

INDO-PAK ESCALATION 'Maintain ceasefire'

67 eminent citizens urge the 2 countries to uphold peace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty-seven members of Bangladeshi civil society have urged India and Pakistan to prevent any violations of the recently announced ceasefire, warning that only genuine political will and dialogue can ensure peace in the region.

In a joint statement issued yesterday, the signatories welcomed the ceasefire as an urgently needed step towards de-escalation and regional stability. However, they expressed alarm over reports of renewed shelling and power blackouts along the border.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Speakers at a roundtable titled "A New Bangladesh for Children: A Stronger Social Budget to Bring Childhood Back on Track", organised by The Daily Star and Unicef with support from the European Union, at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

NCP to launch youth wing on Friday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The youth wing of the National Citizen Party (NCP), titled "Jatiya Jubo Shakti" (National Youth Power), is set to be formally launched on Friday.

The new platform aims to engage youth from the private sector and private universities, encouraging them to use their talents to make the country better, said NCP leaders at a press conference held at the youth wing's central office in Rupayan Trade Centre, Banglamotor.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari announced that Jatiya Jubo Shakti will hold a grand launch event at Shaheed Abrar Fahad Avenue in Gulistan.

Nasiruddin said, "With over 40 percent of our population being youth, there is no alternative but to engage and organise them to drive national progress."

He added that since the NCP's formation in February, the party has worked to unite the youth who played a major role in the July Uprising.

A draft committee for the organisation has already been formed, he said.

Health, nutrition key to long-term economic growth

Speakers tell roundtable organised by Star, Unicef

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

True social protection requires more than cash transfers – it needs strong social sectors and well-funded support programmes, both long neglected in Bangladesh, said Unicef Bangladesh Representative Rana Flowers at an event yesterday.

She made the remarks at a roundtable titled "A New Bangladesh for Children: A Stronger Social Budget to Bring Childhood Back on Track", jointly organised by The Daily Star and Unicef with European Union's support at The Daily Star Centre.

When asked which investment most improves human development, leading economists consistently point to early childhood development (ECD), said Flowers. "If you get health, nutrition, and brain development right early on, you lose decades of potential progress."

"If you get health, nutrition, and brain development right early on, education and long-term economic growth follow. Without that investment, you lose decades of potential progress."

Rana Flowers
Representative of Unicef Bangladesh

She criticised Bangladesh's poor investment in key sectors, calling it a "huge gap".

"Health spending in Bangladesh is among the lowest in the world – lower than in many African nations and even

the average for least developed countries – at just 0.7 percent of GDP," she said.

She added that 40 percent of health centres lack vaccinators, posing serious risks to child health.

Flowers also flagged issues with poor teaching, weak learning outcomes, and the financial burden of private tutoring. "Violence is another crisis. In one week, 27 children were killed by their own families," she said.

She highlighted systemic problems: fragmented services, underfunding, poor integration, and nearly non-existent early childhood support. Despite high primary school attendance, learning outcomes remain poor, and dropout rates rise in secondary education.

Health and WASH services are inefficient and fragmented across seven departments. Primary healthcare is

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Prof Yunus returns to CU after 36 years

Teachers, students, graduates ready to welcome him for convocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong University (CU) campus is abuzz with excitement as Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus returns today after 36 years to attend the university's fifth convocation.

Teachers, students, and graduates are eagerly waiting to welcome Prof Yunus, who is visiting the campus for the first time since leaving his post as a professor in 1989. He will deliver the convocation speech and receive an honorary DLitt degree.



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HATIRJHEEL, PANTHAKUNJA 'Cancel FDC-Palashi link road project'

157 citizens demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists, professionals, rights activists, planners, lawyers and other civil society members yesterday reiterated their demand for immediate cancellation of the link road project from FDC to Palashi portion of the elevated expressway, which is damaging Hatirjheel and Panthakunja Park.

In a joint statement, 157 citizens said the road is violating the environmental laws and the constitution in a glaring example of discriminatory planning, lack of environmental clearance, and state mismanagement.

The project has been undergoing with corruption, mismanagement and a lack of coordination since it started which became a reason of ecological damage and public suffering, they also said, adding that around 2,000 trees have already been felled in Panthakunja, and portions of Hatirjheel's wetland have been illegally filled.

The signatories argued that this project directly violates Article 18A of the Constitution, which obliges the state to protect natural resources, biodiversity, and wetlands for current and future generations.

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