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Put national interests above differences

Speaker urges MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad yesterday urged lawmakers to uphold parliamentary norms, show mutual respect and prioritise national interests to meet public expectations, stressing that differences of opinion should be resolved through dialogue.

"The beauty of parliamentary democracy lies in the coexistence of differing views and differing paths," he said in his opening address as the fourth session of the 13th National Parliament began yesterday afternoon.

The Speaker said lawmakers must play a responsible role in upholding the dignity of the parliament -- the highest institutional expression of the people's sovereignty, democratic aspirations and public opinion.

He said the strength of parliamentary democracy rested on debate, reason, mutual respect and the responsible expression of opinions.



A sudden downpour brings traffic to a crawl on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital last evening, leaving commuters stuck in long queues as they struggle to make their way home.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

FROM JS GALLERY

Govt plans six 100-bed hospitals for workers

PM tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to build six 100-bed hospitals in major industrial hubs across the country to ensure healthcare services for workers, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told parliament yesterday.



He said the hospitals will be exclusively dedicated to workers and would be built in Tongi, Ashulia, Kaliakair, Narayanganj, Savar and Chattogram.

The announcement came after BNP lawmaker Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas raised the issue.

He asked whether the government had any specific plans to establish hospitals in labour-intensive industrial areas to provide healthcare for workers and their family members.

Tarique said his government has been elected by the people and is working for citizens from all walks of life.

Universities push admission tests to February

Move aims to accommodate HSC retakers; DU to go ahead with December schedule

Of the 5,94,113 students who failed this year's HSC and equivalent examinations, 4,22,905 are eligible for the supplementary examinations. The exams will begin on December 1, with results expected by December 31.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public universities will begin accepting applications for the 2026-27 academic session in January, with admission tests scheduled for February to accommodate students who pass the upcoming HSC supplementary examinations.

The decision was taken unanimously at a meeting of public university vice-chancellors at the University Grants Commission yesterday.

UGC Chairman Prof Mamun Ahmed announced the decision at a press briefing after the meeting, saying universities will coordinate to finalise admission test dates.

The move comes amid concerns that over four lakh students

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Case backlog climbs to 48.55 lakh

Backlog rises by over 1 lakh in three months | 3.45 lakh cases disposed of during same period | Experts cite judge shortage, rising filings | Litigants face prolonged delays, higher costs

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The number of pending cases in courts across the country rose by more than one lakh between March 31 and June 30 this year, adding to the suffering of justice seekers.

At the end of June, 48.55 lakh cases were pending, up from 47.42 lakh at the end of March, according to Supreme Court records.

The backlog grew despite the disposal of 3.45 lakh cases during the period, as new filings continued to outpace disposals.

Legal experts say the mounting backlog means prolonged detention, delayed justice and growing financial and emotional costs for litigants.

Karuna Sarker, detained from Narayanganj in connection with a murder case, filed a bail petition with the High Court on February 23, 2026. The petition remained unheard for more than three months.

The HC finally heard the matter on June 16, granting him ad-interim bail and issuing a rule asking the government to explain why he should not be granted permanent bail.

Similarly, Shariful Islam, detained from Mymensingh in a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, submitted a bail petition to the HC on October 21, 2025.



The court heard his petition around three months later, on January 18 this year, and granted him ad-interim bail.

Legal experts described the growing backlog as a major challenge for the judiciary.

"It is not possible to dispose of the cases pending before the courts and tribunals in a normal manner," said Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court and head of legal research firm Law Lab. "To solve this problem, extraordinary measures are required including the appointment of judges," he said.

SC lawyer Advocate Tasmiah Nuhiya Ahmed said litigants spend substantial resources and valuable years attending court without seeing a final outcome.

"Reducing case backlogs and ensuring timely disposal of cases are therefore essential to guarantee meaningful access to justice and uphold the rule of law," she added.

SC Registrar General Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siddiquee said the backlog could not be resolved overnight due to a shortage of judges and the large number of cases being filed.

However, Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury has taken steps to reduce the backlog, including the disposal of long-pending cases and monitoring disposal rates at courts across the country, he said.

Probe flags anomalies in Tk 27,860cr LGD spending: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A probe committee found "serious irregularities" involving the expenditure of Tk 27,859.91 crore by agencies under the Local Government Division, LGRD Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan told parliament yesterday.

In a written reply to a question from MP Fazle Huda during the question-and-answer session, the minister said the division had formed a seven-member inquiry committee on May 12 to investigate allegations of irregularities and corruption in the activities of its offices between January 2009 and February 17, 2026.

According to the minister, the committee submitted its report on October 7, finding evidence of irregularities involving Tk 27,859.91 crore in government funds in an initial review of 66 randomly selected activities.

The report was forwarded to the ACC on October 19 for further investigation.

Meanwhile, responding to a question from MP Mobasher Alam Bhuiyan, Moyeen Khan said water samples from Dhaka Wasa would be sent to a laboratory in Sweden for fresh testing after a study reportedly detected PFAS above permissible levels in one sample.

IN BRIEF



Five more die of dengue, 2,260 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died, and 2,260 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Of the deaths, three were reported in Dhaka division and one each in Mymensingh and Barishal divisions.

With the latest deaths, the total death toll rose to 466, while the cumulative number of cases reached 1,52,173.

Currently, 6,114 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country.

Man gets life term for rape of woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

A Jamalpur tribunal has sentenced a man to life imprisonment for raping a woman in Dewanganj upazila.

The court delivered the verdict in the convict's presence yesterday, confirmed Public Prosecutor Fazlul Haque.

The court also fined Md Yunus Ali Tk 5 lakh and ordered that the entire amount be paid to the victim as compensation.

According to the prosecution, on September 6, 2016, Yunus, a co-villager of the victim, forcibly took her to a location and raped her there when she went to collect water from a nearby tube well.

The victim filed the case with the Jamalpur court on September 29 that year.



E-rickshaw drivers block Topkhana Road in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday to press home their 12-point demand, including BRTA-issued licences for their vehicles, the release of detained drivers and an end to what they call harassment through criminal cases. As part of their protest, they suspended services across the city, leaving many commuters struggling to find transport.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Opposition seeks debates on Ganges treaty, RMG unrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition lawmakers from Jamaat-e-Islami have submitted a series of proposals seeking discussions on issues ranging from the Ganges water-sharing treaty between Bangladesh and India to labour unrest in the country's RMG sector.

They are also set to propose discussions on fertiliser shortages, rising fuel prices, the Rohingya crisis and mismanagement at the country's main airport.

With the Ganges water-sharing treaty due to expire on December 12, Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, Jamaat's lawmaker from Dhaka-14, sought a parliamentary discussion to review the situation and consider effective measures to protect Bangladesh's national water security and interests.