DHAKA THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2026



"I am absolutely willing to accept those results. We'll work with the Democrats, and we'll, you know, look forward to working with them."
DONALD TRUMP

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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Jan hike pledge fails to quell RMG unrest

Violence continues, 100 factories shut, police vehicle torched; wage board holds first meeting



PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following its first meeting yesterday, the new minimum wage board said garment workers would begin receiving wages under the revised pay structure in January, as protests demanding higher wages entered their fifth consecutive day.

Fresh clashes between workers and police were reported in Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Savar yesterday. Protesters torched a police vehicle in Savar and blocked key roads, forcing over 100 factories to suspend operations and declare holidays in Gazipur and Savar, said officials.

Meanwhile, District and Sessions Judge Syed Azad Subhani, chairman of the minimum wage board for readymade garment workers, said the new pay hike of the workers would come into effect in December this year.

"So, the workers will receive their increased wages in January," he told reporters after the board's first meeting in the capital's

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54 Democrats — US SENATE — Republicans 44

51 for control

DONALD TRUMPED

Blue tsunami sweeps Capitol Hill in stunning blow to Republicans

AGENCIES

Democrats seized control of both the Senate and House of Representatives, scoring sweeping victories in Republican strongholds for the first time in generations as tens of millions of voters delivered a scathing rebuke to President Donald Trump.

Voters in conservative bastions who had propelled the president to his second term in office just two years ago swung dramatically toward Democrats, fuelled by deep frustration over the unpopular war with Iran, anxiety over the high cost of living and anger at Trump's stewardship of the country.

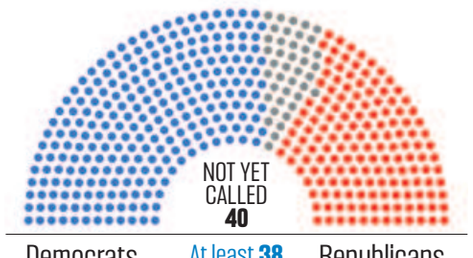
In Texas, the biggest Republican state, Democrats ended a decades-long losing streak in seismic fashion, winning a Senate seat and ousting three-term Governor Greg Abbott.

Kansas elected its first Democratic senator since the Great Depression nearly a century ago, and in South Carolina, a state that Trump carried by nearly 18 points in 2024, Democrats turned aside his hand-picked Senate candidate.

The results will usher in a new era of divided government in Washington, following two years in which the Republican-controlled Congress rarely

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

218 seats needed for a majority



Democrats	At least 38 flipped to Democrats	Republicans
244		151

AS OF 1:00AM
SOURCE: REALCLEARPOLITICS.COM

exercised its power to rein in Trump.

The Democrats now control 54 Senate seats and are leading in one race. They have also won 244 House seats. All 435 House seats were contested, while 35 of the Senate's 100 seats were up for election. Voters in 36 states also elected governors.

Once seated in January, Democrats are expected to use their power to investigate Trump's administration, family and allies and demand concessions on major legislation. The Democratic Senate can block Trump's nominees, including any US Supreme Court justices should a vacancy arise.

"There is now a generational remake of the Senate map that is going to change America," said Chuck Schumer, the party's Senate minority leader. "Americans voted for change, and now Democrats must deliver."

Trump told Fox News that the Iran war played a role in the stunning midterm election defeat for his Republican Party, while Iran's parliament speaker said yesterday that Americans had rejected war, adding that Tehran supports this message.

"Whether out of conscience or the cost of living, Americans said NO TO WAR, and we endorse this message," Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said in a statement through US social media company X.

Trump, who is barred by the US Constitution from seeking a third term, has exercised an iron grip on his party for most of the last decade. But the new balance of power in Washington may accelerate his lame-duck status, as attention turns

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Garment workers' protests demanding a Tk 30,000 monthly minimum wage continued for the fifth day in Gazipur, Narayanganj and Savar yesterday. Law enforcers fired tear gas shells and baton-charged to disperse protesters who hurled brick chunks at them. Key roads and highways were blocked, and hundreds of factories suspended operations or declared holidays.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON AND MEHEDI HASAN

Hakeem poised to become first Black US Speaker

REUTERS

The Democrats' midterm election win puts Hakeem Jeffries in line to become the first Black speaker of the US House of Representatives, with the dual challenge of opposing President Donald Trump while bridging the gap between his party's moderates and its more vocal progressives.



As speaker, Jeffries, representing a New York City congressional district, would preside over a majority that will be sworn in the first week of January, taking the reins from Republicans who controlled the House for the past four years.

"Today begins the great American comeback," Jeffries proclaimed in a victory speech late on Tuesday after media outlets projected the likelihood of Democratic majorities in the House and Senate.

He attacked the Trump-led Republican agenda in Congress over the past two years, pledging to pass legislation reversing steep spending cuts -- enacted into law on July 4, 2025 -- to the Medicaid healthcare program for the poor and people with disabilities.

"The American people have spoken and made clear that they've had enough of the extremism, enough of the corruption. They want a Congress that's going to deliver for the American people," Jeffries said.

Jeffries has long said that, while his caucus would focus on helping the poor and middle class cope with the high cost of living, Democrats would also investigate the Trump administration's dealings with corporate executives, including those who have donated heavily to his various campaigns and projects. He has stopped short of saying the House, under his leadership, would attempt to impeach Trump for a third time.

Democratic Representative Robert Garcia of California, who is expected to become chair of the House Committee on Oversight, had two words of advice.

Donald trumped

FROM PAGE 1

toward the 2028 presidential race and potential successors begin competing for political influence in a post-Trump world.

Despite worries from Democrats that Trump might seek to overturn the election results, as he did in 2020, the president accepted the outcome, congratulating Democrats in an interview with Fox News. He also said he would work with Democrats on issues such as immigration, though he threatened to veto any "insane" bills they passed.

Asked about prospective impeachment, Trump said: "I think it would destroy the Democrat Party if they did that," insisting there was "no reason" for him to be impeached.

Democrats focused their campaign on corruption and affordability, blaming Trump's tariff policy and the war with Iran for driving up costs while highlighting the billions of dollars the Trump family has made since he returned to the White House.

Republicans, led by Trump, attacked Democrats over culture war issues such as transgender rights while portraying their opponents as radical and extreme. But in poll after poll, voters made it clear they were far more concerned with pocketbook issues.

The Democratic wave flooded huge swaths of the country. Republicans lost ground in all but a handful of the approximately 2,100 counties where most votes had been counted, according to tallies compiled by Reuters and USA Today.

Democrats made gains in the richest counties and the poorest; in counties where more people have college degrees and where fewer do. Democrats' advances were particularly sharp in heavily Latino counties, including the border counties of Texas that shifted toward Trump in 2024 and the agricultural towns of the Kansas prairie.

In Seward County, Kansas, home to one of America's biggest beef processing plants and where about half of eligible voters are Hispanic, Democrat Adam Hamilton led incumbent Republican Senator Roger Marshall by 13 points, two years after Trump won the county by 39 points.

Democrats flipped more than two dozen House seats currently held by Republicans, locking in a majority. Democrats won all the closely contested House races that have been decided so far, and they won about a dozen races in districts that Trump won by double digits two years ago.

An unprecedented Republican gambit to redraw several House districts to make them more favorable largely failed, with Democrats hanging on to most of the targeted seats.

Midterm elections are typically seen as a referendum on the sitting president, and Trump did little to disabuse voters of that notion. In the campaign's final weeks, he held dozens of rallies, telling supporters repeatedly to "pretend I'm on the ballot."

He also intervened in several Republican primaries earlier this year to ensure his preferred candidates reached the ballot, despite concerns from some Republicans that his choices carried significant liabilities.

In Texas, Trump backed Ken Paxton, the scandal-ridden state attorney general, over the incumbent, Senator John Cornyn. In South Carolina, the president anointed Darline Graham, a political neophyte, after her brother, Senator Lindsey Graham, died suddenly earlier this year. Both candidates lost.

But even candidates who sought to distance themselves from Trump were unable to escape voters' wrath. In Maine, Republican incumbent Susan Collins had her 30-year Senate career end on Tuesday, despite emphasising her willingness to break with the president during the campaign.



Trump posted this image of MAGA-style cap on truthsocial yesterday.

Progressive Democrat Abdul El-Sayed won Michigan's open Senate seat, becoming the first Muslim elected to the chamber. He defeated Mike Rogers, a former congressman and FBI agent, who entered the race with Trump's backing and sought to falsely portray El-Sayed, an Egyptian American born in Michigan, as a religious extremist.

"You chose hate, and Michigan chose hope," El-Sayed told cheering supporters on Tuesday night, referring to Rogers.

According to exit polls conducted by SSRS on behalf of a consortium of US media outlets including major television networks and the Associated Press, half of voters nationwide said they saw the 2026 midterm elections as an opportunity to rebuke the president, and three-quarters said they are "angry" or "dissatisfied" with the way the country is headed.

Jan hike pledge fails to quell RMG unrest

FROM PAGE 1

Segunbagicha office.

At the next meeting, the board will discuss wage proposals from workers, factory owners, and other organisations, he said.

Amid the unrest, the government formed the board on November 1.

Babul Akhter, the workers' representative on the board, urged workers to return to their workplaces now. He said many workers were already returning as the intensity of the demonstrations gradually declined.

Workers, who currently receive a minimum monthly wage of Tk 12,500, are demanding Tk 30,000. They say persistent inflation over the past years has eroded their purchasing capacity.

Speaking after an inter-ministerial meeting at the Secretariat, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed claimed ordinary workers were being used in a political conspiracy and anti-state activities.

He said law enforcers had been instructed not to use excessive force despite injuries among police personnel. Warning that criminal groups would not be spared, he urged workers to ignore rumours and return to work.

PROTESTS

In Gazipur, workers demonstrated from around 9:00am in Signboard, Bhogra Bypass, Chandana Chowrasta, Konabari, and Banglabazar, according to police.

They blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Bhogra Bypass. Police and BGB members fired tear gas and sound grenades to disperse them. Traffic returned to normal around 12:30pm.

Over 100 workers gathered near Basan Police Station on the Chandana Chowrasta-Shibbari road. Police fired at least 10 sound grenades to drive them away. In Gacha, demonstrators took to the streets around 9:30am, triggering chases and counter-chases between protesters and police.

Later, police dispersed a gathering at Chandana Chowrasta, where people assembled to attend the gayebana janaza (funeral prayers without the body) of garment worker Toufiq Hossain, 35, who died after being injured during the unrest.

Leaders and activists of National Citizen Party and Sramik Shakti joined the event organised under the banner of Workers-Students-People.

Police asked the organisers to clear the road before the prayers began. An argument and scuffle followed when the organisers sought time to complete the prayers. Police then fired sound grenades.

NCP leader Ali Naser Khan alleged that police used truncheons and sound grenades, injuring at least 20 people.

However, Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Harun Rashid of Basan Police Station said he was unaware of the incident.

Executive Magistrate Arif Hossain said the administration was discouraging gatherings in view of the overall situation.

Toufiq from Gaibandha, who worked at Laila Styles Ltd in Gazipur, died on Tuesday while undergoing treatment at an Uttara Hospital.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting at the Secretariat yesterday, Labour and Employment Minister Ariful Haque Choudhury said those responsible for the death of garment worker Toufiq would be brought to justice as soon as possible.

In Savar, clashes broke out at Padmar Mor in Hemayetpur when police tried to remove protesting workers from the Hemayetpur-Singair road.

Witnesses said workers hurled brick chunks and police fired tear gas. Protesters then set a police vehicle ablaze.

Alia Akter, who works at an RMG factory in Ashulia, said a wage board had been formed, but workers must be clearly informed about how much their wages would increase. "The protest will continue until they are met."

Dhaka District Police Superintendent Shamima Parvin said 30,000-40,000 workers gathered there. She alleged that protesters set fire to Savar Model Police Station OC Saiful Islam's vehicle, seriously injuring him.

Three journalists were assaulted in Savar while covering the clashes: Star News correspondent Ahmed Sohan Siraji, Ekattor Television correspondent Raiyan Bin Amin, and cameraperson Md Uzzal Hossain.

Talking to the press, Sohan said a group of stick-wielding protesters attacked them while they were filming after noticing the Ekattor Television camera and logo.

In Narayanganj, several factory workers demonstrated in the Katherpool area of Sadar upazila. They tried to block the Hajiganj-Post Office road by setting fires, prompting police to fire tear gas and stun grenades.

Some protesters attempted to bring workers out of neighbouring factories. Chases and counter-chases ensued after police stopped them from marching towards Shibu Market on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road.

Tarek Al Mehedi, additional superintendent of Narayanganj police, said six people were arrested after police efforts to persuade demonstrators to leave the place failed.

Over labour unrest, police filed a case under the Anti-Terrorism Act in Narayanganj, naming 21 people, including leaders and activists of Awami League, Jubo League, and Chhatra League, and 1,000 to 1,500 unidentified others.

Mohammad Mahbub Alam, OC of Fatullah Model Police Station, said the case was filed early yesterday. He added that the six detainees were produced before the court, with seeking a seven-day remand for them.

In Mirpur, workers tried to take to the streets for a fifth day but were stopped by police. Closure notices were found at least 15 garment factories, while police remained deployed at key locations.

DMP Joint Commissioner Md Mahidul Islam said several people had been arrested and cases filed over road blockades, vandalism, and damage to public property.

Meanwhile, 24 BGB platoons were deployed in the industrial areas, according to its Public Relations Officer Md Shariful Islam.

Five were in Savar-Ashulia, 13 in Gazipur, and six in Narayanganj, including Chashara, the BSCIC industrial area, and Kanchpur Bridge.

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

ICJ to rule on Rohingya genocide case on Nov 19

AFP, *The Hague*

The top United Nations court will on November 19 deliver a landmark ruling on whether Myanmar's crackdown against its mostly Muslim Rohingya minority constituted a genocide, officials said on Tuesday.

Judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) have for seven years been weighing accusations by The Gambia that Myanmar's brutal repression of the Rohingya breached the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

While the ICJ has no means of enforcing its decisions, a ruling that Myanmar committed genocide would heap more international pressure on its leader Min Aung Hlaing. He commanded the military during the Rohingya crackdown before ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a 2021 coup.

This year he was installed as civilian president following deeply restricted elections and is waging a diplomatic campaign for legitimacy which may be complicated by the ruling. The judgement may also be seen as justice for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya.

Legal experts are closely watching the decision by the ICJ, which rules in disputes between countries, for clues as to how the court might sway in the seminal genocide case brought by South Africa against Israel over its campaign in Gaza.

Myanmar has always denied carrying out a genocide against the Rohingya, arguing its actions targeted a military uprising from insurgents after a series of attacks left a dozen security personnel dead.

The crackdown by the Myanmar army and Buddhist militias forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, bringing with them harrowing accounts of gang rape and mass executions.

Govt okays Tk 41,090cr project to overhaul primary edn

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is set to implement the fifth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-5) with an estimated outlay of Tk 41,090 crore, allocating nearly 57 percent of the budget for digital and need-based classrooms as well as school uniforms.

The approval came at yesterday's Executive Committee of the National Economic Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

Under the programme, which will run from July 2026 to June 2031, infrastructure development suitable for digital transformation and teacher training will be carried out across the primary education sector.

Of the project budget, 25.2 percent would go towards providing free school uniforms, including bags, attire, shoes, and socks, to 1,06,17,962 students in government primary schools.

In line with the government's election manifesto and policy directives to expand digital education and technology, 5.9 percent of the budget has been set aside under the "One Teacher, One Tab" initiative to distribute tablets to teachers and install multimedia and Interactive Flat Panels (IFP) in classrooms.

A total of 3,83,513 tablets and 20,000 interactive panel projectors will be distributed to teachers.

To eliminate hazardous and unhealthy school environments, 26.4 percent of the funds will be used to build 15,641 need-based classrooms, 1,500 wash blocks and 10,000 boundary walls.

Another 7.6 percent of the budget has been allocated for comprehensive training to enhance students' Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills and strengthen the professional capacity of teachers and officials, covering 3.1 lakh teachers, officials and staff.

Out of the total proposed cost, Tk 33,203.2 crore will come from government funds, while Tk 7,887.3 crore will be sourced from foreign loans and grants.

Development partners, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, the EU and UNICEF, have pledged financial assistance for the initiative.

An economic analysis of the programme indicates an Economic Internal Rate of Return of 17.3 percent and a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.7, which is expected to yield significant long-term positive impacts on human resource development and economic growth.

Also at yesterday's meeting, 13 projects -- 11 new and two revised -- involving a total of Tk 58,088.9 crore were approved.

The government is set to purchase 5,830 vehicles for Bangladesh Police at an estimated cost of Tk 6,609 crore to address a transport shortage that has left the country's 639 police stations with fewer than two vehicles each on average.

The procurement involves two projects: one for 4,829 operational vehicles costing Tk 4,328.9 crore and another for 1,001 specialised vehicles costing Tk 2,280.1 crore.

Programme to run until June 2031

Nearly 57% earmarked for classrooms, digital edn, uniforms

3.83 lakh tablets, 20,000 interactive panels planned

15,641 classrooms, 1,500 wash blocks to be built

Six measures could save 1.6m lives a year: WHO

AFP, *Geneva*

Implementing a few climate and health measures could save nearly 1.6 million lives a year and generate trillions of dollars for the economy, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

The UN agency's report, released days before the COP31 climate change conference kicks off, proposed heat-health warning systems and climate-resilient infrastructure for drinking water and sanitation.

Improved hand hygiene, cleaner household energy sources and more efficient fossil fuel pricing were also on the list.

"The climate crisis is a health crisis, but much of the harm it causes can be prevented with tools we already have," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

The WHO's report said rolling out six concrete measures could provide "a triple dividend" of "healthier people, lower emissions, and stronger economies".

As well as saving lives, the measures could help avoid 16.7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year, the report said.

The measures could also generate up to $5.4 trillion in fiscal benefits each year, as well as a nearly $4 trillion economic boost by saving lives, avoiding disasters and reducing healthcare costs.

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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Dengue risk high in 29 DSCC wards

28 wards at moderate risk, 18 at low risk: survey

Aedes larvae, pupae found in 403 households | Survey covers 2,250 households across 75 wards | Buckets, drums among major breeding sites | Special mosquito-control drives under way | Residents urged to remove stagnant water weekly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-nine of the 75 wards under Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) have been identified as high-risk areas for dengue transmission, while 28 are at moderate risk and 18 at low risk, according to a survey.

The findings were announced yesterday by DSCC Administrator Abdus Salam at a programme at Nagar Bhaban in the capital.

The survey, conducted by a 36-member DSCC team from September 27 to October 8, covered 2,250 households, with 30 selected from each ward.

Aedes mosquito larvae and pupae were found in 403 households, according to the findings presented by DSCC Chief Health Officer Dr Jahane Ferdous Binte Rahman.

The survey identified multi-storey buildings (31.06 percent), standalone houses (31.37 percent), semi-pucca houses (17.39 percent), buildings under construction (13.4 percent) and vacant plots (14.21 percent) as breeding sites.

The findings showed that plastic buckets accounted for 14.21 percent of larval breeding sites, followed by plastic drums (11.22 percent), stagnant water in basements (9.98 percent), plastic mugs (9.23 percent) and flower pots (5.99 percent).

The survey also found that nearly half (50.9 percent) of Aedes mosquito breeding and dengue transmission could be prevented at an early stage if residents remained vigilant about their courtyards and water-holding containers.

Speaking at the event, Abdus Salam urged residents to keep their homes and workplaces clean and remove stagnant water at least once a week, saying government efforts alone would not be enough to prevent dengue.

He said special mosquito-control drives and awareness programmes were continuing

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Students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University block a road in the capital's Agargaon yesterday, protesting the proposed relocation of the Secretariat to the former International Trade Fair ground in the area.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Review migration ministry, diplomatic missions regularly

Speaker Hafiz calls for stronger accountability

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad yesterday called for regular performance reviews of the expatriates' welfare ministry and Bangladesh's diplomatic missions abroad to strengthen accountability and better protect migrant workers.

He made the call while inaugurating the Bangladesh Parliamentary Caucus on Migration, Rights and Development at a Dhaka hotel, where ministers, diplomats and migration experts discussed challenges including high recruitment costs, human trafficking, labour exploitation, and weak enforcement of migration laws.

The programme was organised by WARBE Development Foundation.

"I would request the caucus members to evaluate the performance of the expatriates' welfare ministry and the embassies abroad every three months or six months," Hafiz said.

He alleged that some ministers during the previous regime had acted as migration subagents and profited from the recruitment process, contributing to excessive migration costs.

The speaker also urged the caucus to work towards ensuring the dignity and security of Bangladeshi women employed in Middle Eastern countries.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said the foreign ministry had established a dedicated migration wing for the first time to address problems faced by Bangladeshis abroad.

She said the government had identified 14 districts with high

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Tidal surges batter coastal people amid warning gaps

Speakers call for localised forecasts, better preparedness, and stronger disaster response

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The failure to warn coastal communities about recurring tidal surges is costing Bangladesh an estimated Tk 8,000 crore over five years, with the financial losses now rivalling those caused by major cyclones, experts warned.

Nearly every coastal family in southwestern Bangladesh receives an early warning before a cyclone, yet almost nine in 10 get no alert before recurring tidal surges breach their embankments, a study revealed yesterday.

The findings were presented at a roundtable titled "Beyond Cyclones: Why Tidal Surge Deserves Urgent Attention in Bangladesh's Disaster Preparedness and Response" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Action Against Hunger (ACF) and The Daily Star jointly organised the event in collaboration with North South University and Uttaran, the project lead, under the SURF-IT project, supported by FCDO and IDRC through the CLARE programme.



Speakers at the roundtable organised by Action Against Hunger and The Daily Star, in collaboration with North South University and Uttaran, at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: **STAR**

While Bangladesh has reduced cyclone deaths, recurring unannounced surges are quietly destroying coastal livelihoods, said Dr Syed Mortuza Asif Ehsan, associate professor of economics at North South University.

Presenting a baseline study of 1,198 households in Assasuni, Koyra and Shyamnagar upazilas, he said families experience waterlogging an average of 2.2 times over five years.

Nearly half of affected households are forced to take loans or borrow money, while 40 percent cut food consumption. The poorest communities suffer the greatest relative income losses, he added.

Several speakers said the coast's

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IN FOCUS

PM seeks China's support in resolving Rohingya crisis

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday sought China's cooperation in resolving the protracted Rohingya crisis, citing the pressure on Bangladesh from hosting 1.3 million displaced people from Myanmar.

He made the request during a meeting with Liu Haixing, minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, at the PM's Office at the Secretariat.

At the meeting, Tarique highlighted the economic, social, demographic and environmental pressures Bangladesh has been facing due to the prolonged presence of 1.3 million Rohingyas and sought China's cooperation in resolving the crisis, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary Shahadat Shadhin.

Liu said China is aware of the Rohingya crisis and that he will convey the Bangladeshi PM's concerns to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

During the meeting, Liu conveyed Xi Jinping's greetings to the PM.

In response, Tarique extended his greetings to Xi and Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

Liu said a joint declaration on a new era of bilateral relations was issued during Tarique's visit to Beijing, expressing hope that the two countries would expand cooperation in line with the declaration.

Prothom Alo celebrates 28th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a pledge to pursue objective journalism through enhanced skills and creativity, Prothom Alo staff celebrated the newspaper's 28th founding anniversary yesterday at the Krishibid Institution auditorium in the capital.

At the staff conference, employees from Dhaka and across the country stressed the need to adapt to changing realities while remaining steadfast in seeking the truth.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman said, "In the future, Prothom Alo must turn into an AI-driven organisation. Prothom Alo is now conducting more forward-looking activities than at any time before. All departments are striving to build themselves up accordingly."

He said, "Increasing the circulation of the print newspaper is still important to us, but that is not the only goal. We must improve the quality of our journalism. We also have to think about increasing revenue. There is no alternative to running on our own income to practise journalism independently and survive. We must take these issues seriously for future journalism."

He added, "We will undertake more multifaceted work... Obstacles will come, as they did in the past. But we will not back down. Our commitment to truth is our

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Prothom Alo employees and distinguished guests gather to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the Bangla daily at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in the capital's Khamar Bari yesterday.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Four killed in Mirpur road crash



PHOTO: **FIRE SERVICE AND CIVIL DEFENCE**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were killed in a head-on collision between a bus of Asian University of Bangladesh and an auto-rickshaw in the Diabari area of the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

The identities of the deceased, two men and two women, could not be immediately confirmed.

The accident took place at Nawaberbagh in Diabari, near the Mirpur embankment, under Shah Ali Police Station, around 7:38am, said Talha Bin Zasim, a member of the Fire Service and Civil Defence media cell.

A unit of Kalyanpur Fire Station responded to the scene and carried out rescue operations.

The bodies were later handed over to Shah Ali Police Station, said Sub-Inspector Ariful Islam, the duty officer of the station.

Indian medical student found dead in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

The body of an Indian Kashmiri medical student who went missing two days ago was recovered from a pond in Cumilla's Burichang upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased, Adnan Altaf, 26, was a student of the 14th batch (2017-18 session) at Eastern Medical College in Burichang. He was scheduled to sit for his second professional MBBS Microbiology examination under the old curriculum from yesterday.

Adnan went missing after leaving the college premises around 11:00pm on Monday. His classmates and others searched for him but failed to find him. A general diary was filed with Burichang Police Station on Tuesday, said Surezit, in-charge of Debpur Police Outpost.

Locals spotted his body floating in a pond in Monipur village around 7:00am and informed police.

Eastern Medical College authorities said they were present at the scene and that police are investigating the incident.

Burichang Police Station OC Lutfur Rahman said the body was sent to Cumilla Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Bakkhali's revival hinges on political, administrative will

Say speakers at Cox's Bazar discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Political and administrative commitment is essential to free the Bakkhali river from illegal occupation and pollution and restore it, speakers said at a discussion in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

They also called for effective implementation of a High Court directive to protect the river.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) organised the discussion at a hotel to highlight the challenges facing the 69-kilometre river.

Presenting the keynote paper, BELA Legal Coordinator and Supreme Court lawyer S Hasanul Banna said the High Court, in a verdict on August 24, 2025, directed authorities to declare the river an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) and evict illegal occupants following a public interest litigation filed by BELA in 2014.

He identified the lack of demarcation, illegal occupation and pollution as the river's major problems, stressing the need for political and administrative commitment to carry out eviction drives.



An aerial view of Bakkhali river calmly flowing through the riverbanks of Chattogram. PHOTO: STAR

Speakers said mangroves along the riverbanks had been destroyed to make way for plots, while illegal structures had been built on occupied land. Municipal and hotel waste are also dumped into the river while hill cutting and illegal sand extraction are further worsening the situation.

They warned that fish stocks and aquatic biodiversity were declining.

District Fisheries Officer Md Nazmul Huda said the river was home to 35 fish species and 10 other aquatic species. Continued pollution could drive them to extinction, he warned, adding that liquid waste entering the river was affecting the food chain.

Cox's Bazar Municipality Executive Engineer Parakram Chakma said the municipality's waste dumping ground at Kostura Ghat would be relocated by 2028.

Speakers also expressed concern over the lack of visible progress on a Tk 47.50 crore project to revitalise the Bakkhali river, evict illegal occupants and control pollution. The project is scheduled to run from January 2026 to June 2028.

Water Development Board Sub-Assistant Engineer Atikur Rahman said the project included dredging four kilometres of the river and protecting 1.2 kilometres of its banks.

Dredging would begin in the upcoming dry season, while tendering for bank protection work had been completed, he said.

Review

FROM PAGE 3

levels of irregular migration and held meetings with deputy commissioners there to strengthen awareness campaigns and identify criminal networks.

The government had also held discussions with Italian and Libyan diplomats and representatives of IOM to address dangerous migration routes through Libya and the Mediterranean Sea, she added.

Deputy Speaker Kayser Kamal called for a review of Bangladesh's 2015 agreement with Saudi Arabia on domestic workers, saying there was a perception that around 13 of its 21 conditions had not been implemented.

He also expressed concern over the execution of two Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia on October 14.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare Nurul Haque said the government had taken significant steps over the last seven months to promote safe migration, although reforming long-established recruitment practices would take time.

ILO Bangladesh Country Director Max Tuñón said Bangladeshi migrant workers paid some of the highest recruitment costs in the world, often spending between Tk 4 lakh and Tk 6 lakh to secure jobs abroad.

He urged diplomatic missions to monitor detained Bangladeshis and ensure they received legal representation.

Dipta Rakshit of Winrock International said 60 percent of the 5,000 trafficking survivors covered under her project had become victims after migrating through what were considered safe channels.

Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro reaffirmed Italy's commitment to keeping legal migration channels open while combating criminal networks involved in irregular migration.

IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Laura Tomm Bonde said the success of the caucus should be measured by improvements in migrant protection rather than the number of meetings or discussions it held.

WARBE Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque delivered the welcome address.

The 22-member parliamentary caucus is chaired by BNP lawmaker ABM Mosharraf Hossain, with Mahmuda Habiba serving as secretary general.

Its vice-chairpersons include Jamaat-e-Islami MP Moshiur Rahman Khan and BNP lawmakers Hasan Rajib Prodhan, Fahima Nasrin and Bilkis Islam. The caucus also includes lawmakers from NCP and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis.

Dengue risk

FROM PAGE 3

in high-risk areas based on the findings.

DSCC has also launched an initiative to clean courtyards and toilets at all primary schools during its regular Saturday "Cleaning Day" programme to protect children from dengue, he added.

"Through public awareness and coordinated efforts, we can build a dengue-free, safe and healthy Dhaka," he said.

The survey findings were analysed using the Breteau Index, House Index, Container Index and Pupal Index to identify dengue hotspots.

DSCC has divided the wards into three categories based on the density of mosquito larvae:

High-risk (29 wards): 1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65 and 71.

Moderate-risk (28 wards): 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 18, 23, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 46, 51, 52, 57, 64, 67, 68, 69, 73 and 75.

Low-risk (18 wards): 3, 7, 17, 28, 34, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 63, 66, 70, 72 and 74.

Tidal surges batter coastal people amid warning gaps

FROM PAGE 3

roughly 6,000km of embankments, many weak or damaged, make tidal surges more destructive.

Zahid Amin Shashoto, head of programme at Uttaran, said Cyclone Amphan breached embankments in Satkhira in May 2020. When high tides came that August, forecasts warned of a surge of only 1–2 feet. But water entered through the broken embankments, flooding 22 villages in Sreeula union of Assasuni.

"When a cyclone hits us, nobody asks for the wind to be slowed. Everyone asks for the embankment to be fixed," he said.

Momenul Islam, director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, welcomed the localised forecasting model developed under SURF-IT and pledged BMD's technical cooperation to validate and use it for community-level warnings.

BMD Meteorologist Dr Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik stressed the need for a unified digital platform that connects relevant stakeholders to deliver timely, location-specific, actionable warnings to vulnerable communities.

He said an early warning system's success depends not just on issuing alerts but also on ensuring that people at risk receive, understand, trust and act on them in time.

Sanzida Yesmin, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, acknowledged the policy gap, saying, "I was completely unaware that these recurring tidal surges occurred without any warning." She stressed the need to integrate impact-based forecasting into national frameworks and early action protocols.

Nitai Chandra Dey Sarker, director at Department of Disaster Management, said the government lacks an institutional mechanism to monitor such non-cyclone events.

He suggested revising the national disaster damage assessment tool, known as the D-Form, to capture cumulative livelihood losses from recurring surges.

Homaun Kabir Sumon, programme manager at ACF, said women bear the brunt of these disasters as many men migrate for work during vulnerable seasons.

He called for women-centred early action protocols and recommended that local disaster management committees have at least 50 percent female representation to address women's specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Tapan Kumar Chakraborty, deputy country director for Bangladesh and Nepal at ACF; BMD meteorologist SM Quamrul Hassan; Syeda Sabrina Sultana, meteorologist at the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System; Damodar Kanel, coordinator at WFP; Dr Sazzad Hossain, chief engineer of BWDB; Shah Jahan Saju, national coordinator for Early Warnings for All at WFP; Shekh Mohi Uddin, coordinator at ACF; and Dr Md Jakariya, professor at North South University, also spoke.

Zunaed Rabbani, an independent consultant, moderated the roundtable.

Prothom Alo

FROM PAGE 3

primary strength. Readers' trust is our capital. We must move forward into the future with this strength."

Following the national anthem and a documentary screening, Managing Editor Anisul Hoque said, "Prothom Alo has never compromised with any evil forces in the past, could not please militants, and could not agree with everyone. For that reason, on its 28th anniversary, Prothom Alo says 'sorry'. This uncompromising stance will continue; Prothom Alo will remain steadfast."

Executive Editor Sajjad Sharif said, "We have no scope to step back. We must move towards the future along new paths with dreams of doing something new."

Head of Online Shawkat Hossain, Head of Digital Business Javed Sultan, and Head of Research Strategy and Business Development Momenur Rashid Siddiquee also spoke.

Guests included Independent University, Bangladesh Vice-Chancellor M Tamim, ACI Ltd MD Arif Dowla, Mohammadi Group Chairperson Rubana Huq and actor Mosharraf Karim.

M Tamim said, "Facing the wrath of both the government and opposition proves Prothom Alo is on the right path. It turned around even after the attack last December and continued objective journalism, which is very encouraging."

The event concluded with prize distribution for staff writing and quiz competitions, followed by musical performances by the Bengal Symphony.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 05

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-00	12-45	3-45	5-25	7-00
JAMAAT	5-35	1-15	4-00	5-30	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO BANGLADESH

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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

The full job description, job requirements and application guidelines (how to apply) can be found on our website: **https://bit.ly/eu-jobs-1226**

The deadline for receiving applications is **Monday, 30 November 2026 at 16:00 Hours.**

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

Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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

ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ওজোপাডিকো)
WEST ZONE POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(An enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Memo No: 27.22.4785.007.74.015.26.2792 Date: 04/11/2026

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

E-Tender for the office of the Superintending Engineer (P&S) invites in the National e-GP system Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following Goods:

Sl	Tender ID	Name of Tender
1	1360227	Supply and Delivery of 33 kV CT (30 nos) and PT (10 Nos) at the central store of WZPDCL Khulna.

This is an Online Tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration is required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

(Engr. Md. Shafiqul Islam)
Superintending Engineer (P&S), WZPDCL
Khulna.

GD-2679

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Amtali Govt. Technical School & College, Amtali, Barguna.
e-mail : amtoligovtsc@gmail.com, Web :www.shtsc.barguna.gov.bd

Memo No: 57.03.0409.500.18.01.26-153 Date: 04-11-2026

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

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

Tender ID	Description of Goods	Tender opening date & time
1360853	Supply of Raw Materials & Spare Parts (Code: 3256105))	17/11/2026 Time: 16.00

This is online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

Md. Mizanur Rahman, Principal in Charge
Amtali Govt. Technical School & College, Amtali, Borguna. Phone - 01711464883

GD-2670

ইনস্টিটিউট অব বাংলাদেশ স্টাডিজ
রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইনস্টিটিউট অব বাংলাদেশ স্টাডিজে নিম্নলিখিত শূন্য পদসমূহ পূরণের জন্য বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

পদের নাম ও সংখ্যা	বিষয়ের নাম ও সংখ্যা	বেতন স্কেল
ফেলো (সহকারী অধ্যাপক)-৮টি/ সহযোগী অধ্যাপক-৩টি	ইতিহাস-১, বাংলা-১, ইংরেজি-১, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান-১, অর্থনীতি-১, ভূগোল-১, মনোবিজ্ঞান-১, নৃ-বিজ্ঞান-১, ফোকলোর-১, আইন-১, সমাজকর্ম-১	ফেলো (সহকারী অধ্যাপক): ৭১,৫০০-১,৩৪,০০০/- এবং ৯ম জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০২৬ অনুযায়ী প্রচলিত ভাতাদি। সহযোগী অধ্যাপক: ১,০০,০০০/- ১,৪২,৪০০/- এবং ৯ম জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০২৬ অনুযায়ী প্রচলিত ভাতাদি।

উপর্যুক্ত প্রতিটি পদসমূহে নিয়োগের জন্য শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা এবং আবেদন সম্পর্কিত বিস্তারিত বিবরণ রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের https://www.ru.ac.bd/ibs/advertisment/- তে পাওয়া যাবে আবেদনপত্র ডাউনলোড করে পূরণ পূর্বক সম্পন্ন করে ১১ (এগারো) সেট দরখাস্ত আগামী ২৪-১১-২৬ তারিখ বিকাল ৪টার মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে জমা দিতে হবে। প্রতি পদের জন্য প্রতি সেট দরখাস্তের সাথে সকল প্রকার শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার নম্বরপত্র ও সার্টিফিকেট, চাকুরিরত প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র, চাকুরির অভিজ্ঞতার সার্টিফিকেট, সকল প্রকার গবেষণামূলক প্রবন্ধের কপি, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। পূর্বে যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাঁদের নতুন আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।

প্রফেসর ড. এম. মোস্তফা কামাল
পরিচালক

GD-2673

AHSANULLAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
141-142 Love Road, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208.
Phone: 02 8870422 (Ext.-201) Web: www.aust.edu
Ref. No: AUST/OTM/CNT, CoE, CE, CSE, UE & MPE/Tender-05/2026-27

TENDER INVITATION

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) is inviting sealed bids from bona fide/ reputed organizations/ distributors/ business partners/agents for:

	Description	Office/ Dept
1.	Procurement of High-Performance PC for CNT office	CNT office
2.	Procurement of original certificate paper (Qty-7000 pcs.) for CoE	CoE office
3.	Procurement of Universal Testing Machine (UTM) for CE dept	CE dept
4.	Procurement of Hydraulic bench & Bernoulli's apparatus for CE dept	
5.	Procurement of BOD Measurement System for CE dept	
6.	Procurement of High-config. PC (Qty- 27 nos.) for CSE dept	CSE dept
7.	Procurement of IP based PABX system, indent from UE Office	UE Office
8.	Procurement of Expansion of perfect Gas Apparatus (Qty-01 no.) for MPE dept	MPE dept
9.	Procurement of Strain Gauge Trainer (Qty-01 no.) for MPE dept	
10.	Procurement of Whirling of Shaft & Critical Speed Apparatus (Qty-01 no.) for MPE dept	

The bidders must submit earnest money @ 2.5% of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of **"Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology"** along with their offer. Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from the Procurement Office of AUST on all working days till Nov. 17, 2026 by 4 p.m. The sealed offer must be submitted on **Nov. 22, 2026 (Sunday)** by 2.00 p.m. at the Treasurer Office and the tenders will be opened (for SL No: 1 to 6) at 02:30 p.m. & 03:00 p.m. (for SL No: 7 to 10) on the same day (Nov. 22, 2026). Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the tenders.
N.B.: Prebid Meeting (only for SL No: 3 & 7) on Nov. 18, 2026 (Wednesday) at 2-00 PM at AUST premises. The AUST authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason what-so-ever and is not bound to award the work order to the lowest bidder.

INNOVATION:: CREATION:: LEADERSHIP

THE World University Rankings 2027 Times Higher Education
NSU Joint 1st in Bangladesh RANKED #801-1000
QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS #901-950 in QS World University Rankings 2027

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/26-27-T08

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/reputed organizations/producers/manufacturers/suppliers for making and supplying convocation souvenir items, in various lots as mentioned below and described in the tender schedule.

Details of the items:

Lot 1: Executive bag
Lot 2: Thermal vacuum coffee mug
Lot 3: Crest

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender within banking hours from Southeast Bank Ltd., Bashundhara Branch, on all working days till **November 16, 2026** by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 1,000.00 (One Thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **November 17, 2026** by **2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at **2:30 p.m.** on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Procurement
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1270, Fax: +88-02-55668202
E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu
Fax : +88-02-55668202

Trump's Senate picks cost GOP dearly

REUTERS, *Washington*

President Trump urged voters to treat him as being on the ballot in the midterm elections and personally backed Republican candidates in several key Senate races. But voters rejected his choices, helping Democrats take control of the Senate.

Trump-backed candidates in South Carolina, North Carolina and Texas lost, while his preferred candidate trailed in early results in Michigan. The defeats exposed the limits of Trump's influence over the Republican Party, which he has reshaped around his MAGA movement for more than a decade.

Trump's defeats exposed limits to his influence over a Republican Party reshaped by his MAGA movement

Trump repeatedly favoured loyalists and ideological allies over established Republicans with stronger state-wide networks and electoral records, betting his endorsement would overcome their political weaknesses. Tuesday's results challenged that strategy.

In South Carolina, Democrat Annie Andrews defeated Darline Graham, sister of Republican Senator Lindsey Graham. In North Carolina, Roy Cooper beat Trump's choice, Michael Whatley. In Texas, James Talarico won a seat Democrats had not captured since 1988, defeating Ken Paxton. Trump remained defiant, writing on social media: "I wasn't on the Ballot and if I was, we would have won IN A LANDSLIDE!"

Some analysts blamed his interventions in Republican primaries for costing the party winnable seats.



Democratic US Senate candidate and Texas State Representative James Talarico speaks after his victory in the US midterm elections during an Election Night rally in Austin, Texas, US, early yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Bottoms elected first Black woman governor

AFP, *Washington*

Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms, a former Atlanta mayor, won the race for governor in the southern state of Georgia on Tuesday, making her the first Black woman elected to the top office in any US state, media projections showed.



Bottoms defeated billionaire health care executive Rick Jackson, the Republican candidate. Outgoing Republican Governor Brian Kemp was term-limited and could not run again. Her win returns the governor's office to Democrats after more than two decades of Republican control.

Iran readies plan for 'maximum deterrence'

AGENCIES

Iran said its military has prepared a "maximum deterrence" plan against any fresh attack by the United States or Israel, with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei ordering an immediate response without geographical restrictions in any future conflict.

The preparations include expanding lists of potential targets to cover American and Israeli assets and infrastructure, while increasing military production. The warning follows recent US strikes on Iran and stalled diplomatic efforts, despite continued Qatari mediation.

During an October 31 meeting with Iran's three senior military commanders, Khamenei called for "maximum deterrence" against renewed military action by Washington or Tel Aviv, Axios reported.

He instructed them to prepare an "immediate and effective response" to any new attack and expand the list of targets to include US and Israeli assets within reach of Iranian forces.

The commanders briefed Khamenei on readiness along Iran's Gulf coastline, the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the country's north-western and south-eastern borders. They also reported a "several-fold increase" in production of ammunition, reconnaissance equipment and combat weapons.

The preparations follow US strikes on Iran's Qeshm Island.

What next as voters curb Trump's power?

AGENCIES

Democrats have taken control of both chambers of the US Congress from Republicans in the midterm elections, dealing a major setback to President Donald Trump. The new majority, which takes office in January, will be able to block parts of his legislative agenda, delay judicial appointments and increase scrutiny of his administration. According to NBC News projections, Democrats secured control of the House of Representatives and the Senate, although some close races remained undecided.

DEMOCRATS WIN BOTH CHAMBERS

Democrats needed a net gain of four Senate seats and three House seats to take control of Congress. In Maine, Democrat Troy Jackson defeated incumbent Republican Senator Susan Collins. In Iowa, Democrat Josh Turek defeated Republican Ashley Hinson. Democrats also made gains in traditionally Republican areas, including Texas and Kansas, amid voter dissatisfaction over high prices and the war in Iran, reports AP.



ABSENCE FROM BALLOT

In a phone interview with CBS News on election night, Trump congratulated Democrats but blamed his party's losses on his absence from the ballot. "If I had been on the ballot, we would have won," he said, arguing that some Republican candidates were unpopular and that his supporters consequently stayed home. Trump said he was willing to work with Democrats but warned he retained full veto powers. "I will veto everything," he said, if the opposition refused to cooperate.

WHAT CAN DEMOCRATS DO?

Democrats will control congressional committees, allowing them to investigate the administration, issue subpoenas and scrutinise its policies. They can also block funding for Trump's priorities, including controversial immigration enforcement programmes, as Congress controls federal spending.

Senate Democrats will gain control of the confirmation process, giving them the power to delay or reject Trump's judicial nominees and potentially postpone filling a Supreme Court vacancy. Democrats could also launch impeachment proceedings against Trump, although removing him from office would require a two-thirds Senate majority.

TRUMP RETAINS VETO POWER

Despite the Democrats winning both chambers, Trump retains veto power and broad executive authority, limiting the ability of his rivals to enact major legislation.

Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution states that the President can veto bills passed by Congress before they become law. Congress can override the veto, but it requires a two-thirds majority in both chambers.

The veto does not allow the President to change the content of the legislation.

Numbers that tell the story of Democrats' midterm blowout

AFP, *Washington*

Turnout figures were unavailable, but Americans had cast more than 61.7 million votes before election day, according to the University of Florida's Election Lab.

The early vote helped Democrats, who traditionally vote early more often than Republicans. African Americans, young people and other groups that typically support Democrats also turned out in large numbers, National Public Radio reported.

Spending on the 2026 midterms reached a record $11.9 billion, up from $8.9 billion in 2022, according to OpenSecrets. Outside spending, led by billionaire Trump ally Elon Musk, favoured Republicans by about $360 million.

Democratic candidates also spent heavily. House and Senate candidates spent a record $3.7 billion, with Democrats outspending Republicans by $800 million, OpenSecrets said.

Kansas elected a Democrat to the Senate for the first time since 1932, as Adam Hamilton defeated Republican incumbent Roger Marshall.

Hamilton, a Methodist megachurch pastor and former registered Republican, made history in the conservative state.

Texas elected a Democratic senator for the first time since 1988, with Talarico flipping the seat.

Young men and Latino voters, groups crucial to Trump's political support, moved towards Democrats, exit polls showed.

In recent weeks, several Latino voters have expressed anger at Trump, saying they felt betrayed.

NBC News exit polls found Latino voters backed Democrats over Republicans by 62 percent to 35 percent.

Voters aged 18 to 29 supported Democrats by 72 percent to 25 percent, a sharp shift from 2024, when young voters were divided between Trump and Kamala Harris.

তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিসন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন পিএলসি.

(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানী)

জনসচেতনতামূলক বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মেঘনাঘাট পাওয়ার লিমিটেড (৪৫০ মেগাওয়াট) মেঘনাঘাট, সোনারগাঁও, নারায়ণগঞ্জ-এর বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রটি নিলামে বিক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে অতিসম্প্রতি পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিশন অ্যান্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন পিএলসি-এর দৃষ্টিগোচর হয়েছে। মেঘনাঘাট পাওয়ার লিমিটেড (৪৫০ মেগাওয়াট) , গ্রাহক সংকেত নম্বরঃ ৪৩৭-০০০৬ - কে অত্র কোম্পানির একজন গ্রাহক হিসেবে দীর্ঘদিন গ্যাস সরবরাহ করা হয় এবং গ্যাস সরবরাহ চুক্তির (GSA) মেয়াদ ১৬/০৮/২০২৬ তারিখে উত্তীর্ণ হওয়ায় বর্তমানে গ্যাস সরবরাহ বন্ধ রয়েছে। উক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিশন অ্যান্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন পিএলসি-এর গ্যাস বিল ও অন্যান্য পাওনা বাবদ মোট ৳৩৪৭,৯৭,৪২,৪৯০.২১/- (তিনশত সাতচল্লিশ কোটি সাতানব্বই লক্ষ বিয়াল্লিশ হাজার চারশত নব্বই টাকা একুশ পয়সা) বকেয়া রয়েছে।

এমতাবস্থায়, বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রটি ক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে চুক্তিবদ্ধ হওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে অত্র কোম্পানির দায়-দেনা পরিশোধের বিষয়ে অবহিত থাকার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল পক্ষকে অনুরোধ জানানো হলো।

কর্তৃপক্ষের আদেশক্রমে
কোম্পানি সচিব
কোম্পানি সচিবালয় ডিভিশন
তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিসন অ্যান্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন পিএলসি.

GD-2677

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Food
Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
web: www. dgfood.gov.bd

"Tender Notice"

An Open tender is hereby invited for selection of blending mills for a total of 170 Upazilas for the period from 01.01.2027 to 31.12.2028 under the Vulnerable Women Benefits programme of the Department of Women Affairs. The selected mills shall lift regular rice and premix kernels from LSDs/CSDs, transport them to the blending mills, blend the premix kernels with regular rice following the prescribed process, and transport the fortified rice to the union parishad premises for distribution under the programme.

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Food;
2	Agency	Directorate General of Food, Dhaka;
3	Name of Procuring Entity	Director, Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division, Directorate General of Food, Dhaka;
4	District of Procuring Entity	Dhaka;
5	Description of the Work	Selection of blending mills for a total of 170 Upazilas for distribution of fortified rice under the Vulnerable Women Benefits programme of the Department of Women Affairs by lifting regular rice and premix kernels from LSDs/CSDs, transporting them to the blending mills, blending premix kernels with regular rice following the prescribed process, and transporting the fortified rice to the union parishad premises.
6	Tender Notice No. and Date	13.01.0000.051.57.025.26.909 Date: 04.11.2026
7	Date of Publication of Tender Notice	05.11.2026
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM);
9	Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
10	Last Date for Sale of Tender Schedule	02.12.2026
11	Office Selling Tender Schedule	Office of the Director, Accounts and Finance Division, Room No.-401, 5th Floor, Directorate General of Food, Dhaka;
12	Tender Submission Deadline	03.12.2026 up to 2:00 PM;
13	Place of Tender Submission	Room No. 202, 3rd Floor, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka;
14	Date and Time of Tender Opening	03.12.2026 at 2:30 PM;
15	Place of Tender Opening	Room No. 202, 3rd Floor, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka;
16	Date and Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	19.11.2026. at 11.00 AM;
17	Venue of Pre-Tender Meeting	Conference Room (Training Division), 7th Floor, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000;
18	Tender Validity Period	120 (One hundred Twenty) days from the date of opening of tender;
19	Tenderer's Experience	The tenderer shall have at least 01 (one) year of practical experience in blending kernels with regular rice. Millers having previous experience in blending premix kernels with regular rice shall submit a certificate, signed by the concerned Upazila Controller of Food, confirming that the blending activities were previously performed properly; Or, Tenderers who have approval from the Ministry of Food and proper validation certificate issued by concerned committee as specified in "Guidelines for Fortified Rice Production, Distribution, and Management, 2021" are eligible to participate this tender
20	Procedure for Tender Submission	Tender must be submitted under the two-envelope system. The technical proposal regarding the millers' qualifications and the financial proposal must be sealed in 2 separate envelopes, and "Technical Proposal" must be written in the middle of the upper side of the technical proposal envelope and "Financial Proposal" in the middle of the upper side of the financial proposal envelope. On the right side of both envelopes, Director, Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division, Directorate General of Food, Dhaka and on the left side, the name and address of the concerned establishment must be written. The 2 envelopes must be placed together and submitted sealed in another large envelope. On the right side of the large envelope, Director, Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division, Directorate General of Food, Dhaka and on the left upper side, the name and address of the tenderer must be clearly mentioned. In addition, the name of the programme and the name of the upazila must be clearly written in the middle of the envelope;
21	Price of Tender Schedule	1,500/- (One Thousand and Five Hundred) Taka (non-refundable);
22	Name, Designation, Address, Phone, E-mail of Tender Inviting Officer	Md. Zahirul Islam Khan, Director, Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000; Phone: 41050091; E-mail: dsdm@dgfood.gov.bd
23	Duration of Work	01.01.2027 to 31.12.2028
24	Tender Security	30,000/- (Thirty Thousand) Taka
25	Goods Security Deposit	An amount equivalent to 100% of the economic price of regular rice and premix kernel to be lifted for preparation of fortified rice.
26	Applicable Rules and Rights of Procuring Entity	This tender shall be conducted in accordance with the Public Procurement Rules, 2025 & related document published by BPPA. The Procuring Entity reserves the right, without assigning any reason, to cancel or amend this notice or to accept, reject, or cancel any or all tenders.

03/11/2026
Md. Zahirul Islam Khan
Director
Phone: 41050091
dsdm@dgfood.gov.bd

GD-2682

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

A window of opportunity closing

Bangladesh is running out of time to utilise its demographic dividend

According to a new report by the World Bank, Bangladesh's working-age population will reach its highest proportion in 2045, after which the number of elderly people will continue to increase and the country will be termed an "aged" society. Between 2000 and 2024, the rise in working-age people added about 0.4 percentage points a year to per-capita real GDP growth. But this contribution is expected to halve between 2025 and 2044, before turning negative starting in 2045. The question is: has Bangladesh been able to make use of its demographic advantage thus far? The answer, disappointingly, is a solid "no".

With around 84 percent of Bangladesh's working population employed in the informal sector, more than 60 percent of people with a post-secondary education are forced to enter informal employment, earning 45 to 84 percent less than those in the formal sector. Meanwhile, female labour-force participation stands at only 38 percent. The future appears even bleaker given that 51 percent of children are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10. According to the report, pre-primary school enrolment rate in Bangladesh is only 36 percent, the lowest among South Asian countries and much lower than the regional average of 62 percent.

The country will enter the "ageing" stage next year, when people aged 65 and above will account for 7 percent of the population. By 2051, this proportion will double. The transition from "ageing" to "aged" will take place over just 24 years, much faster compared to the average of 32 years for other developing economies and 46 years for advanced economies.

With around 84 percent of Bangladesh's working population employed in the informal sector, more than 60 percent of people with a post-secondary education are forced to enter informal employment, earning 45 to 84 percent less than those in the formal sector. Meanwhile, female labour-force participation stands at only 38 percent.

Seen together, the numbers presented in the World Bank's report signal how ill-prepared Bangladesh is to support an ageing population over the next two decades and beyond. The country's infamously high out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure—around 79 percent, more than any other South Asian country—might only get worse and continue to erode working people's income. Meanwhile, even though 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, urban areas reportedly have 18 times the doctor density. Very few adults in Bangladesh save specifically for old age, and even fewer working-age people contribute to a formal pension scheme.

The government must review the findings and projections of the aforementioned report and immediately strategise for a more secure future for the people of Bangladesh. Jobs must be created in the formal sector which can absorb the high number of qualified young people currently settling for informal jobs or unstable entrepreneurship. Women must also be supported to enter the workforce. Healthcare spending should account for at least 5 percent of the budget, and soon. Major education sector issues, such as teacher shortages and secondary school dropouts, must be addressed quickly, and social protection must be expanded to benefit disadvantaged groups. Without such measures, not only will our demographic dividend pass us by, but we will be left with inadequate resources to care for an increasingly older population over the coming decades.

Close the gaps in lead pollution control

Poor import monitoring, market surveillance endangering public health

That Bangladesh has virtually no way of detecting lead chromate, a toxic pigment used in paints and coatings, in imported paint because the country lacks the necessary customs classification is alarming, given the substantial health risks associated with this toxic heavy metal. It is also frustrating, as the dangers of lead poisoning have been reiterated in the country for decades. Just last year, a study involving about 500 children aged two to four years in Dhaka found that around 98 percent of them had concerning levels of lead in their blood. Bangladesh is also among the most lead-contaminated countries in the world, with an estimated 3.6 crore children (more than half of the total child population) having elevated blood lead levels. The fact that such a toxic chemical is being allowed to enter the country unregulated shows an unacceptable level of regulatory and administrative oversight.

Lead chromate is an inorganic chemical compound that is used to produce bright yellow, orange, and red colours in paint, coating, plastic, and other products. High concentrations of lead chromate have also been found in spices such as turmeric in Bangladesh, although coordinated action from the government managed to significantly reduce such prevalence—which points to a hopeful outcome where, with administrative and regulatory coordination, the use of the compound in consumer products can be reined in.

However, exposure to lead can happen in several ways, which makes containing the contamination significantly challenging. For instance, informal lead-acid battery recycling remains one of the major sources of exposure, with a rapidly increasing number of electric three-wheelers accounting for roughly 60 to 65 percent of local demand. It doesn't help that, in Bangladesh, lead chromate is grouped under a broader classification code that also covers non-lead chromium pigments, making it impossible to determine import volumes. Additionally, one recent study highlighted that small paint manufacturers often purchase pigments through chemical traders, making supply chains difficult to trace.

Therefore, to regulate a substance as hazardous as lead, the government should start by approving mandatory lead limits for all sorts of paints (currently, only decorative paint has a specified lead limit of 90 parts per million). Stronger import monitoring, market surveillance, and product identification can help control lead chromate trade. This effort can be strengthened by routine laboratory testing and introducing green taxation to encourage industries to adopt lead-free materials, along with providing technical support to paint manufacturers who seek safer alternatives.

Can we establish a uniform minimum wage for all workers?



Aparajita Debnath is a student at SOAS University of London, and an advocate at Dhaka Judge Court.

■ **APARAJITA DEBNATH**

With the newly constituted minimum wage board for the RMG sector pledging to implement a revised wage structure for workers from January 2027, amid persistent protests by a section of the workers, it is worth examining Bangladesh's prevailing wage protection regime that remains fragmented, selective, and structurally inadequate. While the RMG sector dominates the wage discourse, millions of workers in informal, service, and emerging sectors remain outside meaningful legal protection. It is, therefore, high time the government introduced a uniform national minimum wage alongside a statutory hourly wage system applicable across all sectors.

The primary legislation protecting workers' rights in Bangladesh is the Labour Act, 2006, which was amended by the interim government and subsequently passed in parliament as the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2026. Although the amended law introduced some key reforms in the interest of workers, it does not establish a universal minimum wage. Instead, it retains the existing mechanism of a Minimum Wages Board that recommends minimum wage rates on an industry-by-industry basis. Wage rates vary significantly depending on industry, skill, and region, and become binding only after the issuance of a government gazette notification.

The practice has resulted in significant disparities, however. For example, the minimum monthly wage for entry-level garment workers is Tk 12,500, while minimum wage rates in other industries vary considerably, with many occupations having no separate statutory minimum wage. Workers in informal sectors are also often completely excluded from such safeguards. Moreover, existing wage rates frequently fall short of what's needed to attain a decent standard of living. The estimated living wage for urban Bangladesh is Tk 30,459 per month, according to the Global Living Wage Coalition's 2025 benchmark, which illustrates the gap between prevailing minimum wages and the income needed to afford decent living. Besides failing to establish a universal minimum wage, the law also does not prescribe a statutory minimum hourly rate, including for those who are paid on a daily or piece-rate basis, such as tea garden workers, day labourers, bricklayers, etc.

Our wage system, long anchored in monthly salaries and piece-rate calculations, is increasingly being scrutinised for structural shortcomings that leave large segments of the workforce vulnerable. Although monthly wages are technically based on standardised working hours—typically eight hours a day and 40-48 hours a week—the system operates with a degree of opacity that creates significant room for exploitation. Overtime is often unpaid, informal workers fall outside enforceable protections, and those engaged in flexible or irregular employment arrangements are left without a clear benchmark for fair compensation. In effect, the absence of a standardised hourly wage obscures the true value of labour.

Moreover, female workers are paid less than their male counterparts in some occupations. According to the World Bank, women in Bangladesh also have a significantly lower labour force participation rate (42.5 percent) than men (81.3 percent), and are more likely to be unemployed. In this context, a uniform national wage framework could help reduce discriminatory wage disparities across sectors and strengthen equal rights and protections for all.

The existing wage regime also diverges from established standards set by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Key conventions such as Nos. 131, 100 and 111 address minimum wage protection, equal remuneration, and non-discrimination in employment and occupation, respectively. Together, they promote broader and more inclusive protection under international labour standards. However, Bangladesh's sector-based approach, fragmenting wage regulation across industries, leaves many workers effectively unprotected. Bangladesh has yet to ratify ILO Convention № 131 (the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention); it is high time it ratified and implemented it.

Experiences from neighbouring countries are instructive here. India chose wage consolidation through its Code on Wages, 2019, which provides for minimum wages across all sectors and equal pay regardless of gender. The Code consolidated four earlier statutes into a single framework and provides for a national floor wage below which no state-set minimum wage can fall. However, although passed in 2019, the Code's principal provisions came into force only in November 2025. Even now, it is being switched on state by state, with much of industrial India still drafting its rules.

Pakistan, on the other hand, allows its provinces to set their own minimum wages following the devolution of labour-related powers under the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010. This, however, resulted in variations in wage-setting frameworks and rates across provinces, while enforcement remains a persistent challenge.

These experiences suggest that establishing a legal minimum wage is only a first step. A national wage policy must set an adequate benchmark and be backed by effective enforcement to ensure that workers actually receive what they are entitled to.

The argument for such reforms is not just economic or administrative. A universal wage framework would be consistent with our foundational constitutional principles, including equality before the law (Article 27) and the right to life (Article 32), which the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has interpreted to encompass the right to a basic, dignified standard of living and the means to survive. In this sense, wage reform is as much about advancing constitutional principles as it is about modernising labour policy.

The Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2026 should, therefore, be amended further to introduce a national minimum wage provision, establish an hourly wage standard, and recognise part-time employment. Institutionally, the Minimum Wages Board could be restructured into a more powerful National Wage Commission with jurisdiction across all sectors. Enforcement mechanisms also need strengthening, including through digital wage-tracking systems and stricter penalties for non-compliance. Without such reforms, growing frustration over inadequate wages will continue to spill onto the streets.



Police and garment workers demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 30,000 face off again in Gazipur, on November 4, 2026. PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Why we must forge a new economic vision



Sayeeful Islam is managing director of SSL Wireless and a former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). He can be reached at sayeeful@gmail.com.

■ **SAYEEFUL ISLAM**

Over the past four decades or so, the push to build a strong readymade garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh has succeeded beyond our imagination. What began as an ambitious effort by a handful of pioneering entrepreneurs transformed an impoverished, agrarian nation into a global apparel export powerhouse. The sector has generated millions of jobs, brought women from rural communities into the formal workforce, and became the backbone of our export economy. But the world that rewarded that model is now disappearing before our eyes.

Our entire economic edifice rests on foreign exchange from two primary sources: RMG and remittances. Both face existential challenges.

In manufacturing, the traditional ladder—from apparel to electronics, consumer appliances, and automobiles—has been disrupted by robotics and AI. China's fully automated "dark factories" have already challenged traditional manufacturing models, including those of legacy automotive giants like Volkswagen and General Motors, by producing around the clock with minimal human intervention. Similar disruption is approaching our factory floors. As robotic sewing, automated cutting, and nearshoring take hold across Western consumer markets, our low-cost labour advantage could soon evaporate.

At the same time, the overseas construction sites, logistics hubs, and service sectors employing millions of our migrant workers in the Gulf and across Southeast Asia are also undergoing automation. If our workers remain un-upgraded, relying solely on basic manual labour, remittance inflows may rapidly decline.

To survive, we must fundamentally reset our economic vision. If machines are taking over physical assembly, we must focus on what machines cannot readily replicate: human-centric services, scaled and accelerated by artificial intelligence. Our greatest demographic asset is a median age of 26. Meanwhile, Western nations face an ageing crisis—a "silver economy" increasingly short of certified caregivers, healthcare assistants, and digital clinical operators.

People ask how we can compete with India or the Philippines, who established strong positions in these fields decades ago. The answer lies in recognising that their models were built around conventional economics of the past: large physical campuses, bureaucratic training centres, and years of expensive classroom-based instruction. But technology has opened up alternatives to that model. Healthcare in the West is changing rapidly—caregivers can no long rely on static, outdated routines. They must be continuously retrained to work alongside digital monitoring tools, smart diagnostics, and automated patient records. AI makes this continuous, decentralised learning possible.

With Bangladesh's nationwide digital connectivity, any young person with a smartphone can access an AI-powered personal tutor. Generative AI voice tools can teach English, German, or Japanese through real-time conversation, while modular courses can cover patient handling, anatomy, hygiene, modern clinical protocols, etc. Crucially, AI tools can assess trainees continuously and consistently. Prospective overseas employers could also verify and monitor the learning and assessment process remotely, helping our youth obtain credible, internationally recognised certification without leaving their home districts.

Once they complete the theoretical training, learners can undertake practical apprenticeships at local upazila health complexes and district hospitals. This would provide essential hands-on experience under the supervision of domestic doctors and nurses while helping to strengthen our own overburdened healthcare facilities. The result could be a certified, adaptable workforce ready to enter labour corridors abroad or take up remote digital health roles.

The same virtual approach could be used to retrain overseas workers, equipping them with the technical skills needed to operate modern, automated machinery on foreign job sites before their existing skills become obsolete.

Realising this vision requires immediate, structural reform within our government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must overhaul the structure and mandate of the economic wings in our overseas missions. We cannot afford slow, bureaucratic reporting channels. If trade and labour market reports take months to move through diplomatic red tape, they can become useless. Our missions must function as real-time economic intelligence units, feeding ground-level information on automation trends, factory closures, workplace technology adoption, and regulatory shifts directly into domestic policymaking.

While the government's efforts to increase education spending and introduce basic technology into primary schools are welcome, funding must expand dramatically. Digital literacy, AI-driven learning tools, and modern problem-solving must be integrated into our schools from the outset.

Four decades ago, some of us in the RMG industry took a leap in the dark because we knew exports were our only lifeline. Today, while having physical infrastructure such as deep-sea ports and expressways is vital, concrete alone cannot sustain an export-led economy whose foundations are shifting beneath it. We may lack the fiscal resources to build multi-billion-dollar semiconductor plants, but we can, and should, think ahead. If we read the writing on the wall in Europe, we can see that social unrest there is largely driven by economic insecurity and demographic pressures. In Bangladesh, if we fail to equip our large young population with a viable future, the consequences could be impossible to contain.

They say the only way to predict the future is to create it! So, shall we create our own future, or wait for the fires raging in Europe to spread to our streets? The choice is still ours, but not for much longer.

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‘Honest’ grading may have arrived, but what about the students left behind?



Imran Hossain is research associate at Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Brac University. Views expressed in this article are the author’s own.

■ IMRAN HOSSAIN



This year’s HSC pass rates hit a 22-year low, painting a grim picture of the learning gap in schools. PHOTO: STAR

This year, more than 10 lakh candidates who appeared in two of the national public examinations in the country failed. In the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, 5,04,929 candidates failed out of the 14,04,539 who took the exams under nine general education boards, with the pass rate of 64.05 percent—a 19-year low. The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination saw 10,48,530 candidates in attendance under the nine general boards, of whom 5,07,281 failed, with the pass rate of 51.62 percent—a 22-year low.

These results have been drawing mixed reactions, with some appreciating the long-overdue “honest” grading while others are worried about the unsuccessful examinees. The more useful question, however, is: why were the failure rates so low for most of the past two decades? That, in my view, was because our public exam results stopped measuring learning some time ago, and that the decline of the past two years has mostly been a reflection of truthful grading. The task now is to manage the transition so that the students don’t bear the full burden of consequences.

Official data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) show how far the results of these public exams drifted. In 2004, less than 48 percent of HSC candidates under the general boards passed. By 2021, that figure rose to over 95 percent (excluding the 2020 “auto-pass” of examinees due to the Covid-19 pandemic). The share of students who received the top grade, GPA-5, rose even faster. In 2004, less than one percent of HSC candidates earned GPA-5. In 2021, around 16 percent did. Did learning really improve at that pace? Independent assessments of what our students can do in reading and mathematics have not shown gains on this scale.

A pass rate is a number any government can announce on results day, and students welcome good news with their families. But learning is not as immediately tangible. Over the past two decades, examiners came under pressure to mark generously and to award grace marks to students just below the pass line, and no single board or examiner could hold out while others inflated their grades. High pass rates kept parents happy and gave the government front-page photographs of students celebrating on results day. Students, parents, schools, and governments all gained from that incentive, so it is worth taking a closer look.

HSC candidates are students who have already passed the SSC exams, so in a normal system, the HSC pass rate should be similar to the SSC rate. Between 2005 and 2009, the two rates were similar indeed. Since 2010, however, the HSC pass rate has been lower than the SSC pass rate in almost every year, which is what you would expect if SSC grades were rising faster than learning.

After the political transition in August 2024, examiners were instructed to stop grading the answer transcripts generously and to award no grace marks. The SSC pass rate fell from 83.77 percent in 2024 to 68.04 percent in 2025, and then to 64.05 percent this year. The elected government that took office in February 2026 has so far maintained the stricter standard.

HSC candidates are students who have already passed the SSC exams, so in a normal system, the HSC pass rate should be similar to the SSC rate. Between 2005 and 2009, the two rates were similar indeed. Since 2010, however, the HSC pass rate has been lower than the SSC pass rate in almost every year, which is what you would expect if SSC grades were rising faster than learning.

Some may blame the pandemic. Yes, schools were shut for 18 months from mid-March in 2020, so the learning loss is real. But the cohorts that took the SSC exams in 2024 and 2025 lost the same 18 months at almost the same stage of school, and both were examined on the full syllabus. Their pass rates differ significantly. Lost learning alone cannot explain a gap that large between two groups who lost the same amount. This year’s HSC candidates largely sat for their SSC exams in 2024, under the old marking system, when 83.77 percent passed. Two years later, 51.62 percent passed the HSC—a drop of over 32 percentage points. In more than two decades, no cohort’s pass rate has fallen this far between the two exams. The July uprising disrupted schooling and probably played some part, but disruption measured in weeks cannot account for a change of this size, repeated two years running.

Bangladesh is not the only country trying to reverse grade inflation, but it has probably chosen an unusually fast pace. Ireland, whose grades rose sharply during the pandemic, promised its students that there would be no sudden adjustments. The country is lowering the grades gradually: the share of top grades, H1, fell from 12.1 percent in 2025 to 10.1 percent in 2026. The pandemic adjustment will not be fully removed until 2029. The aim here is ensuring fairness so students don’t lose university places to earlier cohorts who were graded more generously. The cost is that inflated grades stay in the system for years.

Kenya took a different route about a decade ago. In 2016, after an overhaul of its exams council to stop question paper leaks, the number of candidates scoring straight A grades in its secondary exam fell from 2,636 in 2015 to just 141. Credibility returned quickly, but so did the backlash from teachers, parents, and students. As it appears, Bangladesh is somewhat following Kenya’s pace. That approach comes with a cost that falls on particular students.

The first group is the transition cohorts. Many job circulars set minimum requirements for SSC and HSC results, and in a few years, today’s students will apply alongside earlier cohorts whose grades were inflated. A student who earned GPA-5 in 2024 and one who earned it in 2026 hold the same credential on paper, and employers will treat them alike, even though the two grades are not equivalent. The 2026 student met a harder standard and could lose a job to someone who did not.

The second is students in weaker schools. With only 3.4 percent of HSC candidates securing GPA-5 this year, top grades are likely to be concentrated in a small number of strong institutions, and the schools that relied on generous marking to look respectable no longer can.

What should be done? The first priority is not to go back. Every results day might bring pressure to soften marking again, and doing so will make the next correction only harder. Second, students caught in this transition—and in the next one—must be protected. Most universities admit both the current and the previous year’s HSC candidates, and recruiters compare applicants from five or six cohorts, hence students graded under different standards compete directly. The education boards could print each student’s percentile rank on the marksheet alongside the GPA, so that universities and recruiters can see where an applicant stood among those who sat for the same exam. Whatever grade reforms may follow in the future, that rank will mean the same thing.

Third, the retake should be held to the same standard. Here, the government has moved quickly: HSC candidates who failed one or two subjects, who make up about 70 percent of those who failed, will be able to retake those exams within a month instead of waiting a year. Those who failed three or more subjects face a harder path. The quick retake is the right decision, but it still comes with a risk. If the retake is marked more leniently than the main exam, it becomes a back door for the grace marks that were just removed. The failures also show where the gaps are: English was by far the most commonly failed subject, with more than 240,000 students failing it, followed by ICT, with close to 140,000 failed students.

We should also be clear about what a stricter grading system can and cannot do. It may push some students to study harder, but it cannot teach a student who is already far behind. Many of the students who failed this year were behind long before Class 10. The response must begin in primary school, where children either learn to read and calculate or fall behind for good.

Biman’s fleet expansion must be matched by structural reform



Air Vice-Marshal (retd) M. Mafidur Rahman is former chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

■ M. MAFIDUR RAHMAN

Born from the ashes of a war-ravaged nation, Biman Bangladesh Airlines began its journey on January 4, 1972 with a profound sense of national pride, zero financial capital, and a single DC-3 aircraft gifted by the Bangladesh Air Force. For a newly independent country, the national flag carrier was envisioned as the proud ambassador of our skies. Accordingly, this organisation received all support from the government. However, over the next decades, Biman’s performance and growth have remained well below people’s expectations.

Today, Biman stands at another monumental crossroads. The airline has finalised mega agreements with European manufacturer Airbus for 10 aircraft, closely following a massive deal with American aerospace giant Boeing for 25 jets. This combined procurement pipeline of 35 aircraft represents the most ambitious fleet expansion in its history.

News of these multi-billion-dollar capital commitments has sparked intense national debate. At a time when Bangladesh navigates tight macroeconomic headwinds, foreign exchange pressures, and balance-of-payment considerations, citizens and aviation economists rightfully question whether such massive expenditures are prudent. Public scepticism is deeply rooted in Biman’s operational history: recurring delays, service bottlenecks, and a historical reliance on government support to stay afloat. To satisfy the expectations of taxpayers and citizens, hardware ambition must now be matched by radical structural reform.

Biman’s modern core fleet of 19 aircraft has not overcome operational and cultural weaknesses limiting its commercial performance. Heavy dependence on government support and limited financial self-sufficiency leaves the airline exposed to economic downturns. Overstaffing hampers efficiency, and workforce productivity trails regional and global competitors. These weaknesses contribute to inconsistent on-time performance (OTP), while limited flight frequencies, schedule disruptions, and inadequate cabin service impact passenger trust, particularly among business-class travellers. Maintenance and engineering deficiencies, including occasional in-flight technical failures and prolonged aircraft-on-ground (AOG) periods during routine maintenance reduce daily aircraft utilisation despite Biman’s in-house C-check capabilities for Boeing 777 and 737 aircraft. Route decisions often favour diplomatic or sociopolitical priorities over commercial viability, often sustaining loss-making services. Limited engagement in global alliances and code-sharing partnerships further confines Biman’s reach largely to point-to-point traffic.

Here, Ethiopian Airlines offers a valuable case study: a wholly state-owned carrier that has become Africa’s leading airline and ranks among the world’s top carriers. With a record revenue of $9.1 billion in 2025-26 financial year, the airline offers a model for transforming a national carrier into a global aviation leader. Under long-serving technical leaders such as former CEO Tewolde Gebremariam (2011-2022) and current CEO Mesfin Tasew Bekele, it maintained commercial independence from political interference. Ethiopian Airlines has had eight CEOs throughout its nearly 81 years of existence. By contrast, Biman has had 44 CEOs in 54 years, most of whom had non-aviation backgrounds. Biman must adopt a merit-based culture in which career advancement depends on aviation-specific commercial performance indicators, not bureaucratic or managerial tenure.

Acquiring aircraft from both Boeing and Airbus increases operational complexity but offers geopolitical and commercial advantages. A mixed fleet appears more costly to operate because it requires separate spare-parts inventories, tools, pilot training programmes, simulators, and specialised engineering teams. On the other hand, dependence on one manufacturer exposes an airline to geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, and supplier-specific production or supply chain disruptions. Maintaining relationships with both manufacturers gives Biman greater leverage in negotiating prices, delivery slots, and long-term technical cooperation agreements. Although initial operating costs are higher, this strategy may be cost-effective in the long run.

South Asian peers offer sobering warnings of state carriers that collapsed under debt-financed fleet growth devoid of structural reforms. Air India’s pre-privatisation era saw massive debt-financed widebody orders combined with political interference, forced unprofitable routes, and inflated staffing, creating over $10 billion in losses and forcing a bailout and privatisation. Similarly, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Sri Lankan Airlines were crippled by governance failures, political patronage, and an inability to forge alliances, leaving them incapable of servicing aircraft loans.

Biman’s sudden unprecedented fleet expansion has sparked concerns about its preparedness and prospects for success. Learning from the Ethiopian blueprint can help it restore public confidence and make its new fleet a source of profit rather than a financial burden. Hence, the national carrier must take the following steps without delay:

Establish commercial autonomy: Biman’s governance must transition to an independent Board of Directors comprising aviation, finance, and logistics experts. Executive leadership should be recruited based on proven aviation track records with guaranteed extended tenures.

Synchronise workforce and infrastructure growth: Pilots, technicians, and ground crew training pipelines must be scaled ahead of aircraft deliveries to avoid costly asset underutilisation.

Generate revenue from MRO and ground-handling: Drawing on Ethiopian Airlines’ model, Biman must upgrade engineering capabilities at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) to offer profitable third-party maintenance and ground-handling services to foreign airlines. It could also consider outsourcing selected maintenance and handling services to private operators to improve cost efficiency.

Aggressively pursue global alliances: Biman must forge code-share agreements and interline partnerships with major international carriers to sell seamless global itineraries without needing to fly proprietary metal to every corner of the world.

Optimise routes and yields: Biman must apply data-driven revenue management software for dynamic pricing. Every route should be reviewed quarterly, and prestige-driven, loss-making routes and services should be promptly suspended or made profitable.

Elevate OTP and service: Biman must set strict internal targets for on-time performance (OTP) of more than 85 percent, and modernise digital touchpoints and in-flight services to successfully compete with foreign carriers.

Acquiring modern aircraft signals ambition, but fleet expansion alone cannot transform an airline. It must be accompanied by organisational reform, stronger operational and maintenance capabilities, and a cultural shift. Many state-owned airlines have struggled to survive, becoming national burdens before being rescued through privatisation. But Biman’s extensive government privileges give it an opportunity to regain public trust. By adopting Ethiopian Airlines’ technocratic governance model and learning from regional peers’ structural failures, Biman can move from a fiscal burden to a proud, profitable driver of Bangladesh’s economic growth.

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Finance, Finance Division
Administration Branch-6
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
www.mof.gov.bd

Memo No: 07.00.0000.000.086.07.0005.26.5274 Date: 04 November, 2026

e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method-OTM)

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

Sl	Tender ID	Description of Procurement Package	Tender Publication Date & Time	Last Selling of Tender document (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)
1	ID: 1360387	Procurement of Computer-All in one	05/11/2026 15:00	18/11/2026 16:00	19/11/2026 15:00
2	ID: 1365082	Procurement of Printer and other Accessories	05/11/2026 15:00	18/11/2026 16:00	19/11/2026 15:00
3	ID: 1337619	Procurement of Stationery and Consumables Items (Framework Agreement)	05/11/2026 15:30	18/11/2026 16:00	19/11/2026 15:05
4	ID: 1362072	Procurement of Laptop	05/11/2026 14:50	22/11/2026 16:00	23/11/2026 14:30

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. Please visit the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) to submit e-Tender.

04.11.2026
(Md. Mahbubul Alom)
Senior Assistant Secretary
Phone: 55100119
Email: fdadmin6a@finance.gov.bd

GD-2672

From beating cancer to winning awards

SHITHI SAHA DOESN'T GIVE UP

SHARMIN JOYA

Shithi Saha has had a season of artistic milestones, international performances and personal reflection. From winning an award while performing abroad to celebrating Durga Puja across two continents, the singer has much to look back on. But perhaps the most defining chapter of her journey remains her battle with cancer and how it changed her outlook on life.

Shithi recently won the Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards for ***Premeri Jokhom***, a romantic song from Jahid Preetom's web film ***Ghumpori***, which she performed alongside Mahtim Shakib. However, she could not attend the ceremony as she was in Australia for a series of performances.

"This was my first nomination at The Daily Star awards, and I was genuinely excited. I really hoped I would win. When I learnt about the award while in Australia, I felt immense regret. I had wanted to dress up, attend the ceremony and receive the trophy on stage. Missing that moment was a huge disappointment," she said.

Recalling the making of ***Premeri Jokhom***, Shithi said she had previously worked with Preetom and invited her back after being pleased with their collaboration. The recording took place at music director Jahid Nirob's studio, where the singer was impressed by the composition.

"The lyrics and melody complemented each other beautifully. Even months after its release, people kept asking me about the song, which became a love anthem, and I would hear it playing in different showrooms. It reminded me that audiences still appreciate good music," she said.

This year's Durga Puja was particularly memorable, as her celebrations began in Australia. Shithi performed first in Sydney and then travelled to Melbourne for a Durga Puja programme.

"The audience in Melbourne showered me with unimaginable warmth and love. I returned to Bangladesh on Saptami, performed at the Banani Puja Mandap on Ashtami and spent Nabami at my ancestral home in Sirajganj. I haven't experienced such a vibrant and colourful Durga Puja in years," she said.

However, behind her professional achievements lies a deeply personal struggle. Diagnosed with cancer in 2022, Shithi went through treatment largely on her own, choosing not to tell her parents to spare them the worry.

She spent nearly 20 days in Singapore undergoing radiation therapy. "Every day, when I returned to my hotel room after radiation, my entire body would have an intense burning sensation, followed by nausea. The physical pain was overwhelming, and there were moments when I felt completely helpless. Yet, somehow, I found the strength to carry on. I continued singing and even returned to Dhaka to perform two shows before flying back to Singapore."

She also encountered insensitive reactions during her recovery. A female colleague who knew about her diagnosis once questioned why she had come to perform at an event despite having cancer. Rather than seeking sympathy, the remark made Shithi realise how determined she was to continue working despite her illness.

Another encounter was equally distressing. A female journalist interviewed her for a magazine, only to reveal that she had expected Shithi's condition to be critical, possibly even fatal, when she agreed to feature her. The interview was never published. "She admitted that she was disappointed to know that I was recovering, and that she thought they would feature me as I was dying!"

"Those experiences made me more determined. I realised I was stronger than people assumed. I have been given a second life, and with God as my only anchor, I no longer want negativity or fear in my life. I have no regrets," she said.

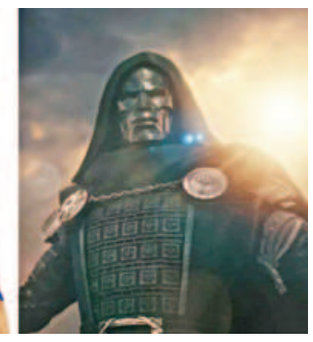
That experience also inspired ***The Healing Room***, her podcast, which aims to provide a platform for people to share their struggles and find encouragement in others' stories. Although she has released only five episodes so far due to work commitments, Shithi plans to resume the initiative and invite more people to share their journeys.

Meanwhile, she is working on YouTube projects and several musical collaborations, having previously worked with artistes such as Shafqat Amanat Ali, Usha Uthup and Salim Merchant. One new collaboration has already been recorded, with more projects in the pipeline.



PHOTO: COURTESY





WWE and Disney team up for 'Avengers: Doomsday'-themed 'Worlds Collide'

WWE and The Walt Disney Company will bring two wrestling events to Walt Disney World Resort in December, opening with the John Cena Classic on December 14. An ***Avengers: Doomsday***-themed edition of ***Worlds Collide*** follows on December 15. Both events will take place at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex.

Featuring Cody Rhodes, the John Cena Classic will stream live on Netflix as a special edition of Monday Night Raw. Fans will vote in real time for their favourite wrestler, who will receive the John Cena Classic Championship.

Meanwhile, Worlds Collide will feature wrestlers from WWE and Mexican promotion AAA. WWE and Fanatics will also host WWE World on both days, offering fans meet-and-greet sessions and exclusive merchandise. Tickets go on general sale on November 13.

EVENTS

'Paliye Beray'



Shoukhin Theatre premieres its 12th production, ***Paliye Beray***, written by Indian playwright Manoj Mitra and directed by Hamidur Rahman Pappu. The play follows Rupchand, a rootless wanderer evading life's realities, offering a psychological exploration of human relationships, personal identity, and social contradictions through the lens of marginalised lives.

Date: Tuesday | November 10, 2026
Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA

NEWS

No room to undermine 1972 charter

FROM PAGE 12

The goal of the people's united movement was to establish a democratic society and a state free from exploitation and religious discrimination, and every article of the 1972 constitution reflects those ideals, he added.

Referring to the current situation, Dr Kamal said it is essential to stop communal politics, control corruption, end drug addiction, and ensure public safety by eliminating terrorism.

He also stressed the need to create jobs for hundreds of thousands of unemployed young people, warning that the country would otherwise face disorder.

Calling for a stable system of government based on the goals of the Liberation War, he said such a system must ensure equality, human dignity and justice.

"To achieve this goal, let us put aside our differences, come together, and move forward to build a better country," he said in the closing part of his statement.

Speaking as a special guest, Women and Children Affairs and Social Welfare Minister Dr AZM Zahid Hossain questioned the opposition's decision not to join the parliamentary committee on constitutional amendments.

"They will join all the parliamentary committees, attend meetings, and give their names as members, but they will not join the constitutional amendment committee. What kind of position is this?" said Zahid, a BNP Standing Committee member.

He urged the opposition to join discussions, present its views and accept the majority's decision, saying parliament represents the people, who are the highest sovereign power.

Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Manna said the basic goals of reform have still not been achieved.

"We have not been able to decentralise power. The demands we raised for reforms have not been met in the end," he said.

He said constitutional provisions that could give one person absolute power remain unchanged, and questioned how anyone could challenge a leader empowered to appoint the police chief, the Bangladesh Bank governor and officials of constitutional bodies.

"What a cruel irony of fate! We ourselves cannot understand what is actually happening with the July charter. One party says the July charter is being betrayed. Another says it will follow the charter word for word. So which side should ordinary people take?" he said.

"The constitution cannot be changed simply through party politics. It would not be right to think of changing the constitution only through party strength, organisational power, or the number of members a party has in parliament."

BNP MP and lawyer Fazlur Rahman said any constitutional amendment must be made on the basis of the 1972 constitution.

Prof Abdur Rouf, who was part of the process of drafting the 1972 constitution, opposed discarding it. He said reforms required parliament's approval and urged action on the issues agreed upon in the National Consensus Commission.

Chairing the programme, Gono Forum President Subrata Chowdhury said it is unfortunate that Constitution Day is not officially observed in Bangladesh and that most political parties do not observe it either.

"So far, 17 amendments have been made to the constitution. There may be an 18th amendment in the future. We are afraid that the next amendment could take the country backwards again. This is frightening," he said.

He said the 1972 constitution must be preserved, and everyone must speak out against any activity that goes against the spirit of the Liberation War.

Interim-era

FROM PAGE 12

over allegations of adverse impacts on public health caused by delays, irregularities, and administrative failures in the procurement and distribution of measles vaccines."

It sets three terms of reference.

First, "identifying the causes and liabilities for delays, irregularities, and administrative failures in measles vaccine procurement and distribution".

Second, "providing recommendations on measures to prevent such untoward occurrences in the future".

Third, "any other recommendation deemed appropriate by the commission in this regard."

The Health Services Division will provide secretarial assistance, along with the required expenses and manpower.

AKM Abdul Awal Mazumder, former secretary and public administration expert, told The Daily Star, "If anyone bears responsibility for the deaths of so many children, it must be uncovered. Forming such a commission was necessary. It is a good initiative.

He hoped the current elected government will publish the report, unlike previous such reports not seeing the light of the day.

Public health expert Dr Mushtuq Husain also welcomed the move to ensure accountability in the health sector.

"Reports of various commissions and committees often face adverse remarks due to biased positions. I hope this commission keeps that in mind and maintains a fair stance," he said.

This is the first time the government has officially announced an investigation into the outbreak. Government officials had repeatedly said they would investigate it, but no formal step was taken.

Meanwhile, six more patients died with measles-like symptoms in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, bringing the combined tally of confirmed and suspected measles-related deaths this year to 1,269, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The DGHS reported 77 new confirmed cases, bringing laboratory-confirmed infections to 24,150, while deaths from confirmed measles cases remained unchanged at 105.

Since March 15 this year, 2,08,634 patients with suspected measles have been hospitalised, of whom 1,99,894 have recovered, the DGHS said.

The new infections and deaths came even after the BNP government, which took charge from Prof Yunus's interim administration, conducted special vaccination drives to bring the situation under control. Experts said there was a gap in data on how many children remained unvaccinated.

Dhaka needs Tehran's nod for safe Hormuz passage

FROM PAGE 12

ambassador said Iran, Qatar and Oman had certain plans, but reopening depended on the lifting of the US naval blockade against Iran.

"Through mediators, we have conveyed to the US Iran's initiative and preconditions for reopening the strait. Among the conditions, lifting the naval blockade and a commitment not to attack Iran are prominent," he said.

On prospects for negotiations amid the ongoing Middle East conflict, Jalil said progress would depend on both sides having a positive intention.

Asked about Iran's preparedness for a possible nuclear attack, the ambassador said the US had used nuclear weapons in the past and could do so again.

"Any attack on Iran is not preventable. If a nuclear attack is launched against Iran, we will respond proportionately against both the US and Israel," he said.

Jalil also said Tehran saw no possibility of the US midterm elections bringing any change in Washington's policy towards Iran.

Four oil tankers

FROM PAGE 12

constrain Trump's ability to enact his agenda, though the president retains the power to order new strikes.

Khamenei also warned that if the US did choose further military action, the scope of the war would widen, without elaborating, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis yesterday said they targeted the airport in the Saudi capital, after civil defence launched a brief warning of "potential danger" in the Riyadh area.

The Houthis "carried out an operation targeting (King) Khalid International Airport in Riyadh... using a ballistic missile," said military spokesman Yahya Saree.

Many academics, students punished over 'AL links'

FROM PAGE 12

Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at HRW.

"Bangladesh needs to turn the page on the repression of the past, not repeat it whenever the ruling and opposition parties trade places."

The sanctions, including dismissals, suspensions and restrictions on teaching, stem from allegations that the affected academics were complicit in violence under Hasina's Awami League government, which was toppled by student-led protests in 2024. Others have been accused of engaging in "subversive" activities in support of the party or discriminating against students who wear Islamic clothing.

Hundreds of students, allegedly members or supporters of the AL, are also facing expulsion, depriving them of their right to education, HRW said.

The organisation said it had interviewed more than a dozen affected teachers, examined university correspondence, and reviewed and analysed a televised discussion and a video posted on social media.

Interviews with teachers and students also confirmed cases of expulsion, cancellation of examination certificates, and students being barred from campus.

More than 20 public universities have been affected, the rights body found.

"Any acts of revenge against people who peacefully supported the previous government would show that freedoms of speech and assembly are not protected," Ganguly said.

"Universities should be places where people are free to express their views, not places where support is enforced for the government of the day."

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury arrested in July uprising case

FROM PAGE 12

Iqbal, former chairman of private television channel DBC, and Rajib were picked up from the channel's office in Mohakhali, said their colleagues and DB officials in the afternoon.

At that time, Md Akhter Hossain, deputy commissioner (Media) of DMP, said the two were taken to the DB office following a situation arising from the publication of a report. DB officials were talking to them, he told journalists at his office.

Mukatadir Anik, assignment editor of the channel, said they had learnt that Iqbal Sobhan was taken for questioning.

Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC. | Based on Islamic Shari'ah

Board & Company Affairs Wing,
Board Secretariat Division
Head Office: Islami Bank Tower,
40, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.

PRICE SENSITIVE DISCLOSURE

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC. in its 415th Meeting held on 04th November, 2026 in the Board Room of the Bank at 2.30 P.M. took the following Price Sensitive Decision:

Sl. No.	Particular	Decision
01	Enhancement of Authorized Capital of Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC. by amending Memorandum and Articles of Association.	Raising Authorized Capital from Tk.2,000 Crore (Tk.20,000 Million) to Tk.10,000 Crore (Tk.100,000 Million) of Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC. subject to clearance from Bangladesh Bank including other Regulatory Authorities and by the Honorable Shareholders in the Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) for approval.

Dated: Dhaka, November 04, 2026.

By order of the Board,
Sd/-
(Md. Habibur Rahman)
SEVP & Company Secretary

www.islamibankbd.com



Activists and supporters of the Frontline Socialist Party and Jana Aragala Movement (People's Struggle) protest against the proposed Protection of the State from Terrorism Act (PSTA) near the Parliament building in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

2 killed in Teknaf over yaba consignment dispute: police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Two men were killed and two others injured after allegedly being beaten in the hills of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar over a dispute involving a hijacked yaba consignment, police and a survivor said.

Police recovered the bodies from two separate hilly areas of Hnila union yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Moktar Kamal, 48, and Ali Akbar, also known as Abbuya, 30, both from the Amtali area of Whykong union.

Kamal's body was recovered around 9:30am from Villager Para, near the West Pankhali Forest Beat Office, while Ali Akbar's body was found around 1:30pm in a forested area of Lechuaprang.

Md Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station, said the killings stemmed from a dispute over a drug consignment.

Local drug traders operating in the hills might have been involved, he said, adding that preliminary information suggested the deceased were also involved in drug-related activities.

Police had identified several suspects and were investigating, he added.

According to local sources, residents spotted several people lying in the Pankhali area yesterday morning. They found one person dead and rescued two others, identified as Ilias, 35, and Ali Ahmed, 40, both from Tulatoli in Whykong.

Ilias told locals that the dispute began after 30,000 yaba pills went missing from a hijacked consignment of 1 lakh pills.

He alleged that on Monday night, a man named Mizan handed the four over to an armed drug-trafficking group operating in the hills of Hnila for punishment over their alleged involvement.

The group then took them into the hills and tortured them, leading to Kamal's death, he said.

Ali Akbar, who had remained missing, was later found dead.

Mohammad Ali, acting chairman of Hnila Union Parishad, said he had also learnt that the incident stemmed from a yaba-related dispute.

Police sent the bodies to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Kuwait sentences Bangladeshi man to death for killing friend

STAR REPORT

A criminal court in Kuwait sentenced a Bangladeshi expatriate to death for the premeditated murder of a friend following a dispute, Gulf News reported yesterday.

The court delivered the verdict on Tuesday, convicting the man of intentional and premeditated murder, according to the Kuwaiti Public Prosecution.

Prosecutors said the victim had posted private photographs of the defendant's wife on Facebook and refused to remove them despite repeated requests.

The defendant told the court that his friend had taken the photographs during a visit to his home without his wife's consent. He said he repeatedly asked his friend to delete the images after offensive comments were posted about his wife.

The defendant said his friend refused to remove the photographs and later posted more images, worsening tensions between the defendant and his wife. He told the court that the dispute prompted him to seek revenge and plan the killing.

Prosecutors said the defendant had planned the murder, armed himself with a knife, and waited outside an area at their workplace after confirming that his friend was inside.

When the victim came out, the defendant attacked him, stabbing him repeatedly in the head and body, prosecutors said.

The defendant admitted the charges during the court proceedings, explaining that he and the victim had been friends before the dispute arose.

BB severs DGePay, NPSB ties over access from India

FROM PAGE 12

bank, is the country's central interbank digital payment network, connecting banks and financial institutions for real-time electronic transactions.

The move came without prior discussion and disrupted only transactions routed through the NPSB, said Rashed Mahmud, managing director and chief executive officer of DGePay, whose other services remain operational.

The main points of contention with the central bank concerned the company's manpower and its India-based development team.

The BB objected to the company not having a dedicated database administrator, as the responsibility was handled by an employee who also performed other duties.

The central bank wants separate personnel for each position, as is the practice in banks, he said.

"This requirement is impractical -- one employee currently performs the work of three or four people."

The regulator also sought tighter security controls, including additional firewalls and a specific Microsoft security product.

The company had already purchased and implemented the additional licence, Rashed said.

Regarding server access from India, he said DGePay's systems had been developed by a research and development team based there, with Indian developers granted infrastructure access solely for development purposes.

Handing the product to a local team would shift responsibility to them, he said.

"Bangladesh Bank objected on hearing 'Indian' and asked why development is not brought to Bangladesh, which would require building local capacity."

Many companies operating in Bangladesh also maintained systems or data in India and other countries.

DGePay, which obtained its payment system operator (PSO) licence from the BB in August 2023, had not experienced any security breach or incident to date, had a limited client base and complied with security requirements.

"A meeting with Bangladesh Bank is ongoing, after which the company expects more clarity," Rashed added.

DGePay is a concern of Dipon Group, which began operations in 1970 as Dipon Gas Company, specialising in oil and gas pipeline construction.

Of the 17 concerns of Dipon Group, five are based in India.

Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.
(A Company of Petrobangla)
(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)

গ্যাস ব্যবহারে সাশ্রয়ী হোন এবং সময়মত গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন

বিনা কারণে গ্যাসের চুলা জ্বালিয়ে রাখা আর বিপদকে ডাকা একই বিষয়

Reference No.: 28.16.9100.000.035.69.0012.26 Dated: 03 November2026

e- Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have been published through National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl No.	Tender ID, Package No. & Date of Publishing	Name of the Work	Tender Last Selling, Closing and Opening Date & Time
01.	Tender ID: 1361291 Package No: e-GP-BCS-TSD-2026-002 Date of Publishing: 03/11/2026	Repair, Testing & Commissioning of Water Bath Heaters (07 Nos) Installed at Different CMS/TBS in JGTDSL Franchise Area.	Last Selling: 17/11/2026, 14:00 Closing date & time: 17/11/2026, 15:30 Opening date & time: 17/11/2026, 15:30

The interested persons/firms may visit the website http://www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.
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.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal/e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(ENGR. MOHAMMADSARWAR JAHAN MAHMUD)
General Manager (Operation Division)
Tel: + 8802997700621
E-mail: gm.op@jalalabadgas.org.bd

GD-2676

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Health Services Division
Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL)
395-397, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208.
www.edcl.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Ref No: 45.06.0000.000.015.14.0002.26.001 Date: 02 November, 2026

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 works as follows:

Tender ID No	Package No & Name of Work	Publishing Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1364770	Package No: EDCL/W-02: Execution of Sub-soil Investigation and Digital Survey for "Establishment of Essential Biotech and Research Center at Munshiganj" Project at Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj.	05-Nov-2026 10:00	16-Nov-2026 12:00	16-Nov-2026 14:00

This is an online tendering system where only online e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' branches within the date mentioned in the Tender Notice.

Further Information & Guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md. Mostafizer Rahman)
Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Establishment of Essentials
Biotech and Research Center,
Munshiganj Project, Phone: 48116110,
Email: vaccine@edcl.gov.bd

(5x4 Colam)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Eastern Zone of Bangladesh Railway Project
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram.
Mobile No. 01711-506101
E-mail: pd.trep@railway.gov.bd

2nd Corrigendum e-Tender Notice

Reference No. 54.01.1500.109.07.020.26-1209 Dated: 03.11.2026

The following e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP Portal System (http://eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of below works (Original Notice reference no. 54.01.1500.109.07.051.26-1161; dated: 10.09.2026) & 1st Corrigendum Notice reference no. 54.01.1500.109.07.020.26-1194, date: 12.10.2026

Sl. No.	Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Procurement Nature and Name	Tender Method	Field Name	Old Value (Date & time)	New Value (Date & time)
1.	e-Tender/trep/2026-2027/WD-7	1321149	Works: Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Akhaura (AKA) - Satiajuri (SJX) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Akhaura (AEN/AKA) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone.	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	11-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.
2.	e-Tender/trep/2026-2027/WD-8_Lot-A	1321155	Works: Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Satiajuri (SJX) - Langla (LNG) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Sylhet (AEN/SYT) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone. (From Km 264/4 to Km 320/4=56.00 Km)	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	11-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.
3.	e-Tender/trep/2026-2027/WD-8_Lot-B	1321157	Works: Maintenance & Rehabilitation of Railway Track in Langla (LNG) - Sylhet (SYT) Sections under Assistant Executive Engineer/ Sylhet (AEN/SYT) jurisdiction of Bangladesh Railway Eastern Zone. (From Km 320/4 to Km 377/4=57.00 Km)	OTM NCT (One Stage Two Envelope)	Document last selling date & time	04-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.	11-November-2026 at 16:00 Hrs.
					Opening Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Closing Date & Time	05-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 13:00 Hrs.
					Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	05-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.	12-November-2026 at 12:00 Hrs.

N.B.: All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged except some changes in the tender Documents. All concerned are hereby requested to strictly follow the revised tender documents at the time of Tender submission.

এস (২৬) (৯৩)

03/11/2026

(Md. Tanvirul Islam)
Project Director

GD-2680

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Office of the Superintendent of Police
Tangail District.

Memo No-7953/E Date: 04 -11-2026.

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for 07 Nos Packages Repair & Maintenance under FY 2026-2027 for District Police Tangail.

SL No.	Package Name	Tender ID No	Online Tender Notice Publication Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Repair work for the boundary wall (western side) of Nagarpur Police Station, Tangail District.	1364441	05-Nov-2026 14:00:00	19-Nov-2026 15:00:00
2.	Repair work for the residence of the Officer-in-Charge of Gopalpur Police Station, Tangail District.	1364438		
3.	Repair work for the Officer-in-Charge`s quarters at Basail Police Station, Tangail District.	1364431		
4.	Repair work for the residence of the Officer-in-Charge of Bhuapur Police Station, Tangail District.	1364424		
5.	General repair work for the Police Officers' Mess in Tangail District.	1364422		
6.	General repair work for the Reserve Office at the Tangail District Police Lines.	1364413		
7.	Repair and renovation work for the ration store at the Tangail District Police Lines.	1363475		

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 (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the national e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

04.11.2026

(Mohammad Shamsul Alam Sarker BPM-Seba)
BP-7506118407
Superintendent Of Police
Tangail, District
Tel-02997714940, Fax-029977
E-mail:sptangail@police.gov.bd

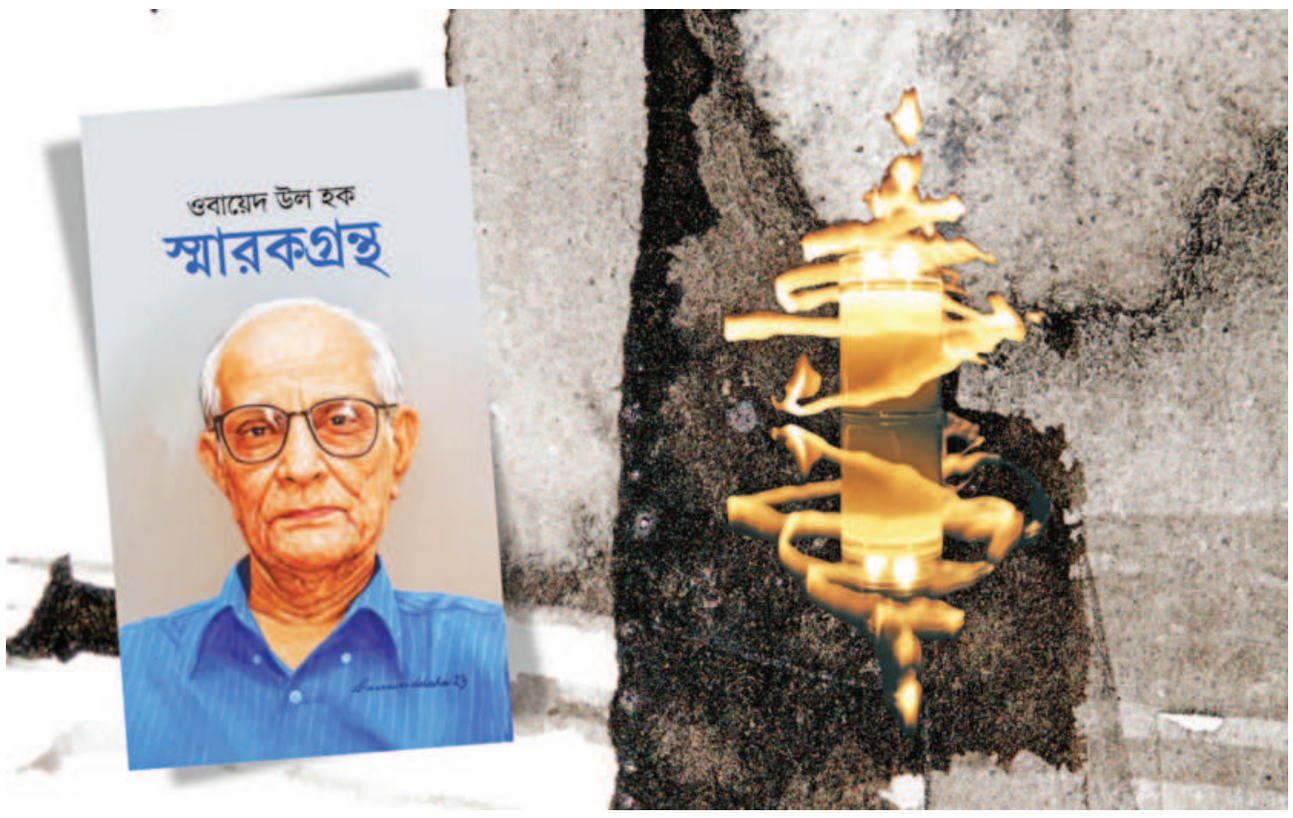
GD-2671

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

The boss I might have had

Review of 'Obaidul Huq Sharokgrantha' (Anyaprakash, Dhaka, 2026), edited by Serajul Islam Choudhury

KAISER HAQ



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

The late Obaidul Huq (1911-2007) is well known to those interested in our cultural history. He was a journalist, film maker, poet, fiction writer, and playwright. Many remember him for his long association from 1951 with *The Pakistan Observer,* of which he was Joint Editor. When the country gained independence and the paper was rechristened as *The Bangladesh Observer,* he became Editor and held the position till 1984.

During these 35 years *Observer* was the country's leading English-language newspaper. I grew up with it; that was in the '50s and '60s. I would pounce on it to feast on the day's Rip Kirby comic strip before carrying it to father. I felt I had a special connection with the paper because of my father and Mr Obaidul Huq (Kaka to me). My father was an occasional contributor to the paper and Obaidul Huq Kaka was like an elder brother to him.

I found out that Kaka was the Uncle Kim who looked after the Young Observers page. Before long, I essayed a trifle or two that appeared in it. But more than the pleasure of seeing my name in print was the experience of calling on Kaka at his office. The paper occupied a floor in a colonial era building in Sadarghat that also housed the local branch of Lloyds Bank. Kaka greeted me with a kind smile and said some encouraging things that meant the world to me. I have heard from several other friends how Kaka's encouragement sped them along in their writing careers. Many of the contributors to this volume of memorial tributes bear testimony to Kaka's humane mentoring role.

Many of the pieces in the book gratefully acknowledge Kaka's mentoring role among our film makers and film critics. It is worth noting that the most substantial essay is by Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury. His vast knowledge of our cultural history comes into play in his insightful account.

By the time I went up to university I was writing more "serious" stuff and contemplating a career in writing. Hemingway and Sartre were my heroes. Hemingway began his writing life as a reporter and journalistic nonfiction would become a significant part of his oeuvre. Shouldn't I follow in his footsteps? When I finished my MA I considered approaching Kaka to ask if he would take me on. Before I did so the editor of the present volume, Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, then Chairman of Dhaka University's English department, offered me a lectureship. And I took it. But when Kaka left *Observer* and took up the editorship of the short-lived Daily News (1984-87), he asked me to write a weekly column. I did so under the pen name Max. So I did have Kaka as a boss after all, albeit briefly, and part-time.

This memorial volume is a significant publication for several reasons. It enables us to form a clear impression of the life and times of a personality marked by intellectual and artistic adventurousness, an admirable commitment to civic values, and disdain for careerism. His initial plan was to follow in his father's footsteps and make a career in law. He went to Kolkata. He had cleared the preliminary examination in law and was preparing for the finals when a totally unexpected development landed him in the civil service.

His father had passed away prematurely, a victim of cholera. One of his father's closest friends, Mukund Bihari Mullick, who was a highly placed bureaucrat, sought him out and offered him a lucrative civil service job. He couldn't say no. He took the job, got a promotion within a year, and stayed on till the end of the Second World War. Meanwhile he had been writing regularly in various newspapers and periodicals. The man-made famine of 1943 moved him to write a story, "Dukkhe Jader Jibon Gora". It came out in the Eid supplement of the mass-circulation daily *Azad* and was well received.

But the writer was not satisfied. The printed word reached only the educated classes. A popular medium like film could reach the masses. He had already become an ardent cine enthusiast. He recognised the tremendous potential of this modern art form. Serious writers worldwide came to the same realisation: V S Naipaul, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, to name just a few. Obaidul Huq Kaka took a leap into uncertainty, gave up his safe job, and set about turning his story into a film. He scripted, produced and directed it. He signed up a few well known actors, like Jauhar Ganguly. Then the riots of 1946 broke out and everything was put on hold.

When an uneasy peace was restored, Jauhar Ganguly refused to come back unless he was paid more. A lesser spirit would have given up in despair. Kaka persisted, and the film was ready for release. It was the first full-length feature film made by a Bengali Muslim. But the time was so fraught with communal discord that it couldn't be released with Muslim names in the credits. Kaka became Himadri Choudhury; and the actor Fateh Lohani became Kiran Kumar. The disguise worked. The film made it into a list of the year's 10 best films. Sadly, not a single copy of the prints has survived the dislocation of partition.

Many of the pieces in the book gratefully acknowledge Kaka's mentoring role among our film makers and film critics. It is worth noting that the most substantial essay is by Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury. His vast knowledge of our cultural history comes into play in his insightful account. A number of pieces by Kaka's family members add an intimate touch, while the selection from Kaka's own writings affords us the pleasure of admiring afresh his wit and humour and insight into human nature. Anyaprokash has given us a handsome volume, but the copy-editing ought to have been better.

Kaiser Haq *is a Bangladeshi poet, translator, essayist, critic, and academic.*

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

A cosmopolitan at heart: Reading Shamsul Bari's autobiography

Review of Shamsul Bari's 'Amar Jibonsritir Jhanpi' (University Press Limited, 2025)

SADMAN AHMED SIAM



ILLUSTRATOR: MAHMUDA EMDAD

"Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you."

—*Beyond Good and Evil*, Friedrich Nietzsche

In *Amar Jibonsritir Jhanpi,* activist and lawyer Shamsul Bari acts as the most ardent student of this statement by Nietzsche. In this autobiography, he takes us on a journey through his life and shows how he saw both the yin and the yang—the darkest parts of the human soul, along with the most irrationally beautiful parts—and, most importantly, how he never became a monster himself, despite looking at those monstrosities in the human soul.

It is difficult to simply categorise *Amar Jibonsritir Jhanpi* as a mere autobiography. It is simultaneously a journey through history, geography, and political science. Born in 1941, Bari witnessed the Partition of 1947, and the catastrophe it induced in both parts of Bengal. He recalls his father helping the Hindu community in an increasingly communal Pakistan in its early years, and with that hands-on lesson, he became sympathetic to the plight of refugees fleeing persecution, perhaps foreshadowing his later activities serving at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

This autobiography is not only a story about Shamsul Bari, but also the story of the origin and development of his beloved country, Bangladesh. As an expatriate living in the United States of America, Bari played a significant role during the Liberation War of 1971. The frontline freedom fighters have been remembered in popular literature and art, and justifiably so, because they were the heroes whose blood secured the independence of Bangladesh. But the countless individuals who fought abroad to steer the foreign policies of different countries and helped to secure the recognition of Bangladesh internationally remain a less discussed part of history

Bari recounts the initiatives he took to inspire US citizens to take the side of Bangladesh through protests, demonstrations, and other creative activities such as producing newsletters. It is hard to overstate the value of these. The USA was one of the largest suppliers of arms to Pakistan, and it wanted Pakistan to remain united, even in the face of genocide. Protesting their policy and even forcing them to change it was a victory for the sovereign Bangladesh. The documentation of this effort is one of the most crucial parts of the book.

As previously stated, Bari was associated with the UNHCR, including as the Regional Director for Central Asia, Southwest Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East, and in that role, he went to different conflict-ridden regions such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Tamil regions of Sri Lanka, Bosnia, Afghanistan, etc., to save refugees fleeing turmoil. In rescuing refugees from these areas, offering them legal protection under the UN framework, and helping build their lives in a safe region, Bari unravels stories which seem unbelievable and reflect the innumerable complexities of human societies in different countries.

Bari takes us through the most crooked part of the human psyche and shows us how communalism and racism lead to human beings massacring nations after nations. He shows us how fragile our civilisation really is, how easily it falters and how it takes only one fake news story, or in the modern world, a fake photo or video, to rile up anger and hatred against certain communities. He tells us story after story of cruel steps taken by the refugees to survive their plight. These disturbing details are bound to make one depressed about the current world we live in.

But, at the same time, Bari also shows us hope—the profound humanity shown by many, and how one simple act of kindness can stop decades of bloodshed. His anecdotes also demonstrate how the states, if they want, can contribute to making human lives more peaceful. It is easy to look at the situation and believe that the world is beyond fixing, but it is also worth remembering that it is the choices of human beings which can shape and change the world. Cruelty does not differentiate between race, ethnicity or nation, and neither does kindness.

Bari's autobiography also has the potential to change the reader's minds on the United Nations as well. As an organisation, the UN has a negative reputation in different third-world countries. Bari does not deny their criticism, but rather offers a plausible explanation of the limitations and restrictions the UN can operate under. He defends the role of the UN as a balancing force in an increasingly polarising world, while acknowledging that it has failed to save citizens of the world in many cases. Anyone who is critical of the United Nations as an organisation should have a listen to what Bari has to say as an insider of the UN. The United Nations, for him, represents a possibility of the nations of the earth coming together to solve problems that humanity collectively faces, and in the age of climate change and AI, which have the potential to destroy the human race altogether, these collective actions are needed the most.

After his activities in the UN, Bari came back to Bangladesh and joined the most formidable intellectual institutions Bangladesh has, such as Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust. Through RIB, he has been involved with seemingly small but revolutionary improvements in the lives of citizens of Bangladesh, such as erasing Monga, a yearly cyclical event of hunger and poverty primarily in the greater Rangpur region of Bangladesh and establishing the Right to Information Act, 2009. The most fascinating aspect of his activities is establishing the Kajoli Learning Model, a community-driven education framework, which was later extended to include vulnerable communities such as the Bedes (river nomads) and floating child workers. His tireless effort to make the rural citizens of Bangladesh self-sufficient is exemplary, and this book would remain as an archive on how to think about such initiatives and sustain them for future social activists.

The book ends with the love of his life, Supriya Sen, later Supriya Bari. Although she has a chapter dedicated to her at the end of the book, her presence can be felt throughout Bari's life at every stage. Married in the United States during her tenure as a teacher at the University of Minnesota, she was a talented academic and artist in her own right. She had been a constant support to Bari up until her death in 2013. She was a Rabindrasangeet artist, and Bari's last chapter is a dedication to her as well as Rabindranath. In her memory, Bari built an old home called Sayantan at Gazipur.

In his heart, Bari is a cosmopolitan. His internationalist approach is what allows him to see through the illusions of borders and barriers and see all human beings as deserving of equal dignity, still a radical idea in the period when our notion of justice and humanism is becoming more and more selective. The road to universal equality is hard, but it is through human beings like Bari that we are able to move toward that goal one step at a time. *Amar Jibonsritir Jhanpi* is a must-read for anyone who wants to be more empathetic and kinder, and to learn how, even when looking at the face of utmost destruction, a person can hope and dream for a better world.

Sadman Ahmed Siam *is a contributor at Star Books and Literature.*

DHAKA THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2026, KARTIK 20, 1433 BS

SPORT



PHOTO: STAR

WHAT TO WATCH

T Sports
Bangladesh vs West Indies
2nd Test, Day 1
Live from 9:30 am
SAFF Championship
India vs Pakistan
Live from 4:30 pm
Bhutan vs Bangladesh
Live from 8:00 pm
Sony Sports 1,2,3,5
Europa League
Live from 11:45 pm

SIX SIDES, ONE CROWN

STAR SPORTS DESK

BANGLADESH | All in or nothing
Bangladesh are targeting their second SAFF Championship title after their triumph in 2003, with several overseas-based players giving new head coach Thomas Dooley a revamped squad. They reached the semifinals in 2023 but have struggled for consistency in recent editions. Considered favourites, the hosts will have to turn home support and heightened expectations into results.

BHUTAN | Underdogs with high hopes
In their 10th SAFF appearance, Bhutan have progressed beyond the group stage only once. A win and a draw in the third round of the Asian Cup Qualifiers offered encouragement, but four defeats in their last five matches underline the challenge ahead. Reaching the last four would be a major achievement.

SRI LANKA | The dark horses
Sri Lanka have strengthened considerably, with a large contingent of origin players based in England, France, Germany and elsewhere in Europe. They arrive on a five-match winning streak, having also won three games in the 2027 AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers third round.



MALDIVES | Former champions seeking revival
The Maldives have reached four finals and won two titles, including the 2018 edition in Bangladesh. However, they have exited the group stage in their last three appearances and lost all five of their latest matches. They are the only side without an overseas-based player in their squad.

INDIA | Perennial winners, youthful squad
The most successful team in SAFF history, India have reached 12 finals in 13 appearances. They will field a squad comprised of mostly players from their U-23s, as they did when winning the 2009 title, while their senior team continue with high-profile friendlies, including against New Zealand. Despite the youthful selection, their pedigree makes them a serious threat.

PAKISTAN | Overseas experience, uphill task
Pakistan have been eliminated in the group stage in six of the last seven editions and are the lowest-ranked side in the field. Most of their 28-member squad play abroad, while a spirited 2-2 comeback draw against the Philippines in the FIFA ASEAN Cup offered some encouragement. Their opening clash with India will be an early test.

FIFA RANKINGS
India 138 | Maldives 173 | Bangladesh 182 | Sri Lanka 184 | Bhutan 192 | Pakistan 197

Bangladesh have hope, now comes the hard part

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh vs Bhutan:
Matches: 13
Bangladesh won: 9
Draw: 2
Bhutan won: 2

India vs Pakistan:
Matches: 25
India won: 12
Draw: 3
Pakistan won: 10

- The two defeats for Bangladesh came in 2016 AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers and an international friendly in 2024, both in Thimphu
- The two draws came in 2008 in a SAFF Championship in Maldives and AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in Dhaka in 2016.
- Bhutan are one of only two teams to have all homegrown players in their squad

Since reaching the final as defending champions in 2005, Bangladesh have managed only two semifinal appearances and suffered six group-stage exits in the eight subsequent editions of the SAFF Championship. They will now attempt to end their 23-year title drought on home soil, with Sheffield United midfielder Hamza Choudhury and several other overseas-based players raising hopes of a revival.

The diaspora players have already made an impression, helping Bangladesh hold India to an away draw before beating them at home in the Asian Cup Qualifiers. With the tournament getting underway today at the National Stadium, former players from the 2003 SAFF-winning and 2010 South Asian Games gold-medal-winning generations are also hoping to see the current side reclaim regional supremacy.

Those ex-internationals took part in Monday's friendly to send a message to the current squad: Bangladesh have won on home soil before and must make the most of another opportunity. They want the players to understand the significance of the occasion and the support behind them.

The challenge, however, will be considerable. Defeats against higher-ranked Indonesia and Malaysia in the FIFA ASEAN Cup, the delayed arrival of key overseas-based players ahead of the FIFA window on November 9, and injuries -- including the one that ruled out US-based forward Ronan Sullivan -- have complicated the build-up.

Although Bangladesh have been widely tipped as favourites by the participating nations, Thomas Dooley's side must find the consistency to justify that status. Their build-up bears little resemblance to that of the 2003 champions, who spent nearly two years under Hungarian coach George Kottan. Two international tournaments during that period also helped the players develop an understanding before they claimed their maiden title, having narrowly missed out in 1999 with a final defeat to India.

The emergence of diaspora footballers has offered a response to longstanding concerns about the shortage of talented players in the country, with their performances against stronger oppositions renewing optimism. Dooley believes his side have a genuine chance of winning the title, provided the players follow their plans and avoid unforced errors. Former internationals share his optimism but have warned that the path to the trophy will be difficult.

"SAFF is a different kind of tournament. Bangladesh can look like champions, but they haven't reached the final since 2005," former national striker Zahid Hasan Emily said. "They must rely less on individuals and work together as a team."

Former midfielder Arman Mia believes Hamza's presence should give the squad confidence. "A player [like Hamza] played in the world's best league... If the team cannot deliver, when will they?" he said.

Emily, however, is concerned about the lack of a recognised number nine following Sullivan's injury. "When we won the SAFF Championship in 2003 and the South Asian Games gold in 2010, our strikers scored 10 goals between them," he said. "It is very difficult to win a big title with players who score only occasionally."

Former forward Alfaz Ahmed, meanwhile, believes patriotism and home support can help the team overcome its shortcomings. "The anthem matters... and the spectators' support can change a match," said Alfaz, who scored the only goal against Nepal to give Bangladesh a winning start in the 2003 edition.

For Dooley and his players, today's Group A contest against Bhutan is the first opportunity to turn promise into results. India, who are in Group B and face Pakistan in the tournament opener earlier today, could provide a sterner test if Bangladesh progress. The real measure of the hosts' progress will come when the stakes intensify.

Looking beyond SAFF

While Bangladesh are focused on ending their 23-year SAFF title drought, neighbours India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are looking beyond regional glory towards bigger international ambitions. Their approaches raise questions about Bangladesh's long-term football vision. With structural problems persisting across domestic football, winning SAFF could offer a confidence boost, but sustainable progress will require a broader roadmap.

Booters ready to seize home advantage

Bangladesh begin their SAFF Championship campaign against Bhutan in Dhaka today, hoping to capitalise on home advantage and end a 23-year wait for the regional title. Boosted by overseas-based players, including Hamza Choudhury, Thomas Dooley's side enter as favourites despite a disappointing FIFA ASEAN Cup outing.

READ FULL STORIES ON THE DAILY STAR WEBSITE

Caught between expectations, reality

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI *from Sylhet*

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) head of turf management Tony Hemming was on his hands and knees, closely inspecting the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium pitch yesterday afternoon after Bangladesh's training session had ended. With the second Test against West Indies beginning today, much could depend on his final assessment.

The host's expectations of another spin-friendly surface, however, may have to give way to the reality of the conditions, which remain difficult to read.

Sources said the team management had requested a turning track, but the weather has not been conducive to that plan. Sylhet has been hot but also overcast, preventing the sun from baking the surface and encouraging cracks to develop. Around four millimetres of grass remained on the pitch yesterday evening, with a late decision on its preparation still possible.

Even within the Bangladesh camp, there was scepticism about relying heavily on spin, particularly after their



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

struggles in Mirpur. Head coach Phil Simmons hinted at a sporting surface.

"What I see from the wicket, the wicket looks good. I remember the Pakistan wicket last year or earlier this year, and it seems to be similar to that, so a good cricket wicket," Simmons said at Wednesday's press conference.

A three-pronged pace attack is now a possibility, although team management sources remained cautious.

"It's Bangladesh, so anything can happen," one source said.

Simmons also hinted at concerns over Taijul Islam's form. The left-arm spinner has managed just five wickets in his last four Tests. But Bangladesh's greater worry remains their batting, with Simmons suggesting a reshuffle in the top order following Mominul Haque's absence.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto is expected to move to number three, while Mushfiqur Rahim and Tawhid Hridoy could occupy the next two positions.

Litton Das, meanwhile, has struggled during training in recent days. He kept wickets briefly yesterday before leaving the field, with sources indicating that he is nursing a tennis elbow injury. His presence remains important, and he is expected to retain his place if fit.

The uncertainty surrounding the pitch was also reflected in the contrasting remarks of the two coaches.

West Indies head coach Darren Sammy said his team had prepared for the possibility of a pace-friendly surface, particularly after Bangladesh's fast bowlers impressed in Australia.

"We thought, well, probably with what happened in Australia, the way the pace bowlers bowled, we have the chance [to play pacers]... knowing uncle Phil [Simmons], you know I call him uncle Phil and knowing what he might prepare for us, we had to make sure the squad was balanced for that," Sammy said.

"If tomorrow comes, it seems like a seam-friendly wicket, we have Kemar Roach," he added.

Simmons, meanwhile, remained tight-lipped about Bangladesh's final combination.

But ahead of the game, expectations of spin or pace conduciveness will face reality as the Sylhet Test progresses. Early sighting of grass, may still confound but what is certain is Tigers must bat better to get anything out of the game.



We have the confidence that we can play, that we can fight, and that we can actually achieve that. All the goals you have in life have to be realistic, and I think this tournament is realistic, that this team can win after 23 years. It's going with hard work, playing with confidence, and fighting until the last minute. That's why we believe it's going to happen this year. We want to show everyone out there how much that means to us.

Bangladesh coach **Thomas Dooley**



I think now the whole football world has changed a lot. Now, not only like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka -- I think most of the countries, now even other countries like Indonesia, Thailand, they get many foreigners as citizens. I think only the Bhutan team is 100% Bhutanese. So, I'm very proud to represent with 100% Bhutanese playing for the national team.

Bhutan captain **Chencho Gyeltshen**



Bangladesh are the favourites, especially with their home ground, fans, and players like Hamza Choudhury and Farhaan (Ali Wahid) -- who I believe will be the best player in South Asia over the next 10 years. India's U-23 team have won this trophy twice before, so they are also favourites, alongside Pakistan.

Sri Lanka coach **Abdullah Al Mutairi**



There are a lot of players (in the Pakistan team) who are playing in Europe. Though they might be playing in the fourth division, fifth division, whatever, you know. They have a lot of players who are playing abroad. So they have a strong team.

India coach **Naushad Moosa**



No, the same goes for us (shaking hands with India players). It's not cricket, it's football. And that's why it's a beautiful game. So yeah, we'll do the same.

Pakistan captain **Alamgir Ghazi**





No room to undermine 1972 charter

Dr Kamal says 'evil force' creating disputes over it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The constitution can be amended over time to meet the needs of the people, but there is no room to undermine the 1972 constitution, which was written on the basis of national unity, Dr Kamal Hossain said yesterday.

An "evil force" is now creating disputes over the constitution and dividing the nation, said the prominent jurist, who is also founder and president emeritus of Gono Forum.

In a statement read out by Gono Forum General Secretary Mizanur Rahman, Dr Kamal said the basic principles of state governance and the fundamental rights of the people, as set out in the constitution, must not be taken away under any circumstances.

The statement was delivered at a discussion marking Constitution Day, organised by the party at the Jatiya Press Club, where Dr Kamal was chief guest. He had chaired the committee that drafted the country's first constitution in 1972.

Bangladesh's constitution, stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of martyrs, is a document of the people's hopes and expectations, as the people are the owners of the country, he said.

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Democratic US Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed and his wife, Dr Sarah Jukaku, take the stage after he declares victory at a midterm election night party at The Department at Hudson's in Detroit, Michigan, US, early yesterday. El-Sayed defeated Republican Mike Rogers by 294,053 votes, becoming the first Muslim elected to the Senate. PHOTO: AFP

Four oil tankers hit Hormuz mines

AGENCIES

Four oil tankers caught fire after hitting mines while attempting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, Iran said yesterday, after it warned no one would benefit from a return to war.

"Four non-compliant oil tankers attempting to pass through the prohibited passage south of the Strait of Hormuz were destroyed after striking naval mines and are still burning," Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said in a statement quoted by state TV.

"Two other non-compliant ships or vessels have also been halted," it said.

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei warned that the Middle East war would widen if the US resumes its attacks, dismissing hopes of a policy shift in Washington after midterm elections dealt a blow to President Donald Trump.

The results could

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

BB severs DGePay, NPSB ties over access from India

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank on October 29 disconnected the online payment gateway DGePay from the National Payment Switch Bangladesh (NPSB) over security concerns, including alleged server access from India.

inspection that identified several security breaches, said BB Spokesman Arief Hossain Khan.

"Cybersecurity and the protection of citizens' data privacy are our highest priorities. If a serious allegation arises that an institution is operating from outside Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bank considers this a threat to data confidentiality and security," he told The Daily Star.

The central bank would take action in response to the allegations against the company.

As an investigation takes time, disconnecting DGePay from the NPSB could serve as a preliminary measure, he added.

NPSB, owned and operated by the central

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Arief Hossain Khan, BB Spokesman

This is the first time that an allegation of server access from outside of Bangladesh has come up against a payment service provider or a payment service operator, The Daily Star has learnt from officials of the BB's Payment Systems Department.

Operating under the brand name DG e-pay, DGePay offers card processing and payment acceptance infrastructure to 600 to 1,000 merchants.

The step was taken following an

Dhaka needs Tehran's nod for safe Hormuz passage

Says Iranian envoy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Iranian Ambassador to Bangladesh Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadi yesterday said Bangladesh must coordinate with Tehran and follow its directions to ensure the safe passage of its ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking at a press conference at the Iranian Embassy in Dhaka, he said no country, whether a friend or an enemy of Iran, could safely transport energy supplies through the strategic waterway without coordinating with Iranian authorities.

The ambassador said ships were passing through the strait every day, but some incidents had occurred because vessels failed to follow Iranian directions.

"Iran's directions are completely safe," he added.

Asked whether any Bangladeshi vessels carrying energy supplies had passed through the strait, Jalil declined to comment, saying the information was confidential and held by the Bangladesh government.

He said he was making every effort to ensure the safe passage of Bangladesh's energy consignments through the strait.

On reopening the waterway, the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Interim-era measles vaccine lapses face probe

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has formed a high-powered commission to investigate alleged irregularities and failures in the procurement and distribution of measles vaccines during the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Headed by former High Court judge Justice Mamun Rahman, the three-member commission will also recommend measures to prevent a recurrence.

It was constituted under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1956, according to a gazette notification issued by the Cabinet Division last night.

- Former HC judge to head inquiry
- Probe covers Aug 2024 to Feb 2026
- Report due within 60 working days
- Commission to identify those responsible

The other members are Prof Dr Mawdud Hossain Alamgir, president of Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS), and ANM Moinul Islam, additional secretary to the Health Services Division.

The commission will identify the liability of those who held responsibility from August 8, 2024 to February 17, 2026, and submit its report within 60 working days, the notification says. It can inspect any place in the country and summon and question any individual.

The notification says, "An inquiry commission has been formed ...

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SPORT

The 15th edition of the SAFF Championship kicks off in Dhaka today, with Bangladesh hosting for the first time since 2018 and targeting their first title in 23



years. Archrivals India and Pakistan open the tournament at 3:30pm before Thomas Dooley's Bangladesh face Bhutan at 8:00pm at the National Stadium. With Nepal unable to participate due to a FIFA ban, the six-team tournament features two groups. Bangladesh are in Group A alongside Bhutan and Sri Lanka, while Group B comprises India, Pakistan and Maldives. The top two teams from each group will reach the November 14 semifinals, with the final scheduled for November 17.

STORIES ON P11



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A colourful mural featuring the Bengal tiger and prominent landmarks of Khulna adorns a wall near Khulna Railway Station. The artwork is part of the Khulna City Corporation's beautification drive ahead of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's visit to the city today.

NEWS IN FOCUS

Many academics, students punished over 'AL links'

Says HRW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Scores of academics and students at public universities in Bangladesh have been arbitrarily punished over their alleged affiliation with ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League party, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

Any action to punish individuals for their peaceful beliefs or without ensuring due process would violate the rights to freedom of expression and association protected under international human rights law, and repeat previous administrations' attempts to control political opinion and expression at public universities, the rights body said.

"Bangladesh has a long history of political debate in its universities, and only autocrats should fear such discourse, not a government formed following student protests," said

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury arrested in July uprising case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Police have arrested Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former information adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in a case filed over the July uprising.

Shafiqul Islam, chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch, said last night that Iqbal Sobhan was shown arrested in a murder case filed with Jatrabari Police Station on August 26, 2024, in connection with the uprising.

Shafiqul said a decision had been made to release Rajib Ghosh, special correspondent of DBC News, who was also detained by DB.

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