DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2026



"We cannot wait to reach a perfect agreement; we hope to reach a good agreement."

Qatar's PM **SHEIKH ABDULRAHMAN AL-THANI** on US strikes on Iran

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The Daily Star

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Govt eyes a new 'Gram Sarkar' to reshape villages

Greater community role planned in maintaining law and order, arbitration, rural development

BAHARAM KHAN

The government has moved to revive "Gram Sarkar", the lowest tier of local governance first introduced in 1980, to strengthen community participation in maintaining law and order, conducting arbitration, and monitoring the progress of rural development projects.

The new model of the local government body will comprise 17 elected public representatives in each of the 41,112 wards under 4,568 unions across the country, according to a draft of the "Gram Sarkar Act 2026" prepared by the Local Government Division (LGD).

The draft will soon be placed before the cabinet, several senior LGD officials told this newspaper.

They said the proposed law was drafted in light of the 1980 legislation enacted during the presidency of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and the 2003 law formulated under the Khaleda Zia-led government.

According to the draft, Gram Sarkar will work to build community resistance to crimes, violence against women and terrorism, and help maintain law and order. It will formulate plans for developing village roads and culverts, assist in reviewing the progress of ongoing projects and regularly report to the Union Parishad.

- 17-member body planned for each of 41,112 wards
- Elected UP member to head Gram Sarkar
- It will report regularly to UP
- Draft law to be sent to cabinet soon
- Convicts with certain prison terms may be eligible for membership

A couple of years after its introduction in 1980, Gram Sarkar was scrapped during the tenure of the then president HM Ershad.

Later, an initiative was taken in 2003 to reintroduce the local body with unelected members, but the law was repealed after the High Court declared it unconstitutional.

The defunct law contained provisions for the formation of a 15-member Gram Sarkar in each ward, with all the members nominated by the local administration.

Experts say that if the system is reintroduced simultaneously across the country, it may not yield the desired outcome. They suggested reintroducing it on a pilot basis first and then deciding on the next course of action.

The draft said that each of the nine wards in every union will have a 17-member Gram Sarkar led by the elected UP member of the ward. An elected woman UP member will serve as an adviser.

The remaining 15 members will be elected by at least 10 percent of voters in that ward. During Ziaur Rahman's tenure, Gram Sarkar members were directly nominated by the government, and there was no honorarium for them.

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Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman, flanked by senior party leaders, waves to supporters from a procession marking National Revolution and Solidarity Day yesterday afternoon. The procession began from outside the BNP's central office in Nayapaltan and ended at Manik Mia Avenue. The photo was taken near the Kakrail intersection. More on page 3.

PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

Govt revises CSA draft, worries stay

TASNEEM TAYEB

Following consultations with civil society, the government has decided to modify provisions of the draft cyber security law and align some offences, such as defamation, with the Penal Code.

The draft Cyber Security (Amendment) Act, 2026 will define "belittling" and introduce safeguards for journalists and news outlets after the earlier draft drew criticism.

These are among 12 revisions to be incorporated, officials said.

The revised draft has yet to be released publicly. Officials earlier said it would be published for further consultation before the amendments are finalised.

The revisions have drawn criticism on several grounds. Critics say journalist safeguards should extend to all citizens, that cancelling an organisation's licence over an individual's offence is disproportionate, and that defamation, rumour and fake news should not be policed through a cyber law at all.

The penalty for spreading rumours has not been reduced, while the draft still leaves investigative powers, including search, seizure and arrest without warrant, unaddressed. The Editors' Council's 12-point recommendations go well beyond the government's proposals.

The earlier draft, made public in September, defined a

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

No one will be able to steal people's rights again

Says Tarique at National Revolution and Solidarity Day event

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday called for national unity to ensure that no one can again deprive people of their rights.

"Let this be our main pledge on this November 7 that no one will ever again be able to take away the rights of the country and its people or turn Bangladesh into a subservient state," he said at a special display programme at the Army Stadium marking the National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

The spirit of the November 7 revolution by soldiers and the people must be upheld to maintain national unity, considering Bangladesh's socioeconomic, geographical and political realities.

Referring to the Liberation War of 1971, the November 7 revolution of 1975, the anti-autocracy movement of 1990 and the mass uprising of 2024, Tarique said the younger generation had always stood up for the country.

"Let the voice of the patriotic and democracy-loving people on this historic day of the revolution of soldiers and people be: Bangladesh comes first, not Delhi, not Pindi or any other country."

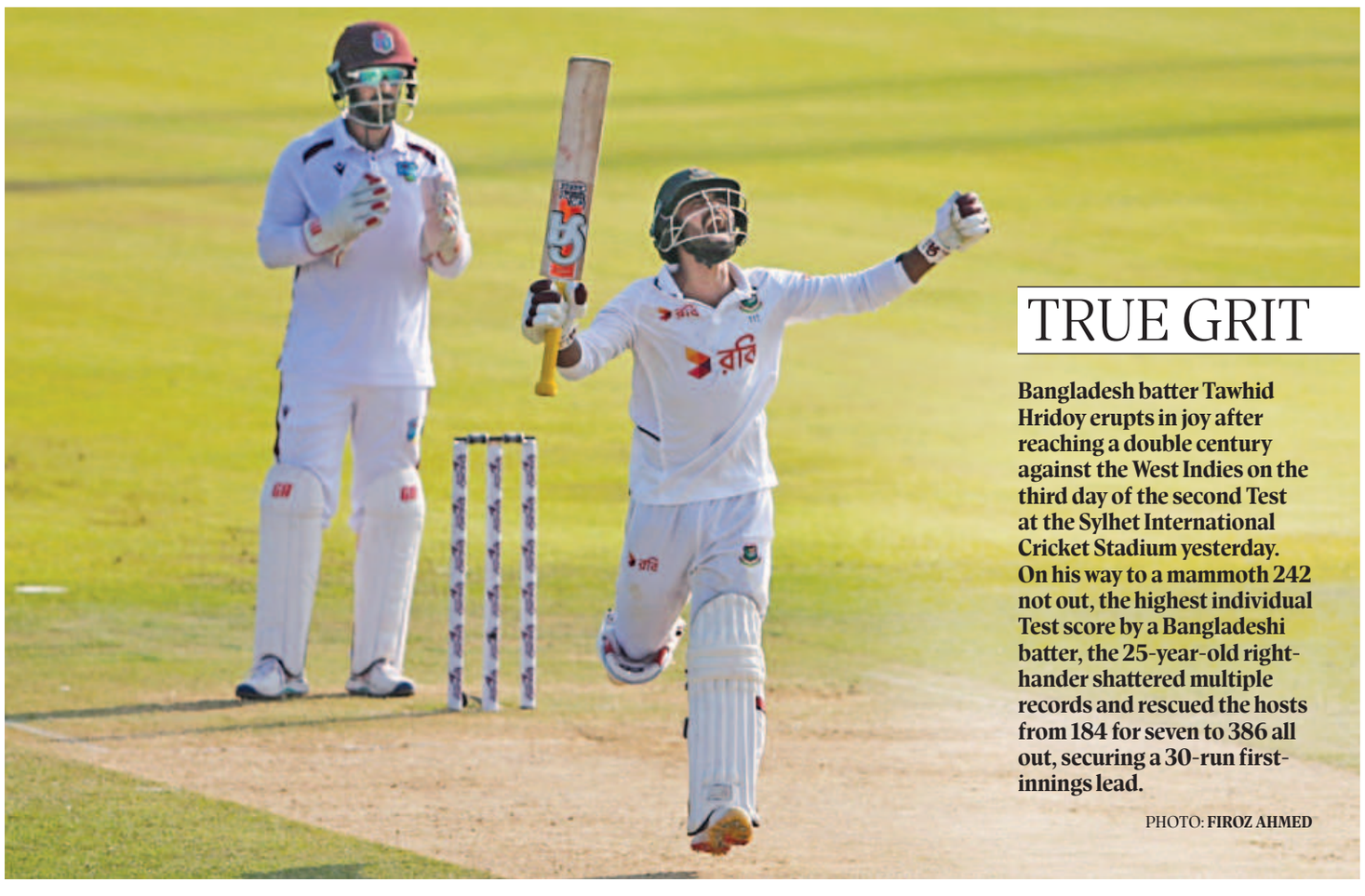
Prime Minister **Tarique Rahman**

Achieving independence was a matter of historic pride, but preserving its honour and making it meaningful is every generation's responsibility, especially the younger generation's.

"History bears witness that whenever there has been a conspiracy against Bangladesh or its

MORE ON PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



TRUE GRIT

Bangladesh batter Tawhid Hridoy erupts in joy after reaching a double century against the West Indies on the third day of the second Test at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. On his way to a mammoth 242 not out, the highest individual Test score by a Bangladeshi batter, the 25-year-old right-hander shattered multiple records and rescued the hosts from 184 for seven to 386 all out, securing a 30-run first-innings lead.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

NEWS IN FOCUS

7 Bangladeshis killed in Saudi road crash

6 more hurt as vehicle overturns on Jeddah-Madina Highway; victims include six of two families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven Bangladeshis, including six members of two families, were killed and six others injured when a vehicle carrying them overturned in Saudi Arabia early yesterday while they were returning to Jeddah from Madina.

The accident occurred around 2:00am in the Al-Himna area, according to a preliminary report prepared by the Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment disclosed the updated information last night.

All 13 passengers, including members of three families, hailed from Cox's Bazar district.

According to the report, the vehicle, driven by a Pakistani national, was travelling at an estimated speed of 160 km per hour when the accident occurred.

Officials at the Kholais Traffic Office initially suspected that the driver lost control due to excessive speed, causing the vehicle to overturn.

However, the driver claimed that the accident occurred after one of the vehicle's tyres burst.

The consulate said the actual cause of the accident would be known after an investigation and the submission of a final report by the Saudi authorities.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Russian strikes cause power cuts in Ukraine: Kyiv

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

Russian forces hammered energy infrastructure around Ukraine's capital with missiles and drones overnight, straining Kyiv's power supply and heating systems as temperatures headed towards zero, officials said yesterday.

Three days before Russia and Ukraine are due to take part in US-brokered talks, explosions rocked Kyiv as Moscow unleashed waves of ballistic missiles, several of which hit and damaged the Northern Bridge across the Dnipro River, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Strikes on energy facilities outside Kyiv — including systems sending power from two nuclear plants to the city and Ukraine's central regions — caused serious damage, the energy ministry said.

"The capital is facing serious difficulties with its electricity, water, and heat supplies," President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on X, adding that substations in five other regions were also hit.



PHOTO: AFP

People stand among the ruins of a kindergarten damaged following a Russian mass missile attack in Kyiv yesterday. Russian attacks have damaged energy facilities in the Kyiv region as well as a key bridge in the Ukrainian capital, its mayor said.

US offers $20m reward for info on 'Iran's nuclear programme'

AFP, *Washington*

Washington is offering a $20 million reward "and possible relocation" for information about Iran's nuclear programme, the US military said Friday, as President Donald Trump reiterated Tehran wants to make a deal to end the war.

A State Department program, Rewards for Justice, "is offering a reward of up to $20 million and possible relocation for information about Iran's nuclear program, including its facilities, equipment, and associated personnel, such as those in the scientific community," US Central Command said on X.

The programme was established in 1984 under the State Department's national security rewards programme to offer money for information that protects American lives and interests.

In its statement about the reward, the State Department said Iran's "lack of compliance with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) on safeguards obligations has led to the agency's loss of 'continuity of knowledge' regarding Iran's production and inventory of key components like centrifuges.

It gave no specific parameters on what information would yield a $20 million reward.

US MIDTERM POLLS

Nearly 100 Muslims won national, local races

AGENCIES

At least 97 Muslim Americans have won their races in this week's midterm elections, encompassing the federal, state, and local levels, according to the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).

More than a dozen other candidates are still awaiting the full ballot count - depending on individual county rules and the way mail-in votes are handled - but they are ahead of their opponents as of Friday morning.

They come from a pool of 168 Muslim-American candidates who made it past the primary stage of their races, which is when they compete within their own party to earn the nomination.

Seven Muslim Americans are headed to Washington, DC.

Six are going to the House of Representatives, including incumbents Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Andre Carson, and Lateefah Simon; and they will be joined by freshmen Adam Hamawy and Darializa Avila Chevalier.

If Aisha Wahab secures her win, which had not been decided by Friday morning local time, she would also join the incumbent House members.

One Muslim American is going to the Senate: Abdul El-Sayed. He will be the first to ever serve a six-year term in the upper chamber.

CAIR has tracked 39 other statewide offices where Muslim Americans won, ranging from attorney general to the state legislature and the state senate.

At the county and municipal level, there are 16 winners, and education and school boards saw 27 Muslim-Americans elected.

Eight were elected to be judges.

The wins make for an all-time record, and come as anti-Muslim sentiment and rhetoric, particularly among Republicans, are at their highest in a generation, according to groups like the Muslim Public Affairs Council (Mpac), the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSO), and the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU).

27 killed in Saudi strikes on Yemen's Sanaa province: Houthis

AFP, *Sanaa*

Houthi media said yesterday that Saudi strikes killed 27 people, most of them women and children, in Yemen's Sanaa province, as deaths mount in the country's revived civil war.

The United Nations says more than 1,600 people have been killed and more than 300,000 displaced since fighting resumed in the impoverished country.

The death toll from the Saudi-led coalition's strikes on Al-Shariya village has risen to 27, most of them women and children, with 36 people wounded, the Houthis' health ministry said in a statement to their Saba news agency.

Saba said earlier in the day that operations to recover victims from the rubble were ongoing and that "aircraft targeted paramedics with two strikes".

The Iran-backed group's Al-Masirah TV broadcast footage that it said was filmed in Al-Shariya, showing smoke rising from a struck site, piles of debris and wounded people in hospital.

Saudi Arabia, fighting in Yemen in support of the internationally recognised government, has not commented on the report.

The Saudi-led coalition in a statement yesterday said it had intercepted and destroyed a Houthi missile launched towards Riyadh province.

The Houthis, meanwhile, said they had launched multiple missile and drone attacks against Saudi troops and infrastructure both in the Gulf kingdom and Yemen.

The group said six operations targeted Aramco oil facilities, Riyadh airport and Saudi military positions on both sides of the border, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree posted on X.

On Friday, an attack on a market in Taiz province killed 30 people. The Houthis said Saudi airstrikes were to blame, while Yemen's government forces accused the Iran-backed group of having fired a ballistic missile at the site.



PHOTO: AFP

Gunman kills six in historic centre of Poland's Krakow

AFP, *Kraków*

Six people were killed and a dozen others wounded yesterday when a gunman opened fire in the landmark historic centre of Poland's second city of Krakow, in the country's deadliest shooting in decades.

The man -- a Polish citizen -- drove a car onto Krakow's Main Market Square and began shooting at random people, said police. Officers shot a suspect who is now in custody, they added.

"The death toll now stands at six: four women and two men," the police said on X. A dozen others -- including police officers -- were wounded.

An AFP reporter at the scene saw ambulances and multiple police cars as police cordoned off the area -- one of Poland's landmark tourist hotspots popular with locals and foreign visitors.

"The perpetrator was shot by police" and was transported to a hospital, regional police said on X.

The police added that the man was wearing military fatigues at the time of the attack and was armed with a long gun.

In his car, "police officers discovered other firearms and a large quantity of ammunition", Krakow police spokeswoman Katarzyna Cislo told private broadcaster TVN24.

The police did not say what the motive was or disclose the nationalities of the victims of the attack, which is Poland's deadliest shooting since the fall of communism in 1989.

Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who headed to Krakow following the attack, called it "a tragic shooting" and said the police were investigating all the circumstances.

"Our highest praise goes to the heroic police officers who risked their lives in the line of duty," Tusk said.

Witnesses told AFP they saw people take refuge in shops and restaurants in the usually bustling streets around the Main Market Square.

"I saw a man shooting at people and walking around the square," Annette, a woman in her sixties, told AFP.

"It's a tragedy for Krakow, we've never seen anything like this before," she added.

"We were at Auschwitz today. And it was only when we got here that we realised what had happened," Stella, a 22-year-old tourist from Rennes, northwest France, told AFP, referring to the Nazi German Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp near Krakow.

"It's very frightening to think that there are still risks in Europe -- risks of a terrorist nature," she told AFP.

Deadly shootings are extremely rare in Poland, a European Union and NATO member of 38 million people.

But the country has been on high alert following a series of stabbings in October, which Tusk denounced as a "cult of violence".

Govt eyes a new 'Gram Sarkar' to reshape villages

FROM PAGE 1

Though the draft law makes no mention of an honorarium for nearly seven lakh members nationwide, an official involved in the process said discussions took place regarding remuneration in view of present-day realities. The finance ministry's opinion has been sought in this regard.

A provision of the proposed law leaves scope for individuals convicted of offences involving moral turpitude to become members of Gram Sarkar.

According to sub-section 9(d) of the draft law, individuals will be disqualified from membership only if they are convicted of a criminal offence involving moral turpitude and sentenced to at least one year in prison.

This means an individual sentenced to imprisonment for less than a year for an offence involving moral turpitude will be eligible to vie for membership. However, the provision stipulates that the individual must wait five years after release from prison to be able to contest the polls.

Legal experts have raised questions about allowing convicts into the local government body, which will be tasked with key responsibilities such as arbitration and dispute resolution.

Firoz Mia, a public administration expert and a former additional secretary, said, "Allowing someone convicted of an offence to serve as an arbitrator would call the entire system into question, even though similar provisions already exist for government employees.

"No individual convicted by a court of an offense involving moral turpitude -- be it a government employee or a politician -- should be involved in state affairs, big or small."

Public administration researcher Abdul Awal Mazumder said that if Gram Sarkar is reintroduced with good intentions, it will produce good results. However, it must be piloted before being launched nationwide.

"In the 1980s, arbitration by local elders in village courts was no less effective than court proceedings. But that picture has changed considerably over the last decade and a half. There are allegations that in many places, racketeers and swindlers act as arbitrators in exchange for money.

"If such people get the opportunity to enter Gram Sarkar, the government's primary objective may be undermined," Mazumder, a former secretary, told this newspaper.

He suggested piloting the system in 50 upazilas across the eight divisions before launching it nationwide.

When contacted, LGD Senior Secretary Shahidul Hassan declined to comment on the matter.

Seeking anonymity, a senior official at the LGRD ministry said the government wants to reintroduce the system without piloting it. However, no final decision has been made yet.

Mir Shahe Alam, state minister for LGRD and cooperatives, believes that the reintroduction of Gram Sarkar will make it possible to deliver various services efficiently to marginalised people.

Citing an example, he said, "The birth and death registration system faces numerous errors and complications. If the tasks related to the system are handled by grassroots representatives, these errors will be reduced significantly, easing public suffering."

Gram Sarkar can help gather accurate information on food demand, nutrition needs, and the status of childhood vaccination in rural areas, preventing fake and duplicate entries into the database, he added.

Guatemalan MP, three cops killed in armed attack

AGENCIES

A Guatemalan lawmaker and three police officers were killed in an armed attack in the eastern department of Zacapa, President Bernardo Arévalo said, condemning the violence and ordering security forces to help identify those responsible.

Lawmaker Julio César Portillo Paz was attacked on Friday in Río Hondo, Zacapa, and initially taken to a hospital with serious injuries. His death was later confirmed by the National Unity of Hope party, or UNE, to which he belonged.

Arévalo said the three National Civil Police officers killed in the attack had died in the line of duty and instructed security forces to cooperate with prosecutors investigating the killings.

The suspects escaped and were not identified.

"We will not allow criminal violence to prevail over the lives and safety of Guatemalans," Arévalo said in a post on X.

"President Luis Contreras, members of the Board of Directors and lawmakers mourn the tragic passing of Congressman Julio Cesar Portillo Paz, representative of the Zacapa district," Guatemala's Congress posted late Friday on X.

Authorities have not disclosed a motive for the attack or identified who was responsible.

The killing comes about three weeks after former anti-corruption prosecutor Juan Francisco Solórzano Foppa was shot dead in Guatemala City, a case that heightened concerns over organized crime's influence and the possible return of politically motivated assassinations. Authorities have not established a connection between the two attacks.

The Lorenzana family cartel, which has links to Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, controls the drug trade in Zacapa.

Portillo won his seat in 2023 for the Cabal party, but has since switched to another opposition party, National Unity of Hope, led by former first lady Sandra Torres.

She is expected to run for president in Guatemala's elections next year.

7 Bangladeshis killed in Saudi road crash

FROM PAGE 1

Among the deceased were Ziaur Rahman and his three children -- daughter Bushra and sons Yasir and Yazan.

Ziaur's wife, Shakira, was injured and remains hospitalised at Kholais General Hospital, while their other daughter, Yusra, is receiving treatment at King Abdul Aziz Hospital in Jeddah.

In another family, Sanjida, wife of Alam Shah, and their daughter Faria were killed in the accident.

Alam Shah was injured but discharged after primary care at Al-Himna Hospital. Their son Faisal is being treated at East Jeddah Hospital.

Another victim, Afsana Bibi, wife of Md Ilias, was also killed in the accident. Her husband sustained injuries but was discharged after primary care at Al-Himna Hospital.

According to the consulate, Afsana had arrived in Saudi Arabia only a few days before the accident to perform Umrah.

The bodies of Ziaur Rahman and his three children, as well as Sanjida, have been kept at Al-Himna General Hospital. The bodies of Faria and Afsana Bibi are at Kholais General Hospital.

Another Bangladeshi passenger, Gafur Alam, is receiving medical care at Kholais General Hospital.

No one will be able to steal people's rights again

FROM PAGE 1

democracy has been threatened, the country has risen again with the spirit of unity and revolution of November 7."

Addressing the young participants, he said the historic day should inspire them to uphold the country's interests.

"Let the voice of the patriotic and democracy-loving people on this historic day of the revolution of soldiers and people be: Bangladesh comes first, not Delhi, not Pindi or any other country."

Tarique said the then army chief, Lieutenant General Ziaur Rahman, was placed under house arrest with his family in the early hours of November 3, 1975 as part of what he described as a conspiracy against the country's interests.

The people and patriotic soldiers united to resist that conspiracy, making November 7 a symbol of national unity for nationalists and democracy-loving people.

The forces defeated on November 7 had continued their conspiracies and later, under the banner of the Grand Alliance, turned Bangladesh into a subservient state again, he said.

He also accused them of undermining the armed forces through the planned killings at the BDR headquarters at Pilkhana and depriving people of their democratic and political rights by establishing fascist rule.

Those forces were defeated again through the mass uprising of 2024, in which students and people made sacrifices to free the country from "fascism".

Comparing the major turning points in the country's history, Tarique said the 1971 Liberation War was fought to achieve independence, while the 2024 uprising was aimed at protecting the freedom of the country and its people.

People from all walks of life had taken to the streets on August 5, 2024, to protect the country's freedom, just as soldiers and civilians had united on November 7, 1975, to resist threats to independence and sovereignty.

"Time has proved that November 7, 1975 was the day that determined Bangladesh's future course," Tarique said, adding that whenever the country deviated from that path, its sovereignty and the people's interests came under threat.

Describing November 7 as the "magna carta" of independent Bangladesh's history, he said its significance would remain relevant for as long as the country existed.

The day also helped establish the identity of the people as Bangladeshis, irrespective of party affiliation, religion, ethnicity or community.

"Whether Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or from an ethnic minority community, everyone born as a citizen of this country has one proud identity -- we are Bangladeshis."













PHOTO: PMO, MEHEDI HASAN

National Revolution and Solidarity Day was observed across the country yesterday through various programmes, including discussions, rallies, cultural events, award distribution ceremonies and special prayers. *Clockwise from top left*, Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman releases baloons at the Army Stadium in the capital's Banani area, marking the historic day. The premier pays floral tributes at the graves of his parents -- party founder Ziaur Rahman and former chairperson Khaleda Zia. A special display marking the day at the Army Stadium. Rock legend James performs at a concert on Manik Mia Avenue. A gathering of village police at the National Parade Ground.

National Revolution and Solidarity Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Revolution and Solidarity Day-2026 was observed across the country with various programmes, including discussions, rallies, cultural events, award distribution ceremonies, and special prayers highlighting the historic significance of November 7, 1975.

Marking the day, district administrations, political parties, and socio-cultural organisations organised events across the country.

Those who had attempted to undermine the country in the past would not succeed in suppressing pro-democracy people this time either. The people would resist such conspiracies just as they had done before.

PRIME MINISTER TARIQUE RAHMAN

The ruling BNP brought out a procession in front of its central office in Nayapaltan yesterday. Prime Minister and party Chairman Tarique Rahman joined it on foot alongside party leaders and activists.

Before the rally began, he called for unity to protect the country's independence, sovereignty, and democracy, warning that conspiracies are once again underway to destabilise Bangladesh and bring back the system of "dummy" elections.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Successive regimes used the constitution to retain power

Say speakers at Star Itihas Adda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Bangladesh's constitution was progressive in recognising people's rights, its highly centralised power structure created opportunities for authoritarian rule, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said successive governments had used constitutional provisions and amendments to consolidate power rather than strengthen democratic accountability.

The speakers called for reforms reflecting people's aspirations without departing from the ideals of the Liberation War.

They were speaking at the 36th edition of The Daily Star's Itihas Adda, titled "Constitutional History of Bangladesh", at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Firoz Ahmed, a former member of the Constitution Reform Commission, said the 1972 constitution was far ahead of its time in recognising rights, having emerged from the struggle against Pakistan's authoritarian state structure. Yet its provisions and drafting process had left power heavily concentrated.



Discussants at the 36th edition of The Daily Star's Itihas Adda, at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

"In terms of its power structure and functioning, the same constitution is highly authoritarian," he said.

Firoz said members of the constituent assembly faced restrictions on proposing changes independently or voting against their parties. The assembly also did not function as a parliament, depriving elected representatives of an opportunity to hold the government accountable.

Questioning why a fresh election was not held after independence to form the constituent assembly, he noted that the Liberation War had transformed people's aspirations, while some political groups had stayed out of the 1970 polls.

A new election could have allowed broader political participation in constitution-making, he said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

IN BRIEF

Dip sent to jail in Tahsif murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Ahmed Shahriar Reza Dip to jail after 10 days' remand in a murder case filed over the death of former Bangladesh Air Force officer KM Tahsif Souri.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Monirul Islam passed the order after police sought his detention in jail, said a court employee.

According to the police, Dip provided several important pieces of information regarding the incident during remand, which are being kept confidential and being verified in the interest of the investigation.



KM TAHSIF SOURI

On October 31, Tahsif's father, KM Eneyetul Karim, filed the case against unknown persons with Uttarkhan Police Station, alleging that his son had been murdered and his body was dumped in the river.

Later in the day, Dip was arrested and placed on a four-day remand in the case. He was placed on another two rounds of three-day remand on November 3 and 5, respectively.

Another arrestee in the case, Tahsif's female friend, is now in jail custody after being placed on two rounds of remand on November 1 and 4.

See business potential, not disability: speakers

Banks urged to ease access to loans for entrepreneurs with disabilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People with disabilities should be recognised as entrepreneurs rather than recipients of charity and given access to loans and institutional support to become economically self-reliant, speakers said at a workshop yesterday.

They called for easier access to financing, simplified banking procedures and changes in social attitudes to ensure their economic inclusion.

The workshop, titled "Workshop on Economic Empowerment of People with Disabilities", was organised by Rotary Club of Dhaka North at BRAC Centre Inn in Mohakhali.

Moderating the event, Professor Afsan Chowdhury of BRAC University said many people with disabilities were turning to entrepreneurship after facing barriers and harassment in the job market.

However, a lack of bank loans and institutional support often prevented them from expanding their businesses.

He said banks should assess their business potential on commercial merit rather than treat lending to them as charity or corporate social responsibility.

He also called for clear guidelines on loan applications, required documents and banking policies, while urging the media to help change negative social attitudes.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North President Habibullah N Karim said people with disabilities needed financial assistance, technical expertise, advisory services and institutional support to participate in the mainstream economy.

- Business potential should outweigh disability
- Call for simpler banking procedures
- Institutional and technical support essential
- Negative social attitudes remain a barrier

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

An artist repaints a defaced graffiti of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore on the boundary wall of Khulna Railway Station yesterday, a day after it was smeared with black ink and anti-Tagore posters were put up. The mural, part of a series commissioned by Khulna City Corporation ahead of the prime minister's visit to the city on Thursday, depicts eminent personalities and the region's cultural heritage along the Shibbari-railway station road. Police have reportedly begun efforts to identify those involved in the incident.

Food crisis drives Kaptai elephants into settlements

RIKORS CHAKMA, *Rangamati*

Asian elephants in Rangamati's Kaptai National Park are facing a severe food shortage as diseases have damaged bamboo and shrubs, while people continue to collect vines, foliage and other edible plants from the forest.

As a result, elephant herds are increasingly entering nearby settlements in search of food, raising the risk of human-elephant conflict.

The 200-year-old Kaptai National Park is one of the country's oldest reserved forests and has long been home to Asian elephants. According to the Forest Department, the park currently has around 40-45 elephants, including six to seven calves.

Locals said elephant intrusions were once rare but have become frequent, leaving residents fearful, particularly at night.

Sudatta Chakma, chairman of Jibatoli Union Parishad, said, "We cannot sleep when elephants roam around at night. No one ventures outside after dusk for fear of elephants, as it can become dangerous."

Omarfaruk Shadhin, former range officer of Kaptai Range, said food becomes scarce in elephant habitats during the dry season.

"In addition, some people harvest vines and foliage from elephant habitats, evading the watch of forest officials," he said.

Md Mamunur Rahman, Kaptai range officer, said elephants generally avoid human settlements if sufficient food is available in their natural habitat.

"By examining elephant dung, we have found that they are mostly consuming grass-based food. Elephants particularly like eating bamboo and bamboo leaves."

He said the Forest Department was establishing fruit orchards and bamboo plantations in areas frequented by elephants to address the shortage.

Prof MA Aziz of Jahangirnagar University's zoology department said an adult elephant needs around 150-200 kg of food and about 150 litres of water daily. Elephants feed on grass, vines, foliage, tree bark and fruits from 100-500 species.

He said the plantation initiatives might provide temporary relief, but protecting natural food sources was more important.



PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

An Asian elephant forages in Rangamati's Kaptai National Park. The reserved forest is a natural habitat for Asian elephants.

"However, the primary goal should be to stop humans from foraging food from elephant habitats, and keeping the forest's waterbodies and natural streams functional and protected. If adequate protection is ensured in the reserved forest, elephants will find food naturally. In that case, there will be no need for separate plantations," he added.



PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

Women weave cloth on traditional waist looms at Rajban Bihara in Rangamati as part of the Kathin Chibar Dan festival. During the ceremony, they prepare robes for Buddhist monks within 24 hours, following a centuries-old tradition. The festival marks the end of a three-month period of seclusion, during which monks meditate inside their monasteries for self-improvement and atonement for mankind.

Of clay, fire and hope

Over 3,000 potter families in the north race to light up Deepaboli

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Ahead of Deepaboli, or Diwali, the festival of lights to be observed today, more than 3,000 potter families across five districts of Rangpur division have been busy making earthen lamps, locally known as "diya", hoping to boost their incomes.

Each family has been producing 20,000-80,000 lamps, with some making even more.

For the potters, the festival offers a rare opportunity to earn more as demand for traditional earthenware rises. However, higher prices of clay, firewood and other materials have pushed up production costs this year.

At local markets, a set of 100 lamps sells for Tk 100-300, depending on quality.

"There are around 70 potter families in the village. We are selling diyas to wholesalers from different areas as well as in nearby markets," said Prabhat Chandra Pal, 65, of Sarpukur Kumarpara village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

Bishad Chandra Pal, 55, of Moghalhat Kumarpara village in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said making the lamps involves several stages.

"Producing 100 lamps now costs between Tk 20-50. The prices of clay and firewood have gone up. Then there is transport cost," he said.

All 45 potter families in his village are hoping for good sales, he added.



Potters across Rangpur division are busy making earthen lamps, known as "diya", ahead of Deepaboli -- the festival of light. PHOTO: **STAR**

In Palpara village of Rangpur's Taraganj upazila, veteran potter Ajay Chandra Pal, 76, was tending a kiln.

He said the kiln fires around 3,000-5,000 lamps daily, which remain inside for another 12 hours before being taken out for sale.

Ashok Sarkar, 70, of Guptapara in Rangpur city, buys around 700-800 diyas every year to illuminate his home, shop and temples.

According to the Rangpur Puja Udjapan Parishad, around 2.50 lakh Hindu families across the five districts buy 300-800 lamps each to illuminate homes, temples, cremation grounds and businesses.

Dhiman Bhattacharya, convener of the Rangpur Divisional Priest Society, said, "Lighting 'diya' is not merely a decoration but a part of prayers for the peace of departed souls, and for well-being in the world."

New train planned for Dhaka-Noakhali route

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Noakhali*

Work is under way to upgrade Noakhali's railway infrastructure, including a Tk 40-crore project to rehabilitate the nearly 50km Laksam-Noakhali rail line and plans to introduce the Subarnachar Express on the Dhaka-Noakhali route.

Md Kamruzzaman Chowdhury, senior secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration, disclosed the plans to journalists on Friday while inspecting platform expansion work at Choumuhani Railway Station. The work includes a 300-foot-long and 15-foot-wide platform extension, floor paving, completion of the unfinished access control system, and improvements to station buildings and sheds.

Once completed, the expanded platform will allow passengers to safely board and get off 16-coach trains.

The secretary said the suspended Noakhali Express and the new intercity Subarnachar Express would begin operations soon, while the existing Upakul Express fleet would be modernised.

Bangladesh Railway Chief Engineer (East Zone) Tanvirul Islam said a tender was floated on November 5 for the rehabilitation project.

The work includes replacing worn-out rails and steel sleepers, laying fresh ballast, upgrading fittings, constructing bank protection walls and improving vulnerable level crossings. He said the Subarnachar Express launch had been delayed by a shortage of metre-gauge locomotives.

Tenders have been floated to procure 30 new metre-gauge locomotives within the next two to three years under the Chattogram-Dohazari project, he added.

Each locomotive is expected to cost around Tk 50 crore, bringing the total to about Tk 1,500 crore.

1,300 jars of banned cosmetics seized at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) officials seized 1,300 jars of banned beauty cream, weighing around 40 kilogrammes, from the baggage of a Dubai returnee at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram yesterday.

The seized products, branded as Fresh & White Beauty Cream, have an estimated market value of Tk 8 lakh, according to a press release.

Acting on a tip-off, CIID officials scanned and searched the baggage of Mohammed Jahed, a passenger arriving on Biman Bangladesh Airlines from Dubai to Chattogram, and recovered the product.

Import of the banned cosmetics violated the provisions of the applicable Import Policy Order since such products could pose risks to public health, said the release.

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2. Supply & Installation of Network Switches for East West University.
3. Procurement and Installation of CCTV Cameras along with accessories for the laboratories of East West University.
4. Procurement of Exam Answer Scripts (200,000 pcs General and 110,000 pcs OBE based) for the office of the Controller of Examinations of EWU.
5. Procurement of 02 (two) different types of Online UPS (6 KVA & 10 KVA) for different labs of the Department of CSE (Room No.215,431,435 & 436).
6. Procurement of 22 sets of Computer with Monitor and UPS for the Department of CSE (Hardware Interfacing Lab).

Detailed tender schedules, including terms and conditions, may be collected from the Finance & Accounts Department (1st Floor) until **25 November 2026**, during office hours (**until 2:30 PM**) on working days. Tender schedule of item sl no.5 & 6 will also be available through the e-tendering portal: **http://etender.ewubd.edu**

The non-refundable tender fee is Tk.500.00 (Taka Five Hundred only).

Interested bidders are requested to submit their tenders by **26 November 2026 at 02:00 PM**, either through the e-tendering system (as specified in the schedule) or by dropping hard copies in the tender box located at the Office of the Treasurer (Room # 316, 2nd Floor). Tenders will be opened **on the same day at 02:30 PM in** the Conference Room (4th Floor) in the presence of bidders' representatives.

All submissions must clearly mention the item name on the envelope. **Failure to comply may result in disqualification**.

EWU reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders, either in whole or in part, without assigning any reason. The University's decision shall be final.

Chief of HR & Logistics

Infant, parents among 4 killed in Jamalpur crash

Two killed, 40 hurt as bus plunges into ditch in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Four people, including an eight-month-old baby and her parents, were killed when a truck hit a motorcycle and an easy-bike in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Morshed Alam, 25, from Indullamari area of Islampur upazila, his wife Ikrama, 20, their eight-month-old daughter Rifa, and motorcycle rider Shawkat Hasan Likhan, 45, of Melandah upazila.

Quoting locals, ATM Mahmudul Haque, officer-in-charge of Melandah Police Station, said a Jamalpur-bound truck first hit the oncoming motorcycle on Jamalpur-Dewanganj regional highway before crashing into the easy-bike ahead carrying the family.

Police recovered the bodies and took the truck driver into custody. Legal procedure was underway, the OC added.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and at least 40 others injured when a bus carrying teachers, students and guardians of a madrasa on a study tour to Cox's Bazar plunged into a roadside ditch in Satkania upazila of Chattogram early yesterday, said OC Nurul Absar of Dohajari Highway Police Station.

The deceased are Sohana Afroz, 45, a teacher at Bakshimul Sunnia Islamia Senior Madrasa in Burichang upazila of Cumilla, and Md Israfil, 56, the husband of another teacher.

The accident occurred around 4:00am on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway near the Khuni Bottal area in Keranihat, police said.

On information, members of Dohajari Highway Police Station, Satkania Fire Station and Satkania Police Station went to the spot and rescued the injured.

Police seized the bus, while the driver managed to flee, the OC said.

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1364427, SBPLC/GMO/BOGURA/OTM/PC/SIRAJGONJ/2026/6	10 (Ten) Desktop Computer for Branches of Sonali Bank PLC, Principal Office, Sirajgonj	Publication: 08-Nov-2026 10:20 Last Selling: 18-Nov-2026 15:00 Closing : 18-Nov-2026 15:30

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America's midterm reckoning and its implications for Bangladesh



The Republican Party's loss of control of both chambers of Congress represents a major electoral setback for US President Donald Trump. PHOTO: UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS

ZILLUR RAHMAN

For many Americans, the debate over Donald Trump's foreign policy boiled down to how to afford another week. According to the Chicago Council's pre-election survey, 86 percent saw the Iran war as driving up living costs; 81 percent said the same about tariffs. Voters did not have to follow every diplomatic controversy to understand that decisions made in Washington, D.C., complicated their lives.

That explained the Democrats' overwhelming victory in the midterms. Republicans will lose control of Congress in January 2027, depriving Trump of a Congress he could easily rely on. The consequences will be felt far beyond the United States, but losing control of Congress does not deprive the President of his constitutional powers.

Costs were just part of the picture. According to an AP Voter Poll, almost seven out of ten voters believed that Congress did too little to restrain the power of the presidency. Corruption was also an important issue. Voters were unhappy not only with Trump's policies but also with the way he governed.

Democratic success among young voters, Hispanics and moderates challenged the idea that Trump's 2024 win had fundamentally changed the American political landscape. The coalition that won the election could split up in the next one. Voters gave him a second chance, not an unlimited mandate.

Democrats should now consider how to exercise their power. Committee chairmanships will allow Democrats to investigate the President's actions, while control of Congress will strengthen their position in spending negotiations. In the Senate, Democrats can reject nominations to the courts, cabinet and diplomatic posts. If used properly, these powers will complicate Trump's attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

However, Democrats will not control the government. Without Republican support, Democrats cannot override a presidential veto. Moreover, most legislation will need some Republican support in the Senate to pass, since most bills require 60 votes to overcome a filibuster. Democrats should expose Trump's actions while trying to achieve something he will not block.

Investigations will not make healthcare less expensive or reduce costs for any family. Democrats should choose which battles to fight and which improvements to deliver, alongside investigating Trump. Two years of constant televised confrontation without visible results outside Washington will give voters plenty of reasons to become disappointed again.

Discussion about 2028 has already started. Trump cannot become President for a third time under the Constitution. JD Vance, Trump's Vice President, blamed the Iran war for the Republicans' defeat, suggesting an attempt to separate his future political career from the administration's record.

Such separation will be very difficult. Vance will need Trump's support, but he will also have to convince voters who rejected the administration in the election that he would govern differently. Vance cannot claim to have been a passive witness to the administration as Vice President. He will have to explain when and how he disagreed with the President.

Democrats will have their own candidates too. Governors Josh Shapiro, JB Pritzker and Wes Moore will have an opportunity to become better known across the nation. Governing a state allows them to offer something more substantial than campaign slogans – a record that voters can examine. Healthcare, education and state management will determine whether that record is enough to advance their political careers.

Bangladesh should develop a foreign policy capable of withstanding changes in the presidency and congressional majority.

However, winning a gubernatorial race does not guarantee victory in the presidential election in the same state. Midterm turnout usually differs from turnout in presidential elections. Moreover, according to the AP Voter Poll, only about half of voters had a positive view of the Democrats. Some voted Democratic only to stop Trump, rather than out of support for the party. Democrats must find ways to win their support.

Abroad, the temptation to interpret the result as a signal of US retrenchment will be strong. It is too early for such an interpretation. With growing domestic opposition, Trump may try to conclude a diplomatic deal that he could later present as a personal success. He may also become more aggressive if he believes foreign leaders perceive him as weak. Foreign governments should be prepared for either possibility.

Iran will be the first test. Investigations and restrictions on war financing could push Trump towards concluding an agreement. However, Congress cannot negotiate an agreement on the President's behalf. Disputes over financing could become arguments over responsibility for American troops. Americans' patience will not last long when families bear the costs of the war without understanding the objectives of the fighting.

It is not necessary to interpret this as a signal that the United States wants to retreat from the world. According to the Chicago Council survey, 58 percent wanted active US participation in world affairs. That preference leaves room for a foreign policy based on engagement, but it also requires greater scrutiny of the costs of military engagements. Fewer expensive wars, more stable trade relations and more secure supply chains would provide stronger reasons to support US engagement in foreign affairs.

European and Ukrainian governments will find more supportive partners in Congress when it comes to providing aid and blocking concessions to Russia. European governments should make use of that opportunity without overlooking their own capabilities. Any legislative action may still require Republican support, and the White House will continue to play a major diplomatic role. Europe's security needs a stronger foundation than the hope that the next US election will correct the outcome of the previous one.

Beijing will probably see this as an opportunity to negotiate a better deal. Pressure to reduce costs could make Trump more willing to discuss trade agreements. Democrats will probably push harder on Taiwan, human rights and Chinese investments. Chinese and other Asian governments will have to pay greater attention to consultations on some issues while accepting greater uncertainty on others.

Israel will face tougher scrutiny over military assistance and its treatment of Palestinians. In the rest of the Middle East, governments that have relied heavily on access to Trump should develop additional contacts in other parts of Washington. Agreements with the President become more vulnerable without support from other parts of the US government.

Trade policy requires caution. A Democratic majority does not necessarily mean the cancellation of tariffs introduced under powers delegated to the President. Exporters should not expect Democrats' concerns about American workers' living standards to translate into enthusiasm for increasing imports. More stable regulations would be a reasonable goal. Exporters should not count on quick relief.

Bangladesh will face direct consequences from events in Washington. The United States remains one of our main trading partners. Changes in the American economy and trade policy influence factory orders, employment and foreign exchange earnings.

Bangladesh should continue negotiations with the administration while developing contacts with congressional trade committees and American importers. These efforts should proceed in parallel. It would be wrong to expect Democrats to resolve our trade problems, since their voters also want protection from economic insecurity.

Stronger congressional support could help sustain assistance to the Rohingya and maritime cooperation in the Bay of Bengal. However, elections do not guarantee the restoration of aid. Bangladesh will have to make a convincing case consistently to both parties.

Progress in protecting labour rights, ensuring responsible governance and safeguarding minority rights can be part of that case. These are not concessions intended to please Washington. They matter for Bangladesh and give its diplomats a stronger foundation for seeking support.

Bangladesh should develop a foreign policy capable of withstanding changes in the presidency and congressional majority. This means working with both US political parties, expanding partnerships elsewhere and avoiding the construction of foreign policy around individual personalities.

Democrats will have to prove that accountable government can improve people's lives. Republicans will have to decide whether loyalty to Trump offers them a political future. The election has opened up possibilities for greater restraint. The dependability of American power will depend on what happens after the election.

Zillur Rahman *is a political analyst, President of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and Founding Board Chair of CGS USA. He hosts Tritiyo Matra on Channel i and writes on geopolitics, strategic affairs and governance. Follow him on X: @zillur.*

Can Bangladesh turn connectivity with Thailand into strategic leverage?

MOHD AMDADUL HAQUE

A four-day shipping connection between Chattogram and Thailand's Ranong Port may look like a modest logistics improvement. For Bangladesh, it raises a foreign policy question: can a new maritime link create strategic options as ports, supply chains and geopolitical competition become more interconnected? The route will not replace the Strait of Malacca or make Bangladesh a regional hub overnight. Its value depends on whether Dhaka can convert geography into commercial leverage through reliable services, balanced trade and regional cooperation.

The first direct shipping service between Chattogram and Ranong began in September 2026. At the fourth Bangladesh–Thailand Foreign Office Consultations on 30 October, both governments welcomed the connection and said it could reduce transportation time from approximately 15 days to four. The Bangladesh foreign ministry's account of the consultations places the route within a wider agenda covering trade, investment, labour migration, energy and regional cooperation. That is the right context: a shipping service becomes strategically relevant only when it supports a wider economic relationship.

A strategic route, not a replacement for Malacca

Ranong lies on Thailand's Andaman coast; Chattogram is Bangladesh's principal seaport. A direct connection creates a shorter option for cargo moving between Bangladesh and Thailand's western maritime gateway and may strengthen links between South Asia and mainland Southeast Asia. But four days is an expected port-to-port transit time, not a door-to-door guarantee. Cargo moving onwards to Thailand's Gulf coast or East Asia may still require road, rail, feeder or conventional sea connections. The route's value is specific, not universal.

The Strait of Malacca remains central to global commerce, linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans and carrying substantial energy flows. The US Energy Information Administration estimates that around 23.2 million barrels per day of oil passed through it in the first half of 2025, according to its global chokepoint data. Chattogram–Ranong cannot displace this artery, but it can provide another option for selected cargoes.

The commercial imbalance is the first test

The central challenge is cargo availability in both directions. Thailand's trade with Bangladesh is heavily imbalanced. According to 2025 UN Comtrade figures compiled by Trading Economics, Thailand exported about US$913.54 million worth of goods to Bangladesh, while its imports from Bangladesh were approximately US$88.04 million. The gap is visible in the reported Thai exports to Bangladesh and Thai imports from Bangladesh. These are total merchandise values, not container figures for the new service, but they raise a basic commercial question: can operators secure enough return cargo to sustain competitive rates?

Dhaka has recognised the problem. At the October consultations, Bangladesh asked Thailand to import more pharmaceuticals, jute and jute products, and to reduce duties on Bangladeshi goods. Bangkok said it would consider the proposals and called for early discussions on a bilateral free trade agreement. Thailand's own summary of the bilateral consultations also highlights trade, investment and connectivity as shared priorities. Yet diplomatic willingness does not guarantee market access. The route will not correct the imbalance unless Bangladeshi firms can meet Thai standards, find distributors and compete on price.

Bangladesh should focus on export sectors with realistic demand. Pharmaceuticals and jute-based products were raised during the talks; garments, seafood, processed foods and leather goods merit market testing. Each faces different certification and sanitary requirements. The government should help exporters identify Thai buyers and resolve regulatory barriers. Success should be measured by repeat orders and export growth, not trade missions.

Port capacity and the missing links

Bangladesh has a substantial maritime base, but also faces a concentration risk. Chattogram handled 3.409 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in 2025 and processed about 92 percent of the country's seaborne general cargo and nearly 98 percent of containerised imports and exports. These figures show why domestic port efficiency is central to the corridor's success. A faster overseas leg cannot compensate for delays in berth allocation, container handling, customs, road access or inland depots.

Ranong is a smaller port whose regional role is still developing. In the first seven months of Thailand's 2026 fiscal year, it reportedly handled 7,000 TEUs, 106,000 tonnes of cargo and 217 vessel calls. Container throughput rose 55.56 percent year on year, but the volume remains modest compared with Chattogram. The reported operating figures for Ranong Port show growth, but not yet the capacity of a major regional hub. This asymmetry can be useful if the route serves specialised cargo at a manageable scale.

Bangladesh should assess Ranong's handling equipment, storage, customs facilities and onward transport before shifting large volumes. Operators should publish sailing frequencies, freight rates, actual transit times and records of delays. Businesses need predictable door-to-door costs, not simply a four-day sea passage.

From bilateral shipping to regional architecture

The corridor's greater potential lies in the Bay of Bengal's regional institutions. BIMSTEC brings together Bangladesh, Thailand and other littoral and nearby states. Its Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, supported by the Asian Development Bank, treats ports, maritime transport, road and rail links, multimodal systems and trade facilitation as interconnected elements of regional integration. Chattogram–Ranong can provide a practical demonstration of this agenda, but only if the maritime service is linked to inland transport and compatible border procedures.

BIMSTEC members have also signed an Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation, listed in the organisation's official register of agreements. Bangladesh can use this framework to pursue port cooperation, information exchange, maritime safety and more predictable shipping procedures. Still, a regional agreement cannot, by itself, eliminate customs delays or infrastructure gaps. Implementation—not merely the existence of an agreement—will determine whether the corridor becomes a working example of regional cooperation.

Thailand's support for Bangladesh's aspiration to become an ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partner and its accession to RCEP adds a diplomatic dimension. The route may demonstrate Bangladesh's commitment to regional connectivity, but it offers no shortcut to either process. Both require separate political engagement and domestic preparation. Dhaka should treat the corridor as supporting evidence, not a substitute for integration.

The geopolitics of resilience

Thailand's interest in Ranong is part of a wider effort to strengthen its Andaman-facing economy. Its proposed southern Land Bridge was presented as a way to connect the Andaman coast with the Gulf of Thailand and offer an alternative to Malacca. Yet concerns over cost, demand and environmental impacts have challenged the megaproject. In July 2026, Thailand moved to scale back the US$30 billion plan and focus instead on expanding Ranong Port and related rail links, according to Reuters' report on the revised project. For Bangladesh, the lesson is to plan around realistic port improvements rather than depend on a grand infrastructure vision that may not materialise.

Dhaka should welcome Thai investment where it improves capacity, but assess proposals against demand, financing, environmental safeguards and local impacts. A corridor dependent on a single operator, port or political initiative is not resilient. Leverage comes from multiple workable options, not from creating a new dependency.

Security must accompany connectivity. The October consultations addressed human trafficking, arms smuggling, online scams and narcotics, and the two sides agreed to consider establishing a joint committee. Increased cargo traffic requires effective screening, vessel monitoring and intelligence-sharing. A faster route that weakens border oversight would create new vulnerabilities.

What Bangladesh should do next

Bangladesh should establish a corridor coordination mechanism involving both governments, port authorities, shipping companies, customs agencies and exporters. It should publish quarterly data on sailings, transit times, freight rates, cargo volumes, delays and the imbalance between inbound and outbound cargo loads. Dhaka should also pursue targeted access to the Thai market and pilot electronic documentation, advance cargo information and risk-based inspections.

It must also improve Chattogram's road and rail links, inland depots and port operations, while connecting the service to BIMSTEC's maritime agenda on safety and harmonised procedures. These steps could transform a bilateral shipping link into a platform for regional economic diplomacy.

A four-day voyage is an opening, not leverage in itself. The route will matter only if it attracts regular cargo, expands Bangladeshi exports, reduces total delivery costs and gives firms a dependable alternative. Bangladesh need not claim that it can challenge major maritime chokepoints to benefit from a secondary route. In a region shaped by competition over access and supply chains, Dhaka's advantage will come from widening its options and demonstrating that connectivity delivers measurable gains.



Delegations from Bangladesh and Thailand attend the fourth Foreign Office Consultations in Bangkok on 30 October 2026. Both sides welcomed the launch of direct shipping between Chattogram and Ranong ports to strengthen bilateral trade and connectivity. PHOTO: BANGLADESH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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

COP31 must bridge the funding gap

Effects of climate change cannot be mitigated otherwise

Climate change impacts are intensifying every year, devastating lives and livelihoods across the world, with countries like Bangladesh facing the most severe consequences. Widespread displacement is one such impact. Nearly 90 million people have already been forcibly displaced in countries increasingly exposed to climate-related droughts, floods, and extreme heat, according to a report by the UN refugee agency published ahead of COP31. It also reiterated a longstanding demand of vulnerable nations that they need more funding to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Scientists have been warning for quite some time that the Earth is warming at an accelerating rate. Despite this and the impacts they themselves are experiencing, rich countries—who happen to be the biggest contributors to global warming—have thus far fallen far short of providing the funds needed by poorer nations to cope with the crisis. Adaptation requires basic measures such as suitable infrastructure, early warning systems, proper flood protection, drought-resilient irrigation, etc—all of which could significantly improve their ability to withstand adverse climate impacts.

According to the UN Environment Programme, the world's 155 developing nations will need $305 billion annually by 2035 to adapt to worsening heatwaves, floods, fires, storms, draughts, and rising sea levels. Yet climate financing from rich countries amounted to only $32 billion in 2024, with governments in Global North spending more on defence than on tackling climate change.

Scientists have been warning for quite some time that the Earth is warming at an accelerating rate. Despite this, rich countries—who happen to be the biggest contributors to global warming—have thus far fallen far short of providing the funds needed by poorer nations to cope with the crisis.

As per the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, Bangladesh was the seventh most affected country by extreme weather events between 2000 and 2019, experiencing 185 such events during the period. As sea levels are rising, more land is being lost. Salinity is penetrating further inland, destroying agricultural land, reducing rice yields, contaminating drinking water, and causing serious health problems for people living in affected areas. We have also witnessed increasingly frequent and intense floods and cyclones. Even the Sundarbans, which has long shielded Bangladesh from the worst impacts of cyclones and storms, is at risk. These severe impacts have pushed hundreds of thousands of people towards urban centres such as Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, and Rajshahi, putting enormous pressure on already strained infrastructure. With temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius during summer, the risks of waterborne and vector-borne diseases are also rising. Other developing countries are facing more or less similar threats.

COP31, which starts on November 9, will only make meaningful progress if rich nations recognise that they must fulfil their responsibilities and commitments to increase climate funding for vulnerable countries. Investing in clean energy projects in developing and least developed countries must also be part of the agenda. If we are to protect the planet as a whole from the devastating effects of climate change, wealthy nations must honour the promises they made during past climate summits. COP31 must produce a clear roadmap for closing the funding gap, with measurable timelines and mechanisms for delivering the promised funds. Countries that have contributed least to global warming should not be left to bear its heaviest costs.

Engage expatriates in local development

Initiative in a Tangail village offers a model for diaspora-led development

In media, where a significant proportion of migration coverage focuses on darker realities, the news that expatriates have funded the installation of 100 streetlights along a three-kilometre stretch in a village in Tangail is a refreshing development. And we are encouraged by it. This is not to suggest that the hardships and vulnerabilities associated with migrants should receive less attention; quite the contrary.

Bangladesh is among the leading countries for sea arrivals in Europe, according to UNHCR data in 2025. Our young population, grappling with anxiety and uncertainty for their future, embarks on dangerous journeys abroad that often push them to the forefront of foreign wars, into digital slavery, or, in some cases, death. A report published by this daily on Saturday recounts how a Bangladeshi man who travelled to Cambodia for a data entry job was sold to an online scam compound, where he was held captive and tortured. The government must, therefore, strengthen migration oversight to protect aspiring migrants from exploitation and ensure that their hopes of building a better future do not come at such devastating costs. This brings us back to the Tangail story.

Before the lights were installed, residents of Sonalia village struggled to travel along the road at night due to safety concerns. Amazingly, over the past two years, migrants from the village provided funds to build a road, establish flower gardens, construct homes for underprivileged families, and distribute Eid gifts to 200 households. Their next initiative is to offer interest-free loans to meritorious students to help them sit for IELTS and pursue higher education overseas. These examples underscore the potential of migrants in contributing to the country's development beyond just sending remittances. Their planning and investment can significantly contribute to local socioeconomic development. The knowledge, skills, and experience they acquire overseas can also be harnessed in policymaking, technological advancement, entrepreneurship, and other fields.

Realising this potential, however, requires the government's sustained engagement with the expatriate community and institutional support for collective initiatives. Bangladesh already offers investment options for migrants such as the Wage Earner Development Bond, but to fully utilise the potential of the Bangladeshi diaspora, a bridge must be established to connect overseas Bangladeshis with opportunities for investment and mentorship at home. We urge the government to take note, while recognising that such initiatives would complement, not replace, the state's responsibility to provide essential public services.

A nation of graduates with few jobs for them

MIND THE GAP



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NOSHIN NAWAL

Bangladesh has perfected the art of producing qualified young people for an economy that is increasingly unsure what to do with them. Between graduate unemployment, miserable wages, recruitment favouritism, and an education system selling aspirations on credit, the country's employment crisis is becoming a particularly expensive national joke. There is a peculiar ritual performed in middle-class Bangladeshi households, wherein a child is sent to the best school the family can afford, enrolled in coaching classes the family cannot afford, instructed to pursue a respectable degree, and eventually presented to society as a finished product. The parents have invested two decades, several small fortunes, and absorbed around 40,000 unsolicited opinions. The graduate has a certificate, a LinkedIn profile, and a growing suspicion that the family's chauffeur might enjoy greater job security.

Bangladesh's labour market is where ambition is plentiful, opportunity is rationed and the phrase "we'll let you know" is the equivalent of parents saying "dekhi". According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, unemployment among university graduates reached 13.54 percent in 2024, compared with 3.66 percent nationally. The International Monetary Fund's October 2026 assessment paints an uglier picture: nearly 29 percent of highly educated young Bangladeshis are unemployed, while approximately half of highly educated workers occupy jobs beneath their qualifications. Apparently, the more education one acquires, the greater the opportunity to discover how little the economy values it.

Of course, employers have their complaints, such as graduates lacking practical skills, communication abilities, and industry experience. Universities, meanwhile, continue producing degrees with the enthusiasm of a printing press operating without editorial supervision. Employers often demand experience for entry-level positions, universities offer theoretical knowledge with limited practical exposure, and students are left wondering where they were supposed to acquire three years of experience before their first job. But blaming graduates absolves businesses of their reluctance to invest in training, universities of having outdated curricula, and policymakers of their spectacular failure to connect education with economic planning. Everyone identifies a skills gap, but no party seems particularly enthusiastic about closing it.

Then there is the recruitment culture, where meritocracy often show up dressed for the interview only to discover that someone else's uncle has already spoken to the managing director. Utilising connections is not unique to Bangladesh, nor is every appointment corrupt. But when recruitment processes lack transparency, personal networks become an alternative method to secure employment. The young person with excellent qualifications but no influential surname is encouraged to develop resilience, presumably because resilience is considerably cheaper than institutional reform. On the other hand, thousands spend their most productive years preparing for competitive government job exams, not necessarily because public administration represents their deepest calling, but because a secure salary and predictable career have become rare luxuries. When the private sector cannot consistently offer stability, fair recruitment, or meaningful progression, the attraction of government service is hardly mysterious.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's celebrated garment industry presents another uncomfortable contradiction. We proudly advertise our manufacturing prowess while workers struggle over wages that must somehow accommodate food, rent, transport, and the occasional extravagance of being alive. Garment workers' recent protest demanding a Tk 30,000 minimum monthly wage, up from Tk 12,500, has triggered fresh unrest. Manufacturers warn of narrow margins, rising costs, and international competition. These pressures are real, but so is the absurdity of an export economy whose competitiveness remains so dependent on keeping labour inexpensive. The World Bank estimates that about 84 percent of workers in Bangladesh operate informally. The IMF has also noted a movement of educated youth towards agriculture rather than higher-productivity manufacturing and services.

Women, naturally, receive an additional complementary obstacle course. Bangladesh has invested enormously in girls' education, only to maintain a labour market where educated women face disproportionate unemployment. An IMF analysis of data from 2024 found unemployment among highly educated women to be 16.66 percent, compared to 6.37 percent among similarly educated men. In practice, a woman finds she must be qualified but not intimidating, ambitious but accommodating, and professionally committed but also available for domestic duties. Employers worry about marriage, maternity, and childcare as though reproduction were an unfortunate personal hobby rather than a fundamental part of society's continuation. The country celebrates female empowerment at conferences while workplace structures likely assume that somebody else will handle the children. And then, of course, we lament the exit of talented women from the workforce.

Perhaps the cruellest consequence of graduate unemployment is the normalisation of wasted potential. Young Bangladeshis increasingly treat migration as an escape. Families invest in overseas degrees, professional qualifications, and migration pathways because they no longer trust the domestic economy to reward their children's abilities. Bangladesh trains its people, foreign economies benefit from their productivity, and we console ourselves with remittance figures. Even entrepreneurship, routinely prescribed as the miracle cure to unemployment, cannot flourish based on motivational speeches alone. Starting a business requires capital, reliable electricity, predictable regulation, functioning banks, and customers with purchasing power. Telling unemployed graduates to become entrepreneurs without addressing these conditions is rather like advising someone trapped in a flood to consider starting up a swimming school.

Bangladesh does not need another ceremonial employment summit featuring distinguished speakers explaining that young people are the future. It needs measurable job creation targets, transparent recruitment processes, serious apprenticeships, better vocational education, affordable financing, and industrial diversification beyond garments. The World Bank's export diversification programme, which supported the creation of nearly 1,80,000 jobs in targeted non-garment firms, demonstrated that deliberate investment can produce tangible employment. Above all, economic success must be measured not merely by GDP growth, export receipts, or the number of new graduates, but by whether ordinary people can obtain dignified, productive work and build independent lives.

Unemployment is not simply an economic statistic; it postpones marriages, erodes confidence, deepens socioeconomic inequality, drains family savings, and turns adulthood into an indefinite waiting room. Bangladesh's young people have been instructed to study more, work harder, improve themselves, learn English, acquire digital skills, and remain resilient. They have largely complied. Perhaps it is time the economy updated its own CV.



FILE VISUAL: **TEENI AND TUNI**

Keeping women in sport is the real test



Shafiq R Bhuiyan is vice president and head of internal communication and CSR at BRAC Bank.

SHAFIQ R BHUIYAN

Bangladesh increasingly celebrates women in sport, acknowledging their achievements and encouraging more girls to follow their lead. This is evident in the fact that over 6.79 lakh girls registered online for the second season of the Notun Kuri Sports competition, accounting for 41.8 percent of all applicants. But what happens after a woman enters the sporting world? Does the system provide fair career opportunities, protect her during vulnerable periods, and support her future beyond competitive sport? More girls entering academies, representing the country, and winning medals certainly signal progress. But participation only tells us who has entered the system, not who was able to stay in for the long term. The real test is whether women can sustain their involvement in sport without compromising their safety, dignity, or economic security.

The Women's Professional Cricket Global Employment Report 2022, by the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA), recorded 24 centrally contracted women cricketers in Bangladesh, but no fully professional players in the domestic structure.

Former national cricketer Suraiya Azmin's experience recently brought certain shortcomings into focus. Reportedly, after requesting paid maternity leave from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in May, she received no response. Following childbirth, however, she was dropped from the national contract list, while her leave request and unpaid salary remained unresolved. Following the incident being reported, the BCB has decided to introduce paid maternity leave for women cricketers, with the proposal expected to receive formal approval soon. Indeed, Azmin's experience laid bare the absence of a formal system to protect a female player's income, contract, and return after childbirth.

After requesting paid maternity leave from BCB, former national cricketer Suraiya Azmin reportedly received no response. Following childbirth, she was dropped from the national contract list, while her leave request and unpaid salary remained unresolved. BCB has since decided to introduce paid maternity leave for women cricketers.

Maternity protection should guarantee paid leave, protect salary and contracts, prevent pregnancy from being an undisclosed excuse for non-renewal or exclusion, and ensure medical care, rehabilitation, and a gradual return to play. The International Cricket Council's post-pregnancy return-to-play guidelines offer a framework for recovery, assessment and training, but do not guarantee paid leave or contract security. Member boards must provide those protections.

The Pakistan Cricket Board, for instance, introduced a parental support policy in 2021 that allows women cricketers to move temporarily into non-playing roles during pregnancy, avail up to 12 months of paid maternity leave, and receive a contract extension for the following year. It also provides post-childbirth medical and physical support, and allows a player travelling for cricket to bring along a carer for her infant, with the board sharing travel and accommodation costs.

In Bangladesh, however, beyond national contracts, what protections are available to domestic, emerging, or lower-paid sportswomen? A 2017 Fifpro global employment survey, covering more than 3,200 women footballers, had found that 47 percent would consider leaving early to start a family. Only 2 percent had children; of those, just 8 percent received maternity pay and 61 percent had no childcare support. Fifpro's 2026 report found that 19 percent of players considering leaving earlier than planned citing plans to start a family; 49 percent were considering an early exit overall. The figures are not directly comparable, but Fifpro identifies Fifa's 2021 maternity protections as one factor in changing perceptions. Fifa's rules still do not guarantee automatic contract extensions during pregnancy.

When selectors or administrators assume marriage or childbirth means a player will soon leave the sport, they might stop investing in her regardless of whether she has made such a decision. But, just like their male counterparts, sportswomen should not have to delay having children, conceal their marital status, or choose between family life and a sporting career.

Players' safety is another concern, as a former captain of Bangladesh's women's cricket team last year alleged sexual harassment and mental abuse by former team officials and said earlier complaints had not produced an effective remedy. An independent inquiry found prima facie evidence of inappropriate conduct in two out of four specific allegations. The BCB later banned one former official from cricket-related activities. The inquiry findings underline the need for trusted reporting channels.

Meanwhile, the BCB's announcement of an independent committee to hear sexual-harassment complaints outlined in a recent investigative report by The Whistle is a positive step. But its credibility will depend on whether players can approach the committee safely and whether complaints are handled fairly and transparently.

Institutions must also consider what happens when women leave competitive sport. How many move into coaching, officiating, administration, or talent development? And how many leave because of marriage, childbirth, injury, or financial pressure? Bangladesh lacks comprehensive data. Former athletes' experience can strengthen the next generation, but pathways into these roles need support. Sporting institutions should be judged not only by the number of medals won by players and by women's participation numbers, but also by whether sportswomen can build secure, complete careers. This requires safe training environments, fair selection, protection from harassment, paid maternity support, medical care, and opportunities beyond competition.

Alongside encouraging girls to take up sport, we need to also show them that the system will stand beside them not only when they win, but also when they become mothers or choose new roles in the game. The real measure of inclusion is not how many women enter the field, but whether they can stay, grow, and shape its future.

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COP31 must put disability inclusion on the climate agenda



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■ VASHKAR BHATTACHARJEE

As another global climate summit approaches, the world must confront the fact that the voices of persons with disabilities, who are among the most vulnerable to climate change, are still largely absent from the decisions shaping their life and future.

I met Tayeb Ali, who has visual impairment, on October 31 at a reunion programme organised by the alumni association of the Government School for the Visually Impaired in Chattogram. I first came to know Tayeb when he was admitted to the school. He had experienced a tragedy that no child should have to endure. During a devastating disaster, members of his family had left him behind, possibly because they did not know how to evacuate or protect a child with visual impairment. Many of his family members subsequently lost their lives or went missing. But Tayeb survived. Our conversation brought back memories of a painful past that reminded me of the enduring silence or neglect surrounding the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities in climate negotiations.

Tayeb's survival did not mean that the disaster was over. Years later, he continues to face the consequences of climate-related hazards. Floods, storms, salinity intrusion, and extreme heat have repeatedly disrupted his life and livelihood, as they have those of many others. Crops are damaged, economic security disappears, and opportunities to escape poverty become increasingly limited. "I might have survived the 1991 cyclone," said Tayeb, "but every day since then has been a relentless war against nature, even my mere existence."

As he described his circumstances, one message stayed with me: that such a disaster is not a single event; it returns year after year, taking away whatever little stability that people, including those with disabilities, manage to rebuild. I found myself asking, when we discuss climate adaptation, resilience, and loss and damage, do we ever imagine what these words mean to someone like Tayeb?

Another conversation I had with a physically challenged entrepreneur from the Patharghata area of Chattogram revealed a different dimension of the same crisis. He explained how tidal flooding periodically submerges his neighbourhood. When water rises, he cannot leave his home independently. His business activities stop and his income suffers as a result. For him, the problem is not just the rising water but also the absence of accessible infrastructure, safe transportation, inclusive preparedness, and adequate support. "Here I live in a city, an urban settlement, but the city stays inundated. Even with water around, people can still commute by different vehicles, but I have to stay indoors due to the lack of accessible transportation and proper planning," he said.

These are not isolated stories. They reflect the experiences of countless people with disabilities across Bangladesh, particularly in coastal and disaster-prone areas. Climate change does not affect everyone equally. A cyclone warning may not reach someone who is deaf. An evacuation shelter may offer protection to many but remain inaccessible to a wheelchair user. A person with visual impairment may receive the warning but still be unable to navigate an unfamiliar evacuation route without assistance. A disaster becomes more devastating when disability intersects with poverty, inaccessible infrastructure, discrimination, and exclusion from decision-making.

According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's (UNDRR) 2023 Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters, 84 percent of respondents did not have a personal disaster preparedness plan, while 86 percent reported not participating in community-level disaster risk reduction decision-making and planning. These figures expose a fundamental failure: those who face some of the greatest barriers during disasters are frequently excluded from designing or accessing systems meant to protect them.

I witnessed another side of this exclusion when I had the opportunity to attend the UN climate conference in 2015. It was an important experience, but I was struck by how limited the participation of persons with disabilities appeared to be in the broader climate discussions. Since then, I have not had another opportunity to attend a COP. Such opportunities remain extremely limited for many disability advocates, particularly those from developing countries. The barriers are not just physical. These include the cost of participation, inaccessible information, limited representation within national delegations, insufficient funding for organisations of persons with disabilities, and the persistent failure to recognise disability inclusion as a central climate justice concern.

Now, as world leaders prepare to gather in Antalya, Türkiye, for COP31 from November 9 to 20, 2026, I find myself asking: whose voices will shape the future of climate action? Will someone like Tayeb have a place in those conversations? Will an entrepreneur who loses income because of inaccessible roads and tidal flooding influence adaptation priorities? Will disability advocates have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decisions about climate finance, early warning systems, and loss and damage?

True, international commitments already provide a foundation. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the obligation to protect persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction emphasises inclusive, accessible, and participatory approaches. The Paris Agreement also acknowledges the need to respect and consider the rights of persons with disabilities in climate action. Despite all this, the distance between international commitments and everyday reality remains enormous.

Bangladesh has made important progress in disaster preparedness and early warning. However, significant gaps persist in ensuring that preparedness, evacuation, shelters, recovery assistance, and climate adaptation initiatives are accessible to everyone. Disability inclusion must, therefore, move beyond symbolic references in policy documents. Governments, including in Bangladesh, must ensure the meaningful representation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in national climate delegations, policy consultations, and adaptation planning. Participation must mean having an opportunity to influence decisions, not merely being present in a conference room.

Climate finance must also explicitly address disability inclusion. Resources should support accessible shelters, inclusive early warning systems, disability-responsive infrastructure, resilient livelihoods, and community-based adaptation initiatives. Organisations of persons with disabilities should have better opportunities to access funding and lead solutions. Furthermore, disability-disaggregated data and research must become an integral part of climate policymaking. Without understanding how different groups experience climate hazards, governments cannot design equitable responses. Most importantly, disability inclusion must be embedded in national and local disaster management, climate adaptation, and loss-and-damage mechanisms. Every relevant institution should be accountable for ensuring that people with disabilities are not excluded.

These people are not simply vulnerable individuals waiting to be rescued. Their expertise and lived experiences can make climate solutions more practical, effective, and inclusive. Tayeb's story is not merely about the tragedy of being left behind during a disaster. It is also about the extraordinary resilience of someone who has continued to rebuild his life despite repeated setbacks. But resilience should never become an excuse for institutional neglect in the face of repeated hardships.

As COP31 approaches, the international community must recognise that climate justice cannot be achieved while persons with disabilities remain invisible or only symbolically involved in climate-related negotiations, national policies, and financial decisions. They must be equal partners in shaping those policies and decisions.



VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

As world leaders prepare to gather in Antalya, Türkiye, for COP31 from November 9 to 20, 2026, I find myself asking: whose voices will shape the future of climate action? Will someone like Tayeb have a place in those conversations? Will an entrepreneur who loses income because of inaccessible roads and tidal flooding influence adaptation priorities? Will disability advocates have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decisions about climate finance, early warning systems, and loss and damage?

Can we make ship recycling both green and commercially viable?



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■ MUHAMMED ALI SHAHIN

For years, the ship recycling industry has provided critical raw materials to the steel industry, generated tax revenue for the government, and provided jobs to thousands of people. However, many entrepreneurs in this industry, which involves hazardous operations and significant environmental risks, face financial constraints that hinder their ability to upgrade facilities and maintain environmental standards. In response to requests from ship recycling yard owners, last month, the government downgraded shipbreaking yards from the red to orange category under the Environment Conservation Rules, 2023. The move has reopened an important debate: how can Bangladesh protect its environment and workers while ensuring that this economically important industry remains competitive? The answer should not be a choice between industrial growth and environmental protection, but a balanced framework that makes sustainable ship recycling commercially viable.

According to the secretary of the Ministry of Industries, ship recycling is a promising industry with an estimated 6,500 ships expected to be ready for scrapping worldwide by 2030. International ship owners' association, Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), predicts around 16,000 vessels will be available for recycling in the next decade. To meet global expectations on safe recycling, the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (HKC) came into force on June 26, 2025. Bangladesh ratified the convention in June 2023. But to improve its position internationally, the industry in Bangladesh must invest heavily in recycling facilities that protect the environment and workers.

Under the Environment Conservation Rules, 2023, ship recycling was placed in the red category for environmental clearance, which required a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment along with public consultation and review by the Department of Environment (DoE). The DoE's certification was required both for the site, that is, the yards, and the measures taken to ensure that the operations—ship recycling or cutting—are safe for the environment and human health.

However, ship recycling entrepreneurs have been concerned about the lengthy approval process, because dismantling a ship after it is beached can take up to 90 days, waiting for suitable tides and weather, the operating costs often increase as revenue gets delayed. The red category also means the industry is not eligible for specific green funding from Bangladesh Bank. But to improve their yards, owners require large investments.

An industry that is trying to invest billions to comply with international environmental and safety standards cannot realistically do so without help from financial institutions. On one hand, companies are being encouraged to go greener, but on the other, due to their category, they often cannot access the funding. The question, therefore, is how companies can be helped to overcome this challenging task, without risking the environment. Besides, any changes to the category need to comply with the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, Environment Conservation Rules 2023, Ship Recycling Act, 2018, and any relevant international obligations.

One solution could be making the monitoring tools under the red category mandatory for ship-cutting activities under the orange category. The authorities should issue a separate notice detailing clearly the requirements that will be needed to identify risks, mitigate them, and complete an environmental assessment. Besides, consultation and independent assessments should still be completed where required by law.

Such an approach could streamline the regulatory approval process without creating an environmental regulatory vacuum. It will help balance the industry's growth potential by ensuring access to green finance whilst still maintaining environmental standards and legal standards. However, the proposed notification must have a clear legal basis, remain consistent with the parent law and applicable rules, and establish specific, enforceable compliance requirements. It must not be used as a mechanism to circumvent statutory EIA obligations.

The reclassification should not reduce any current obligations the industry follows regarding Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM), segregation, safe storage, handling, treatment, and disposal of hazardous waste. All vessels arriving should have IHM completed correctly and ship recycling facilities should have proper processes in place to identify, manage and handle hazardous materials. The Bangladesh Ship Recycling Board currently requires ship recycling plans, IHM, and proper safety and waste management measures. This can be used as the basis for the special notice/order. Compliance with the HKC and national hazardous waste legislation should be made an integral requirement.

Besides, the government should expedite the development of a joint hazardous waste treatment facility, particularly the treatment, storage and disposal facility (TSDF) at Mirsarai. In addition, government departments responsible for oversight of the industry must be manned with staff with the right knowledge and skills. Without the necessary infrastructure, skilled individuals and proper oversight, ensuring environmental standards in the ship creaking industry will be difficult. Regular independent inspections should be conducted for gas detection before entry into confined spaces; emergency preparedness, ensuring use of correct PPE, and employment of skilled staff at yards. Green accreditation should be an ongoing process.

Moreover, a green financing mechanism should be developed jointly by the government, Bangladesh Bank, and commercial financial institutions for the industry. Only yards that are genuinely compliant and eligible should be able to access green sustainable financing through a clear policy. This could include long-term concessionary loans, partial credit guarantees, and targeted grants. Financial support should be tied to verifiable improvements in environmental and occupational safety. Individual yards should be assessed by banks using clear compliance indicators. International development partners such as the International Maritime Organisation, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and International Finance Corporation could also support through technical assistance, infrastructure sharing and blended funding.

India invested 53.5 crore rupees in the industry under the Ferrous Scrap Development Fund, upgrading 109 recycling yards. It has also implemented the Shipbreaking Credit Note Scheme for eligible shipowners to incentivise them to dismantle ships in HKC-compliant yards. Meanwhile, Pakistan announced a 12 billion rupees upgrade to its Gadani shipbreaking site to improve hazardous waste issues and provide better facilities for workers. Bangladesh can implement similar incentives suitable for its industry. The aim should be to create predictability in the market and reward ethical businesses in a positive way. The relevant ministries and active representatives from civil society organisations should be heavily involved in the whole process.

Thus, it should be a conditional reclassification with mandatory environmental assessment under a standalone enforceable order (if legally possible), strict IHM and hazardous waste management, green funding for yards that are compliant and independent oversight of environmental and occupational standards.

Bangladesh does not have to choose between supporting its ship recycling industry and protecting the natural environment. There must be a regulatory and financial system in place that allows for both. Orange classification (if legally justified) should never be used to undermine environmental responsibilities. Also, the environmental regulations should not hinder responsible businesses from gaining funding. The ultimate objective should be to ensure that Bangladesh develops a commercially viable ship recycling industry with responsible worker protection, hazardous waste management, and protection of the coastal environment for future generations.



'Bangladesh does not have to choose between supporting its ship recycling industry and protecting its environment.'

FILE PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**






Art Dhaka 2026 opens a new horizon for art and architecture

ZAHANGIR ALOM

As the city's creative pulse quickens, Art Dhaka opened on November 6, at Aloki, bringing together visual culture, critical dialogue and architectural innovation. Running until November 10, the initiative seeks to create a cultural platform where art is experienced, debated and collected.

At the centre of this vision stands ***The Glasshouse***, a temporary structure designed with sustainability in mind. Built with components intended to be dismantled, repurposed and reused after the event, it serves as a gathering space for installations, performances, talks and conversations with artists.

Nearby, Shala, the designated collectors' lounge, offers an intimate setting for dialogue among artists, patrons and cultural practitioners. A curated food venue presents traditional Bangladeshi flavours in contemporary formats, while an event shop features artist-led publications, prints and design objects.

Art Dhaka's founders share a commitment to supporting local contemporary art while encouraging international exchange.

The main fair comprises two curated sections, with artworks available for purchase by visitors and collectors. ***Narration. Thought. Chronicles.***, curated by Zihan Karim, occupies the ground floor, while The Still Point, curated by Najmun Nahar Keya, is on the upper floor.

The Print Pavilion, titled ***The Art of Access*** and curated by Fareha Zeba, explores the processes and traditions of printmaking. Bringing together prints and works on paper by artists across generations, it offers an accessible entry point into collecting.

Leaping Across Time, curated by Mustafa Zaman, pays tribute to pioneering artists whose practices helped lay the foundations of modern art in Bangladesh.

The Immersive Art Zone explores artistic legacies through sound, image, movement and spatial storytelling. It features the visual worlds of Zainul Abedin and SM Sultan, alongside a specially developed presentation



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

of works from Rokeya Sultana's ***Fata Morgana*** series.

The exhibiting artists work across a range of media, exploring personal histories, the possibilities of materials and social and cultural change.

Bishwajit Goswami's figurative and conceptual works examine human anatomy, identity and spatial presence, drawing on the emotional and psychological dimensions of contemporary life.

Sourav Chowdhury brings together printmaking techniques, textured surfaces and mythic symbolism in narratives that connect folklore, memory and modernity.

Dinar Sultana Putul's engagement with organic materials, tactile processes and environmental concerns invites viewers to reflect on ecological cycles and material heritage.

Art Dhaka's ambition to expand the infrastructure for contemporary art in Bangladesh also invites scrutiny. Its concentration of prominent founders, elite collectors and established artists creates a rarefied atmosphere that may feel removed from the wider art community.

Bringing architecture, sustainability, performance, design and culinary arts into one programme, Art Dhaka proposes an expansive vision of a cultural gathering.

Its promise lies in connecting these disciplines while creating room for public participation and serious artistic debate. How widely it opens that space will help determine its lasting contribution to the city's cultural life.

APURBA to perform in Florida after successful New York concert

Actor-turned-singer Ziaul Faruq Apurba is set to perform in Florida following the success of his first solo concert in New York earlier this year.

Held in August at the Jamaica Performing Arts Centre, ***Apurba Live Musical Night*** saw him entertain audiences for nearly two hours with songs and personal anecdotes. Following the response, Apurba revealed that he had received concert proposals from 12 US cities but preferred to take time preparing for each event.

His next performance is scheduled for December 13 at the seventh ***World Fair and Fest*** in Tampa, Florida. He will take the stage at 7:30pm local time on the second day of the two-day festival.

In a video message, Apurba said, "After New York, I am now coming to Florida to share my music with you. Looking forward to meeting everyone through songs and stories."





Vijay Sethupathi to present at 54th International Emmy Awards

Tamil actor Vijay Sethupathi is set to serve as a presenter at the 54th International Emmy Awards, scheduled to take place in New York on November 23, 2026.

He joins a list of Indian personalities who have previously presented at the prestigious ceremony. Actor Aashka Goradia presented in 2009, followed by Simone Singh in 2010. Prerna Wanvari also presented an award in the Arts Programming category in 2012.

Sethupathi was last seen in Baththa, set in Madras in 1986, where he plays a feared gangster who develops an unlikely bond with an eight-year-old boy after becoming trapped in a school toilet.

He will next star alongside Sai Pallavi in filmmaker Mani Ratnam's upcoming romantic drama ***Inji Vellam***.

US firms supply

FROM PAGE 12

to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) data.

Imports from traditional Middle Eastern suppliers, including Oman, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, fell to zero in September.

Oman and Iraq accounted for 41 percent and 21 percent of imports respectively in September 2025.

Besides the United States, smaller quantities came from the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which together accounted for 12 percent of imports. Malaysia's share declined from 5 percent to 3 percent.

Ajam J Chowdhury, director of Omera Petroleum Limited and former president of the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh (LOAB), said freight charges for bringing LPG directly from the United States stood at around $82 per tonne before the Middle East crisis, but some vessel owners were now demanding as much as $250 per tonne.

Mohammed Nurul Alam, chief executive officer of JMI LPG, said his company had imported around 8,000 tonnes of LPG and paid a premium of $300–350 per tonne over the Saudi Contract Price to secure supplies.

"We were selling the product at a loss to maintain supplies," he said.

He said the conflict had reduced vessel availability and made it difficult to arrange shipments and secure insurance coverage, adding to the cost of bringing LPG to Bangladesh.

FEW ALTERNATIVES

Ajam warned that Bangladesh's growing dependence on US-origin LPG posed a supply-security risk, as importers had limited alternatives.

Although countries such as Nigeria and Algeria could emerge as alternative suppliers, Bangladeshi importers had little experience sourcing LPG from those markets, he said.

Another feature of the changing supply chain is the growing role of intermediary storage and trading hubs in Asia.

US-origin cargoes are sometimes stored and traded through facilities in Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, and China before reaching Bangladesh, Ajam said.

He added that large importing countries, including India, had already secured cargoes for the next three to four years, making it difficult for smaller buyers to secure supplies.

"Even if the war ends, supplies may not return to normal immediately, as the damaged infrastructure in the Middle East would take time to repair," he said.

Md Redhwanur Rahman, chief operating officer (sales and marketing) of Bashundhara LP Gas, which was once a major market player but is currently unable to import, said, "Even companies with term supply contracts were not receiving their full contracted volumes because of shipping constraints."

The company had faced banking restrictions in 2024 and 2025 and had yet to sign a new long-term supply contract with any global supplier, he added.

BERC Chairman Jalal Ahmed said the shift towards US supplies had increased the distance LPG cargoes needed to travel to reach Bangladesh, adding to transportation time and costs.

CONCENTRATED IMPORT MARKET

Although around 35 companies hold licences to operate in the sector, only 10 to 12 are active importers.

The five largest importers accounted for around 71 percent of Bangladesh's total LPG imports of 17.43 lakh tonnes in FY2025-26, according to BERC data.

United Aygaz was the largest importer, bringing in 2.96 lakh tonnes, followed by Meghna Group's Fresh LPG with 2.8 lakh tonnes.

Omera imported 2.65 lakh tonnes, BM Energy 2.03 lakh tonnes and Jamuna Spacetech 1.87 lakh tonnes.

Several other major companies, including Basundhara, Unitex, Orion, Beximco and JMI, have reduced or suspended imports, according to industry sources.

Govt's debt burden swelling

FROM PAGE 12

The government also provided Tk 20,000 crore in capital support to Shamilita Islamic Bank, formed last fiscal year by merging five troubled Islamic banks. Further support may be needed as reforms of weak banks continue.

Considering these factors, the World Bank projects the fiscal deficit to widen to 4.8 percent of GDP in FY27 and 4.9 percent in FY28, as expenditure growth outpaces revenue gains.

BANK BORROWING, DEBT RISKS

The World Bank warned that "the government's continued reliance on the banking sector to finance the fiscal deficit risks exacerbating existing macro-financial vulnerabilities".

By absorbing available bank liquidity, government borrowing risks crowding out private-sector credit, keeping lending rates high and discouraging investment.

It could also complicate efforts to contain inflation and deepen the "sovereign-bank nexus", tying public finances more closely to banking-sector risks.

Domestic banks hold the largest share of domestic public debt through Treasury bills and bonds.

REVENUE SHORTFALL

The World Bank said revenue collection improved only modestly in FY26 and remained below target, while tax policy and administration reforms made limited progress.

A narrow tax base, weak compliance, and fragmented tax administration continue to constrain revenue mobilisation.

Key reforms, including separating tax policymaking from tax administration, remain delayed.

The World Bank also called for digitalising tax administration and phasing out poorly targeted tax exemptions.

Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said weak revenue mobilisation was the main driver of rising public debt, forcing the government to rely increasingly on domestic and foreign borrowing.

Bangladesh's revenue-to-GDP ratio, which stood at 7.9 percent in 2025, is among the lowest in the world, he said, leaving the government dependent on loans to meet its spending needs.

"The original sin is that our revenue collection is much lower than that of the countries participating in the conference. That is what we need to address first," he said.

Mustafizur said the budget also failed to provide a complete picture of debt servicing, as principal repayments, particularly on domestic debt, were not disclosed as clearly as interest payments.

A clearer account of both is needed to show how much public money goes towards servicing debt, he added.

He said the conference could help Bangladesh learn from other countries about managing debt, securing concessional loans and negotiating lower interest rates and longer repayment and grace periods.

But it would not solve the underlying problem without stronger domestic revenue mobilisation.

"Unless we address this problem, no one will be able to pull us out of the debt trap," he said.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, also said government expenditure had risen without a corresponding increase in revenue, widening the deficit and adding to public debt.

He said the conference could help Bangladesh build the technical capacity to issue sovereign bonds in international markets and attract potential investors.

Policymakers need to understand listing and regulatory requirements, choose suitable bond instruments, and identify appropriate markets, as Bangladesh is considering raising funds through a sovereign bond.

"Issuing bonds alone is not enough; there must be buyers willing to invest in them," Hussain said.

He added that credit ratings, underwriting and guarantees would be crucial. Guarantees from institutions such as the International Finance Corporation or specialised private financial institutions could reduce investor risks and lower borrowing costs.

"If these issues are discussed and translated into concrete steps, the conference could produce some meaningful outcomes. Otherwise, it could end up being little more than an opportunity to attend sessions, listen to presentations and exchange views," he said.

Crude bomb blasts

FROM PAGE 12

General Hospital during an Awami League motorcycle procession. Police said 70 to 80 motorcycles were travelling from Banani towards Kuril Bishwa Road. Three people were arrested.

Also on November 5, two crude bombs were thrown near the July Memorial in Badda, while explosions occurred outside Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Karwan Bazar and at Gate 3 of Rajarbagh Police Lines.

On Friday night, eight crude bombs exploded in Khilgaon, Adabor, Shahbagh, the airport area and Kalshi in Mirpur between 7:55pm and midnight. A Baishakhi Paribahan bus was also torched at the Coca-Cola intersection on Pragati Sarani.

Early yesterday, a Pallisheba Paribahan bus carrying garment workers was set ablaze in Saturia, Manikganj. Around 4:00am, a BRTC bus on the Khagrachhari-Chattogram route was torched in Khagrachhari town's Mahajanpara area. Its helper, who was sleeping inside, escaped unharmed.

DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media) Akhter Hossain said five Awami League affiliates had been arrested over the explosions in the past 24 hours.

He said a special drive targeting criminals and leaders and activists of the banned organisation was underway to maintain law and order. Figures on Awami League arrests since November 1 would take at least another day to compile, he added.

According to the Police Headquarters, at least 21 people were arrested in connection with crude bomb explosions between November 1 and 7. During the same period, at least 898 people linked to the Awami League were arrested in ongoing police drives.

Similar attacks occurred ahead of an Awami League-announced lockdown in September. On September 19, at least 14 crude bombs exploded across Dhaka, a bus was torched outside Kafrul Police Station and three people were injured. The DMP subsequently established over 200 checkpoints and intensified patrols and searches.

Former inspector general of police Ashraful Huda urged stronger intelligence operations alongside regular policing, citing manpower shortages.

"When there is only one police officer for every 1,200 people, it is not possible to ensure security everywhere by deploying uniformed police alone."

He also called for closer supervision by senior officers to ensure field-level personnel perform their duties.

Prof Muhammad Omar Faruk of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University's Department of Criminology and Police Science said the explosions appeared intended to create instability, spread fear and fuel resentment against the government.

He warned that politically motivated individuals and separatist groups, including those previously involved in terrorism, might exploit the situation.

Faruk recommended stronger police surveillance, CCTV monitoring and patrols in crime-prone areas and around key installations, saying increased police presence could prevent attacks.

DMP Additional Commissioner (DB) Shafiqul Islam said security was being strengthened. "We are planning to install CCTV to cover the city. Besides, checkposts will be set up in the city area."

New Gini housing attacked again

FROM PAGE 12

Mohammad Nazim Uddin Bhuiyan, owner of New Gini Properties.

They also vandalised a farm inside the compound and robbed gold ornaments from his sister, who was there at the time, he alleged.

Nazim claimed the attackers belonged to the same group that had carried out the September 26 attack.

Police detained 14 people, including four women, in connection with yesterday's incident, Sazzad Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (Cantonment Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

"When one group went there, the other group resisted them, leading to a clash. Police brought the situation under control and detained 14 people from both sides," he said.

Of those detained, three sustained serious injuries. They were first taken to Kurmitola General Hospital before being referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he added.

On September 26, around 200 to 250 people stormed the housing project at around 10:30pm, firing gunshots and vandalising several structures, including content creator Salman Muqtadir's Brownfish Studio, the company's office and an under-construction building.

Construction workers were also beaten, while mobile phones, cash and other valuables were allegedly looted.

New Gini Properties subsequently filed a case with the Cantonment Police Station, accusing 13 named people, including retired Major General Golam Mohiuddin Chowdhury, and 150 to 200 unidentified people.

The initial police investigation pointed to a land dispute between the housing company and the retired military officer as the motive behind the September attack.

On October 17, Nazim also filed a general diary with the Cantonment Police Station, alleging that three people accused in the case had threatened to kill him.

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff

FROM PAGE 12

program that defined the first year of the president's second term.

But he faced widespread criticism after the deadly shootings of two protesters by immigration agents in Minneapolis in January -- incidents that sparked mass demonstrations.

"Stephen Miller is the architect of the most barbaric, inhumane policies of this administration. Trump couldn't have made a worse choice," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer posted on X.

"Our Democratic majorities will fight him every step of the way."

'It's Miller Time'

In a post on Truth Social earlier announcing Miller's appointment, Trump described him as "one of my most trusted advisors."

Trump said Wiles had "done an outstanding job" and would be "moving over to the Trump Political Operation. I want to thank her for her service as Chief of Staff -- She has done a great job!"

Tk 4cr bridge remains unusable without approach roads

MINTU DESHWARA

Around 15,000 people from at least 12 villages in Moulvibazar's Rajnagar upazila still have to cross the Laghata river by boat or makeshift bamboo footbridges as a Tk 4 crore bridge, built nearly five years ago, remains unusable due to a lack of approach roads.

"We urge the authorities to build the approach roads and open the bridge without further delay," said Hosna Begum, a local resident.

The 60-metre reinforced concrete bridge on the Kamarchak Government Primary School-Dhalai ferry terminal road in Kamarchak union remains disconnected from roads at both ends.

According to the Local Government Engineering Department, construction began on July 6, 2020, at an estimated cost of Tk 4,04,03,449. Contractor Prince Mamun (JV) was given until November 18, 2021, to complete the work.

Sajjad Hossain of Islampur village said residents have to take detours of several miles as rickshaws, vans, bicycles, motorcycles and auto-rickshaws cannot use the bridge.

Farmers struggle to transport their produce to markets, while taking critically ill patients to hospitals is also difficult, he said.

The affected villages include South Islampur, Khas Premnagar, Mitipur, Bhola Nagar, Shyamerkona, Nowagaon, Alalpur, Hatikraiya, Gobindpur and Kalaikuna.



The 60-metre reinforced concrete bridge on the Kamarchak Govt Primary School-Dhalai ferry terminal road in Kamarchak union remains disconnected from roads. PHOTO: STAR

Residents also face difficulties reaching schools, the Kamarchak Union Parishad, a bank, mosques and madrasas. A visit to the site found the main bridge structure complete but without connecting roads at either end.

Brinda Namasudra of Bhola Nagar said students, elderly people and patients requiring emergency medical care were among the worst affected. Farmers and traders also face additional costs and delays in transporting goods.

"Despite spending crores of taka, our suffering remains unchanged. During the monsoon, boats and bamboo footbridges are still our only means of crossing the river," said local businessman Suleman Mia.

Repeated attempts to contact the contractor, Prince Mamun (JV), for comment went unanswered.

Rajnagar Upazila Engineer Abdul Gani said construction of the approach roads had been delayed due to difficulties in sourcing soil during the monsoon and legal complications over land acquisition. "We have decided to complete the approach roads within the existing arrangements," he said.

"We hope to complete the work and make the bridge usable within the next month," he added.

See business potential, not disability: speakers

FROM PAGE 3

"Most of all, they need our confidence that they can be part of the mainstream," he said, stressing the importance of accessible infrastructure.

Representatives of financial institutions, including Kanti Kumar Shaha, chief executive officer of Alliance Finance PLC; Shakil Ahmed of Eastern Bank PLC; Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq, chief communications officer of United Commercial Bank PLC; and a representative of Upay, discussed financial products and services available to entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Debashish Roy, director of Impact Investment Exchange, called for greater visibility of financial services available to people with disabilities.

Zahidul Kabir, lead of BRAC's Disability Inclusion Programme, and Aziza Ahmed, director of operations at Bangladesh Business and Disability Network, discussed the responsibilities of organisations working in the sector.

Syed A J Rizvi, founding chairman of Alliance Finance, said banks could adopt a more flexible and proactive approach to supporting entrepreneurs with disabilities while complying with existing regulations.

Bappi Sarker of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation said his organisation had developed a forum to promote the economic development of people with disabilities with support from different sections of society.

Shormi Roy, founder of catering business Ahona Rondhonshala, said banks had been responsive when she followed the required procedures, but entrepreneurs needed clearer information on accessing loans and other banking facilities.

"Today's disabled community wants to be treated as entrepreneurs first," she said.

The workshop concluded with a decision to prepare documents explaining procedures for obtaining banking facilities. Participants also called for policies supporting underserved sections of the economy.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North Secretary M Hasanuz Zaman was also present.

Successive regimes used the constitution to retain power

FROM PAGE 3

Firoz said the concentration of power persisted under later rulers. Although Ziaur Rahman had introduced provisions for referendums and a Supreme Judicial Council, he did not substantially change the centralised power structure, he said.

He also argued that the introduction of one-party rule in 1975 reflected not just a constitutional crisis but a failure of governance, as the ruling party became increasingly detached from the people.

He called for addressing the constitution's shortcomings without abandoning its progressive ideals and its roots in the Liberation War.

Supreme Court lawyer Qazi Zahed Iqbal said several amendments had been made to accommodate particular individuals rather than reflect the people's will.

Although the constitution contained the essential features of parliamentary government, the country had still experienced authoritarian rule, he said, adding that the problem also lay in political culture and the reluctance of leaders to relinquish power.

Qazi cited the Eighth Amendment, which introduced Islam as the state religion under HM Ershad, as an example of using constitutional change for political advantage.

He said the 1990 mass uprising had restored parliamentary government, but its gains were not sustained. The 2024 uprising had offered another opportunity to introduce reforms in line with people's aspirations.

Regarding the present reform debate, Qazi said changes through parliament could face legal challenges, while reforms through a separate council might also be challenged for going beyond the existing constitutional framework.

The interim administration, by taking oath under the constitution after the 2024 uprising, had entered that framework, he argued. The intervening period therefore needed ratification through an 18th amendment, he said.

However, the prospect of future legal challenges should not prevent necessary changes. "You cannot bind future generations to today's values," Qazi said, arguing that each generation should be free to adapt the constitution to its needs.

Supreme Court lawyer and constitutional researcher Arif Khan said the constitution's origins lay in the Liberation War and earlier political struggles in East Bengal.

He said Pakistan's prolonged failure to establish stable constitutional rule explained why the Awami League had moved quickly to frame a constitution after independence, seeking to avoid a similar deadlock.

Demands for education, food, clothing and other basic rights had featured in political programmes before independence, he said. The principles of the 1972 constitution therefore did not belong exclusively to the AL.

"The Liberation War was not any party's war. It was a people's war," Arif said, criticising the party for claiming ownership of the war and the constitution.

He argued that the AL subsequently weakened the framework it itself had established, first through the 1973 amendments on international-crimes cases and emergency powers, and then through the Fourth Amendment of 1975, which introduced one-party rule.

Arif credited former president Ziaur Rahman with restoring several provisions on elections, judicial powers and the press, bringing the constitution closer to its earlier form, although some provisions were changed.

He linked the events of November 7, 1975, to that process.

The constitution could be amended or rewritten where necessary, but severing its link with the Liberation War could benefit those who opposed independence, he warned.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 08

	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

Govt revises CSA draft, worries stay

FROM PAGE 1

rumour as "unsupported or unverified" information, news or claims that caused, or could cause, public confusion, panic or unrest.

Under the revision, information must be false to qualify as a rumour.

However, the revisions disclosed by officials do not indicate any reduction in the penalty of 10 years' imprisonment or a Tk 40 lakh fine, or both, for spreading "rumours" and "misinformation".

The government also plans to define and penalise defamation in line with the Penal Code, 1860, which provides for up to two years' simple imprisonment, a fine, or both.

The earlier draft proposed five years' imprisonment or a Tk 20 lakh fine, or both.

The modifications will further distinguish defamation, belittling and bullying from offences involving sextortion and other forms of sexual abuse under Section 25.

The revised draft requires approval of a competent court to arrest journalists and news outlet owners over their coverage. Media outlets will receive prior notice and an opportunity to defend themselves before action can be taken against them.

On content blocking, authorities would have to inform affected individuals or organisations of the reasons within three days, and applications for the release of blocked content would have to be disposed of within 15 days.

The government also plans to remove a provision that allowed online content to be blocked for being derogatory towards the state, and to delete the words "any other agency" from Section 8(2), which refers to authorities empowered to seek content blocking.

Under the existing law, authorities must obtain tribunal approval within three days of blocking content. If approval is not obtained or is refused, the content must be restored.

However, the proposed protections have drawn criticism for distinguishing between journalists and other citizens.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), acknowledged that journalists and media owners were being given some exemptions but asked why the same protections would not extend to everyone, and whether the same law would discriminate against all other citizens.

"Such divide and rule should not be ideally acceptable to media professionals themselves," he said.

Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury said freedom of expression should be protected equally for journalists and other citizens, raising constitutional concerns about selective safeguards.

She also sought clarification on what kinds of "action" would require prior notice.

Referring to Section 29 of the previous draft, under which a court may suspend, cancel or prohibit an organisation's registration, licence or activities following its conviction, she said cancelling an organisation's registration or licence for an individual's offence would be disproportionate, particularly when the offence is defined broadly.

The Editors' Council's 12-point recommendations include court approval for journalists' arrests, searches, seizures, surveillance, and device access; confidentiality of sources; safeguards for public-interest reporting; protection against penalising entire outlets for individual reports; and handling of defamation complaints by the Press Council.

Prothom Alo executive editor Sajjad Sharif said the government had responded to some concerns by proposing advance notice and time limits for disposal of applications.

"But the new draft should have also addressed sections 33, 34 and 35, which specifically deal with investigative powers, search, seizure and arrest without warrant," he said.

On defamation, SC lawyer Priya Ahsan said it did not need to be defined twice. The existing criminal defamation provisions, inherited from the colonial era, had themselves been misused, and imprisonment was a disproportionate response to reputational harm, she said.

She also criticised the continued inclusion of rumour as an offence, citing the misuse of such loosely defined speech under Section 57 of the ICT Act and other predecessors of the cyber security law.

She welcomed the removal of provisions allowing mobile courts to try certain cyber offences.

Iftekharuzzaman said the issue was not merely how defamation was defined, but whether cyber security or criminal laws should be used at all to regulate defamation, fake news and disinformation. He argued that such an approach was neither appropriate nor effective.

"Cyber security laws are meant to protect cyber infrastructure, data integrity, and online safety such as preventing hacking or digital fraud rather than to police information, speech or reputation," he said.

Civil courts would be more appropriate for addressing reputational damage, misinformation and fake news, he said, rather than using this law to control free speech through unaccountable use of police and state power.

National Revolution and Solidarity Day observed

FROM PAGE 3

He said those who had attempted to undermine the country in the past would not succeed in suppressing pro-democracy people this time either.

He added that the people would resist such conspiracies just as they had done before.

The procession passed through Nightingale intersection, Kakrail, the Chief Justice's residence, Hare Road, Minto Road, Hotel InterContinental intersection, Banglamotor, and Farmgate before reaching Manik Mia Avenue in front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

At one point, he led the crowd in chanting, "Not Delhi, not Pindi, nor any other country -- Bangladesh first, Bangladesh for all."

"Let our revolution begin today," he said, concluding his speech.

Earlier, BNP leaders and activists began gathering in Nayapaltan in small processions from noon. At one point, crowds filled the streets from Kakrail intersection to Fakirerpool.

Many carried the national flag and placards featuring portraits of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, former prime minister Khaleda Zia, and Tarique Rahman. Several participants wore colourful caps and party T-shirts.

Leaders and activists from BNP units in Dhaka North and South, as well as different districts under Dhaka division, took part in the rally.

Earlier in the morning, President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman paid floral tributes at the graves of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and the party's former chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Meanwhile, the BNP rally and procession brought parts of the capital to a standstill yesterday afternoon, causing severe traffic congestion.

VILLAGE POLICE TO GET HIGHER SALARIES

Earlier in the morning, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman attended a national gathering of village police at the National Parade Ground, where he announced increases in their salaries, retirement benefits, and allowances.

He said the monthly salary of village police members had been raised from Tk 7,500 to Tk 10,500, while that of village police chiefs had been increased from Tk 8,000 to Tk 11,000.

Members will also receive a monthly mobile phone allowance of Tk 150. The new benefits took effect yesterday, he said.

The retirement gratuity for members has been increased from Tk 50,000 to Tk 80,000, while that for chiefs has been raised from Tk 80,000 to Tk 1 lakh.

Weekly allowances for travel to police stations have also been increased. Members will now receive Tk 500, up from Tk 300, while chiefs will get Tk 600 instead of Tk 300.

CONCERT AT MANIK MIA

A concert titled "Concert for Solidarity" was organised at Manik Mia Avenue to mark the day.

Organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the event was held under the management of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, with support from the Bangladesh Musical Bands Association.

James, Miles, Warfaze, Feedback, Artcell, Shironamhin, and Mechanics performed at the concert.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
web: telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affair's
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Police
3.	Procuring Entity Name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization
4.	Invitation for	Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027
5.	Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.008.26/9152/Betar
6.	Date	05-11-2026
Key Information		
7.	Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International)
Funding Information		
8.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)
Particular Information		
9.	Tender Publication date	08 November 2026
10.	Tender last selling date	21 December 2026.
11.	Tender closing date and time	22 December 2026 at 12:00 hrs.
12.	Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	22 December 2026 at 12:30 hrs.
Name & address of the office		
13.	Name & address of the office	Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Selling tender document	ASP (Procurement), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
	Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
14.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	22 November 2026, at 12:00 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
15.	Eligibility of Tenderer	1) Up to date Export license (2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal (3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability (4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal (5) Other requirements described in the tender document (PG 5A).
16.	Brief description of goods:	Supply of HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories for FPU in FY 2026-2027

Sl. No.	Description of Good	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	HF Fixed Set with necessary accessories	5,000/- (Five Thousand) Taka only.	TK-6,34,500/- or USD-5,100.00	150 days from the Date of Opening L/C.

Procuring Entity Details		
17.	Name of official inviting tender	Shahriar Bin Saleh
18.	Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
19.	Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
20.	Contact details of official inviting the tender	Phone: +880 2-8301253 FAX: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: + 88 01320-020041, e-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd
21.	The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.	
Special instructions		
22.	a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.	
	b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.	
	c) The Procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.	
	d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.	
	e) Evaluation will be done by Lot by Lot basis.	
	f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.	
	g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.	
	h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.	
	i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2025.	

০৫/১১/২০২৬

(Shahriar Bin Saleh)
BP 7810126915
SP (Logistics)
Police Telecommunication Organization
Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Mobile: 01320020041
E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

GD-2698

BILS | ILO International Labour Organization | The Daily Star





Decent Work and Social Justice for All

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) hosted a national symposium on September 4, 2026 in Dhaka, titled "Future of Work: Decent Work and Social Justice for All." The event brought together government representatives, employer, worker, and civil society stakeholders to address the rapidly evolving labor market. Discussions focused on two primary priorities: strengthening social dialogue for inclusive labor governance and expanding universal social protection to safeguard workers against ongoing economic, technological, and environmental transitions.

In his welcome remarks, BILS Executive Director Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed highlighted the closure of more than 400 garment factories and the resulting job losses. He called for a system to provide workers with timely information about potential layoffs and available support, stressing the need for a life-cycle-based social protection system.

ILO Bangladesh Country Director Max Tunon said the future of work concerns not only employment opportunities but also the quality of jobs. Highlighting widespread informality, he stressed institutional capacity, accountability and political commitment, while identifying the National Social Dialogue Forum as an important platform for tripartite engagement.

Md Saidul Islam, additional secretary-general of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation, identified informal employment and Bangladesh's LDC graduation as major challenges, calling for coordinated action by the government, employers and workers.

Md Abdur Rahim Khan, additional secretary at the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said decent work policies must address emerging challenges from climate change and technological transformation alongside compliance with international labour standards.

Advocate Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, MP, stressed adequate wages, workers' income security and effective implementation of recent labour law amendments. Referring to workers' demand for a monthly national wage of Tk 30,000 and rising inflation, he called for stronger social dialogue and shared responsibility in protecting workers' rights and offring social protection.

Chief guest Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, adviser to the prime minister, called for a sustainable, welfare-oriented economy that protects rights and promotes humane development. He highlighted the garment sector's contribution to women's formal employment and stressed domestic resource mobilisation to invest in skills, productivity and social protection.

Mesbahuddin Ahmed, senior joint convener of the National Advocacy Alliance for Workers' Rights, said continued identification of emerging labour challenges and cooperation among government, employers and workers were essential to ensuring decent working conditions.

At the closing session, Lotte Ellegaard, head of SRO-Asia at the Danish Trade Development Agency, emphasised strategic investment, formal job creation and skills development. Drawing on Denmark's experience, she said effective social dialogue depends on trust, mutual respect and strong representative institutions.

Dr Mahdi Amin, adviser to the prime minister, underscored accountable governance, workers' participation in policymaking, women's empowerment, childcare support and social protection. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to workers' rights and industrial stability.

BILS Secretary General and Prime Minister's Adviser Nazrul Islam Khan called for collective action to address automation, artificial intelligence, digitalisation and the just transition. He also stressed the need to strengthen national dialogue mechanisms and expand workers' organising rights, noting that many workers remain unorganised and inadequately represented.

The symposium sought to consolidate recommendations from the two thematic discussions, identify priority actions and stakeholder responsibilities, and build consensus around an outcome document to guide future action on labour reform, social dialogue and universal social protection.

KOHINOOR MAHMOOD, *Director, BILS,* moderated the whole event.

Social Dialogue for Inclusive and Decent Workplaces

The first thematic session, titled "Shaping the Future of Work: Social Dialogue for an Inclusive and Decent World of Work," featured a keynote presentation and panel discussion moderated by Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Executive Director of BILS. The session explored emerging labour market challenges and emphasised social dialogue, collective bargaining, institutional readiness and skills development for an inclusive transition.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For social dialogue

- Implement a robust labor information management system and mandate impact assessments before introducing AI or automation into workplaces.
- Operationalize the National Social Dialogue Forum to guarantee tripartite (government, employer, worker) collaboration in labor governance and policymaking.
- Establish a unified digital database mapping workers' skills and employment statuses to seamlessly connect them with jobs and social security.
- Strengthen Public Employment Services and mandate employer-led reskilling to create structured pathways from informal to formal employment.

Ananya Raihan (Keynote Speaker)
Chairperson, i-Social
Bangladesh's future of work is shaped by technological, environmental, and demographic shifts. To ensure a fair transition, social dialogue among the government, employers, and workers is vital. He advocated for active labor market policies and updating the National Employment Policy every three years. Key institutional reforms, such as adding four departments to the Ministry of Labour, creating dedicated desks for informal workers, and establishing an interoperable National Workers' Registry will strengthen labor governance and protect all workers.

Mesbahuddin Ahmed
Senior Joint Convenor, National Advocacy Alliance for Workers' Rights
Ensuring a just transition is essential as Bangladesh moves towards a greener, sustainable economy. Workers must not be left behind during these economic and environmental shifts; their livelihoods and fundamental rights must be actively protected. Furthermore, reskilling, upskilling, and continuous skills development are crucial for preparing the workforce for emerging employment opportunities. Effective social dialogue among the government, employers, and workers, aligned with the Labour Reform Commission's recommendations, is necessary to address transition challenges and guarantee inclusivity.

Md. Abdus Samad Al Azad
Director General, Department of Labour (DoL)
Addressing changing labor market needs requires stronger institutions and stakeholder collaboration. Public Employment Services must be digitalized and strengthened, utilizing reliable labor market data to guide skills development and employment planning. Furthermore, employers share the responsibility to reskill and upskill their workers, helping them adapt to ongoing digitalization. Appropriate policies, targeted budgetary allocations, and continuous tripartite consultations are essential. The Ministry of Labour and Employment must play a central, coordinating role in implementing these vital initiatives.

Nada Aridhi
Technical Specialist, LAWC Cluster, ILO Bangladesh
A human-centered approach must remain central to the future of work, ensuring workers' voices shape policies and legislation. To address emerging employment forms, social dialogue must be strengthened at national, sectoral, and cross-border levels. Declining trade union density and limited collective bargaining remain significant challenges. Consequently, new labor groups, including gig and platform workers, must be integrated into these discussions alongside traditional tripartite constituents. Ultimately, reliable data, extensive research, and technical expertise are essential for effective dialogue.

Saad Mohammad Chaudhary
General Secretary PUWF / ILO-GB Member, Pakistan
Technological advancements, including AI and automation, must actively support decent work, social justice, and inclusive development. Workers and trade unions require a meaningful role in workplace digitalization decisions. Rigorous labor-impact assessments are necessary before introducing major technological changes to evaluate their effects on employment, wages, safety, and labor rights. Furthermore, lifelong learning, reskilling, and social protection must be strengthened for displaced workers. Transparency and strict accountability in algorithmic management and digital surveillance are equally critical for fairness.

Dr. Pravin Sinha
Secretary General, NLLA & IIRA, India
Effective social dialogue requires stronger institutional coordination and meaningful participation from the government, employers, and workers in policymaking. Bangladesh faces major challenges regarding its large informal sector and lack of reliable labor data. Preparing for LDC graduation is vital due to its implications on trade and employment. In labor-surplus economies, automation must be introduced carefully to mitigate job losses. Technology should ideally be leveraged in ways that actively support employment generation rather than unnecessarily displacing the human workforce.

Yasunobu Aihara
President, Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF)
Social dialogue and sustainable social protection are essential for managing technological change. Despite progress in Bangladesh's labor standards, informality, insecure employment, and limited collective bargaining remain concerns. Introducing AI without worker consultation, unequal training access, and unclear regulations present further challenges. Workers must participate in digitalization decisions. To ensure technological progress benefits everyone, stronger AI literacy, robust skills development, and clear regulatory frameworks are needed, all supported by continuous and inclusive social dialogue across the employment spectrum.

Dr. Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury
Executive Chairperson, NSDA
Skills development must lead to sustainable employment; training alone is insufficient without practical application. Currently, about 74% of individuals receiving competency-based certifications through targeted job placement initiatives successfully enter the labor market. These recognized certificates significantly improve employment prospects both domestically and abroad. To connect training with actual industry demands, stronger collaboration among the government, private sector, and stakeholders is essential. Increased industry participation guarantees that skills development directly translates into meaningful and long-lasting employment opportunities for workers.

Challenges and Readiness for Universal Social Protection

The second thematic session featured a keynote presentation by Mostafiz Ahmed and panel discussion moderated by Dr. Jakir Hossain, Professor at the University of Rajshahi. The session examined gaps in social protection coverage, particularly for informal and vulnerable workers, and explored pathways towards universal, life-cycle-based protection, with emphasis on sustainable financing, stronger governance and emerging labour market risks.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For universal social protection

- Enact a legal framework for extending sustainably financed social security to all workers including informal, gig, and migrant workers.
- Integrate existing benefit databases and leverage mobile banking for transparent, secure social protection disbursements.
- Establish living-wage mechanisms and design comprehensive protections addressing women's specific life-stage vulnerabilities.
- Develop targeted income support and retraining programs for workers displaced by technological automation or climate changes.

Mostafiz Ahmed (Keynote Speaker)
Professor, Jagannath University
Universal social protection is essential to ensuring a just world of work in Bangladesh. Existing programmes must be strengthened to address workers' needs and vulnerabilities. Key priorities include enacting a Universal Worker Social Protection Act, introducing a national minimum wage, standardising workplace injury compensation and protecting workers against unemployment. Expanding pensions, healthcare, maternity and paternity benefits, childcare, affordable housing and educational support is also necessary. Stronger protections are needed for workers with disabilities and migrant workers, including insurance, compensation and reintegration support.

Razequzzaman Ratan
President, Socialist Labour Front (SLF)
Comprehensive social protection and labor rights are essential, especially for informal and vulnerable workers. He emphasized four key priorities for worker protection: recognition, registration, remuneration, and rights. Formalizing informal employment, ensuring fair wages, and protecting migrant, female, and gig workers from job loss are vital. Direct payment mechanisms prevent intermediaries from withholding earnings. Additionally, post-retirement security, reasonable working hours, child protection, and ensuring women workers receive fair pay, dignity, and workplace safety require immediate attention.

Ruben Korevaar
Programme Lead, Mondiaal FNV, Netherlands
Social protection must reach low-income and informal workers through better program coordination. While the National Social Security Strategy provides a framework, fragmented initiatives create coverage gaps for Bangladesh's large informal workforce. Drawing from Germany's experience, he highlights the importance of contributory social protection and shared responsibility among the government, employers, and workers. Rather than just temporary financial assistance during hardship, robust social protection provides security and stability, strengthening worker participation and contributing to broader economic growth.

Syed Saad Hussain Gilani
Programme Manager, ILO Social Protection
Social protection must comprehensively cover both formal and informal workers. The Employment Injury Scheme pilot effectively demonstrates the value of social insurance and employer contributions. Bangladesh urgently needs a dedicated legal framework and institutional mechanism for worker-focused social protection. A tripartite council involving the government, employers, and workers would significantly strengthen coordination and accountability. Furthermore, creating a unified worker database and utilizing accessible mobile financial services will make it easier for workers to receive benefits efficiently.

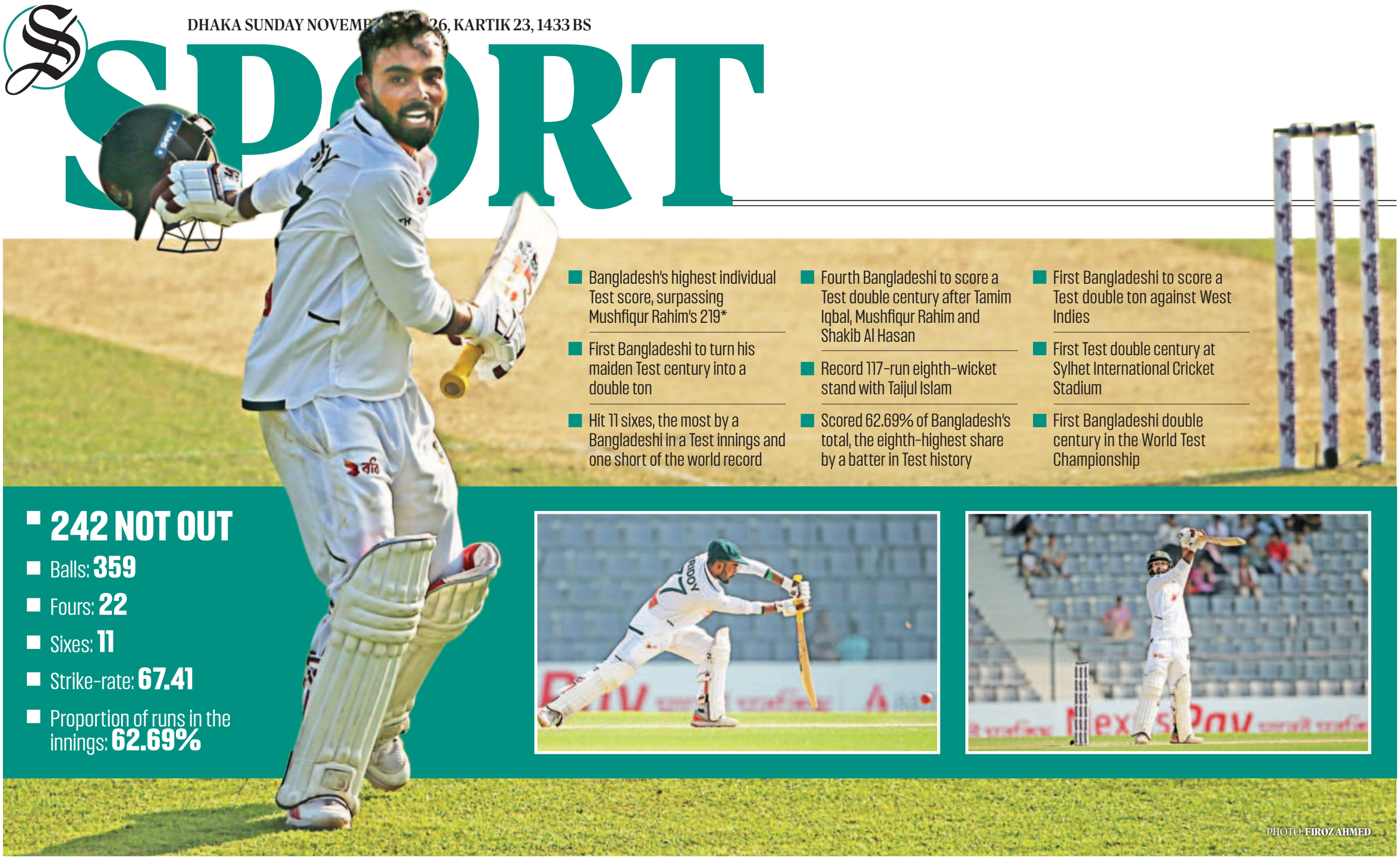
Shaheen Anam
Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation
Low-income and informal workers urgently require coordinated access to social protection. Women workers face severe additional challenges, including inadequate wages, safety concerns, unpaid care burdens, and climate-induced displacement. Beyond statutory minimums, living wages demand greater attention as living costs rise. Social protection for women must address their specific needs across different life stages, particularly vulnerabilities tied to employment and unpaid care work. Stronger monitoring, strict accountability, and effective resource allocation are necessary to ensure this critical support reaches them.

Virjesh Upadhyay
Director General, Dattopant Thengadi Foundation, India
India's experience demonstrates the immense value of universal worker registration based on a "one worker, one identity" principle. A comprehensive database tracking occupation, skills, and migration history effectively connects workers with employment opportunities and targeted social security services. Bangladesh can draw useful lessons from this approach while tailoring it to its unique labor market and institutional context. Developing a worker-centered registration mechanism will provide a robust foundation for improving social protection access across all employment categories.

Dr. Sabur Ghayur
Chairman, Center for Labour Advocacy and Dialogue, Pakistan
A unified, portable, and trusted social protection system is essential for Bangladesh. Drawing on Pakistan's experience, implementing a single, integrated worker and beneficiary registry can reduce fragmentation and vastly improve program delivery. Social protection benefits must follow workers across employers and locations, utilizing mobile financial services for easy access. Transparency, public trust, and institutional autonomy are equally vital. Consolidating overlapping programs and introducing state co-contributions for informal workers will make social protection more accessible and financially sustainable.

Md. Forhad Siddique
Inspector General, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments
Sector-specific interventions are urgently needed to extend social protection across Bangladesh's diverse workforce. Currently, DIFE maintains a database of approximately 700,000 workers, providing a solid foundation for developing a central worker registry through NID verification and database integration. Better coordination among existing benefit mechanisms, including the Employment Injury Scheme, the Sramik Kalyan Foundation, and various factory-level programs, can significantly improve coverage. Ultimately, a unified system will streamline worker identification and simplify access to essential social protection benefits.

SPORT



- Bangladesh's highest individual Test score, surpassing Mushfiqur Rahim's 219*
- First Bangladeshi to turn his maiden Test century into a double ton
- Hit 11 sixes, the most by a Bangladeshi in a Test innings and one short of the world record
- Fourth Bangladeshi to score a Test double century after Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Shakib Al Hasan
- Record 117-run eighth-wicket stand with Taijul Islam
- Scored 62.69% of Bangladesh's total, the eighth-highest share by a batter in Test history
- First Bangladeshi to score a Test double ton against West Indies
- First Test double century at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium
- First Bangladeshi double century in the World Test Championship

242 NOT OUT

- Balls: **359**
- Fours: **22**
- Sixes: **11**
- Strike-rate: **67.41**
- Proportion of runs in the innings: **62.69%**

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Hridoy's marathon of grit in the heat

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI *from Sylhet*

Patience, grit, and sudden acceleration. Tawhid Hridoy showcased it all yesterday.

Under an unforgiving Sylhet sun on Saturday, the West Indies sensed an early kill. Instead, they ran into a man possessed. Doing whatever he wanted en route to a record-breaking double century, Hridoy showcased steely determination and resilience with his unbeaten 242.

He ground things out alongside Mushfiqur Rahim, seeing out day two after facing 80 deliveries to reach 29.

Bangladesh were five for 138 in the morning session, staring at another collapse after Mushfiqur and Litton Das fell to soft dismissals. Hridoy took it upon himself to do it all. When he lost Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who had added 41 important runs alongside him, Bangladesh had only just avoided the follow-on. There was still plenty of work to do.

The West Indies pacers extracted extra bounce from the surface, while their spinners fared better than Bangladesh's. But Hridoy played a game of his own. There were ramps, pulls and cuts aplenty, all among his strong suits. He struck 11 sixes and took pressure off the lower order. Alongside Taijul Islam, he put together 117 runs before adding another 85 with Taskin Ahmed.

His two dismissals in the Mirpur Test had drawn criticism of his commitment to the longest format. Hridoy brushed aside suggestions that he was not ready for the job with a Herculean act with the bat.

Selector Habibul Bashar had picked him based on what he had seen in a first-class match in Sylhet.

"In my first stint as a selector, I saw him in a first-class match in 2022 or 2023. I came and spoke to [Chandika] Hathurusingha back then. I told Hathurusingha that Hridoy is our next best Test batsman. A batsman like him at number six will help us a lot," Bashar recalled.



"We were in the ascendancy, thinking about how big a lead we could get. But Hridoy played a special innings, putting Bangladesh in a good position."

JOMEL WARRICAN, West Indies Spinner

Bashar had heard rumours that Hridoy did not want to play Tests. "I was very surprised."

"Why don't you want to play Test matches?" Bashar asked. Hridoy, he recalled, was surprised too, replying: "I never said anything like that; I want to play Test matches."

"I also told him that when I pick him, it will be based on his natural batting style," Bashar recalled. Hridoy did exactly that, despite failing in Zimbabwe and Mirpur.

"The biggest thing is that Hridoy wanted to play Test cricket very badly. He specifically wanted to play the South Africa 'A' team series, so I definitely wanted to give him that opportunity, and that drive helped him here," Bashar said.

That internal drive pushed Hridoy to show that his 350 not out in Potchefstroom was no fluke. He trusted his defence, took his time and built an innings over eight hours. The two dismissals in Mirpur had fuelled his resolve. Cramps eventually got the better of him, keeping him from the press conference yesterday.

Challenges remain in the coming days, but Hridoy showed the rewards of determination. The quality of the innings alone justified the records he set.

His bat speed, assertiveness and willingness to take the game on, even in such a situation, will leave a mark on Bangladesh's Test history.

"It was the best Test innings I have seen from the ground. You know why? The situation alone made it the best," Bashar said. And few could argue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

- **West Indies:** First innings 356 and second innings 7-0 in 4 overs.
- **Bangladesh:** First innings 386 in 11.5 overs (Tanzid 16, Shanto 18, Hridoy 242 not out, Mushfiqur 34, Miraz 16, Taijul 22, Taskin 12)

Hridoy's Houdini act: A knock among Bangladesh's greatest?

Tawhid Hridoy's unbeaten 242 against the West Indies in Sylhet was an extraordinary display of resilience and batting prowess. Walking in with Bangladesh under pressure, the 25-year-old held the innings together as wickets fell around him, gradually turning a precarious situation into a 30-run first-innings lead. His record-breaking knock, marked by patience, resolve and an array of attacking strokes, stands as one of the most remarkable individual efforts in Bangladesh's Test history and turned a day of adversity into one of the most memorable in the country's cricketing journey, writes Al-Amin.

Read full story on The Daily Star website



Barcelona's Brazilian forward Raphinha looks in high spirits during a training session on the eve of tonight's crucial LaLiga away fixture against second-placed Atletico Madrid. The league leaders, on 30 points from 11 games, hold a two-point advantage over Atletico, with Real Madrid a further point behind and also eyeing a slip-up. In his fifth season at Barcelona, Raphinha has scored 19 goals in all competitions this season -- 15 in LaLiga and four in the Champions League -- and recently renewed his contract with the Catalan club until June 2030. PHOTO: **FC BARCELONA**

Timely lift as SAFF stakes rise

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are set for a major squad boost ahead of their second and final Group A match of the SAFF Championship 2026 against Sri Lanka on November 11, with talismanic midfielder Hamza Choudhury and promising forward Farhaan Ali Wahid expected to join the team on Monday.

Team manager Amirul Islam Babu confirmed their arrival as Bangladesh trained at Dhaka's Kings Arena yesterday. Hamza's Sheffield United played away against Charlton in the English Championship on Saturday, while 19-year-old Farhaan's Boreham Wood faced Wigan Athletic in the FA Cup first round.

"As per the SAFF rules, we are allowed to register 28 players, and we have registered 28. Currently, we have 26 players in the squad. The remaining two could not join due to the FIFA window [which opens from November 9]," Babu told reporters.

He also expressed optimism about the recovery of defensive mainstay Topu Barman, who picked up an injury during the warm-up ahead of the Bhutan fixture.

Attacking midfielder Sheikh Morsalin could also return. He clarified that he had missed the opening match due to a slight fever rather than an injury and "recovered four or five days ago". He is now "100 per cent fit".

Bangladesh, seeking their first regional title in 23 years, began their campaign with a 1-0 win over Bhutan, substitute forward Mohammad Ibrahim scoring the decisive goal in the 69th minute. The victory took the hosts to the top of the three-team Group A. If Sri Lanka beat Bhutan in today's match, both sides will secure semifinal places.

In the day's other fixture, Pakistan face the Maldives in a must-win Group B encounter after losing 3-2 to India in their opener. A victory for Maldives victory would see them and India advance to the last four.

Despite Bangladesh's narrow win over Bhutan, Morsalin felt the result could keep the team motivated. "Sometimes scoring too many goals makes the body relax. From that perspective, I think it is better that way. We are still hungry," he said.

He also cautioned against underestimating Sri Lanka, whose squad includes several expatriate players. "We are not taking Sri Lanka lightly by any means. They have a very good team, and we are preparing accordingly," Morsalin said.



- Bangladesh's Hamza Choudhury and Farhaan Ali Wahid are expected to join the squad after their club commitments, while Topu Barman and Sheikh Morsalin are nearing full fitness.
- A win for Sri Lanka in their Group A clash against Bhutan would see them and Bangladesh into the semifinals.
- Organisers have announced a 50 per cent discount on tickets for today's double-header, applicable only to today's matches.
- SAFF general secretary Purusottam Kattel expressed satisfaction with the opening ceremony and matches but acknowledged organisational shortcomings. He said steps had already been taken to address the issues ahead of today's fixtures.

PHOTO: **STAR**

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangladesh vs West Indies
2nd Test, Day four
Live from 9:30 am

SAFF Championship
Maldives vs Pakistan
Live from 4:30 pm
Sri Lanka vs Bhutan
Live from 8:00 pm

LaLiga
Real Sociedad vs Rayo Vallecano
Live from 9:15 pm
Villarreal CF vs Getafe CF
Live from 11:30 pm
Atletico Madrid vs FC Barcelona
Live from 2:00 am (Monday)

RAJDHANI TV

Premier League
Sunderland vs Chelsea
Live from 8:00 pm
Manchester United vs Aston Villa
Live from 10:30 pm





Crude bomb blasts, bus arson raise security alarm

At least 15 explosions in Dhaka since Nov 1; police blame AL

TOUSIF KAIUM *and* **DIPAN NANDY**

A fresh wave of crude bomb explosions and bus arson attacks has raised security concerns, with at least 15 blasts in Dhaka since November 1 and buses torched in the capital and other districts.

Police blamed leaders and activists of the Awami League, whose activities are banned, alleging the attacks were intended to create unrest ahead of December, when ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina has announced plans to return from India.

Additional Inspector General of Police (Crime and Operations) Mohammad Sayedur Rahman accused the party of trying to destabilise the government.

"Who else could be behind these acts of terrorism except the Awami League? These incidents are clearly intended to destabilise the government and create panic among the public. Exploding cocktails serves no other purpose than spreading fear.

"We achieved victory in December [1971], but their entire objective is to tarnish Victory Month. They are trying to dedicate this month to our neighbouring country. Their objectives and motives are bad."

On November 2, crude bombs exploded beneath Agargaon metro station and near Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School in Sobhanbagh. Another exploded outside the July Memorial Museum in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on November 4.

The following day, a constable was injured when a crude bomb was thrown at a police patrol vehicle near Kurmitola

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PHOTO: **AZAHAR UDDIN**

A locally made vehicle laden with a tall stack of heavy timber travels along a road in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila. Powered by a small diesel engine and operating without any particulars, like fitness certification and registration, such vehicles are a common sight on rural roads and highways. The photo was taken recently on Monakasha road.



US firms supply 85% of Bangladesh's LPG

ME disruption drives sourcing shift, raises import costs, exposes nearly one crore consumers to price, supply risks

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh's dependence on US-based firms for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports has surged amid the US-Israel war on Iran, leaving the South Asian country exposed to supply disruptions and price volatility.

The shift has forced importers to seek supplies from farther afield, and rely more heavily on spot-market purchases, and pay higher procurement premiums, freight and insurance costs.

With nearly one crore consumers relying on LPG, largely for household cooking, these costs are feeding into domestic prices.

The US firms accounted for 85 percent of Bangladesh's LPG imports in September this year, up from 27.4 percent a year earlier, according

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff

AFP, *Washington DC*

US President Donald Trump has named Stephen Miller, architect of his hardline immigration policy, as his new chief of staff, signaling a bare-knuckle fightback after Republicans were hammered in the midterms.

Ultra-loyalist Miller, 41, will replace Susie Wiles, who becomes the first major White House casualty from the Democratic landslide earlier this week.

Democrats pledged they would fight "every step of the way" against Miller, who became synonymous with scenes of masked immigration agents committing violence after he backed federal agents who shot and killed two Americans.

"I wanted to make a change," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked why he named Miller to replace Wiles.

"Sometimes in life you have to make moves."



Trump's move was particularly startling, as he had repeatedly insisted before the midterms that there was "zero chance" of replacing Wiles.

A White House official told AFP that Wiles had resigned on Thursday night.

But naming the combative Miller was the clearest possible signal from Trump that the gloves are now off after his brief conciliatory gestures to Democrats in the wake of the Republican midterms collapse.

"He's a great fighter," Trump said later at the airport in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he was accompanied by Miller. "He's been with me right from the beginning...and he's very loyal."

Miller has been one of Trump's closest aides for decades, pushing nativist policies that gelled with Trump's "America First" agenda.

At Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort home on Friday night, Miller addressed a crowd of party faithful to lavish Trump with praise, pledging his undying loyalty.

"It is the honour of my life to be President Trump's chief of staff," Miller said in a video posted to the president's Truth Social account.

As Trump's deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security advisor, he was the brains behind the mass deportation

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Govt's debt burden swelling

WB warns public debt-to-GDP ratio may cross 45% in FY28,

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh's public debt-to-GDP ratio could rise to 45.2 percent by FY28, narrowing the gap with the 55 percent threshold the International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers sustainable, the World Bank has warned.

The projected increase reflects growing expenditure on public sector salaries and pensions, subsidies, capital support for troubled banks, and debt servicing, against a backdrop of weak revenue growth, according to the global lender.

The ratio is estimated to have increased to 40.5 percent in FY26 from 38.9 percent in FY25. The World Bank projects it will reach 43 percent in FY27 before crossing 45 percent in FY28.

"Public debt continued to rise, posing risks to debt sustainability," the bank said in its latest development update, released last month.

Against this backdrop, the government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will jointly host a two-day international debt conference in Cox's Bazar on November 15-16, with delegates from 30 countries.

Finance ministry officials said the conference, the first of its kind in the country, would discuss sustainable borrowing strategies and cost-risk trade-offs, assess the evolving IMF-World Bank Debt Sustainability Framework, and explore ways to mobilise private capital for public investment.

The discussions are also expected to identify reforms to strengthen debt management, including the possible establishment of a dedicated Debt Management Office.

THE WORLD BANK

Govt to hold first-ever debt conference on Nov 15-16

RISING EXPENDITURE

According to finance ministry estimates, spending on government salaries, allowances and pensions, now Tk 1.31 lakh crore, could rise to Tk 2.37 lakh crore after full implementation of the new pay scale.

The pay scale, the first comprehensive revision since 2015, is being introduced in phases with retrospective effect from July 1, 2026. Basic salaries and allowances are set to rise by an average 120 percent and pensions by around 70 percent.

The new pay structure aims to address the erosion of real wages experienced by government employees amid prolonged inflation and rising living costs.

However, the World Bank said, "The additional wage bill, estimated at around 0.6 percent of GDP in FY27, is likely to add pressure on fiscal space, which remains constrained by low revenue collection and competing spending demands."

Subsidy and incentive allocations have risen from around Tk 24,000 crore in FY21 to Tk 1.16 lakh crore in the current fiscal year.

Interest payments could exceed Tk 1.5 lakh crore next fiscal year, up from Tk 1.31 lakh crore in FY25 as external borrowing has become less concessional over time.

Debt service obligations continue to rise, with interest payments remaining elevated at 2.6 percent of GDP in FY28, the World Bank warned.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Advertisement



New Gini housing attacked again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 100 to 150 people allegedly attacked and vandalised the New Gini Properties housing project in the capital's ECB Chattar area yesterday afternoon, nearly six weeks after a similar attack on the compound.

The attackers broke the entrance gate, entered the premises and assaulted security personnel and other workers, said

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