

EYE CARE
Bangladesh
keen to work
with Orbis
Says Prof Yunus

BSS, Dhaka
Chief
Professor
Muhammad
Yunus has
expressed
Bangladesh's
willingness to collaborate
with global non-profit
Orbis International to
expand eye care services
across the country.
During a meeting with
Orbis President and CEO
Derek Hodkey at his office
on Wednesday, Prof Yunus
acknowledged Orbis's
significant contributions
to Bangladesh's eye health
sector. Derek is visiting
the country as part of the
Orbis Flying Eye Hospital's
training programme,
currently underway in
Chattogram.
Highlighting Orbis's
global impact, Derek
shared that the
organisation has been
delivering sight-saving
programmes in over 200
countries and territories
since 1982. In Bangladesh,
Orbis has worked with
the health ministry for
39 years, screening 7.8
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TAZREEN FIRE
12yrs on, justice
still elusive
Say speakers

DU CORRESPONDENT
Justice for those killed
in the Tazreen Fashions
tragedy remains elusive
even after 12 years, said
speakers at an event
yesterday.
They were speaking at
a cover unveiling event
for the book, "12 Years of
Impunity: Tazreen Worker
Murders -- Stories of Fire
and Life," marking nearly 12
years since the devastating
fire at Tazreen Fashions,
which killed at least 117
workers and injured over
150 others.
The book, published
by Bangladesh Garment
Sramik Sanghati, a
platform for RMG
workers, was launched at
Bishwo Shahitto Kendro
at Banglamotor in the
capital.
November 24 will mark
over a decade since the
tragic blaze at Tazreen
Fashions, located in
Nishchintipur, Ashulia.
The cover of the
compilation was unveiled
by Sahara Khatun, the
mother of victim Shah
Alam, and Rokeya Khatun,
the mother of victim Hena
Akter.
Speakers said the
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Shot, shackled, blinded

Rahat was picked up from ambulance, beaten at police station and then sent to jail; despite losing an eye during July uprising, the 18 year old refuses to abandon his dreams

MASHFIQ MIZAN

Eighteen-year-old Alif Hassan Rahat, a student from Milestone College in Uttara, dreamed of becoming a rocket engineer.
On July 18, when he joined the quota reform protest, he was struck by 29 police-fired pellets -- two struck his eye, 13 on his face, and 14 his chest.
The ambulance carrying him was intercepted by cops, he was detained, and beaten up for a whole night at a police station, before being sent to jail.
Rahat was sent to Dhaka Central Jail, where he was confined to a small, dark room with four other protesters. As he languished in jail without any treatment, his health deteriorated further.
Rahat was finally allowed proper medical treatment after Sheikh Hasina fled the country. By then, it was too late.
A pellet had reached the optic nerve of his right eye, leaving him completely blind. The pellet was too deeply lodged to be removed.
Rahat had sat for his HSC

to join them.
Suddenly, police opened fire, said Rahat.
"But we remained undeterred. Suddenly, near Uttara Square Hospital, law enforcers on a white microbus, started firing indiscriminately. Suddenly, I started bleeding. Blood was streaming from my eye like tears," Rahat said.
He was rushed to Uttara Adhunik Hospital. Some of the pellets from his face and chest could be retrieved.
Doctors couldn't stop the bleeding in his eye, so they bandaged it and told him to seek treatment elsewhere.
Then he went to Kurmitola Hospital but did not receive much help.
All the hospitals nearby were stretched thin as injured protesters were arriving in numbers.
So, he went back home. The next day, when Rahat woke up, he panicked as he couldn't see anything through his right eye.
AMBULANCE INTERCEPTED TWICE
On July 20, Rahat went to an

One officer sneered, "Look, we have some fighters here," before hurling abuse at them for participating in the protests. Despite their visible injuries and need for medical attention, the police detained all of them and took them to the Uttara East Police Station.
Once inside, officers seized all their belongings, including medical reports.
A group of five cops then surrounded the 18-year-old, punching, slapping, and kicking him.
The psychological torment began in the afternoon.
A police personnel was reloading his gun in front of Rahat. "I've already killed a few. You're next," the cop told Rahat.
Rahat was thrown into a cramped holding cell, packed with over 40 detainees, while



exams just before the mass uprising.
His results came out recently. He received GPA 5.
When his friends celebrated, Rahat stayed home -- bruised, blinded, and traumatised.
The Daily Star spoke with Rahat last month, and he shared his story.
THE DAY HE GOT SHOT
Student protesters began gathering near Zamzam Tower in Uttara on July 18.
The main road was off-limits, heavily guarded by armed law enforcers. Then Rahat saw a procession coming from the side of Abdullahpur. He decided

eye hospital in Tongi, from where he was referred to the National Eye Institute.
Rahat, his father Rahij Uddin, and two other injured protesters -- Arman Hossain and Rashedul Hasan -- boarded an ambulance.
The city was under curfew. First, an army patrol intercepted them. Spotting the young, injured protesters, the soldiers allowed the ambulance to pass.
Rahat and the others breathed a brief sigh of relief.
But near Uttara East Police Station, the ambulance was stopped once more -- this time by police.

his father and the ambulance driver were kept in a separate room.
Around 2:00am, after questioning, Rahat's father was released.
Rahij Uddin wanted to see his injured son. In response, the officers said, "Move forward, don't look back, or we'll shoot you," Rahij told this correspondent.
After 2:00am, Rahat was brought out of the cell for questioning and assaulted by four cops.
"One of them was taking photos and videos. They said my life was over, that I'd never

leave jail, and even if I did, I'd never resume my studies," Rahat recounted.
At dawn, detainees were lined up outside the station. Rahat was handcuffed. They were herded onto a prison van bound for the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Dhaka.
At court, Rahat and other detainees were thrown into an iron cage. "Over 100 people were crammed into the small cage. Just like animals," Rahat said.
By 1:00pm, after hours in the cramped cage, they were sent to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, without any hearing as no judge showed up.
Sending accused detainees to jail without any hearing is a violation of relevant laws.
Rahat was accused of attacking a Rab-1 team and vandalising their vehicle with weapons, intending to kill them.
Md Abdul Hakim, a warrant officer of Rab-1, filed the case, accusing 1,000-1,500 unnamed individuals.
The senior officials of Uttara East Police Station have been on the run since August 5. All attempts to reach them have been unsuccessful.
Md Mohibullah, newly-appointed officer-in-charge of the police station, said he does not know the whereabouts of his predecessor. He said normal operations resumed at the station in the last week of September following partial repairs.
INSIDE PRISON WALLS
Inside the jail, Rahat was taken to the prison hospital. But the facilities were a far cry from the advanced treatment he needed.
Later, he was moved to a cell, surrounded by hardened criminals. The reality of his circumstances started to set in, and he started crying in despair.
A man with shackles in his legs and ropes binding his arms tried to offer comfort.
Another inmate handed him some biscuits.
"These were the only signs of humanity I experienced in days," Rahat said.
The only treatment he received that night was some eye drops and a few painkillers.
"The next morning, I was taken to a field to register my name. They stamped a mark on my arm -- a prisoner's identity," Rahat said.
From there, he was led into a cramped, dark room already

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JULY UPRISING
Women activists
feel sidelined
and forgotten

Demand equal representation
in state reforms at discussion
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women leaders and activists, who actively participated in the July uprising, yesterday said despite their contributions at every level, they have been systematically sidelined in the post-movement period.
They pointed out that equal representation of women was not ensured in the reform commissions or other state institutions.
They added that the longstanding culture of denying women their rightful roles and excluding them from various sectors continues unabated.
They made these remarks at a discussion titled "Dialogue on Women of the Mass Uprising: Where Did the Women Go?" held at the Jatiya Press Club, where injured participants and female activists shared their experiences.
The event was jointly organised by two volunteer organisations, Loraku 24 and Empowering Our Fighters.
Umama Fatema, spokesperson for the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said it has become evident that there was a deliberate and successful attempt to sideline women in the aftermath of the uprising.
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Provide \$200 billion
support to LDCs
Bangladesh calls on EU
during COP 29

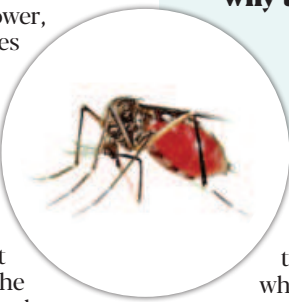
BSS, Dhaka
Bangladesh has urged the European Union (EU) to support a proposal for allocating US \$200 billion to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the most climate-vulnerable countries so that these nations can effectively respond to the challenges of climate crisis.
Bangladesh made the call at a bilateral meeting held yesterday between the ministers of LDCs and the EU on the final outcomes of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, according to a message received here.
The meeting emphasised the need for collaboration on unresolved issues to achieve a balanced and equitable outcome for all parties.
In the meeting, the Bangladesh delegation highlighted that "many issues remain unresolved," urging both groups to work together to secure a meaningful and inclusive deal for COP29.
During the meeting, the LDC ministers shared their key positions, emphasising the urgent need for financial and technical support to address the adverse impacts of climate change.
The EU ministers acknowledged the concerns raised by the LDCs and reaffirmed their commitment to address climate vulnerabilities to foster sustainable development.
They discussed crucial progress in the negotiations, such as climate finance, adaptation, mitigation, and the global stocktaking process.
The meeting marked an essential step in ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable countries are heard and acted upon in the final negotiations of COP29.

Climate change behind
prolonged dengue season
Say experts; 123 die in 22 days in November

HELEMUL ALAM
In the first 22 days in November, the country has already witnessed over 123 deaths and 23,009 dengue cases, showing an alarming trend this year.
Experts identified climate change as one of the main factors behind this prolonged dengue season this year, which is also the picture of the last few years.
According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), November 2022 saw 274 dengue deaths and 40,716 cases, while December recorded 83 deaths and 9,288 cases. The figures for 2021 and 2022 were significantly lower, with 27 deaths and 5,024 cases in 2021, and 113 deaths and 19,334 cases in 2022.
This year, dengue has claimed 438 lives, with total cases reaching 84,826 so far.
According to the LANCET Countdown on Health and Climate Change data sheet 2023, from 2018 to 2022, the average summer temperatures that people were exposed to were 0.9 degrees Celsius higher than the 1986-2005 baseline average.
The conditions are suitable for the spread of malaria for more than half of the

Climate change also changes the pattern of humidity in weather, which has changed the adaptation pattern of Aedes mosquitoes and also changed the behaviour of Aedes mosquitoes. This is why the seasonal dynamics of Aedes mosquitoes have changed.

PROF KABIRUL BASHAR
Entomologist at JU



Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury noted that the warm, humid conditions, which typically taper off by November, persist this year.
"Temperatures between 16°C and 30°C are ideal for Aedes mosquitoes, and biting tendencies increase in such conditions," he said.

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After a photo was published in The Daily Star on November 16, inset, showing a man crawling through a gap in a road divider on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Hemayetpur, Savar, local resident Ahmed Ali took an initiative to address the safety hazard. Despite a footbridge just 60 metres away, many pedestrians were risking their lives by using the unsafe shortcut. Motivated by a sense of responsibility, Ahmed, along with his family, sealed the hole to encourage safe practices.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN