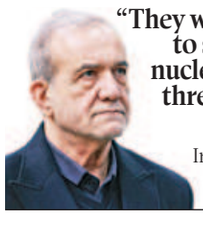
DHAKA THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2026



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Iranian President **MASOUD PEZESHKIAN** slams US

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Lured to Teknaf only to be sold, held for ransom

Trafficking survivors narrate how recruitment, abduction and extortion networks operate in Cox's Bazar

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **MOKAMMEL SHUVO,** *from Teknaf*

On November 3, eight construction workers left Cox's Bazar town for Teknaf, the district's border upazila, after a man offered them jobs.

The man, identified with a single name, Sohel, arranged two CNG-run autorickshaws for the journey. They were taken to a house near Baharchhara and told work would begin the next day.

Later, armed men moved them to a tin-roofed house beside a betel nut plantation, blindfolded them, tied ropes around their waists, and marched them into the hills, one worker told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity for fear of reprisals.

The captors took the workers' phones and cash and beat those who protested, the worker said, adding that some armed guards looked just 12 or 13. Police case documents list a 15-year-old among the accused.

The worker said their captors told them Sohel had sold each of them for Tk 20,000. The armed men gave them two options: pay Tk 3.5 lakh per person for an illegal sea journey to Malaysia, or Tk 4 lakh to return home.

"We went there for work. We never wanted to go to Malaysia," he said.

The worker was among 56 people rescued on November 5 when a joint force of army, Border Guard Bangladesh and police raided the Nuralipara hills, about three kilometres west of the West Leda Rohingya camp in Teknaf's Hnila union.

Army soldier Titas Sheikh died after being shot when armed suspects opened fire.

Interviews with victims, community sources, and officials over the past two days, along with police records, point to a loose chain of recruiters, transporters, armed guards, and boat operators exploiting Rohingya seeking passage to Malaysia and Bangladeshis lured by jobs or abducted for ransom.

Victims faced ransom demands of up to Tk 4 lakh

56 people rescued from Teknaf hills on November 5

Trafficking routes stretch from Teknaf to Malaysia

462 trafficking cases filed in Cox's Bazar since 2012



The accounts do not establish a single command structure.

According to law enforcement records, 3,534 people, most of them Rohingya, were rescued while attempting to travel to Malaysia through the Cox's Bazar coast between 2016 and 2025.

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Chakratinath Government Primary School in Bogura's Sariakandi has been relocated six times in three villages over the past decade due to erosion by the Jamuna. On May 11, the school was forced to move to a tin-roofed structure on an embankment. A storm on Tuesday night blew away nearly half of the structure's roof. The photo taken yesterday shows some of the students in class.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SCHOOLTEACHERS



PM, Chinese VP discuss climate cooperation at the COP31

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng discussed expanding Chinese investment in Bangladesh and strengthening climate cooperation during a bilateral meeting in Antalya, Türkiye, yesterday.

The meeting, held at 4:30pm local time on the sidelines of the 31st UN Climate Change Conference

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QAWMI MADRASAS

Children exposed to abuse amid lack of safeguards

25,000 Qawmi madrasas educate some 70 lakh students

No sector-wide, enforceable child-protection framework

Teacher recruitment is largely informal, with limited background checks

29 incidents of violence against women, children in madrasas recorded in October

NILIMA JAHAN

Around 25,000 Qawmi madrasas in Bangladesh are currently educating an estimated 70 lakh students, but many of these non-governmental Islamic schools do not have enforceable child protection policies or the measures needed to keep children safe.

Complaint mechanisms are inconsistent and oversight is weak in these institutions, leaving children vulnerable to abuse, especially in madrasas with dormitories.

Recent allegations of sexual abuse, physical assault and intimidation of over two dozen madrasa students in several districts have exposed how institutional failures can leave children without adequate protection or reliable channels to seek redress.

One of these incidents involved eight-year-old Abu Sufian (not his real name). After attending a Qawmi madrasa in Gazipur as a day-shift student for two years, he was enrolled in its residential section on October 7 after his parents were persuaded by a teacher.

Four days later, he returned home lethargic and feverish, struggling to swallow. His hands, throat, tongue and buttocks bore bruises.

Sufian told his mother that the teacher

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Madrasa teacher gets death for raping 11-yr-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

A court in Netrokona yesterday sentenced madrasa teacher Aman Ullah Mahmudi Sagor to death for raping an 11-year-old girl and making her pregnant in Madan upazila.



His brother Mamun Mia Maimun, who was also an accused in the case, was acquitted as the allegation that he had threatened the victim's family could not be proved.

Judge Md Abdus Salam of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Netrokona pronounced the verdict in the presence of both accused

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PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Farmers harvest Aman paddy in the golden morning sunlight near Amanura in Rajshahi's Godagari upazila yesterday. As they cut the dew-covered stalks, flocks of birds swoop down to feed on fallen grains, seemingly unperturbed by the farmers working nearby.

DHAKA AIRPORT

3rd terminal deal moves closer to approval

RASHIDUL HASAN *and* **TASNEEM TAYEB**

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) is set to send the draft concession agreement with a Japanese consortium for operating Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's third terminal to the civil aviation and tourism ministry for further approval.

The CAAB board cleared the draft for submission at a meeting on Tuesday, a source familiar with the development told The Daily Star yesterday.

The agreement will undergo further scrutiny, including legal and financial vetting by the relevant ministries, before being placed before the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for final approval.

The move comes as authorities continue preparations to begin partial operations at the terminal on December 16, coinciding with Victory Day.

The initial phase will involve a limited number of flights, with operations gradually expanding as more facilities become available. Authorities are working to ensure that the infrastructure required for limited flight operations is ready by then.

The move comes as authorities continue preparations to begin partial operations at the terminal on December 16, coinciding with Victory Day.

Sources familiar with the developments said that, unlike the ceremonial inauguration in October 2023, after which the terminal remained closed to regular commercial operations,

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