









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

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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.