28 Flood-Affected Families Receive New Houses in Banshkhali Funded by Nahar



Staff Reporter: Social and humanitarian development organization SAWAB has provided new houses to 28 helpless families who lost their homes during floods in Banshkhali, Chattogram. The two-room semi-pucca houses, funded by donor organization NAHAR, were officially handed over to the beneficiaries on Wednesday (November 4).

Severe floods in July of this year caused widespread devastation across various areas of Banshkhali, leaving numerous families homeless. Immediately following the floods, SAWAB conducted emergency relief and humanitarian aid operations. Later, the organization took the initiative to construct 28 houses for the rehabilitation of the affected families.

SAWAB Chairman S. M. Raseduzzaman presided over the house handover ceremony. Director General (Secretary) of the NGO Affairs Bureau under the Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Mohammad Zakaria, attended as the chief guest. Banshkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md. Ruhul Amin and Banshkhali Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md. Rabiul Haque along with his team were present as special guests.

Local dignitaries, prominent businessmen, representatives of the respective areas, beneficiary families, and members of SAWAB's senior management team were also present at the event. Following the handover, an interactive meeting was held with beneficiaries of the ongoing development projects of SAWAB and Islamic Relief, during which essential household items were distributed among them. During the meeting, beneficiaries shared stories of project benefits, lifestyle changes, and future expectations.

Guests at the event praised SAWAB's humanitarian initiative, stating that alongside government efforts, the combined endeavors of non-governmental and donor organizations are crucial for rehabilitating disaster-affected people. Members of the families who received new houses shared that they had spent nearly three to four months in miserable, homeless conditions after the floods, and receiving the new houses has significantly alleviated their prolonged suffering.

The beneficiaries demanded employment opportunities through the provision of auto-rickshaws, grocery shops, and livestock to achieve self-reliance. They also requested the installation of deep tube wells in the area for safe drinking water.

SAWAB Chairman S. M. Raseduzzaman stated that SAWAB's journey in the service of humanity and the welfare of people will continue, and the organization will keep working in the future to rehabilitate disaster-affected people and improve their living standards. The organization noted that post-disaster rehabilitation is not limited to relief distribution alone; rather, ensuring safe housing, employment, and a dignified life is the ultimate goal. SAWAB expects that the 28 houses built with Nahar's cooperation will instill new hope in the lives of the affected families.



Teacher's Hand Broken in Attack Over Land Dispute by Women's Party Leader and Relatives in Valuka

Moksedur Rahman Mamun, Valuka Correspondent: Allegations have surfaced that Upazila Mohila Dal leader Shirina Akhter and her family members attacked the home of a school teacher in Valuka, Mymensingh, beating him and breaking his hand over a long-standing land dispute. The attackers are also accused of assaulting the teacher's wife, looting gold ornaments, and cutting down trees to cause widespread devastation. The injured educator, K. M. Sadek Hossain, is an assistant teacher at Barachala Husainia Dakhil Madrasa. He is currently undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. The teacher's younger brother, Rafiqul Islam, stated that over the land dispute, Mohila Dal leader Shirina Akhter, her husband Farid Mia, and son Shanto Mia, along with several others, entered their home and launched an assault. During the incident, his elder brother was struck with a machete (da), fracturing one of his hands. Additionally, his sister-in-law was beaten, gold ornaments were snatched, and trees around the house were cut down and damaged. No statement could be obtained from the accused parties regarding the incident. Valuka Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Zahidul Islam stated that strict legal action will be taken against those involved in the incident.

Twelve Arrested in Anti-Narcotics Task Force Drive in Munshiganj



Mahabub Alam Babu Munshiganj: Led by Department of Narcotics Control Munshiganj Deputy Director and Executive Magistrate Md. Omar Faruk, a joint team comprising the Department of Narcotics Control, SRB 10 (CPC 02 Srinagar), and the District Ansar Battalion conducted an anti-narcotics task force drive in Goalimandra, Louhajang upazila, arresting 12 individuals from the spot. Conducted under the directives of Munshiganj Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate Syeda Nurmahal Ashrafi on Wednesday (November 4) late night, the drive resulted in 11 drug consumers being sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 1 to 6 months alongside fines of Tk 100 to Tk 500. Additionally, based on the recovery of 30 yaba pills from one of the accused, Department of Narcotics Control Inspector Md. Masudur Rahman filed a regular case against him at Louhajang Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act, according to a press release issued by the Munshiganj administration.

School Teacher Dies After Being Cut Under Train in Parbatipur

Manjurul Alam, Parbatipur Correspondent: A school teacher named Runa Layla (47) tragically died after being run over by the Rupsha Express train in Parbatipur, Dinajpur. The incident occurred on Wednesday (November 4) around 11:30 AM on the Parbatipur-Saidpur railway line in the Rahmatnagar Railway Colony area adjacent to the Gankabor Basti, north of Parbatipur railway station.

The deceased, Runa Layla, was a Bengali teacher at Saidpur Al-Farooq School. On the day of the incident, she had gone to school as usual and conducted her classes.

Her husband, Abdul Awal, is a Bengali department teacher at the Saidpur Cantonment Board.According to local sources, she was seen sitting near the railway line in the Gulpara railgate area on Wednesday morning.

Noticing her unusual movement, several locals advised her to leave the spot. Later around 11:30 AM, she was struck and killed by the Rupsha Express train. However, the exact reason behind her suspected suicide could not be ascertained.

Regarding the matter, Parbatipur Railway Police Station (GRP) OC Mahmudun Nabi stated that the deceased teacher's body was recovered and sent to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Railway Line Will Run from Dhaka to Kuakata via Shariatpur: Whip Nuruddin Ahmed



Shariatpur Correspondent: A railway line connecting Dhaka to Kuakata via Shariatpur will be constructed during the tenure of the BNP government, stated National Parliament Whip and Shariatpur-3 Member of Parliament Mia Nuruddin Ahmed Ahmed (Opu).

Speaking as the chief guest on Wednesday (November 4) afternoon at the freshers' reception program for higher secondary first-year students at Shariatpur Government College, he made these remarks.

Whip Opu announced that the Communications Minister and the Railway Secretary will be brought to Shariatpur to inaugurate the feasibility study for constructing the railway line up to Kuakata via Shariatpur. He also expressed optimism about establishing an agricultural university and a science and technology university in the district.

Warning that anyone attempting to obstruct the government's development activities will have to answer to the public, MP Opu said, "Many consider Shariatpur a neglected district. Through development and progress, we will prove that Shariatpur is also an advanced, prosperous, and proud district."

Addressing the newly admitted students, he shared experiences from his career while offering diverse directives on focusing on studies, acquiring skills, and building future careers. College teachers, students, and local political and social figures were present at the event.



Preparatory Meeting Held in Dobaura to Celebrate National Revolution and Solidarity Day

Abdul Matin Masud, Dobaura (Mymensingh) Correspondent:

A preparatory meeting was held in Dobaura, Mymensingh, to mark the celebration of National Revolution and Solidarity Day-2026.

The meeting took place on Wednesday morning at the upazila parishad conference room, chaired by Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mosharrof Hossain.

During the meeting, various programs were adopted to observe the day with due dignity and solemnity. Detailed discussions were also held to ensure the smooth and successful execution of the scheduled programs.

Among those who delivered speeches at the meeting were Assistant Commissioner (Land) Moksudus Salehin, Officer-in-Charge Shafiqul Islam, Upazila BNP Convener Azharul Islam Kajol, Member Secretary Anisur Rahman Manik, Joint Convener Mozammel Hossain Khan Liton, former Traders Association Convener Nazrul Islam Dulal, NCP Coordinator Atiqur Rahman, Upazila Chhatra Dal Convener Jalal Uddin, Gono Odhikar Parishad President Zinnat Ali, Jubo Dal leader Farruque Hossain, and Dobaura Press Club General Secretary Abul Hashem, among others. Relevant officials of the upazila administration, political and social figures, journalists, and invited guests were present at the event.

Headmaster Goes into Hiding Following Allegations of Molesting Student in Nilphamari



Nilphamari Correspondent : Allegations of molesting a second-grade student have been brought against Dwijendra Nath Roy, headmaster of Kisamat Bhutiyan Government Primary School in Palashbari union of Nilphamari Sadar. Following the surfacing of the incident, he has remained absent from school. Locals alleged that similar complaints had been raised against him involving multiple students previously, which were reportedly covered up through local settlements.

Visiting the school on-site revealed that for the past two days, the headmaster has arrived at school solely to sign the attendance register before leaving for the education office, without handing over school responsibilities to any other teacher or entering proper details in the movement register as per rules, according to assistant teachers.

An anonymous local shopkeeper stated that rumors of the molestation incident involving the second-grade student spread across the area the day before yesterday. He claimed that the headmaster had previously faced judgment over similar allegations involving several students, including fifth graders, but resumed normal classes following local settlements. Assistant teachers informed him that efforts are underway to settle the current matter locally as well.

Local youth Palash Chandra Roy remarked, "Discussions and criticisms regarding this incident have been widespread in the area for two to three days. Children are afraid to go to school. I have even enrolled my niece in another school. When such repeated allegations arise against a teacher, where is the safety of our children?"

School Managing Committee President Animesh Chandra Roy stated that he has not yet officially taken over committee responsibilities, though he heard about the molestation allegation involving the second-grade student. Lacking official handover, he has been unable to take steps. Meanwhile, the victimized student has stopped attending school, and no family members were found at her residence.

Although the headmaster was absent from school, assistant teacher Sudhen Roy stated that the headmaster has been leaving the premises for the past two days after signing the attendance register, claiming he is visiting the education office, without delegating responsibilities or signing the movement book.

Allegations of House Vandalism, Looting, and Land Grabbing Over Land Dispute in Radhakantapur Village, Atghoria



Md. Masud Rana, Atghoria (Pabna) Correspondent: Allegations of house vandalization, looting, and land grabbing have surfaced over a land dispute in Radhakantapur village of Atghoria. The victims have additionally alleged the looting of cash and gold ornaments, along with the felling of trees.

In connection with the incident, attacks by opponents left Sekendar Ali, Rafiqul Islam (Omio), and Lovli Khatun injured. Victim Sekendar Ali lodged a written complaint at the Atghoria Police Station as the plaintiff.

According to the complaint, a long-standing dispute regarding homestead land had been ongoing between Sekendar Ali and his neighbor Habibur Rahman in Radhakantapur village. Amidst this dispute, at around 11:45 AM on the day of the incident, Habibur and his cohorts arrived armed with country weapons and sticks, forcibly occupying Sekendar Ali's homestead land, enclosing it with tin fencing, and planting various saplings.

When Sekendar rushed to the scene upon receiving news and forbade them, Habibur's gang turned aggressive. According to the General Diary (GD), a scuffle ensued over the issue, and they were subjected to indiscriminate kicking, punching, and beating, resulting in injuries.

Subsequently, his homestead was vandalized and looted. During the assault, cash and gold ornaments were taken away.

Victim Sekendar stated, "A dispute has been ongoing with my neighbor Habiv for a long time over our house land. Capitalizing on this, they brought people and forcibly occupied my purchased homestead land by surrounding it with tin fences. When I tried to stop them, they attacked and beat me up with sticks. At that time, they vandalized and looted my house, making off with Tk 8 to 10 lakh in cash and gold ornaments. Several members of my family, including myself, were injured in their assault. I demand a proper investigation into this incident, the recovery of looted valuables, and strict legal action against the accused."

He confirmed that he, his son Rafiqul Islam (Omio), and Lovli Khatun sustained injuries in the attack. Furthermore, the GD notes that damages worth approximately Tk 50,000 were inflicted due to the house vandalization.

230 arrested in 1,048 anti-drug operations in Feni

Feni Correspondent

The Narcotics Control Department has arrested 230 people in 1,048 anti-drug drives in the district in the last 10 months.

In addition to the arrests, about 43 kg of marijuana, 9,198 pieces of Yaba, 145 foreign liquor, 5,030 pieces of Tapentadol tablets, 20.5 liters of brewed liquor, 30 cans of beer, 16 bottles of Fairdeal, 25 pieces of saree, 1 domestic pistol, 1 mobile set and 161,150 taka were recovered in these operations.

According to sources from the Narcotics Control Department, 72 regular cases and 163 mobile courts were conducted in the district from January to October this year. Of these, 230 people were arrested and 19 are absconding. The source further said that 23 people were arrested in 102 raids in January, 22 in 88 raids.

360 kW Solar Power System Installed at Kishoreganj DC Office

Nazrul Islam Khairul, Kishoreganj Correspondent: A 360-kilowatt (kW) capacity solar power system has been installed at the Kishoreganj Deputy Commissioner's office, reducing the office's electricity expenditure by approximately one-third.

The information was disclosed from the Deputy Commissioner's office on Tuesday (November 3). According to sources at the Kishoreganj Deputy Commissioner's office, the government has undertaken multi-faceted initiatives to alleviate public suffering amidst the country's energy and power crisis, maintain stability in power supply, and ensure long-term energy security. As part of this, a target has been set to generate 20 percent of the country's total electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and 30 percent by 2040. Aligned with the government's initiatives to expand renewable energy usage and save electricity, a 360 kW solar power system has been installed at the Kishoreganj DC office. This marks a significant initiative by a government institution to increase renewable energy use, reduce operational costs, and build eco-friendly energy management. Kishoreganj Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sohana Nasrin stated, "I am immensely pleased to share that among the Deputy Commissioner offices across all 64 districts of the country, the Kishoreganj DC office has set an exemplary milestone by installing this solar setup with the maximum capacity of 360 kilowatts."

She further noted that electricity generation has already commenced from the solar power system installed in this office. This power generation has resulted in a monthly electricity bill saving of approximately Tk 3 lakh. Additionally, opportunities have been created to supply excess electricity demand to the national grid through the net-metering system, she added.

Deputy Commissioner Sohana Nasrin also mentioned that the use of solar power is not merely a means of saving electricity; it is one of the most effective ways to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, protect environmental balance, and ensure sustainable energy security for future generations.





Indo-Pacific Quad ministers work on supply chains, denounce arbitrary export restrictions

Business Desk

The foreign ministers of the US, Australia, India and Japan pledged on Saturday to work to build reliable global supply chains, expressing "grave concerns" about what they described as economic coercion through export restrictions and non-market practices.

A joint statement by the foreign ministers of the Indo-Pacific "Quad" did not explicitly identify China, but came at a time when Japan has been extremely critical of Beijing over its restrictions on critical mineral exports.

The meeting came shortly before the final session of a meeting of foreign ministers from the Group of 20 major economies, which includes China.

The ministers reiterated their support for a free and open Indo-Pacific, underscoring the importance of economic security in maintaining global stability and prosperity, including through reliable and open global supply chains.

"They expressed grave concerns regarding economic coercion, including through arbitrary export restrictions, as well as non-market policies and practices that result in over-capacity to disrupt global supply chains in critical industries," the joint statement said.

The ministers also emphasized the "absolute necessity to protect and preserve navigational rights and freedoms in the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait," the statement said.

It was the third meeting of the Quad foreign ministers this year, with plans now taking shape for US President Donald Trump to attend his first formal meeting of the leaders of the four countries next month in Manila during a conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

After the Quad ministers' meeting, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio hosted a final plenary session with foreign ministers from the Group of 20 major economies during a two-day summit in Atlanta, where the participation of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov highlighted deep rifts among G20 members.

Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand told Reuters in an interview that she would not have chosen to invite Lavrov, but she used the occasion to confront him directly about Russia's military campaign into Ukraine in February 2022.

"I stared him in the eye and called out Russia's further illegal invasion of Ukraine, the stealing of Ukrainian children, the targeting of Ukrainian ships in the Black Sea, all of which are reprehensible, all of which are contrary to international law and international humanitarian law," Anand said, citing her remarks during a closed-door plenary session on Friday.

Lavrov on Friday told reporters that Moscow's position on the Ukraine conflict was unchanged, and Russia could not accept Ukraine as a "military threat to the lawful security interests of the Russian Federation," according to Russian news agencies. Rubio, speaking at a reception at the Georgia Aquarium on Friday evening, repeated his call for G20 members to cooperate where possible given complex economic and geopolitical challenges.

"Because we all face these challenges, we must all work together to address them," he said.

Musk pumps $446m into US midterms, as campaign spending set to 'shatter' records

Business Desk

The US midterms campaign is set to be the most expensive on record - with the total cost projected to reach nearly $12bn (£9bn), according to Open Secrets, an independent organisation that tracks campaign finance.

Most of the spending is driven by outside political groups - known as Super Political Action Committees (Super Pacs) - pouring large sums of money into some key races ahead of election day on 3 November.

The top individual donor is billionaire businessman Elon Musk, who has spent almost half a billion dollars backing Republican candidates, particularly in Texas where many of his companies are based. There are rules on how much people, parties and political action committees (Pacs) can give directly to candidates.

But Super Pacs can accept unlimited contributions from individuals, corporations, labour unions, and other political committees. They can't give that money directly to candidates but they can spend it supporting them indirectly.

According to the latest Federal Election Commission (FEC) filings which run to mid-October, more than $9.5bn had been spent in this midterms cycle.

Pacs and Super Pacs make up more than half of that - at about $5.5bn - with their spending in the last couple of months almost doubling.

A line chart showing money spent on the midterm elections cycle from January 2025 to October 2026 - with Pacs and Super Pacs totalling about $5.5 billion, candidates about $3 billion and Party Committee about $1bn

Candidates, parties and outside groups have to report their spending to the FEC, but the full totals won't be available until after the midterm elections.

However, Open Secrets has projected the total will be $11.9bn based on trends in past cycles.

This would be about 30% more than what was spent during the last midterm elections in 2022.

The top 40 donors gave $2.4bn up until 14 October, according to the liberal-leaning think tank Brennan Center for Justice, which is a record high for that point in a midterms cycle.



"Spending in the 2026 midterms is shattering records, with more of the money coming from the wealthiest donors and groups this election," says Michael Beckel, a US campaign finance expert.

As well as individuals, organisations can also give to Pacs. For example, Geosor Corp and Fund for Policy Reform, both founded by the billionaire financier George Soros, have given a combined $102m to liberal groups.

Aside from Soros, former New York City mayor and businessman Michael Bloomberg has been the biggest Democratic donor, giving more than $60m.

Several billionaires including Jeff Yass, who runs one of the world's largest trading firms, and Richard and Elizabeth Uihlein, the owners of a US business supply company, have given over $100m this campaign to Republican causes, according to FEC filings.

But Musk has given by far the most of any individual, donating almost half a billion dollars as of October.

Musk has given most of this to a Super Pac he set up in 2024 called America PAC, as well as to the Republican-aligned Senate Leadership Fund.

Most of his money has been spent on the Texas Senate race, supporting Republican candidate Ken Paxton, who is running against Democratic candidate James Talarico.

Getty Images Elon Musk speaks to reporters as US President Donald Trump looks on outside the White HouseGetty Images

Elon Musk worked for the Trump administration last year and has attended events at the White House since

Three takeaways from Elon Musk's latest political donations

America PAC's investments in the Texas race total more than $45m. It has also invested around $10m into both of the Senate races in Michigan and Ohio.

"Crypto companies have also been very active this cycle, with Ripple and Coinbase combining to give $63 million to fund Super Pacs promoting the crypto industry's interests," says Brendan J Glavin of Open Secrets.

What has the money been spent on?

Campaigns and political groups spend money trying to reach voters in a variety of ways - including hiring staff to do on-the-ground voter outreach and hosting campaign events like rallies. They also spend money to conduct internal polling.

However, the majority of funds are spent on advertising - especially on TV.

In this cycle, $11.15bn has been spent on advertising up until the end of October, according to ad tracking firm AdImpact.

"Traditional broadcast television remains the top beneficiary of advertising expenditures, though expenditures on digital ads continue to increase," says Beckel.

Similarly to Musk's spending, AdImpact tracked that most of the money has been spent on advertising in the Senate races in Michigan, Texas and Ohio, followed by Iowa and Maine.

From grains to chicken, India faces prolonged food inflation

Business Desk



Indian farmer Amarsingh Gushinge wants to sow wheat and chickpeas in coming weeks to capitalise on attractive prices, but dwindling water supplies after below-average monsoon rains are preventing him from planting either crop.

Like Gushinge, millions of farmers, especially in southern and western India, are facing water shortages as they prepare to plant winter crops.

"There's not enough moisture in the soil to sow the next crop, and no money left to do so either," said Gushinge, 78, at Rajewadi village, about 400 km (250 miles) east of Mumbai. The Jalna district around his village has received about 48% less rain than average this year, the local weather office has said.

A weak monsoon mean farmers will have to sow winter crops under less favourable conditions, raising the risk of stunted growth and lower yields.

Lower crop yields could further stoke food inflation, with prices of sugar, pulses, wheat and rice already climbing amid a severe El Niño. Onions, ubiquitous in Indian kitchens and widely used in curries, as well as milk and poultry products, are also becoming more expensive.

A spike in prices of staples can anger millions of Indians - increases in onion prices have ousted state governments in elections in the past.

Higher food prices could further weaken discretionary consumption across the economy, with the weakest monsoon rains in more than a decade already dampening rural demand and dragging down sales of tractors and farm equipment.

Food inflation could reach around 10% in the October-December quarter, said Devendra Pant, chief economist at India Ratings and Research, citing a combination of weak rains, higher global prices and rupee depreciation.

In September, annual retail food inflation accelerated to 7.74%, pushing headline inflation to 5.54%, close to the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance limit of 6%.

Higher food prices will likely prompt the central bank to raise interest rates by a further 50-75 basis points, as it risks feeding into broader price pressures, Pant said.

He said he expects the central bank to raise rates for a second consecutive time at its December meeting, after its first hike in October. Protein has been a key driver of price increases and could prove difficult to bring down, economists said.

The central bank's September Monetary Policy Report said animal protein and spices accounted for nearly half of the 200-basis point rise in food inflation between March and August, driven by higher feed and fodder, transport, packaging and energy costs, as well as bird mortality after a heat wave.

In September, meat inflation eased to 8.7% from 12.0% in August, largely due to a high base, while inflation in milk, other dairy products and eggs rose to 5.1% from 4.8%.

Animal feed, mainly corn and soybean, accounts for 60%-70% of poultry production costs, said Uday Singh Bayas, president of poultry equipment makers' body IPEMA-Poultry India. Poultry producers have yet to fully pass on higher feed costs, and broiler prices could rise from January as higher costs and tighter supplies put further pressure on the market, said Uddhav Ahire, chairman of the Anand Agro Group. Pulses, poultry and dairy are key sources of protein in India. Prolonged protein inflation could hurt lower-income households and force them to alter their diets, with implications for long-term health, said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Bank of Baroda.

Sugar output is likely to fall short of domestic consumption for a second consecutive year and may recover only in late 2028 if rains are favourable in 2027, said Rahil Shaikh, managing director of Mumbai-based trader MEIR Commodities India.

Sugar prices have risen nearly 30% over the past year, prompting the government to allow duty-free imports of 1 million metric tons to help bridge a shortfall, with consumption exceeding 29 million tons this year against output of less than 27.5 million tons.

But global prices are higher than domestic rates, limiting the impact of imports and making a return to last year's price levels unlikely, Shaikh said. While India can turn to imports of sugar, vegetable oils and pulses to offset domestic production shortfalls, higher global prices, a weaker rupee and rising freight costs are making overseas supplies more expensive.

El Niño is also affecting farm production in other countries, while the Russia-Ukraine war has hit grain and sunflower oil supplies from the Black Sea region.

These factors are pushing up prices of vegetable oils, said Sandeep Bajoria, chief executive of Mumbai-based brokerage Sunvin Group. India holds surplus stocks of rice and wheat, but prices continue to rise as supplies of the premium quality grain preferred by consumers remain tight. Preferences vary across states, and dry weather has cut supplies of rice varieties favoured in southern India, pushing up prices, said BV Krishna Rao, president of the Rice Exporters Association.

Wheat, India's main winter crop, has climbed to a nearly two-year high amid concerns that El Niño could bring warmer winter conditions and curb production early next year.



Nearly half of the region's people living on under $3 a day are in Pakistan

Business Desk

Pakistan is driving the rise in extreme poverty across West Asia, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAAP), with nearly half of the region's poorest people now living there, World Bank says.

The finding comes from the October edition of the bank's Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan Economic Update, published on Oct 6.

It forecasts Pakistan's economy will grow by 3.8 percent in the 2026-27 fiscal year, while its fiscal deficit will stand at 3.5 percent of gross domestic product.

The region has suffered severe economic losses from the conflict that began in February 2026, the report says.

Unlike previous energy crises, when oil-exporting countries generally benefited, Gulf oil producers have borne the heaviest costs this time because the Strait of Hormuz has been closed.

The World Bank projects the region's economies, which expanded by an average of 3.3 percent in 2025, will contract by 2.1 percent on average in 2026.

"The impact of this conflict is not limited to the energy sector. It is also severely disrupting tourism, aviation and supply chains. Rising uncertainty is also weighing on financial markets and business confidence." As policymakers grapple with the immediate fallout, the region must also prepare for another major shift: the rise of artificial intelligence.

The report says the region is undergoing several transitions at different speeds, rather than a single transformation.

In most economies, AI is expected to affect the short-term outlook mainly by boosting productivity, rather than through widespread job losses.

A report by Pakistan's English-language daily Dawn on Oct 7, headlined "Pakistan drives regional rise in poverty levels", highlighted the World Bank's findings on poverty.

Nearly 48 percent of the region's population living below the extreme-poverty line of $3 a day is in Pakistan, the report says.

Another 47 percent of the poor live in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Republic of Yemen.

The report describes the concentration of extreme poverty in a handful of countries as especially pronounced. Its figures put Pakistan at the centre of the regional burden, while Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen account for nearly all of the remaining share.

The findings come as conflict, disrupted trade and climate risks compound pressures on households already struggling to afford food and other essentials across the wider region today.

Food insecurity remains particularly worrying in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, as well as Yemen. Afghanistan, Djibouti, Lebanon and Pakistan are also facing significant pressure on food security.The World Bank warns that an El Nino weather pattern stronger than usual is forecast for late 2026. It could push food prices higher and hit poor households hardest.