



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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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

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