am. Several factories in Narsinghpur declared holidays around 8:30am, while police used tear gas as protesters tried to block roads.

By 11:20am, at least 70 factories in Ashulia had declared holidays, while workers at others stopped work. Tension persisted in Narsinghpur, Nischintapur and Unique areas.

Mohammad Mominul Islam Bhuiyan, superintendent of Industrial Police-1, alleged that outsiders were encouraging workers to leave factories and throw stones. Security measures had been taken to help factories continue production, he added.

In Gazipur, workers of Panacea Ltd walked out around 9:30am and blocked the highway near Naojor flyover, halting traffic in both directions. Workers in Konabari, Mouchak and Telichala also staged protests.

Around 11:00am, demonstrators set fire to something on the Gazipur-Sylhet highway. Police and BGB personnel rushed to the spot, and police fired sound grenades. Traffic was suspended for at least an hour.

Amjad Hossain, superintendent of Gazipur Industrial Police, said 30 to 40 workers also tried to block the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Bhogra bypass.

He said 150 factories had remained closed on Monday, while another 15 declared holidays yesterday.

Tk 822cr profit, unpaid bills Tk 7,000cr

FROM PAGE 1

Passenger transportation accounted for the largest share of Biman's revenue, followed by ground handling, cargo and mail services, excess baggage charges and other income, according to its operational presentation.

It carried 3.26 million passengers last fiscal year, down 3.6 percent year-on-year.

Round-trip flights declined 10.1 percent to 9,690, although the passenger load factor rose to 84 percent from 82 percent in fiscal 2024-25.

The airline, however, has claims amounting to more than Tk 7,000 crore from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and Padma Oil in unpaid airport charges and fuel bills.

As of August, CAAB claimed around Tk 5,842.91 crore in outstanding aeronautical and non-aeronautical charges, including surcharges.

CAAB had repeatedly written to Biman seeking payment of outstanding charges, officials said.

Padma Oil reported Tk 1,232.71 crore in outstanding jet fuel bills, bringing the combined claims to around Tk 7,075.62 crore.

The figure changes every time Biman makes any payment while refuelling jet fuel, but the outstanding amount remains no less than Tk 1,200 crore, Kanchan Chandra Shom, general manager (accounts & finance) of Padma Oil, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mohammad Nazmul Hoque, member (finance) of CAAB, said they have the highest dues from Biman, including aeronautical and non-aeronautical charges.

The figures represent accumulated dues rather than expenses incurred in a single financial year.

"Biman always says it has made a profit, but it does not explain how the profit was made or which sectors generated it," said Kazi Wahidul Islam, an aviation expert.

Questions remain over how unpaid aviation and fuel charges are treated in the airline's financial calculations, he said, while calling for making Biman's financial statements publicly available to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

The national flag carrier's financial position has come under renewed focus following two parliamentary committee meetings on Sunday and Monday, where lawmakers scrutinised its earnings, operations, aircraft purchases, ticketing problems and audit objections.

At Sunday's parliamentary standing committee meeting, members questioned whether feasibility studies had been conducted before the purchase agreements for 35 aircraft were signed with Boeing and Airbus.

They sought details of the proposed routes, passenger demand, operational capacity and transparency of the procurement process.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat told the committee that the purchases were necessary to prevent an aircraft shortage in the coming years.

According to a ministry press release, he said newly purchased aircraft could take around 10 years to join the fleet, by which time existing aircraft would gradually be grounded.

The government would not directly finance the purchases; Biman would make payments in phases from its own earnings, while the government would act as guarantor, he said, adding that the delivery process could continue until 2040 and that financing would be arranged through soft loans.

The committee sought a report on the procurement process, including whether necessary assessments were conducted before signing the agreements.

Meanwhile, at a separate meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings on Monday, members raised questions over unusually high international airfares and Biman's online ticketing system.

The committee wanted to know why tickets on the Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route were several times more expensive than those on the Kuala Lumpur-Manila route despite the distances being nearly the same, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the discussions.

Members sought an explanation of the fare disparity and whether any policy existed to regulate international airfares.

The committee suggested examining whether a fare-setting policy could be introduced.

Questions were also raised over Biman's online ticketing system.

One committee member complained that tickets were often unavailable online, although many seats were found vacant after passengers boarded aircraft.

Regarding this, the aviation expert Wahidul said the problem had persisted for years, largely because of a lack of accountability in ticket sales and seat management.

Airlines around the world increasingly relied on automated systems to manage seat inventories, reducing opportunities for manual interference.

Although Biman had introduced measures to penalise travel agencies for holding seats without confirmation, the problem continued, he said.

"If an aircraft has 300 seats and only 200 are filled, someone must explain why the remaining 100 seats went empty."

The district and country managers should be held accountable for unsold seats, particularly when flights depart with unusually low passenger loads, he said.

The parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings also questioned Biman over Tk 736 crore in reported irregularities involving chartered cargo operations on the Dhaka-Guangzhou-Dhaka route and revenue collection.



'Confiscate the assets of Hasina, Kamal without delay'

ICT chief prosecutor urges home ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam yesterday requested the home ministry to take control of all movable and immovable properties belonging to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

In a letter sent to the home ministry's senior secretary, Aminul said ICT-1, in its November 17, 2025 verdict, sentenced Hasina and Kamal to death and ordered the confiscation of their properties in a crimes against humanity case linked to the July 2024 uprising.

The tribunal also directed that proceeds from the assets be distributed as compensation to victims and the families of those killed during the uprising, the letter said.

The letter warned that the fugitives could sell or transfer their assets before

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman pays a courtesy call on President Mirza Fakhrul Islam at Bangabhaban yesterday, briefing him on his recent visit to Japan, including his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and discussions with leading Japanese organisations. They also discussed bilateral agreements and MoUs signed during the visit, as well as issues of national interest. PHOTO: PMO

IN FOCUS

LPG price hike aims at 'long-term welfare'

Says Zahed, warns govt's subsidy capacity is shrinking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The LPG price hike was made keeping long-term welfare in mind, said Zahed Ur Rahman, information and broadcasting adviser to the prime minister.

The government's capacity to provide subsidies is steadily declining, he also said at a press conference at the Secretariat yesterday.

Zahed said the government understands the pressure fuel price hikes, particularly those of cooking gas like LPG, put on the public.

"If I may put it this way, this price hike was also done keeping long-term welfare in mind," he said.

The government plans to provide Tk 48,000 crore in subsidies to the power and energy sector in the current fiscal year. However, it had to pay half of that amount -- Tk 24,000 crore -- within two and a half months, he said.

"We are now buying liquefied natural gas (LNG)

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

261 women, girls faced violence in October

Says HRSS report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 261 women and girls faced violence across the country last month, according to the monthly report of the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

Of them, 82 were raped, including 42 children. Five rape victims were murdered, and one died by suicide.

Another 72 women and girls faced sexual harassment, while nine were killed over dowry-related violence. Domestic violence left 47 women dead and 21 dead by suicide.

Additionally, 38 children were killed, and 163 were subjected to abuse.

The rights organisation also reported that at least 12 people -- 10 from BNP and two from Awami League -- were killed and 334 injured in 70 incidents of political violence in October.

Internal BNP feuds accounted for half of the incidents, leaving nine people dead and at least 185 injured.

The report was compiled using information from 16 national media outlets and the organisation's own fact-finding, HRSS said.

Released yesterday, it also said 33 incidents of mob beatings over allegations of theft, robbery and mugging left at least

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Financing barriers deter private climate investment

Speakers call for lending reforms, longer-term loans and govt guarantees at roundtable by SNV Bangladesh, Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bankers, business leaders and climate experts yesterday called for reforms in lending rules, longer-term loans and government-backed guarantees to attract private investment in climate adaptation.

They cited uncertain returns, foreign exchange risks and poor project preparation as barriers to financing agriculture, water supply and municipal services.

They spoke at a roundtable, titled "Pre-COP Dialogue: Unlocking Private Investment in Climate Adaptation", jointly organised by SNV Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre ahead of COP31.

Mazed Hossain Mahin, business origination adviser at SNV Bangladesh, said the National Adaptation Plan estimated investment needs of $230 billion by 2050, or $8.5 billion annually, across 113 actions.

"These priorities still need to become projects that financiers and investors can actually assess and support," he said.

Ali Azam Al Azad, director (deputy secretary) at the PPP Division of Invest Bangladesh, said the government had developed small-scale public-private partnership (PPP) guidelines with SNV's support and incorporated climate considerations into procurement rules.

The guidelines allowed up to 40% viability gap funding for PPP projects, he said, calling for changes to collateral requirements, single-borrower limits and long-term lending rules.

Molla Karimul Islam Tuhin, head of the Sustainable Finance Department at City Bank PLC, estimated annual financing needs at Tk 1 lakh crore for adaptation and Tk 1.3 lakh crore for mitigation.

Banks disbursed about Tk 30,000 crore annually, with the government



Participants at the roundtable organised by SNV Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Uphold spirit of 1971 war, protect people's rights

Says Dr Kamal Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for an independent judiciary, free and fair elections, and freedom of expression to uphold the fundamental principles of the constitution.

"The constitution is the product of our nation's struggle. Through the Liberation War, we dreamt of building an exploitation-free and democratic state. Nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism are the four fundamental principles of the 1972 Constitution. The people are the source of all state power," he said.



"The struggle to protect people's rights is not yet over. We must ensure an independent judiciary, free, and fair elections, and freedom of expression. No discrimination should be allowed on the grounds of religion, community, gender, race or political identity. Let us all work together to build a democratic and discrimination-free Bangladesh," he added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

4 NAT'L LEADERS

Security concerns force postponement of exhibition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Liberation War Museum yesterday postponed a special exhibition commemorating the four national leaders following security concerns raised by law enforcement agencies.

Museum trustee Sarwar Ali told The Daily Star that law enforcers had requested the postponement, citing concerns about the prevailing security situation.

"Law enforcement agencies considered the situation somewhat worrying and requested that the programme be postponed. We decided to postpone it considering overall security," he said.

Several police personnel were also deployed at the museum in Dhaka's Agargaon area.

Asked about the deployment, Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said police had received confidential information about a potential security threat.

"The situation in the country is not good. We also received confidential

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Without protective gear, labourers break stones in Banglabandha, Tentulia, Panchagarh, yesterday, exposing themselves to health risks. Female workers earn Tk 300-500 a day, while their male counterparts get Tk 700-1,000. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

TAHSIF'S DEATH

Dip on fresh 3-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Ahmed Shahriar Reza Dip on a fresh three-day remand in a case filed in connection with the death of former Bangladesh Air Force officer KM Tahsif Souri.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Hasan Shahadat passed the order after police sought a seven-day remand for further interrogation, said Additional Public Prosecutor Muhammad Shamsud Doha Sumon.

In a forwarding report, investigation officer Firoz Uddin, an inspector at the Tongi river police outpost, said Dip had provided some important information during interrogation, which investigators were verifying.

The report said Dip and Tahsif had visited several places together, sometimes accompanied by their friend Jarika Tasnim Disha, 19.

Disha returned home at one point, while Dip and Tahsif later went to a field beside the Turag river in the early hours of October 28, it added.

The IO said investigators had found information suggesting that Dip and Disha were the last people seen with Tahsif before his death and that evidence indicated their possible involvement in the incident.

Police are examining the information as part of the investigation.

Stay vigilant against misinfo on July charter

Constitutional amendment body urges youths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Special Committee on Constitutional Amendment yesterday urged youths to remain vigilant against what it described as misinformation regarding the implementation of the July charter.

It made the appeal during a views exchange meeting with representatives of various student organisations.

According to a Parliament Secretariat press release, participants noted that the July charter clearly states that reforms are to be carried out through constitutional amendments.

The discussions covered a range of issues, including framing a modern and people-oriented constitution through necessary reforms.

The meeting also paid tribute to the significant role played by students in the uprising.

DSCC begins e-rickshaw reg form distribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) yesterday launched the registration process for battery-run e-rickshaws operating in areas within its jurisdiction.

Each form can be availed at Tk 100 from Nagar Bhaban and all DSCC regional offices between 10:00am and 3:00pm on working days. Each individual can collect a maximum of five forms.

However, submitting an application alone will not guarantee registration. E-rickshaws must first be modified in accordance with prescribed guidelines and obtain approval or clearance from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Applicants must also meet the requirements outlined in the Rules for the Operation of Three-Wheeled Low-Speed Battery-Powered Rickshaws (E-Rickshaws) in City Corporation Areas, 2026, issued by the Local Government Division, before submitting their applications to the city authorities.

DSCC Administrator Md Abdus Salam disclosed the initiative while briefing reporters yesterday.



Students of the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) block the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Sitakunda, Chattogram, yesterday, protesting the death of fellow student Maysha Musferat killed in a road accident in the Kumira area. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

'My whole world has fallen apart'

Breaks down father of IIUC student killed as container lorry hits minibus

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, *Ctg*

"We celebrated her 22nd birthday last Friday with relatives and friends. Maysha was so happy. Today, she is no more. The pain is unbearable."

Shakhawat Hossain, father of Maysha Musferat, 22, broke down while talking to this correspondent in front of the emergency unit of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday at noon.

Maysha, a student of the English department at International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), was killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Kumira, Sitakunda upazila, yesterday morning. Another student, Razia Sultana, was injured.

Around 9:20am, a container lorry hit a minibus, which overturned onto the two students as they waited beside the road in front of the university gate. Maysha died after being taken to CMCH, while Razia is receiving treatment at a private hospital.

Maysha lived with her family in Mirsarai. Her father, an expatriate, said she had left home for university that morning. Hours later, he received a call from the university and rushed to the hospital with his wife and son, only to find her dead.

"She was my only daughter among three sons. My whole world has fallen apart," he said.



Maysha Musferat

IIUC teacher Prof Mostafa Monir Chowdhury said Maysha had gone to the university, but as her class was postponed, she was waiting for a bus to return home.

CCTV footage showed Maysha and two others standing beside the road when a minibus stopped in front of them. A 40-foot container lorry then rammed the minibus from behind, causing it to overturn onto the students. The lorry driver fled the scene.

Agitated students said the university administration had failed to ensure safety despite several previous accidents at the spot.

Maysha's janaza was held on the highway in front of the university around 4:00pm. Her body was later taken to her home.

Meanwhile, students blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram highway and the railway track from around 10:30am for seven hours, demanding the arrest and prosecution of the lorry driver, a foot-overbridge, removal of illegal structures and unplanned speed breakers, and restrictions on roadside parking.

The blockade caused severe traffic congestion on both sides of the highway and halted four trains on the Dhaka-Chattogram route.

"They lifted the blockade around 4:00pm after the Sitakunda UNO, Chattogram SP and IIUC vice-chancellor assured them of immediate action," said Arifur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police of Highway Police (Cumilla Region).

29 sources polluting Halda river identified

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A team of researchers from Chittagong University (CU) has identified 29 sources of pollution in the Halda river, one of the country's major natural breeding grounds for carp fish species, raising concerns over threats to its aquatic ecosystem and biodiversity.

The sources include untreated industrial waste, household and market garbage, chemical fertilisers and pesticides from agricultural land, plastic waste, oil discharged from boats, emissions from brick kilns along the river, and dumping of dead animals and birds.

Professor Dr Mohammad Omar Faruk Russell of CU's botany department, who led the research team, presented the findings at an event yesterday.

The team identified the sources while examining plant diversity along around an 81-kilometre stretch of the river between September 2025 and October 2026.

The study also documented 1,029 plant species along the riverbanks, including some rare specimens among 729 recorded for the first time, as well as 51 medicinal plant species.

The newly recorded species include Leisa Garjan, also known as Lengra Garjan, and Patha Tekia.

The team also identified 100 endangered plant species, including Neeljui, Tejbahul, Faiz tree, Sidha Jarul, Kuchi palm, Nat Alkushee, Khana, Ashok and Barun.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

However, natural vegetation was not evenly distributed along the riverbanks. Comparatively fewer plants were found between Nazirhat Bridge and the Narayanhat area along the river.

Researchers believe the expansion of agricultural activities and crop cultivation along the riverbanks reduced the natural habitats of these species.

"Our main objective was to document the plant diversity along the river. In addition, we identified sources of pollution that are harmful to the plants and the river," said Prof Omar Faruk.

The researchers recommended 13 measures to conserve the river's plant diversity and curb pollution. These include protecting rare and threatened plants, planting native trees along the banks, treating industrial waste, preventing river encroachment, and regular monitoring.

Prof Sheikh Bakhtiar Uddin, another member of the research team, said pollution threatened not only fish but the entire river ecosystem, including its plant diversity.

"Government agencies responsible for protecting the river should take effective steps to stop pollution," he added.

The research was conducted with funding and support from Effective Creation on Human Opinion (ECO), a private research organisation, and Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills (BSRM).

Prof Omar Faruk said the manuscript of the research findings had been prepared and would be submitted for publication soon.

Tourist vessels yet to start trips to Saint Martin's

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

No vessel carrying tourists to Saint Martin's Island has yet left Cox's Bazar, despite the tourist season opening on November 1, as operators are still waiting for several mandatory approvals.

Officials concerned said vessel operations could begin on November 5 if the necessary government clearances are obtained by then.

Hossain Islam Bahadur, general secretary of Sea Cruise Operators-Owners Association of Bangladesh, said vessels need clearance from environment ministry, approval from Department of Shipping, route permits from BIWTA and permission from the Cox's Bazar district administration to start operations, and the approval process remained incomplete. "Preparations were underway to start



operations on Thursday or Friday."

Mahmudur Rahman Sayem, magistrate of tourism cell at Cox's Bazar district administration, said no shipping company had yet applied to the district administration for final approval after securing clearances from other agencies.

Nayan Shil, deputy director of BIWTA in Chattogram division, said five vessels had applied for route permits.

A meeting held at environment ministry on October 12 decided that tourists would be allowed to stay overnight on the island from November 1 to March 15.

A maximum of 3,500 tourists will be allowed to visit the island daily during the period.

Mahibul Islam, deputy director (marketing and branding) of the Bangladesh Tourism Board, said vessels would sell tickets according to their respective passenger capacities through designated ticketing agents' websites, all integrated with the Tourism Board's website.

Meanwhile, a source at the district administration said vessel operators were not particularly keen to start services yet, citing uncertainty over passenger numbers until the tourist season gains momentum after November 15.

Woman dies as easybike hits her

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

A woman was killed after being hit by a battery-run easybike in Aditmari of Lalmonirhat on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Momina Begum, 46, of BSCIC area in Saptibari.

The accident occurred in front of the PTI Training Centre at Saptibari Union in the upazila around 10:00pm. The easybike driver fled the scene with the vehicle immediately after the accident.

Police and locals said Momina was crossing the road when a speeding battery-run easybike hit her. Momina died on the way to the hospital.

Invitation for Tender
Jiban Bima Corporation
Administration Division,
Head Office, Dhaka-1000.

Ref no. 53.19.0000.308.30.022.27.187; Date: 02 November' 2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in e-GP portal (Http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by General Manager, Administration Division, Jiban Bima Corporation, Head Office, 24, Motijheel, Dhaka for the procurement of following package which will be available on e-GP website from 08-11-2026 (4.00PM)

Sl. No	Tender ID	Name of Goods	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
01.	Tender ID:1364351	Printing and Supply of Calendar-2027 of Jiban Bima Corporation	22/11/2026 4.00 PM	23/11/2026 12.00PM

1. This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
2. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branch on or before last selling date and time.
3. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (Http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

(Abu Nayeem Mohammed Maruf Khan)
General Manager-Admin

GD-2666

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 Web: www.powergrid.gov.bd
স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.৪৫৭.১৪.০০৩.২৬.৫২২ তারিখঃ ০২/১১/২০২৬খ্রিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের প্রকল্প-১ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Title of Works	Last date & time of document selling	Last date & time of security submission
1341106	Reconductoring Work for Aminbazar-Kalyanpur, Mymensingh-Shambhuganj, Horipur-Siddhirganj and Horipur-Madanganj 132kV Double Circuit Transmission Line.	22 November 2026 at 15.00	23 November 2026 at 12.00

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

(মোঃ মঞ্জুর মোর্শেদ)
প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও তত্ত্বাঃ প্রকৌঃ (অঃদাঃ),প্রকল্প-১

LUXURY APARTMENT FOR RENT
3,500 SFT, North Gulshan,
House # 2/C, Road # 73.
Prime location • Elegant living
• Modern amenities
01755544174

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১।	প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	:	২৩ বীর, কুমিল্লা সেনানিবাস
২।	কাজের বিবরণ	:	মাল্টিপারপাস শেড-১ এর সামনে পার্কিং এর জন্য হার্ড স্ট্যান্ডিং গ্রাউন্ড নির্মাণ এবং এতদ্‌সংক্রান্ত বিবিধ প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যয় নির্বাহ বাবদ
৩।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	:	০৬ নভেম্বর ২০২৬
৪।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	:	১২ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকা এবং উল্লেখিত সময়ের পরে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না পর্যন্ত
৫।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ	:	১২ নভেম্বর ২০২৬ তারিখ ১৫০০ ঘটিকায় সকল দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র বক্স খোলা হবে

আইএসপিআর/সেনা/৯১৪

লেঃ কর্ণেল
অধিনায়ক
২৩ বীর

GD-2661

Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Public Service Commission Secretariat
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
www.bpsc.gov.bd

Memo No: 80.00.0000.403.32.011.26-316 Date: 02.11.2026

Re-Tender

This is to notify all concerned that the following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods as follows-

Name of Goods	Package No & Tender ID	Publication, Last Selling and Closing Date & Time
Supply of OMR Answer Sheets for BCS Examination.	Invitation Reference No. : 80.00.0000.403.32.011.26-315 **Tender ID: 1365022**	Tender Publication: 4 Nov, 2026 09:00 am Last Selling: 15 Nov, 2026 04:00 pm Closing: 16 Nov,2026 11:30 am

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mofijur Rahman)
Deputy Director (Admin-3)
Telephone No: 55006639

GD-2664

Americans vote in midterms

Trump calls it 'most important midterm' of his lifetime

AGENCIES

Americans delivered their verdict on Donald Trump's tumultuous second presidency yesterday in midterm elections that threaten to shatter his grip on Washington, with Democrats widely favoured to retake the House but facing a greater challenge in the Senate.

Republicans losing the House would give Democrats the power to stall Trump's legislative agenda and launch sweeping investigations of his administration. A Senate defeat would also threaten his ability to appoint Supreme Court justices and senior officials.

The election amounts to a nationwide judgment on Trump. All 435 House seats and 35 of the 100 Senate seats are at stake, along with governorships in 36 states. Democrats need only three House gains and a net four seats in the Senate to wrest both chambers from Republican hands.

Democrats could block Trump's agenda and launch investigations if Republicans lose the House

Trump labeled the elections as "the most important midterm in our lifetime."

Congressional candidates made their final arguments to US voters on Monday evening, the eve of the midterm elections, with tensions running high in Michigan, where Abdul El-Sayed aims to become the first Muslim elected to the Senate, and in California, where the Supreme Court quashed an attempt by President Donald Trump's Justice Department to intervene.

The top court rejected the Trump administration's attempt to temporarily block California from counting mail-in ballots from more than 20,000 registered voters who federal officials alleged were likely non-US citizens.

Some Republican supporters, however, remain confident.



People vote during the midterm elections early in the day at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, US, yesterday. About 210 million registered voters are set to decide how much power Donald Trump will have for the remainder of his presidency. PHOTO: AFP

Blue wave or red surprise?

Key factors that could decide the US midterms

AGENCIES

Americans voted in the midterm elections to decide who would control Congress for the final two years of Donald Trump's presidency, along with dozens of governorships and thousands of state offices. The campaign unfolded against a backdrop of economic concerns, the Iran war, immigration, ethics questions and the growing impact of artificial intelligence.

IT'S THE ECONOMY

Affordability remains the top issue for many voters. Although inflation stood at 3.7 percent in September, Americans continue to face higher costs for fuel, housing, electricity, groceries and borrowing.

Polling suggests economic concerns dominate voter priorities. Pew found 65 percent of Americans believe Trump's economic policies have harmed the economy, while a Joseph Rainey Center survey found 57 percent ranked groceries, gas or utility bills among their top three issues. Trump's tariffs remain a key battleground, with critics blaming them for rising costs and supporters arguing they protect US industry.

IRAN WAR

The conflict with Iran has become a major domestic issue as rising energy prices affect household budgets.

Emerson polling identified the war as the most important issue among those surveyed, while Reuters/Ipsos found only 34 percent approved of Trump's handling of the conflict. Several Republican candidates have called for an end to the fighting, reflecting divisions within the party.

IMMIGRATION

Immigration remains central to the political debate, but public opinion has become more complicated.

Support for Trump's hardline policies has weakened following controversies surrounding deportations, detention practices and ICE operations. Reuters/Ipsos found 55 percent disapproved of Trump's handling of immigration, while surveys show Democrats and Republicans running nearly even on voter trust regarding the issue. Opposition is particularly strong among Latino voters in competitive House districts.

TRUMP, MONEY AND POWER

The election is also a referendum on Trump's second term. Government ethics ranked among voters' leading concerns, with polling showing widespread perceptions of corruption in federal government. Many voters also expressed doubts about Trump's ability to separate presidential duties from his family's business interests.

AI COMES TO TOWN

Artificial intelligence has emerged as an unexpected campaign issue. Voters express concerns about jobs, safety, regulation and the expansion of data centres needed to support AI technology. Debate over the costs and local impacts of data centres has become particularly visible in several states.

OTHER FAULT LINES

Transgender rights and healthcare remain divisive issues. While not as dominant as the economy, Iran or immigration, they continue to mobilise key segments of both parties' supporters.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (All 435 seats up for election)		SENATE (35 out of 100 seats up for election)
214 seats	DEMOCRATS HOLD	45 seats
219 seats	REPUBLICANS HOLD	53 seats
2 seats	INDEPENDENTS/ VACANTS	2 seats

Is US preparing to resume its war with Iran?

AGENCIES

As Americans voted for the midterms, attention in the Middle East is focused on whether a pause in major US military operations against Iran could end once the elections are over.

Signs of possible escalation have been mounting for weeks. Israel has conducted military exercises near Iran, the US has reinforced its naval presence in the region, and attacks on commercial shipping and threats against Gulf infrastructure have continued.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly ruled out military action before the midterms, but has left open the possibility of action afterwards.

US officials have reportedly advised regional partners to prepare for potential renewed strikes and Iranian retaliation, while emphasising that no final decision has been made.

On October 19, Israeli fighter jets reportedly flew to within striking distance of Iran before returning, while US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth made an unannounced visit to Israel. Analysts said the developments fuelled concerns that military preparations were underway.

Trump has repeatedly hinted at possible action after the vote. On October 28, he said: "We are going to have something one way or the other that'll happen fairly soon."

Media reports suggest American and Israeli planners have discussed options for a short but intensive campaign targeting Iranian energy facilities, as well as missile, drone and nuclear-related infrastructure.

US and Israeli planners reportedly discussed a short, intensive campaign targeting Iran's energy, missile, drone and nuclear facilities.



The prospect worries Gulf states, which fear any conflict could spread beyond Iran. Tehran has warned it would retaliate against US bases, warships and civilian infrastructure across the region if attacked, reports Aran News online.

Commercial shipping has already come under pressure. Numerous incidents have been reported in and around the Strait of Hormuz, affecting vessels, seafarers and energy supplies. Iran-backed Houthis have meanwhile continued attacks on Saudi targets, including airports and oil facilities.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthis said yesterday it had intercepted a drone in the region of Makkah, as the Houthis reported 17 people killed in Yemen over two days.

Saudi Arabia has accused the Houthis several times of targeting Makka and Medina, another holy city, accusations the Iran-backed fighters systematically reject, reports AFP.

At the same time, the US has assembled a powerful military presence near Iran, including aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships and Marine units capable of carrying out air, missile and limited ground operations.

An operation to capture the Kharg Island would fall within the capabilities of Marine Expeditionary Units, particularly with support from the F-35B fighters carried aboard the Boxer.

Whether such an operation is actually being contemplated remains unknown. But the combination of naval deployments, military planning and increasingly pointed political rhetoric has left little doubt that Washington is preparing to keep its options open.

BIWTC
Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation
Ministry of Shipping
Fairlee House 24, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka
www.biwtc.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No. & Reference No.	Description of works	Tender Document Last Selling Date and time	Tender closing Date and time	Tender opening Date and time
01	1354455	Remaining works of Construction of 02 nos slipway each 2000 M.T max with all other's incidental works at Dockyard 1 & 2 of BIWTC, Narayangonj.	29-Nov-2026 16:00	30-Nov-2026 12:00	30-Nov-2026 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the http://www.eprocure.gov.bd have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches. It is noted that bill payment will be done upon availability of fund after acceptable work done.
Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Tenders.

02.11.26
(Md. Ziaul Islam)
Chief Engineer
&
Project Director
BIWTC, Dhaka.

GD-2667

Russian strikes on Ukrainian aid point kill 29

Power grid facilities also hit in separate attacks



AFP, *Kyiv*

Ukraine said Monday that Russian strikes on a school distributing humanitarian aid killed at least 29 people, dashing fragile hopes of "progress toward peace" after a local ceasefire in the south expired without violations.

Russia resumed its strikes on the southern region of Kherson after the end of a ceasefire in the area, the longest truce in the war raging between the neighbours since Russia's 2022 invasion, Kyiv said.

Hours after the truce, Russia targeted a village in Zaporizhzhia, adjacent to Kherson, with repeated strikes that killed at least 29 people, the acting regional governor said. Some of the dead had come to collect aid at a local school.

President Zelensky warned there were "still people under the rubble" in the village of Komyshuvakha after the attack, where he said "rescue operations continue as far as the security situation allows."

Russia also launched a massive overnight strike on Ukrainian electricity facilities in the Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv regions which supply power to military factories and the Ukrainian army, the Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday.

বি,আই,ডব্লিউ,টি,এ ভবন
১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ
পোস্ট বক্স ৭৬,
ঢাকা-১০০০

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌপরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ
BANGLADESH INLAND WATER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY
www.biwta.gov.bd

BIWTA BHABAN
141-143,
MOTIJHEEL C/A
POST BOX 76,
DHAKA-1000

File No.: File No.: 18.11.0000.311.14.161.2026-884 Date: 01-11-2026

Corrigendum-II & III

Ref.: Invitation Reference No.:
(i) 18.11.0000.311.14.161.2026.660; Dated: 07-Oct-2026
(ii) 18.11.0000.311.14.163.2026.661; Dated: 07-Oct-2026

e-Tenders have been invited in the national e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the (i) Procurement of 05 (five) Nos. 20-inch Cutter Suction Dredgers and Ancillary Vessels with Other Accessories (Package-21 & 22) and (ii) Procurement of 04 (four) Nos. 18-inch Cutter Suction Dredgers and Ancillary Vessels with Other Accessories (Package-23 & 24). Amendments have been made to the tenders that can be found in the websites mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Tender Name	Tender ID	Website
1.	Procurement of 05 (five) Nos. 20-inch Cutter Suction Dredgers and Ancillary Vessels with Other Accessories	1346529	https://www.eprocure.gov.bd https://biwta.gov.bd
2.	Procurement of 04 (four) Nos. 18-inch Cutter Suction Dredgers and Ancillary Vessels with Other Accessories	1346578	

01-11-2026
(Md. Moznu Miah)
Addl. Chief Engineer (Marine)
Dredging Department, BIWTA
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

GD-2662

Parties must practise what they preach

Lack of intraparty democracy threatens the future of governance

The findings of a new study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) have again shed light on a long-ignored state of affairs: the dearth of good governance, transparency, accountability, and democratic practices within our political parties. While not entirely shocking, these revelations should be instructive for the parties concerned. For decades, these parties have been run with authority concentrated in the hands of a few at the top. Regular party elections, transparent candidate selection processes, and integrity have hardly been a priority for them. If the very institutions entrusted with upholding democracy fail to practise it themselves, how can they possibly help advance it?

Reviewing the activities of 32 registered parties, the TIB study found that they are increasingly operating like power-centric businesses. Businesspeople accounted for 59.9 percent of elected MPs in the 2026 parliamentary election. Dynastic politics dominates leadership in at least 10 major parties, including the ruling BNP, Awami League (currently banned from politics), and Jatiya Party. National councils are irregular in at least 16 parties, while most elect their leaders largely through voice votes rather than secret ballots. And only one party constitution sets a limit on the number of terms an individual can serve as party chief.

Meanwhile, most parties don't follow the RPO requirement to form candidate panels based on proposals from local committees. Wealth, muscle power, and local influence often outweigh merit in candidate selection. Grassroots members have little influence over decision-making, while women's active participation in leadership remains shockingly inadequate.

In a functional democracy, political parties represent citizens' interests. But when they are held hostage by money and patronage, capable leaders are pushed aside while business interests gain disproportionate influence.

In the February election, for instance, women constituted just 4.09 percent of the candidates. These shortcomings undermine the very foundation of representative politics that is essential to a functioning democracy.

Party finances form another troubling part of the picture. TIB estimated that a party maintaining offices and conducting regular activities down to union or ward level could spend Tk 1,532 crore to Tk 2,188 crore annually, excluding election expenses. However, the highest expenditure reported in the published 2025 accounts of four parties was only Tk 23.91 crore. While TIB's estimate is a model of potential organisational costs, rather than verified spending, the enormous disparity underscores the need for credible financial disclosure. The study also found that none of the 16 active party websites reviewed published financial reports or election expenditure accounts, making the case for stronger oversight even more compelling.

In a functional democracy, political parties represent citizens' interests. But when they are held hostage by money and patronage, capable leaders are pushed aside while business interests gain disproportionate influence. We, therefore, support TIB's recommendations for regular secret-ballot leadership elections, independent audits of party finances, and greater grassroots and women's participation. To this end, relevant RPO and party registration rules must be amended and strictly enforced, and the Election Commission must be equipped to scrutinise party accounts. Above all, parties must undertake meaningful internal reforms. They cannot expect citizens to trust their ability or willingness to deliver good governance if they cannot uphold democratic practices within their own ranks.

Whose interests is BERC protecting?

Frequent LPG price hikes demand transparency

The country's LPG cylinder industry is mired in allegations against companies of showing artificial shortages, hoarding products, and overcharging. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) seems more than willing to appease the businesses that threaten sales shutdowns and regularly press the authority for higher commissions and other charges. A report by this daily shows changes in the official pricing of LPG cylinders since January, when the price for a 12-kg LPG cylinder stood at Tk 1,306. With the latest hike, the official price set by BERC is Tk 2,060—the first time the official retail price has been set above Tk 2,000.

What is even more frustrating is that consumers are forced to buy LPG cylinders at much higher prices than the official rate. According to this daily, as recently as in September, 12-kg LPG cylinders were being sold for Tk 1,900 to Tk 2,500, even when the official rates ranged between Tk 1,585 and Tk 1,837. While LPG imports have been declining since 2024, for years now, only 10-12 of the 35 licensed companies have been active importers. Due to the rule that prevents companies from refilling cylinders of rival brands, consumers and retailers are often left with empty cylinders and are compelled to purchase new ones from companies that still import LPG, thus having to spend more.

Despite the myriad reasons businesses cite for hiking LPG cylinder prices every other month, audit reports by BERC show that most LPG companies are profitable. The new price is also higher than the Tk 1,976 per cylinder that was proposed by BERC's technical evaluation committee at a recent public hearing. This begs the question of why the regulatory body is always so quick to increase LPG companies' prices instead of fulfilling its duty, which is regulating energy prices to protect consumers from being overcharged. Instead, we only see the opposite happening, and too frequently.

From BERC, we demand greater transparency in terms of why LPG cylinder prices are hiked so frequently. The commission must also investigate allegations of artificial shortages, hoarding, and the informal overcharging that has become the norm in this market. Nearly one crore consumers depend on this essential good to run their households daily. Authorities cannot remain so compliant with the whims of private companies in this regard.

What the LDC deferral means for Bangladesh at COP31

Ismot Hasnine Masrur E Khuda is a researcher and energy policy analyst. He can be reached at ismothasnine111@gmail.com.

Rassiq Aziz Kabir is an academic and public policy analyst. He can be reached at rassiq.aziz@gmail.com.

■ **ISMOT HASNINE MASRUR E KHUDA** *and*
■ **RASSIQ AZIZ KABIR**

Bangladesh's graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category has rarely been treated as anything more than a trade question in our policy discourse. On October 29, the UN General Assembly extended our preparatory period to November 24, 2029 without objection. Nepal was granted an identical extension. However, the first test of the decision will come in Antalya, Türkiye, where COP31 begins on November 9. There, Bangladesh will negotiate for the first time as a country granted extra time. In climate negotiations, LDC status decides which negotiating bloc a country sits in and which pools of money it can draw from.

These pools are sizeable, at least on paper. The LDC Group under the UN climate convention represents 44 countries and is currently chaired by Timor-Leste. The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), finances adaptation in LDCs only; during its last four-year cycle, the cap per LDC was $20 million. The Green Climate Fund aims to direct at least half of its adaptation resources to LDCs, small island states, and African countries, while the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) has reserved a minimum of 50 percent of its start-up resources for LDCs and small island states. The extension therefore keeps Bangladesh inside these earmarked windows for three more years of negotiations.

The terms upon which the extension was granted, however, deserve a closer reading in Dhaka. Speaking for the European Union, Ireland backed the extension but cautioned that repeated delays for countries already meeting the graduation criteria could erode the process's credibility, adding that LDC-specific concessional resources should remain with countries facing the most severe structural challenges. Canada, speaking also for Australia and New Zealand, asked for regular progress reports. Australia presides over the negotiations at COP31.

A week earlier, when the FRLD set aside $20 million for flood-stricken Nepal, its first allocation to any country, developed-country board members, including the EU's, stated that the decision should not be treated as a precedent. These remarks suggest that Bangladesh, by far the largest economy among the LDCs and the largest user of LDC trade preferences, will be watched more closely than its peers. Few countries have as many people exposed to floods, cyclones, and rising seas, but size invites a level of scrutiny that some smaller members escape.

Besides, earmarked funds are shrinking relative to demand. A pledging session for the LDCF planned at COP30 was called off after donors indicated contributions would be too small, and seven technically cleared projects, one of them from Bangladesh, were left out of the fund's final work programme for want of resources. The FRLD's start-up window of $342 million has received 176 funding requests worth $2.8 billion, with 41 LDCs alone seeking a little over $1 billion. When money is this scarce, a large claim from Bangladesh means a smaller share for other LDCs.



VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

The LDC tag, moreover, has brought in less money than is often assumed. Since its inception, the LDCF has provided Bangladesh with $48.19 million, less than Nepal's $55.38 million and Bhutan's $60.39 million. In the 2022-2026 cycle, Bangladesh accessed the fund only through its final work programme, with a $9.8-million coastal adaptation project in the Greater Sundarbans, which is less than half of the per-country cap. The extension's value in climate terms will therefore depend less on the status itself than on whether we can prepare fundable projects in time.

More importantly, the GEF's ninth funding cycle runs from July 2026 to June 2030. At COP29, parties requested the LDCF to support recently graduated countries, and the GEF's draft strategy for the cycle proposes support for countries that graduated during the previous two cycles. Bangladesh, now set to graduate in November 2029, would fall late in the current cycle, and how such countries will be treated in the next is not clear yet. The FRLD, meanwhile, is designing its long-term operating model. Its board will take up its first funding requests in Manila in December. The rules determining our access after 2029 are being drafted now, while Bangladesh still has a say as an LDC. Dhaka should therefore approach COP31 as the start of a three-year climate transition. Three measures are worth considering.

First, Bangladesh should coordinate formally with Nepal. A joint statement in Antalya could commit both to publishing an annual report on climate finance during the transition, alongside the progress updates already owed to the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP). The two countries should then push for a graduation clause in GEF-9 programming and in the FRLD's long-term model, so that a country graduating midway through a funding cycle remains eligible for LDC floors for at least three years after graduation.

Second, Bangladesh should contribute to the bloc instead of merely drawing from it. The LDC Group's Dili declaration calls for pledging events for the LDCF and the Special Climate Change Fund at COP31. Bangladesh should back it openly. It can also offer adaptation training to other LDCs through the Dhaka-founded LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change. As the FRLD drafts rules for rapid disbursement after the Nepal case, Dhaka should support provisions that prioritise the smallest and poorest members.

Third, Bangladesh should ground its vulnerability argument in existing instruments. In 2015, the CDP recommended allocation of new climate finance on the basis of its economic vulnerability index, irrespective of LDC status. In 2024, the UN General Assembly adopted a multidimensional vulnerability index by consensus. Dhaka should table a specific proposal that the FRLD's long-term allocation system and the LDCF's support for graduating countries use these indices to inform allocation alongside the existing floors. It should check its own scores first, however, since Bangladesh met the CDP's vulnerability threshold for graduation. At home, the Economic Relations Division and the environment ministry should ensure that Bangladesh's project, left out of the last LDCF work programme, is resubmitted as soon as GEF-9 programming opens and that any request from us in the FRLD pipeline is ready for the board's consideration in December.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman is expected to attend COP31. His address would be most useful if it sets out how Bangladesh plans to use the extension in the climate arena and what it is prepared to offer the LDC Group in return. A 2019 column in this newspaper noted that LDC negotiators had once floated renaming the group the "G47", since vulnerability does not end with graduation. The idea deserves a second look.

Holding on to the support won in New York will take more work at the climate table. Smaller LDCs may still be heard on status alone. Bangladesh will need to bring more than that to Antalya.

Why do some resent garment workers' demand for a living wage?



Maisha Islam Monamee is a contributor to The Daily Star.

■ **MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE**

A strange phenomenon seems to influence public discourse whenever garment workers demand higher wages. Why, many ask, should a garment worker demand Tk 30,000 when educated young people are earning so little? The wage debate seems to have acquired a new benchmark: if a university graduate is underpaid, others are somehow expected to moderate their demands for better wages.

The frustration of young graduates is real. Our graduate labour market is deeply dysfunctional. Years of education, often financed through considerable family sacrifice, do not necessarily translate into economic independence. Employers demand experience, offer inadequate salaries, and expect professional commitment in return. But acknowledging one form of economic hardship does not require diminishing another. Comparing a graduate's Tk 15,000 salary with a garment worker's Tk 12,500 overlooks the different financial circumstances, living costs and responsibilities that determine how far each income can stretch.

A fresh graduate earning Tk 15,000 might still live with their parents, eat meals prepared at home and depend on their family for rent, healthcare, or emergency expenses. Their education and opportunities may have been financed by their parents. A garment worker might be supporting two children, paying rent in an industrial neighbourhood and sending money to elderly parents in their village. These are not interchangeable economic circumstances.

This does not mean every graduate receives parental support or every garment worker supports a family. But the structural distinction matters. To have family support to fall back on is itself an economic resource that is distributed very unevenly across society. This is where our classism appears, disguised as professional ambition, meritocracy and, occasionally, concern for economic fairness.

We have developed a hierarchy of whose labour deserves respect. We attach social prestige to the person sitting behind a computer while treating the person operating industrial machinery for 10 hours as an interchangeable unit of production. One's salary is discussed in terms of qualifications and market competitiveness. The other's is discussed in terms of how much the factory can afford. A university education is an achievement. But it is not a certificate granting its holder a superior claim to economic dignity. Nor does the absence of a degree make someone else's labour less valuable. A garment worker does not need academic credentials to justify being able to afford food, housing, and healthcare.

It is worth considering how we discuss the garment industry. It is routinely celebrated as a national economic success story. But when the people physically producing those exports demand higher wages, the conversation changes. When workers cannot afford necessities, the conversation is about whether they are asking for too much. It is perhaps also worth asking why the economic anxiety of a factory owner is so readily understood as a structural problem, while the economic anxiety of a worker is so often reduced to an individual demand.

Perhaps we should also ask why the road is where these workers have to make themselves heard. Many of us complain about garment workers disrupting traffic while happily participating in a consumer culture whose affordability depends, in part, on highly competitive global manufacturing costs. We want clothes to remain cheap, factories to remain profitable, export figures to keep rising and roads to remain clear. But we are not enthusiastic about discussing who absorbs the cost of making all four things possible.

This is not to suggest that factory owners face no genuine difficulties. Manufacturers operate under pressure from international buyers, rising input costs, energy shortages, and competition from other sourcing destinations. But recognising these pressures does not require treating workers' wages as the industry's most convenient adjustment mechanism. International brands exercise considerable influence over purchasing prices and production arrangements. Local manufacturers retain responsibility for employment practices and wage payments. Workers, meanwhile, occupy the weakest position in this arrangement, with limited bargaining power and few effective avenues to negotiate.

When formal mechanisms fail to deliver, street protests become one of the few remaining ways to make grievances visible. And visibility is precisely what these demonstrations deserve. A road blockade inconveniences thousands of people. These frustrations are legitimate. But perhaps we should also ask why the road is where these workers have to make themselves heard. Many of us complain about garment workers disrupting traffic while happily participating in a consumer culture whose affordability depends, in part, on highly competitive global manufacturing costs. We want clothes to remain cheap, factories to remain profitable, export figures to keep rising and roads to remain clear. But we are not enthusiastic about discussing who absorbs the cost of making all four things possible.

Young graduates should absolutely demand better salaries. They should challenge exploitative employers, question unpaid internships, and reject the idea that poverty is a necessary rite of passage into professional life. But why should that grievance require them to compete with garment workers? Perhaps the better question is: why does a garment worker's wage demand provoke resentment among people who are dissatisfied with their salaries? The garment workers' demand for a dignified life is not an insult to their degree.

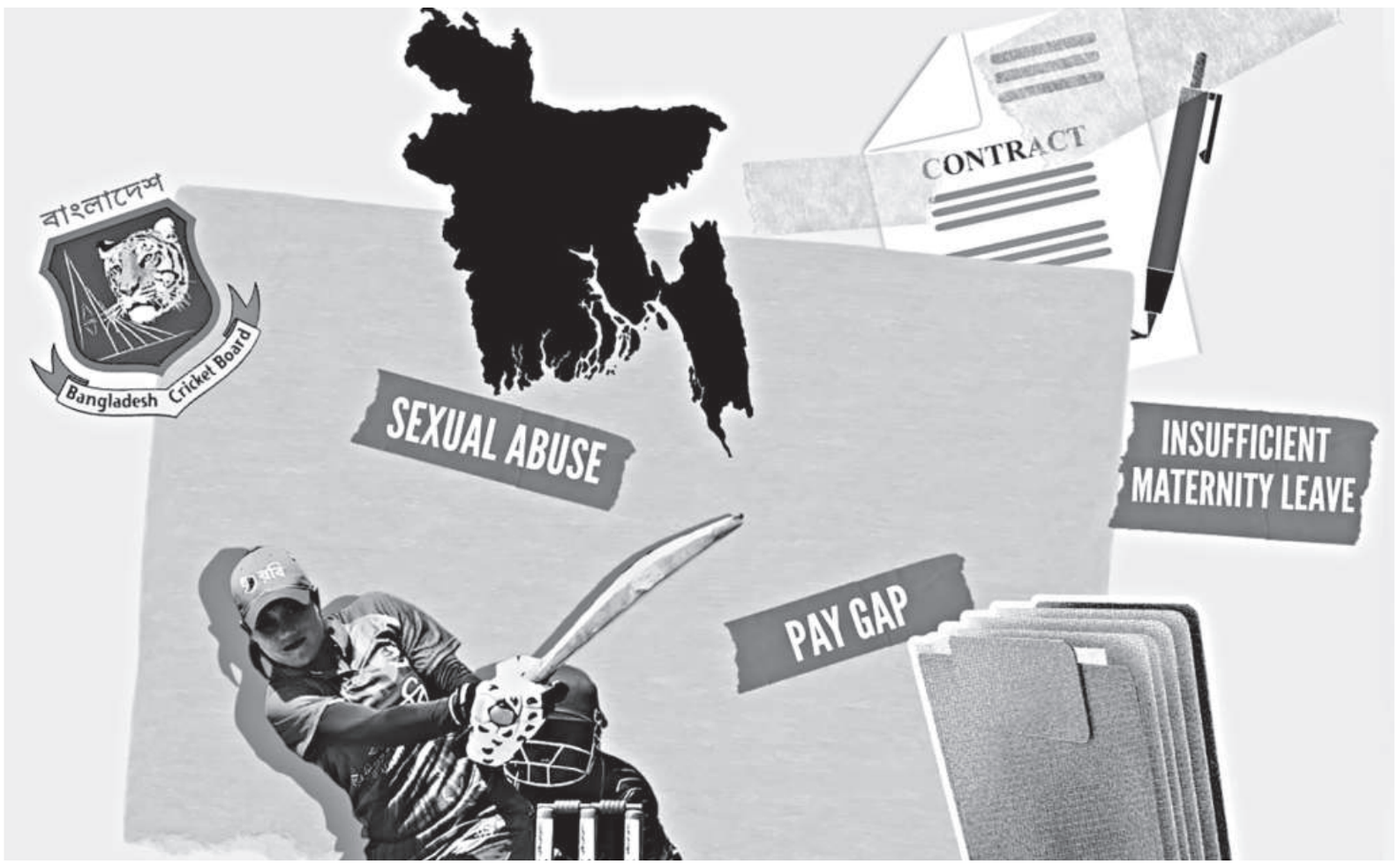
The Daily Star Reg. No. DA 781 | **EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam** Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net | **Registered & Head Offices:** The Daily Star Centre 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215 Phone: 09610222222 | **Newsroom:** Fax- 58156306 reporting@thedailystar.net | **Advertisement:** 01711623910 advertisement@thedailystar.net GPO Box: 3257 | **Subscription:** 01711623906 | thedailystar.net bangla.thedailystar.net/

Women cricketers deserve equal rights, not discretionary favours



Azra Humayra
is sub-editor at The Daily Star Campus.

■ AZRA HUMAYRA



VISUAL: **ALIZA RAHMAN**

Women's cricket is treated as an afterthought time and time again. Women's domestic match fees have doubled, yet the Tk 40,000 offered for longer-format matches remains far below the Tk 1.5 lakh paid to men for four-day fixtures. This makes cricket a lucrative sport for the male cricketers and an entirely different proposition for women, who are expected to show the same level of dedication as men and overcome additional societal barriers, yet receive only a fraction of the financial support needed to sustain their careers.

Former pacer Suraiya Azmin emailed the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on May 9 requesting paid maternity leave and received no response. She gave birth in August and found herself dropped from the national contract list, with her leave request and unpaid wages unsettled. She received zero support from BCB and lost her livelihood in the process of giving birth.

Sanjida Islam Moyna, who played in 70 international one-day and T-20 matches and continued in domestic cricket after her marriage but stepped away after giving birth in 2025. She said that cricket officials and selectors assume married players and mothers will not last and see no point in investing in them.

The point is that those assumptions are never applied to anyone other than women. A male cricketer can become a father and return to training, but no such guarantee is afforded to women. The system does not need to explicitly bar mothers from playing cricket. It simply makes it so difficult for expecting and new mothers to continue their careers that they are eventually forced to leave, allowing their departure to be portrayed as a "personal choice".

Some players delay marriage to prolong their careers; others hide that they are married because they know the price of the tag. Former Bangladesh player and current Qatar women's team head coach Fatema Tuz Jahara points to the money. A national contract often supports a whole family, so a female player has to "think ten times" when it comes to pregnancy. Women are asked to choose between family and sports when men do not have to make that choice.

A different approach is possible. Australia and New Zealand provide paid maternity leave for paid contracted players. Pakistan introduced a Parental Support Policy in 2021. A year later, Bismah Maroof captained the Pakistan team at the 2022 ICC Cricket World Cup six months after giving birth.

The ICC's new Return to Play Post-Pregnancy Guidelines are a welcome development, offering guidance on recovery, training and practical support, but they stop short of guaranteeing paid maternity leave or protecting players' salaries. The guidelines are futile if the member boards do not implement them. The BCB said that it will follow the ICC guidelines. Yet its women's wing chairperson, Rafiqul Islam Babu, admitted he did not know why no guideline existed already, and CEO Nizam Uddin Chowdhury describes matters being addressed "case-by-case".

This is a recurring theme in women's cricket, as maternity is not the only place where BCB turns a blind eye. This cannot be called an oversight because the system is working the way it is designed. On November 1, online news portal The Whistle published an 11-month investigation about the alleged sexual harassment by coaches and selectors. At every level, aspiring female cricketers depend on coaches and selectors for career advancement, creating a clear imbalance of power. The story unravels the system that perpetuates sexual harassment from district to national level.

National contracts last for one year, and their renewal depends on selectors' assessments. Only 17 women currently hold such contracts. Former captain Jahanara Alam claims to have experienced the consequences of this discretionary power, which can also leave new mothers vulnerable to being dropped from the squad. She alleged that Manjurul Islam Manju, former selector and manager of the national women's team, proposed a sexual relationship during the 2022 World Cup. Manju denies the claim, but a committee appointed by the BCB found preliminary evidence supporting two of her four allegations. Jahanara remained silent for years because the player feared losing her contract.

The committee also found that BCB had no framework to prevent sexual harassment, despite the 2009 High Court directive. The BCB could have used Jahanara's case as an opportunity to investigate wider allegations of sexual harassment in women's cricket, but there is little publicly available evidence that it did so. Action under the law was recommended, but Manjurul was only banned by the BCB. Ironically, he occupied no post at BCB at that time.

A harassment policy appeared on the BCB website on October 12, only after The Whistle began asking questions. Nizam Uddin Chowdhury told The Whistle it was approved in July and is an "internal policy". The 10 contracted players The Whistle contacted had never heard of it, and no complaints committee has been named. The chairperson of the women's wing also reportedly did not know such committees exist.

Herein lies the predicament because the problem cannot be found unless the victims speak up. When a coach allegedly groped a young female cricketer at 18, she left the field. Such departures, like that of athlete mothers, appear in no statistics. For this piece, I tried to find figures on how many players leave after marriage or after giving birth but could not find any data from the BCB. During the Covid lockdown, BCB director Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby said female cricketers usually leave the game after marriage. Being aware of the problem yet failing to take any measures to address it is itself a deliberate choice.

Women's cricket is treated as an afterthought time and time again. Women's domestic match fees have doubled, yet the Tk 40,000 offered for longer-format matches remains far below the Tk 1.5 lakh paid to men for four-day fixtures. This makes cricket a lucrative sport for the male cricketers and an entirely different proposition for women, who are expected to show the same level of dedication as men and overcome additional societal barriers, yet receive only a fraction of the financial support needed to sustain their careers.

The consequences of this neglect are evident on the field. The Women's Bangladesh Premier League (WBPL) remains an unfulfilled promise. According to former captain Rumana Ahmed, the number of matches declined under Nazmul Abedeen Fahim's tenure. In 2025, the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) ended after just two of its three scheduled matches, depriving players of valuable playing and earning opportunities. Worse, ahead of the 2025 World Cup in India, the national women's team had to practise against the boys' under-15 team because the BCB failed to arrange an international series, leaving them without adequate match preparation. Neglect follows in other places too; in 2025, the Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) held pre-election meetings without a single woman present. There is no woman on the BCB's newly elected board, and selector Salma Khatun is the only woman in a key national position, reports The Whistle. It shows the sheer lack of importance given to the female cricketers.

If the BCB is conscientious about its female cricketers, it must understand that without a safety net, women are likely to feel disquieted about returning to the field. It must form an independent complaints committee consisting of women and outside members. It should publish a written policy with paid maternity leave and protected contracts, medical assessments before return, and transparent rules for selection and renewal, so marriage, pregnancy, or refusing a coach's advances never become unofficial reasons to drop anyone.

The instances make it clear that the neglect is staunchly structural because these issues persist from maternity leave, contract security, and sexual harassment cases to match fees, domestic tournaments, and representation in decision-making. Without a written policy, financial security and genuine investment in women's cricket, their careers are being governed by discretion rather than rules. Women should not have to choose between motherhood and a career or between silence and a career.

Amid mounting questions, we must account for citizens drawn into Russia's war



Jannatul Naym Pieal
is a writer, researcher, and journalist. He can be reached at jn.pieal@gmail.com.

■ JANNATUL NAYM PIEAL

Abdullah Al Mamun of Lalmonirhat flew to Russia on May 7 with 29 other men, hoping for a better life. Then he ended up in a military camp there. The day before he was sent to the front, he rang his younger brother back home. "If we do not meet in this world, we will meet on the Day of Judgement," he told his family. Later, a man who had travelled with him informed them that Mamun was dead. His village arranged a "gayebana" janaza, but since no one could confirm his death, only "munajat" was offered instead. Five months on, his wife has a one-year-old son, debts she cannot pay, and a husband whose body she has not seen.

Recently, the UN's Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine told the General Assembly's Third Committee that it had compelling evidence that Russian authorities, working with recruiting agents in several countries, had trafficked men from 29 countries, including Bangladesh, into the Russian armed forces. The commission examined recruitment from 48 countries and drew on 245 testimonies, along with visas, travel records, and contracts. Among the documents it obtained were business visas issued to Bangladeshi recruits, claiming that a Russian civilian company had invited them. The men were offered jobs, charged recruitment fees, and put on flights, sometimes within days. Once in Russia, many were presented with one-year contracts with the defence ministry, written entirely in Russian. Their passports and phones were often taken away before they signed. Moscow has rejected the report, saying it does not recognise the commission.



FILE VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

For Dhaka, the question now is what to do with these findings. And it all begins with acknowledging the fact that they report does not give us the whole picture. It does not say how many Bangladeshis were trafficked, killed, or went missing. It also excludes men who knowingly joined the Russian forces. That omission is quite significant because Bangladesh's ambassador in Moscow told *Prothom Alo* that more than 90 percent of workers go to the war willingly. Russian citizenship and monthly earnings of several lakh taka are powerful attractions for people struggling to find work at home. But accepting a job offer is not consent to being sent to war. The commission found that recruits from different countries were given the same contracts. Some received as little as 20 minutes of military training, while others trained for a month. The commission says these men became members of the Russian armed forces once they signed, even when they were under pressure. They are soldiers, not mercenaries, and should be treated as prisoners of war if captured. Their home countries, it says, should treat them as victims rather than prosecute them.

The most basic question also remains unanswered: how many Bangladeshis have gone to Russia and ended up in its war? The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) issued 7,949 clearances for Russia between January 2025 and October 27, 2026. That is a record of clearances, not a count of men who were trafficked to Russia. According to Shariful Islam Hasan, associate director of Brac's Migration Programme, it is very important for the government to trace around 8,500 people who travelled legally to Russia over the past two years. BMET recorded 4,727 workers travelling to Russia in 2025 alone, up from 1,395 in 2024. Meanwhile, Russian work permits issued to Bangladeshis rose to 9,300 in 2025, from 2,800 the previous year, according to figures reported by *The Moscow Times*. These figures measure different things, but the gap underlines how little the available data tells us about the full flow of workers. Fortify Rights and Truth Hounds identified at least 104 recruits and 34 deaths between May 2025 and February 2026. *Prothom Alo* has confirmed at least 54 deaths over three years. The Special Response Battalion says 20 of the 30 men who left in May have died. These are partial counts from different sources and periods. The UN commission says it sent governments 69 letters about the recruitment of foreign nationals into the Russian armed forces and received only six replies. As Bangladeshis, we have the right to know if our country was among the respondents.

India, at least, is trying to establish what happened to its citizens. On October 9, its foreign ministry said around 259 Indians had been recruited, 139 had returned home, and talks were underway for another 69. Its Supreme Court is overseeing a compensation process. The government has told the court that 51 Indians are dead and 77 cannot be traced. Russia has processed six compensation claims. There is no reason to take comfort from any of these numbers. But the figures are on record, the government has had to answer questions, and families have a process through which they can seek compensation. Bangladesh has none of this. Russia has reportedly given our embassy details of 40 Bangladeshis who are dead or missing, without saying which is which. The Wage Earners' Welfare Board has received not a single application to bring a body home. Families cannot prove their relatives have died, so they cannot claim burial grants, compensation or insurance. They had to pay an average of Tk 10 lakh to send their men abroad. They are now left with the debt and no reliable account of what happened to them.

The government cannot plead ignorance of its obligations. Bangladesh joined the Palermo Protocol in 2019 and has had an anti-trafficking law since 2012. Prosecuting recruiters, warning jobseekers, seeking the discharge of victims, and protecting them from punishment are not new ideas imported from Geneva. They are part of what Bangladesh has already committed itself to doing. The government has cancelled the licences of three agencies, and police have arrested two men, which is appreciable. But who recruited the men through those agencies? Who collected the money? Who arranged the flights and put them in touch with people in Russia? The commission describes a chain involving recruitment agents, transit countries, and Russian officials. Two arrests cannot be the end of an investigation into a chain like that.

There is also a question Dhaka needs to answer about its own priorities. In the same month that the government cancelled the agencies' licences, Bangladesh and Russia were discussing an increase in the number of Bangladeshi workers in Russia, from around 10,000 to as many as 100,000. More jobs abroad may sound like good news in a country where so many young people struggle to find work. But what safeguards would protect those workers? Who would make sure a man recruited as a civilian worker does not end up in a military uniform? These are not minor details to be worked out later, and Dhaka should press Moscow for answers, including why Bangladeshi men were made to sign contracts they could not read. A UN report should not have to expose the dangers before the government acts to protect its citizens.

UNAPOLOGETICALLY BOLD

The story of Priyontee Urbee



PHOTO: REBOOT

SHARMIN JOYA

Whether she is posing sharp, cheeky questions on a glittering red carpet, dissecting complex scripts, or navigating a boat-only village in the Netherlands, Priyontee Urbee moves through life with unfiltered charm and captivating energy. A dynamic host, actress, and avid globe-trotter, she has earned a reputation for being refreshingly direct—a trait that defines both her screen presence and her personal philosophy.

For Urbee, hosting is not about exchanging polite pleasantries; it is about injecting life and laughter into the room. During her recent second stint hosting the red carpet of the Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards, she threw away standard scripts in favour of tailored, witty inquiries for every director and artiste. From asking direct questions to teasing actors in playful "Kill, date, or marry" games, her spontaneous approach broke the ice.

"The first time, I was hesitant and couldn't ask everyone everything," she reflects on her hosting evolution. "The second time, I broke all shyness. Everyone took the questions so spontaneously and had so much fun". Achieving that effortless rapport required intense preparation. Alongside her co-host Prantar Dastider, she spent three days rehearsing until 4:00am, filling notebooks with custom questions.

The red carpet remains her ultimate medium. "The main stage requires maintaining formal norms, but the red carpet is informal and full of funny questions—that's much more like me," she notes, citing Cannes as her ultimate red-carpet inspiration since childhood.

In her acting career, Urbee shows a distinct blend of passion and selectivity. While gearing up for upcoming Eid projects—including a new pairing with Musfiq Farhan—she remains cautious about jumping onto the silver screen. "Unless it's a very strong character, I don't want to step into movies just yet," she asserts. When choosing directors, she holds immense respect for visionaries like Mejbaur Rahman Sumon, Robiul Alam Robi, and Jahid Preetom. She shares a special creative chemistry with Preetom, particularly after their acclaimed collaboration ***Emon Dine Tare Bola Jay***. "Preetom bhai's dialogues carry immense depth and complexity," she explains. "He knows I can deliver those heavy, complex lines, which makes working with him so rewarding".

Beyond the studio lights, Urbee's true escape lies in wandering across continents. Having recently travelled across seven European nations—including the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, and France—she discovered a reality quite different from standard tourist stereotypes. Expecting late-night partying, she instead found a disciplined, hard-working culture where people wake up at 6:00am and walk everywhere. Switzerland captivated her completely. "When I close my eyes and think of Europe, Switzerland comes to mind first—it literally feels like heaven". She was equally enchanted by a serene, car-free Dutch village navigated entirely by boat. Yet, true to her candid nature, she doesn't hesitate to share hot takes, deeming France overrated due to safety anxieties and clutter. "If I have to clutch my bag tightly in fear, why go there?" she quips with characteristic honesty.

Looking ahead, Urbee's wanderlust is far from satisfied, with Portugal, Argentina, and Italy topping her future travel bucket list. Whether stepping in front of a camera or exploring unfamiliar streets across the globe, Urbee continues to live on her own terms—vibrant, fearless, and endlessly curious.



Tahsan, Mehazabien to appear as guest judges on 'Marks Allrounder'

Singer-actor Tahsan Khan and actress Mehazabien Chowdhury are reuniting as guest judges for the studio round of ***Marks Allrounder***, the child and teenage talent competition currently airing on NTV.

The duo was scheduled to judge the contestants during the shoot on Monday, November 2, for the multi-discipline contest, which features nearly three lakh participants competing in singing, dancing, acting, drawing, recitation, storytelling, and impromptu speaking.

The nationwide competition will crown three top all-rounders with educational scholarships worth Tk 15 lakh each, alongside Tk 1 crore in total awards.

Tahsan recently shifted his focus to hosting following a break from music and acting, while Mehazabien has pivoted toward films and OTT projects.

EVENTS

'Soul of Qawwali Returns'

An evening dedicated to the devotional and spiritual traditions of Sufi music, ***Soul of Qawwali Returns*** celebrates South Asian musical heritage with live Qawwali performances alongside artisanal perfume and antique showcases.

DATE: Thursday | November 12, 2026
TIME: 5:30pm–10:00pm
VENUE: Tajine Banquet Hall, Dhanmondi



NEWS

Trump, Adani, Google, Meta

FROM PAGE 12

last year.

The list divides those named into five categories: political, security, legal, economic and social.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega were also placed in the political category.

The security category includes the Israeli armed forces, the Chinese Communist Party, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Mexican drug cartels.

RSF accused the Israeli military and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of pursuing repressive policies against journalists in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.

It described China as the world's largest prison for journalists. It also said organised crime had killed nearly one journalist a month in Mexico since the beginning of the year.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and India's Adani Group were named in the legal category over alleged misuse of legal proceedings against journalists and media outlets.

Technology giants Alphabet and Meta feature in the economic category, while billionaire Elon Musk, Argentine President Javier Milei and Indian website OpIndia were placed in the social category.

RSF said the individuals and organisations used different methods to suppress independent journalism, including violence, imprisonment, legal harassment, financial pressure and online attacks.

RSF Director-General Thibaut Bruttin said the list was subjective but sought to identify those responsible for attacks on press freedom.

He said naming those responsible and documenting their actions could help prevent such attacks from becoming normalised.

No individual or organisation from Bangladesh appears on the list.

Bangladesh ranked 152nd in RSF's 2026 World Press Freedom Index, slipping three places from last year. Its press freedom situation remained in the "very serious" category.

Govt clueless on toxic lead-based paint imports

FROM PAGE 12

The findings were presented at a roundtable organised by the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO) in collaboration with the Department of Environment (DoE) and the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN) at the DoE office in Dhaka.

Lead chromate is widely used to produce bright yellow, orange and red colours in paints, coatings, plastics and other products. Exposure to lead can damage the brain and nervous system, particularly in children, and may cause learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

The study found that India supplied between 89.9 percent and 93 percent of imports under the broader customs category by weight during 2022-2025, with China as the second-largest source.

Researchers said some lead chromate may also enter Bangladesh through finished paints and pigment pastes imported under other customs codes.

The report identified paint as the primary use of imported lead chromate in Bangladesh and found no evidence of domestic production of the pigment. It noted that small paint manufacturers often purchase pigments through chemical traders, making supply chains difficult to trace.

Bangladesh introduced a mandatory lead limit of 90 parts per million (ppm) for decorative paints in 2018. Similar standards have since been drafted for seven categories of industrial paints, coatings and related materials, but those standards are yet to be approved by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) and published in the official gazette.

Speaking at the roundtable, Md Saidur Rahman, additional secretary at the environment ministry, called for a detailed economic assessment of industries using lead chromate to minimise disruptions as they transition to safer alternatives.

Md Shahriar Hossain, founder and secretary general of ESDO, proposed exploring green taxation to encourage industries to adopt lead-free materials, while ASM Obaidullah Mahmud, chief research and development officer at Berger Paints Bangladesh, said stronger research and development efforts would help accelerate the transition.

The study recommended improved customs identification, routine laboratory testing and market inspections, along with technical support for small and medium-sized paint manufacturers seeking safer alternatives.

A separate ESDO assessment conducted in 2025 with support from Instiglio and the Lead Exposure Elimination Project found that 68 of 161 decorative paint samples collected in Dhaka and Chattogram, or 42.2 percent, exceeded the legal lead limit.

The cabinet in August approved a draft National Strategy and Multi-Year Action Plan for a Lead-Free Bangladesh (2026-2035), which calls for coordinated action across government agencies.

"Lead chromate is just one of the sources of lead exposure, and addressing it must be part of a broader, comprehensive effort to eliminate lead pollution," said Siddika Sultana, ESDO's executive director.

Materials distributed at the event cited toys, cookware, cosmetics and battery recycling among other potential sources of lead exposure.

Razinara Begum, director of waste and chemicals management at the DoE, said chemical management rules were being drafted and stressed the need to protect workers who are exposed to lead without adequate safety equipment.

Bank directors

FROM PAGE 12

below Tk 2,000 crore from paying cash dividends.

At the meeting, Mostaqur urged banks to expand lending and speed up disbursement of stimulus loans to create jobs amid the economic slowdown. He also indicated that rules could be eased slightly, if necessary, to ensure faster disbursement.

The push comes as private sector credit growth has hit a historic low, falling to 4.17 percent in September from 4.75 percent in August, according to provisional BB data.

Bankers cited procedural hurdles in disbursing stimulus loans and weak business conditions that have dragged credit demand to its lowest level. The governor, however, insisted that lending under the package be stepped up, according to a source present at the meeting.

Bangladesh Bank announced the Tk 60,000 crore stimulus package in May to revive the struggling private sector, reopen closed factories, and boost investment and employment amid slowing growth and persistent inflation concerns.

But disbursement remains sluggish. Banks had released only around Tk 12,000 crore, or one-fifth of the package, by mid-October. Several targeted groups, including unemployed youths, are yet to receive any loans.

The meeting also decided that BB would hold joint meetings with the BAB and ABB every three months.

Chairmen of Bank Asia, Pubali Bank, One Bank and IFIC Bank, among others, attended from the BAB side. The ABB delegation included managing directors of Mutual Trust Bank, Eastern Bank, One Bank and Pubali Bank, among others. Deputy governors and other central bank officials were also present.

Medical colleges, univs mull relief for HSC retakers

FROM PAGE 12

admissions, he said.

Several universities are scheduled to close applications or finish admission tests before the retake results are out.

According to the existing timeline, Dhaka University will accept applications from November 11 to 25 and hold its five admission tests between December 5 and 26.

Its rules require candidates to have passed the HSC or equivalent examinations in 2026 and meet the minimum GPA requirements for their chosen units. DU does not allow applicants from previous HSC batches.

Jagannath University will receive applications from November 15 to December 10, with admission tests beginning on January 1.

Rajshahi University's proposed preliminary application period runs from November 12 to 27, although its tests are planned for January.

Chittagong University and Comilla University have set December 10 as their application deadline, with admission tests planned for later dates.

For universities holding tests in January, the application deadline rather than the test date is often the immediate obstacle for supplementary candidates.

Khulna University has scheduled tests for December 17 and 18, while the Military Institute of Science and Technology has fixed December 18 and 19.

The medical and dental admission tests have tentatively been planned for December 4.

The nine-university agricultural cluster has scheduled its combined admission test for January 2, while Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, which is coordinating the process, has yet to announce detailed application arrangements.

There may be more room for adjustment in the 20-university General, Science and Technology (GST) cluster. Its tests are scheduled for March 19, 20 and 27, but application dates have not been announced.

BUET has fixed January 16 for its admission test and KUET January 8, while RUET and CUET have proposed January 14 and 23 respectively. Their application deadlines will determine whether supplementary candidates can compete.

On Monday, Syed Akhtaruzzaman, chairman of the Dhaka Education Board and head of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, told The Daily Star that the boards would need the entire month of December to hold the examinations, evaluate scripts and publish results.

"We have informed the authorities that bringing these students into the regular admission process will be difficult in practice," he said, adding that there is little scope to shorten the examination schedule further.

The uncertainty comes despite an undergraduate intake capacity far exceeding the number of students who passed this year's HSC and equivalent examinations.

The country has 14,92,288 undergraduate places for the 2026-27 session, compared with 6,46,685 successful HSC candidates, according to the UGC.

But only 63,656 places are on public university main campuses. Another 10,18,632 are in affiliated colleges and institutions, including 9,46,095 under National University, while private universities account for 4,10,000.

AL leader dies

FROM PAGE 2

This correspondent repeatedly tried to reach several on-duty medical officers at the hospital by phone, but none answered. Hospital Superintendent AM Aktaruzzaman said he was in Dhaka. The number he provided for another medical officer was switched off.

Zakir's 21-year-old son, Zobaid Al Fahad, told The Daily Star that his father had high blood pressure and high cholesterol and that the jail authorities did not provide proper medical care.

"Even when we supplied medicines, the jail authorities did not let my father take them," he said.

He said his father had told the family that the jail food made him feel sick. The family last spoke to Zakir over the phone on Friday, and he was completely healthy then, Fahad said.

"How could things change so drastically?" he asked, alleging that Zakir had suffered mental torture in prison.

The jail superintendent denied all these allegations, saying there was no reason to withhold prescribed medicine and no torture was inflicted on Zakir. She also said that no complaint about illness from jail food had come to the authorities' attention during his nearly one year there.

Zakir was also a former additional public prosecutor of the Bogura District Judge's Court.

In his political career, he served as general secretary of the Bogura District Swechchhasebak League, president of the Bogura District Chhatra League, and office secretary of the Bogura District Awami League.

BINANCE HACK

N Korea blasts FBI allegations as it test-fires missiles

AFP, *Seoul*

Pyongyang blasted on Monday the FBI's allegations it was behind the theft of $6 billion from cryptocurrency platform Binance, as it test-fired strategic cruise missiles in a new display of its weapons capabilities.

The missile launch came on the heels of a public rebuttal from Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, who slammed the FBI's allegations as a "grave political provocation".

On Saturday, the FBI said a North Korea-affiliated hacking group called TraderTraitor had been behind the hack.

Experts see the incident as potentially the largest cryptocurrency theft in history, with a haul equalling "nearly a quarter of the DPRK's estimated annual GDP," Michael Bosack, founding director of the Parley Policy Institute and a former UN Command official, told AFP.

Kim Yo Jong said the FBI's claim was "absurd rhetoric and nothing new," given prior US allegations that Pyongyang was behind last year's major hack of Bybit.

HC asks Rumi

FROM PAGE 2

Quran International Madrasa at Tongi, assaulting a teacher, vandalising the office and looting Tk 17 lakh.

Rumi filed an application with the High Court on October 26 seeking anticipatory bail.

On October 25, a Gazipur court turned down the bail petition filed by Moslem Ahmed, the vice-principal of the madrasa, in a case filed by Rumi accusing the teacher of sexually abusing his daughter.

According to the family, the alleged incident took place on the ground-floor staircase of the madrasa on October 19.

The girl reportedly refused to attend the madrasa after the incident and later disclosed what had happened to her parents when they asked her about it.

Sajek blockade eases for farmers, students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*



Vehicles carrying agricultural produce and transporting teachers and students to educational institutions will be exempt from the ongoing road blockade in Sajek union of Baghaichhari upazila in Rangamati from today.

The decision was announced yesterday in a press release issued by the Sajek Gana Adhikar Rakkha Committee following a joint meeting with the Sajek Karbari Association.

Ambulances, fire service vehicles and those carrying media workers will also remain exempt from the blockade, as before.

The organisers said the move was taken in the interests of farmers and agricultural traders from both Pahari and Bengali communities in Sajek.

However, the organisations unanimously decided to continue the indefinite blockade until residents' five-point demands are met, the release said.

The blockade has entered the second day of its fourth phase.

On October 26, a meeting between government representatives and protesters over the demands ended inconclusively. The administration accepted four demands but rejected the call for the immediate removal of members of the JSS (Santu Larma) group from Sajek.

261 women, girls faced violence

FROM PAGE 3

22 people dead and 20 injured. Another 22 incidents of mob violence left one dead and 36 injured.

At least four attacks on minority communities saw seven idols and three homesteads vandalised. Two shrines were also vandalised in Sherpur and Thakurgaon.

At least 46 journalists were attacked or harassed in 28 incidents in October. One was killed, 31 injured, and one sued for defamation.

Meanwhile, 15 incidents of curbing free speech led to 20 arrests and 15 cases. Among them, three were detained and two sued for criticising the prime minister, while five were detained for "hurting religious sentiments". Social media posts also led to one person being beaten to death.

One person was arrested under the Cyber Protection Act.

Meanwhile, 71 incidents of worker abuse left 23 people dead and 134 injured, while 38 workers died in workplace accidents.

Security concerns force postponement of exhibition

FROM PAGE 3

information suggesting a possible security risk. That is why police were deployed," he said.

Denying that police had prevented the exhibition from taking place, the OC said the organisers had decided to postpone it in response to police concerns.

Titled "The Four National Leaders in the Struggle for Independence", the exhibition was scheduled to be inaugurated at 4:00pm yesterday and continue until November 17.

It was organised to commemorate the contributions of Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman to Bangladesh's independence. The four leaders were killed inside Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Uphold spirit of 1971 war

FROM PAGE 3

Dr Kamal made the remarks as chief guest at a discussion titled, "Human Rights, Democracy, Independent Judiciary and the Fundamental Principles of the 1972 Constitution", organised by the Democratic Lawyers Association (DLAB) to mark Constitution Day at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) auditorium on the Supreme Court premises in Dhaka.

Sanjid Rahman Shuvo, the organisation's publicity secretary, read out the written statement on his behalf.

Dr Kamal, who chaired the committee that drafted the country's first constitution in 1972, also paid tribute to the four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, Capt M Mansur Ali and AHM Qamaruzzaman.

Presiding over the programme, DLAB President Subrata Chowdhury said Bangladesh must uphold the spirit of the Liberation War, the 1990 mass uprising and the July uprising.

Prof Abu Sayeed, SCBA President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, and Barrister Sara Hossain also spoke, among others.

Financing barriers

FROM PAGE 3

and development finance among other potential sources, he added.

"We need to repay our depositors' money, so we can't do philanthropy," he said.

Kaida Azam, head of the Structured Finance Department at NCC Bank PLC, said adaptation projects could require 10 to 15-year loans, while banks relied largely on short-term deposits.

Imtiaj Haque, portfolio manager at Water.org, called for greater use of impact bonds and blended finance.

Water.org has signed a social bond agreement with BRAC Bank and is exploring taka-denominated bonds to address hedging difficulties, he said.

Ataus Sopan Malik, managing director of AR Malik Seeds Pvt Ltd, said businesses like his might need "three, four or five million euros" for research, storage and logistics, but foreign financing often targets larger projects. He called for concessional loans and research grants.

Shabbir Karim Rudro, director and chief technology officer of Tetra, said a survey found more than 700 reverse-osmosis water treatment plants in Khulna and Satkhira, of which over 30 percent were inoperative.

Each plant could serve about 300 families, selling water at 50 paisa a litre, he said. "One water plant can serve a community."

Syeda Afzalun Nessa, head of sustainability at HSBC Bangladesh, said the bank's philanthropic climate initiatives include saline-tolerant crops, water-efficient farming in Rajshahi and mangrove conservation in Mirsarai.

HSBC is exploring carbon trading for Rajshahi mango farmers with the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, she said.

HSBC Group has also provided about US $1 million for disaster preparedness and emergency assistance in Bangladesh with Save the Children, UNICEF and the British Red Cross, she added.

Prof Tania Haque of Women and Gender Studies at Dhaka University said women are often seen as "passive recipients rather than active agents" in climate programmes.

She called for their involvement in planning, budgeting and implementation.

Ismène RAC Stalpers, country director of SNV Bangladesh, said private capital should complement, not replace, public and international finance, particularly where commercial returns were limited.

She called for stronger partnerships and investment-ready businesses.

Sumaiya T Ahmed, head of sustainability at PRAN-RFL Group, said the company received a $35 million financing facility from Dutch development bank FMO, linked to sustainability targets.

FMO was also co-investing in technical assistance for more than 100,000 farmers in the company's supply chain, she added.

Nuria Lopez, chairperson of the EU Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, called for more agro-processing investment and better access to European markets for smaller businesses.

Debashis Roy, director (advisory and partnerships) at Impact Investment Exchange, called for clearer adaptation categories and lower climate-bond issuance costs.

SNV Chief Executive Simon O'Connell called for cooperation to reduce risks and make better use of limited grants.

Mohammad Ikhtiar Sobhan, lead of the advisory portfolio at iFarmer; Arif Faisal, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development; Muntasir Tahmeed Chowdhury, chief executive of Inspira Advisory & Consulting Limited; and Hridoy Islam, senior manager at Sajida Foundation, also spoke.

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

1,173 constables used fake addresses

FROM PAGE 12

Once the scrutiny is completed, the PHQ will send a report to the home ministry, recommending action against the constables who used fake permanent addresses, the official said.

The findings also point to other alleged irregularities.

Despite being ineligible, more than 100 constables reportedly secured jobs, allegedly through political interference, while around 200 candidates received unusually high marks in viva voce despite poor results in the written examination.

"We have been reviewing these findings. A candidate might have a relative who was an Awami League leader, but that does not necessarily mean the candidate used the relative's influence to secure a job," said an official involved in the probe.

Allegations of political interference and bribery in police constable recruitment have persisted for years, as district police chiefs reportedly favoured candidates backed by political leaders or influential officials. There were also allegations that SPs recruited constables in exchange for bribes.

Under the current recruitment system, the SP of each district makes the final recommendations for trainee recruit constables (TRCs), who then undergo six months of training at police training institutions.

Upon completion of training, they receive appointment letters from the SPs at their respective training institutes.

Several investigators told this correspondent that 946 of the 980 questionable constable appointments in Dhaka district took place during the tenure of then SP Md Habibur Rahman in 2014-15.

Habibur, who was recently sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in two cases over crimes against humanity, is being investigated by the Anti-Corruption Commission over allegations of money laundering and illegal wealth accumulation through bribery, corruption and recruitment irregularities. He remains absconding.

In September 2021, The Daily Star uncovered irregularities in the recruitment of 18 constables in Narayanganj during the tenure of the then SP Muhammad Harun Or Rashid in 2019.

Among them, five submitted land sale deeds bearing the same registration number, while another three provided deeds with an identical registration number.

The land sale deeds of 11 recruits were linked to the same mouza, daag (plot number) and khatian(record of rights) and carried identical land registration numbers.

Following an internal inquiry, the PHQ dismissed the 18 constables. However, Harun was promoted to deputy inspector general in 2022 and appointed chief of the Detective Branch of DMP later that year.

Harun, who remains absconding, was dismissed from service on October 31 for unauthorised absence from duty and defiance of official orders. He is now facing two corruption cases filed by the ACC and several crimes against humanity cases at the ICT.

On August 27, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmad told parliament that thousands of constables, sub-inspectors and other police personnel had allegedly been recruited by manipulating district quotas during the AL government's tenure.

He cited allegations of irregularities in police recruitment in Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur and Kishoreganj, where candidates allegedly bought small plots of land and changed their permanent addresses to qualify for district quotas.

"We have identified four to five such districts," he said, adding that the final investigation report would be made public.

Following the March 15 instruction from the IGP, district-level committees headed by SPs were formed to investigate corruption, breaches of recruitment rules and other irregularities in constable recruitment.

The committees were asked to examine allegations of fake addresses, land purchases to establish local residency, preferential treatment in examinations, political influence, discrepancies between written and viva voce marks, and possible question paper leaks.

They were instructed to submit their findings and recommendations by April 15.

Asked whether any action would be taken against the officials who verified, recommended or approved the appointments in question, one of the senior PHQ officers said it would be up to the government to decide.

Referring to the allegations of district quota manipulation, former IGP Baharul Alam said opportunities for such manipulation still exist, as district SPs can facilitate the recruitment of candidates from other districts by allowing them to establish nominal residency through land purchases.

Nominal residency refers to an address where a person is officially registered as a resident but does not actually live there on a regular basis.

Towards the end of the AL government's tenure, the PHQ moved to curb recruitment irregularities, according to an assistant inspector general who previously served in the recruitment and career planning department of the PHQ.

Marks for the written examination were raised from 40 to 45, while those for the viva voce were reduced from 20 to 15 to limit the scope for candidates to secure jobs through disproportionately high viva voce marks, said the official.

The PHQ also took over responsibility for preparing question papers and centrally evaluating answer scripts, replacing the previous system under which district police units handled both, the official added.

LPG price hike aims at 'long-term welfare'

FROM PAGE 3

at $30 per unit. From 2021 to 2025, up until the interim government, the price per unit was $10 to a maximum of $14," he added.

Describing the fuel price hike and crisis as global, the adviser said, "The problem is that a country with a ruined economy like Bangladesh has to choose where to provide concessions and how much. The brunt of this will have to be borne by someone, in some way. That is the reality."

However, if the price hike has a major impact on the public, the government will consider providing relief if it can improve its position in other sectors, he added.

Asked about police action against protesters, Zahed said law enforcement agencies have the legal authority to use force, including lethal weapons where legally justified, but stressed that it must follow due process and the principle of proportionality.

The government does not want to suppress protests like previous administrations, he said.

PRAYER TIMING

NOVEMBER 4

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

বিনা টিকেটে রেল ভ্রমণ থেকে বিরত থাকুন
দুর্ঘটনা এড়াতে রেলের ক্লিপ ও যন্ত্রাংশ চুরি রোধে এগিয়ে আসুন

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী-২ এর দপ্তর,
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম-৪০০০।
ই-মেইলঃ den2ctg@railway.gov.bd.

নথি নং-ডিইএন-২/সিটিজি/২০২৬-২৭/টেন্ডার নোটিশ-০২ তারিখঃ-০১-১১-২০২৬খ্রিঃ।

Tender notice

বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী-২, বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, কর্তৃক **National Electronic Government Procurement Portal (https//www.eprocure.gov.bd/)** এ নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র আহবান করা হয়েছেঃ

ক্রঃ নং	টেন্ডার আইডি, নথি নং	ক্রয়ের ধরণ ও কাজের নাম	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	দরপত্র প্রকাশ, দাখিলের তারিখ ও শেষ সময়
1	1363079 DEN-2/CTG/ 2026-27/ 1363079/03	At CTG (CRB Tulatali): Through repairs to bungalow no. E/71 including guide wall, drain & sanitary works with other allied works.	OTM NCT	01-Nov-2026 20:00:00 19-Nov-2026 12:30:00
2	1363961 DEN-2/CTG/ 2026-27/ 1363961/05	At CTG (Station Colony): Thorough repairs of qtr.no. T/747(A,B) including roof treatment with other allied works.	OTM NCT	02-Nov-2026 20:00:00 22-Nov-2026 12:30:00
3	1363951 DEN-2/CTG/ 2026-27/ 1363951/04	At CTG (Station Colony): Thorough repairs of qtr.no. T/37 including roof treatment and boundary wall with other allied works	OTM NCT	02-Nov-2026 20:00:00 22-Nov-2026 12:30:00

বিঃ দ্রঃ
১. শুধুমাত্র ই-জিপি সিস্টেমে নিবন্ধিত **eligibility** শর্তাবলী পূরণকারী দরদাতাগণ সরাসরি অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন ।
২. নিবন্ধিত ও আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বিনা খরচে দরপত্র দলিল দেখতে পারবেন; তবে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য দরপত্র দলিল ও দরপত্র জামানত বাবদ অর্থ নির্ধারিত ব্যাংকে জমা করতে হবে।
৩. আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণকে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের পূর্বে দরপত্রের আবশ্যকীয় প্রতিপালনীয় শর্তাবলী যথাযথভাবে প্রতিপালনের বিষয়টি নিশ্চিতে অত্র দপ্তরের নোটিশ বোর্ডে বিজ্ঞাপিত নির্দেশনা সম্বলিত অনুরোধ অবলোকনের জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া হলো।

এস (২৬) (৯২)

(জীষান দত্ত)
বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী-২
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম।

GD-2669

'Confiscate the assets of Hasina

FROM PAGE 3

the order is enforced and called for bringing those under government control without delay.

It urged the ministry to immediately prepare a comprehensive list of all their properties, bring them under state control and arrange for the proceeds to be distributed as compensation to the victims and the families of those killed during the uprising, in accordance with the verdict.

Aminul told journalists that the prosecution had urged the government to sell the assets through lawful procedures and distribute the proceeds through the July Foundation or another legally recognised body.

He added that the convicts who did not appeal within 30 days had no further legal scope to appeal and that their sentences would be executed once they were arrested.

Meanwhile, former ICT prosecutor Saimum Reza Talukder, who resigned amid bribery allegations on March 9 and was under investigation, has left Bangladesh, multiple sources confirmed.

Contacted, Saimum also confirmed his departure over the phone but declined to provide further details.

Saimum had allegedly demanded Tk 1 crore in exchange for securing bail. The allegations surfaced in March after audio recordings of WhatsApp conversations, purportedly involving Saimum and members of the family of former lawmaker ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, were leaked.

A five-member fact-finding committee formed to investigate the allegations against him has yet to submit its report.

Aminul Islam, who leads the committee, said the inquiry was at its final stage and the allegations had been established primarily.

However, Saimum faced no restriction on travelling abroad, he added.

Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
Kotbari, Cumilla
www.bard.gov.bd

No. 47.63.0000.000.033.26.0010.26/ 2195 Date: 03.11.2026

e -Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of Work as stated below:

Sl. No.	Nature of Procurement	Description	Tender ID No.	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Method of Tender
01.	Works	Renovation/Modernization of Washroom at Café-2 (Tiles, RCC, Plumbing-Sanitary & electric works), Cafe-3 column Tiles & related works.	1360539	28-Oct-2026 15:05:00	09-Nov-2026 15:15:00	OTM

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 Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any Branches of registered Bank within closing date and time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd.)

(Salah Uddin Ibne Syed)
Director (Administration)
BARD, Kotbari, Cumilla.

GD-2663

LAW INTERVIEW

Constitution Day Special

Getting overly fixated on drafting new constitutional texts can easily distract us from fixing the actual issues of governance

On 4 November 1972, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. To commemorate the 54th anniversary of the Constitution, ***Rafid Azad Saumik*** *from the Law Desk interviewed* ***Dr Ridwanul Hoque*** *to discuss some critical questions of constitutional reforms, popular sovereignty, and public confidence.*



Dr Ridwanul Hoque

Dr Ridwanul Hoque *is a Bangladeshi legal scholar specialising in constitutional law, comparative public law, citizenship, and judicial review. He is a former Professor of Law at the University of Dhaka and is currently part-timely teaching at Monash University in Melbourne. He is also a governance specialist with experience in universities and public sector organisations.*

LAW DESK (LD): To what extent, in your assessment, have the fundamental ideals and objectives of the Constitution of Bangladesh been realised over the past 54 years?

DR RIDWANUL HOQUE (RH): This is a question that needs to be answered objectively rather than subjectively, taking all factors into account. When the Constitution was adopted in 1972, it rested on four basic pillars: democracy, socialism, nationalism, and secularism. Beyond these four fundamentals, however, there were other fundamental aims: notably, for example, to establish a state where the rule of law is secured and the human rights and dignity of the people are recognised and respected.

Now, looking at our record, you cannot say in one sentence that we have succeeded or completely failed. On the one hand, despite periods when Bangladesh slipped away from democracy, we were still able to restore or return to democracy within the constitutional framework. Following the recent 2026 elections, we have returned to democracy once again. On the other hand, we have faced serious challenges at different times. One reason is that we adopted our Constitution within a very short time. Coming right out of the War of Independence, we expedited the process, which, arguably, led to lapses and a lack of consensus on certain concepts.

Take nationalism as an example. Dr Kamal Hossain wrote in his book that we fought the liberation war based on Bengali cultural or linguistic nationalism. While that concept has its merits, it also had exclusionary factors. By defining nationalism purely through the Bengali language and identity in the Constitution, we excluded the indigenous peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other regions who have distinct ethnic identities. Later, through the 5th Amendment, the principle of Bengali nationalism was altered so that the people would be known as Bangladeshi rather than Bengali, attempting to include those who felt left out. Again, the 15th Amendment reached another compromise: Bengali by nation, but Bangladeshi by citizenship.

When it comes to human rights and the rule of law, they have largely remained neglected throughout our history. While we made institutional efforts over the years, the immediate past regime was horrible, especially in years from 2010 to 2024. The regime was infamous for brutally destroying people's rights and lives through so-called 'crossfire' or extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. These actions are completely repugnant to the democratic goals of our Constitution.

Our real constitutional challenges/problems are: holding free and fair elections, ensuring parliament can hold the government accountable, and making sure the opposition is not shut out by a brute majority in the governing party.

LD: How do you interpret the coexistence of state religion and secularism within the constitutional framework? What implications does this arrangement have for communal harmony and the protection of the rights of religious and other minority groups?

RH: This is a very unusual arrangement that you do not see in other constitutions around the world. On the face of it, having secularism and a state religion side by side seems contradictory. If you say the state is founded on secularism, you cannot logically declare Islam, or any other faith, as the state religion.

However, practically, from the perspective of specificity of our own society, I support this position. Every constitution needs to serve the land and society it belongs to. If you make the Constitution purely secular and remove any reference to the religion of the Muslim majority, some might feel excluded, as if their faith has no recognition. On the other hand, if you completely drop secularism and only keep Islam as the state religion, it sends a message to other religious minorities that they do not belong.

So, this compromise has a unifying value and helps ensure the Constitution's durability, one might plausibly argue. But there is a crucial condition: the mention of Islam as the state religion must remain purely symbolic. At the same time, there must be strong, adequate protective clauses to safeguard the rights of religious and linguistic minorities against any discrimination.

Our courts have interpreted the state religion or Islamic references in the Constitution quite pragmatically in the past. Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani, for instance, was known for his innovative remarks on, and reference to, the constitutional faith in Almighty Allah and the state religion to interpret provisions discouraging social vices like gambling or discrimination against women. Therefore, while the coexistence of secularism and a state religion may seem ambivalent, it can work as a practical compromise in Bangladesh.

LD: What are your views on the proposal to introduce an upper house within the parliamentary system of Bangladesh? From a constitutional and institutional perspective, what considerations are relevant to assessing its necessity and feasibility?

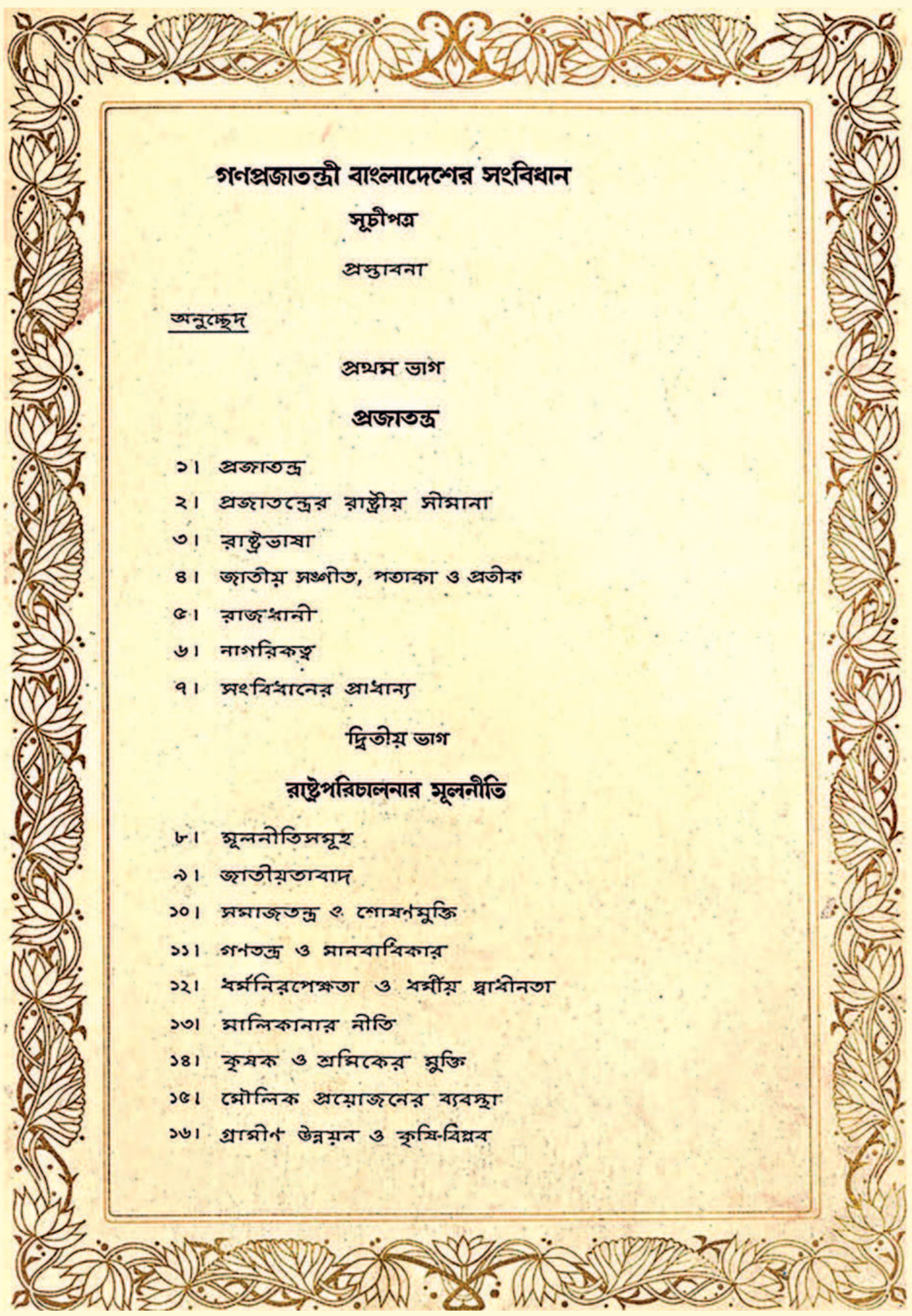
RH: My personal approach to constitutional problems is very simple: If there is no problem, do not fix it. I see no reason whatsoever to introduce an upper house or a bicameral parliament in Bangladesh.

It is very rare for a unitary state to have a bicameral parliament. You generally see upper houses in federal systems where you need to represent different states or provinces that might have ethnic concentrations. That is not the case for Bangladesh. Our crisis has never been that we lack legislative chambers or a balance of representation; our crisis is the ineffective functioning of parliament that has historically remained emasculated or subservient. Over the years, we have seen an overbearing government, completely dominating the parliament and thereby leaving it with no real say in holding the executive accountable. That is a political cultural issue.

An upper house cannot fix that problem; it will only create new ones. In our political culture, it will just become an elite club, where parties will park their favoured figures.

Look at what happened with the reserved seats for women. When we introduced them in 1972, the idea was that this would be a temporary measure and that political parties would gradually start nominating women directly for general seats. But that never happened. Instead, every regime kept extending the number of reserved women seats, because parties needed those seats simply to increase their parliamentary numbers for law-making and constitutional amendments. An upper house would be treated the same way.

Our real constitutional challenges/problems are: holding free and fair elections, ensuring parliament can hold the government accountable, and making sure the opposition is not shut out by a brute majority in the governing party. Questions about models of proportional representation for an upper house are moot. My answer is clearly no: Bangladesh does not need a second chamber.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের সংবিধান

সূচীপত্র

প্রস্তাবনা

অনুচ্ছেদ

প্রথম ভাগ

প্রজাতন্ত্র

১। প্রজাতন্ত্র
২। প্রজাতন্ত্রের রাষ্ট্রীয় সীমানা
৩। রাষ্ট্রভাষা
৪। জাতীয় সঙ্গীত, পতাকা ও প্রতীক
৫। রাজধানী
৬। নাগরিকত্ব
৭। সংবিধানের প্রাধান্য

দ্বিতীয় ভাগ

রাষ্ট্রপরিচালনার মূলনীতি

৮। মূলনীতিসমূহ
৯। জাতীয়তাবাদ
১০। সমাজতন্ত্র ও শোষণমুক্তি
১১। গণতন্ত্র ও মানবাধিকার
১২। ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা ও ধর্মীয় স্বাধীনতা
১৩। মালিকানার নীতি
১৪। কৃষক ও শ্রমিকের মুক্তি
১৫। মৌলিক প্রয়োজনের ব্যবস্থা
১৬। গ্রামীণ উন্নয়ন ও কৃষি-বিপ্লব

LD: How would you assess the legitimacy, inclusiveness, and public participation associated with the constitutional reform initiative undertaken during the interim government?

RH: Taking up constitutional reform under an unelected, interim government is quite rare. Usually, after a revolution or uprising, a government first focuses on stabilising law and order and running the administration, while constitutional questions come later. But the initiative itself was legitimate because the July movement/uprising demanded an end to corruption, authoritarianism, and human rights violations tied to systemic constitutional flaws.

The reform process failed in its scope and composition of the reform questions. The commission took on an overly ambitious mandate, expanding its scope far beyond what was realistic for an interim period. They tried to write recommendations for everything, from police reform to caretaker arrangement, and even prepared a draft new preamble. Why would an advisory commission draft a preamble for future parliamentarians? That is the job of elected representatives, and not of a reform commission. The report ended up being very verbose - a long list of issues after issues.

More importantly, no politicians were on the commission. It turned out to be an academic research committee. While technical experts and academics should certainly be there, you cannot leave out the major political parties that have shaped the country's political history and constitutional journey over the last 50 years.

As a result, public participation became a box-ticking exercise. Holding seminars and meetings was superficial. In my opinion, ordinary people were not in the mood to read complex constitutional documents; they were busy dealing with daily struggles regarding law and order, food prices, and personal safety.

A much better approach would have been to narrow the scope of work, on day one, to a few basic provisions and leave broader changes to the next parliament. They should have included political party representatives from the beginning alongside technical experts. That would have reduced disagreement and produced a more realistic, pragmatic consensus.

LD: How do you evaluate the importance of public confidence in the Constitution? Do you see any changes regarding people's confidence in the Constitution, especially in the post-July uprising?

RH: Having public confidence in the Constitution is extremely important. After the uprising, some leaders of the movement argued that the previous Constitution simply did not work and that we needed a brand-new one.

While our Constitution certainly has flaws, many of the problems we faced stemmed not from the text itself, but from political parties and rulers refusing to follow the rules of the game already in place. Getting overly fixated on drafting new constitutional texts can easily distract us from fixing the actual issues of governance.

You cannot measure or build public confidence in a month or two. Nor can you do it through academic debates. For ordinary, hard-working people in our villages, the Constitution is not a set of complicated legal articles; to them, the Constitution means reason, good conscience, and the rule of law. To build genuine confidence in the Constitution, the state must deliver three practical things:

First, fair and credible elections: people must be able to vote freely and see that their votes can really unseat an abusive or corrupt government that they don't want to return to power.

Second, there must be an end to political impunity: people must see that politicians cannot use state power for unearned wealth, and that if a minister abuses power and indulges in corruption, they will lose their seat and face jail where required.

Third, the rule of law: The legal and judicial system must show that no one is above the law, and that crimes, including those by law enforcement and security forces, are genuinely punished.

Relevantly, my former teacher, the late Professor Shah Alam, used to emphasise that public confidence in the legal and constitutional system is what truly holds it together. Public trust in law is the basis of power of law. Without that practical trust, the Constitution is just paper. We must focus on making democracy and the rule of law work in practice, rather than getting lost in unnecessary restructuring.

DHAKA WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2026, KARTIK 19, 1433 BS

SPORT



Bangladesh are the strongest team in the tournament right now. I don't know when I will meet them, but I hope to see them in the final.

NAUSHAD MOOSA,
India football team head coach





Bangladesh and Bhutan are gearing up for their SAFF Championship 2026 opener, with both sides training at the ABG Sports City training ground yesterday. Bhutan held their session in the morning, followed by Bangladesh in the afternoon. Bhutan arrived a day earlier, while India and Sri Lanka landed yesterday to participate in the tournament. PHOTO: BFF / FACEBOOK

SAFF at the door, but build-up falls flat

SPORTS REPORTER

With just one day to go before kick-off, the region's biggest football tournament, the SAFF Championship, is yet to generate the excitement it deserves, with organisational confusion and a lack of publicity threatening to overshadow the occasion.

Fondly dubbed the 'South Asian World Cup', the tournament is just around the corner, with all participating teams except Maldives having reached Dhaka. The six-nation competition gets underway tomorrow with a high-stakes India-Pakistan opener before hosts Bangladesh face Bhutan. Yet it is hard to believe that the region's biggest football show is about to take place in the capital. Dhaka appears largely indifferent, with little sign of the excitement that usually accompanies a major regional tournament.

Unlike the previous three SAFF Championships held in Dhaka, in 2003, 2009 and 2018, when Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) went to considerable lengths to build anticipation -- putting up festive decorations, billboards and banners -- there is little sign of promotional activity this time.



BFF is providing logistical support to South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) secretariat, which is organising the six-team senior men's tournament in Dhaka for the first time. However, an apparent lack of coordination between the two bodies has left media professionals struggling to obtain essential information.

"There is no shortage of communication between the BFF and SAFF, and there is no confusion," BFF president Tabith Awal told reporters at the BFF headquarters following a reception for the Bangladesh U-15 team, who recently finished runners-up in the E tier of the FIFA U-15 World Cup and Festival in Azerbaijan.

While stressing that SAFF carries the primary responsibility as host, Tabith said BFF had a "moral and legal obligation" to support the regional body. Yet he admitted that the build-up had fallen short of expectations.

"Of course, I am also disappointed with the organisational side of the tournament. The kind of hype we expected around the SAFF Championship has not been seen yet. But I think the excitement will grow as the tournament progresses," he said.

Bhutan arrived on Monday, followed by Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan yesterday. However, neither SAFF nor the BFF provided timely information about the teams or photographs of their arrivals. A BFF executive blamed SAFF, saying the federation had requested a photographer from the regional body to cover the arrivals but was still waiting.



"We could have sent our own photographer, but SAFF would not pay him. So why should our photographer work for them?" said the BFF executive.

India arrived with 19 players from their 23-member squad and five members of the coaching staff, but the information had to be obtained directly from the team. Organisers had also failed to provide training schedules and venues by yesterday.

Meanwhile, two match commissioners, from Bhutan and India, have arrived, while referees and assistant referees from Vietnam, Indonesia and Oman were expected last night. A referee assessor and an assistant referee from Thailand had even contacted the SAFF secretariat on Monday to arrange their Bangladeshi visas, raising questions about how well the organisers had prepared.

Despite the organisational shortcomings, hosts Bangladesh are dreaming of reclaiming the title after 23 years. Yet the national team have been kept away from the media for six consecutive days, until yesterday, leaving journalists without the latest updates.

"Since winning the SAFF Championship in 2003, Bangladesh have always tried to win the title, and the players have given their best, but unfortunately, we have not been able to do so," Tabith said.

"This time, however, we are overconfident that we will win the SAFF title, and people will see the winning mentality of the players from the very first match."

The BFF boss acknowledged the difficulty of arranging practice matches outside the FIFA international window but believes three to four domestic league matches would provide sufficient preparation.

"Playing practice matches was not so important. What matters more is performing together during matches," he said, expressing confidence that Bangladesh would play before a full house despite limited interest in buying high-priced tickets.

The tournament may yet gather momentum once the action begins, but the organisers have already lost valuable time building a connection with the public. For a competition billed as South Asia's biggest football event, leaving the host city largely unmoved on the eve of kick-off is a poor start.



DIOMANDE RAISES THE BAR FOR VINI

Yan Diomande leads the charge during practice as Real Madrid prepare for tonight's away Champions League clash against AEK Athens. Jose Mourinho's side are on a roll, having won their last six matches across competitions since a 2-1 away defeat to Atletico Madrid in LaLiga before the September international break. Diomande has been instrumental in that run, scoring four goals and providing three assists while stepping up in Vinicius Junior's absence as the Brazilian continues to serve a five-match LaLiga ban following his red card against Villarreal in Real's first game after the break. With Vinicius available again for tonight's encounter, Diomande could be shifted to the right wing, allowing the Brazilian to return to his preferred left flank, with Kylian Mbappe leading the attack. The pressure, however, will be on Vinicius to rediscover his best form and convince Mourinho that he deserves to reclaim his place in the starting XI. PHOTO: REAL MADRID

WHAT TO WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1,2,3,5
New Zealand vs India
1st ODI
Live from 8:00 am
Champions League
Fenerbahche vs Liverpool
Live from 11:45 pm

AEK Athens vs Real Madrid
Live from 11:45 pm
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday):
Slavia Praha vs Arsenal
Leipzig vs Man City
Dortmund vs Real Betis
Porto vs Napoli

Bangladesh ready to ditch spin-first approach

SPORTS REPORTER

After their plan to outspin West Indies on a spin-friendly Mirpur wicket backfired last week, Bangladesh are considering a change of approach for the second Test in Sylhet, starting tomorrow.

Both teams held their first training sessions at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday, having arrived in the city a day earlier. The players also took a close look at the greenish wicket and spoke to head curator Tony Hemming to assess its nature. With a day still to go before the Test, however, the hosts could yet make a late adjustment, as they did ahead of the opening match.

Traditionally, Sylhet has produced sporting wickets, offering early assistance to pacers before bringing spinners into the game as matches progress.

Bangladesh have played six Tests at the venue, winning three and losing three. Two of those defeats came against Zimbabwe, in 2018 and 2025.

The Tigers, however, have enjoyed convincing victories in their last two Tests at the venue, against Pakistan and Ireland, on sporting wickets. Their batters also played key roles in those wins, adding to the appeal of a surface that could bring the best out of the hosts.

In Mirpur, Bangladesh's spinners were outplayed by their West Indies counterparts, with the visitors claiming 16 wickets through spin compared to just eight for the hosts' trio.



PHOTO: BCB

The batters offered little support either, managing 272 in the first innings and 142 in the second in an eight-wicket defeat that left Bangladesh's bowlers with too little to defend in the fourth innings.

The team management are now considering a change of strategy for Sylhet, potentially moving away from a spin-friendly approach towards the kind of sporting surface traditionally seen at the venue. The idea is to give the pacers a greater role while offering the batters better conditions to post competitive totals and the bowlers something to defend.

"An all-out spin attack won't help us because we don't play spin all that well either. In fact, over the last few seasons, we won matches on sporting wickets with pace bowling," a member of the national selection panel told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

The selector, however, acknowledged that the West Indies also boast a formidable pace attack, featuring Kemar Roach, Shamar Joseph, Jayden Seales and Justin Greaves.

"It won't be easy -- they also have good fast bowlers. If Nahid Rana was with us, we could have gone into the match without tension with our pace attack," he added.

Bangladesh could also receive a boost with Mushfiqur Rahim set to return after missing the opening Test due to a finger injury. His return could see skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto move up to number three, followed by Tawhid Hridoy, Mushfiqur and Litton Das.

There is also a strong possibility of Bangladesh fielding an extra pacer, with either Ebadot Hossain or Taskin Ahmed potentially coming into the side at the expense of a spinner.

With the series on the line, the hosts can ill afford another miscalculation.





ADMISSION SCHEDULE

Medical colleges, univs mull relief for HSC retakers

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Universities and medical admission bodies may revise their schedules to allow students who failed one or two subjects in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations to apply for admission in the 2026-27 academic year if they pass the proposed retakes.

The issue was discussed yesterday at a meeting of Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon with representatives of universities, medical admission authorities and the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The parties concerned would hold further talks to work out how the schedules could be adjusted, said Khan Moinuddin Al Mahmud Sohel, director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education.

The admission test dates will have to be rescheduled, he said, adding that students who pass the supplementary examinations must have an opportunity to apply.

The education boards plan to begin the supplementary examinations on December 2 and publish results by December 31.

Asked whether universities agreed to the changes, Moinuddin said the authorities would discuss the options and decide how to proceed.

The meeting followed concerns that the government's plan to give unsuccessful HSC candidates another chance might still leave them unable to apply to major public universities this academic year.

Around 4.2 lakh students failed one or two subjects in this year's HSC and equivalent examinations and could qualify for the retakes.

A total of 4,22,905 students failed one or two subjects in this year's HSC and equivalent examinations and could qualify for the retakes.

Milon announced the retake initiative on October 31, saying students who failed one or two subjects should not have to wait another year to pass. The ministry would try to coordinate the examinations with university

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



A voter holds a child while casting their ballot during the US midterm elections in Chapin, South Carolina, US, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump, Adani, Google, Meta, 'press freedom predators': RSF



STAR REPORT

US President Donald Trump is among 33 individuals and organisations named as "press freedom predators" by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which accused them of targeting journalists and independent media this year.

The Paris-based media rights watchdog released its 2026 list on Monday, marking the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

RSF said Trump had intensified attacks on the press since returning to the White House in January 2025, citing verbal attacks, legal intimidation, administrative reprisals and restrictions on journalists' access to government and military institutions.

The United States now ranks 64th out of 180 countries in RSF's World Press Freedom Index, down seven places from

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

1,173 constables used fake addresses to get jobs in quota

Say police after probe into Awami League-era irregularities

SHARIFUL ISLAM

At least 1,173 constables, mostly recruited in Dhaka during the Awami League government's tenure, used fake permanent addresses to secure jobs under district-based recruitment quotas, according to the findings of a police investigation.

The probe, initiated by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Md Ali Hossain Fakir on March 15, covered the recruitment of 76,448 constables nationwide between 2014 and 2024.

- Probe examined recruitment of 76,448
- Over 83% cases linked to Dhaka district
- Many showed fake addresses to qualify for district quotas

Of the 1,173 constables who are still in service, 980 or over 83 percent were recruited in Dhaka, with 643 appointed in 2015 and 303 in 2014. Narayanganj came second on the list with 93 identified cases of quota manipulation.

The Police Headquarters (PHQ) is now verifying investigation reports submitted by superintendents of police (SPs) across all 64 districts to ensure the accuracy of the data before submitting a report to the home ministry.

Many of these constables allegedly bought small plots of land merely to establish local residency, while others submitted fictitious addresses to qualify for the quota, said two senior PHQ officials, seeking anonymity.

"We are now examining the findings further so that no innocent person is mistakenly included on the list," one of the two officials told this correspondent.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

US to stop $4b aid to Israel

Says Trump

REUTERS

President Donald Trump yesterday said he made a deal with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Washington would stop $4 billion in funding to Israel after the end of this year.

It was not immediately clear which funding Trump meant or how exactly the funding would be stopped at the end of the year, given that the memorandum of understanding that provides $3.8 billion in US military aid to Israel each year does not expire until 2028. Conversations have been under way on how Washington's assistance to Israel would evolve beyond that date.

Speaking to Fox News' "Fox & Friends" programme, Trump said Israel no longer needed the funding and that some Democrats and left-wing politicians were using the US financial support to Israel as a talking point to criticise Republicans.

"Now, as far as paying Israel, Bibi Netanyahu and I have made a deal that we give Israel $4 billion a year, and we made a deal months ago that we're stopping," Trump said. "We've already agreed that by the end of this year we won't be paying Israel. Now we'll help Israel if they need it."

Neither the White House nor Netanyahu's office responded to Reuters' requests for comment.

US public support for Israel has fallen since the Gaza war began in 2023, particularly among Democrats.

Govt clueless on toxic lead-based paint imports

Experts call for stronger monitoring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh cannot determine how much lead chromate -- a toxic pigment used in paints and coatings -- enters the country because the chemical lacks a separate customs classification, according to a study unveiled yesterday.

Researchers said lead chromate is grouped under a broader Harmonised System (HS) code that also covers non-lead chromium pigments, making it impossible to identify import volumes from official trade data.

Lead chromate is widely used to produce bright yellow, orange and red colours in paints, coatings, plastics and other products. Exposure to lead can damage the brain and nervous system, particularly in children, and may cause learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

They warned that the gap hampers monitoring of a substance linked to serious health risks, particularly for children.

Imports under the broader customs category rose 51.1 percent between 2022 and 2025, from 427,481 kg to about 645,800 kg, according to UN Comtrade data cited in the study. The value of those imports increased from $1.69 million to $2.29 million over the same period.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Large swathes of Aman paddy lie flattened across fields in the Barind region after three days of rain and gusty winds. Farmers say the lodging of the semi-ripe crop could cause significant losses ahead of harvest. The photo was taken in Rajshahi's Godagari upazila yesterday. PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

BANKS IN FOCUS

Bank directors seek dividend, age cap relief

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB), a forum of bank directors, has urged Bangladesh Bank to ease dividend payout rules and scrap the 75-year-old age limit for independent directors.

The demands were placed before BB Governor Md Mostaqur Rahman at a joint meeting with the BAB and the Association of Bankers Bangladesh (ABB) at the central bank headquarters yesterday. The governor presided over the meeting.

Under existing rules, banks cannot pay dividends if their financial health is weak, including when they have provision shortfalls, high non-performing loans (NPLs) or inadequate capital.

BAB argues that profitable banks should be allowed to pay at least a small cash dividend, warning that investors could otherwise lose interest in bank shares.

"They are waiting in hope of dividends. But under the rules, many banks will not be able to pay," BAB Chairman Abdul Hai Sarker, who also chairs Dhaka Bank, told The Daily Star.

"We have requested the governor to relax the rules so that banks can pay at least some cash dividend even with a provision shortfall, one or two percent," he said.

For removing the age limit for independent directors, BAB argued that older people who remain capable should be allowed to continue serving on bank boards. Sarker said they were hopeful that this demand would be met.

Bangladesh Bank has tightened dividend restrictions in stages. Since 2024, banks receiving provisioning deferrals have been barred from paying dividends.

From 2025, lenders with NPLs exceeding 10 percent of their total loans have also been disqualified, regardless of profitability. In May this year, the central bank added another restriction, barring banks with paid-up capital

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3