



“The time has come for real and effective international action to stop this historic injustice and ongoing tragedy which has become a disgrace to humanity.”  
Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas urges action on Gaza

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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আমরা কৃতজ্ঞ, আমরা গর্বিত  
সমৃদ্ধি ও সম্ভাবনার পথে একসাথে পেরিয়েছি ৩২ বছর! আস্থা ও ভরসায় আমরা  
ছিলাম আপনার পাশে, সবসময়।  
আগামী দিনগুলোতেও আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবায় পাশে থাকার প্রতিশ্রুতি নিয়ে  
আমরা আছি, থাকবো, সেই একই ভরসায়।

## Private airlines caught in a bind

10 pvt carriers operated over the past 3 decades, now only 2 running

RASHIDUL HASAN

Bangladesh's private airline industry is struggling to stay afloat, hobbled by soaring fuel prices, punitive surcharges, and what operators describe as unfavourable policies.

Of the 10 private carriers that have entered the market over the past three decades, only two -- US Bangla Airlines and Air Astra -- remain in operation.

Novoair, which plans to resume flights on May 21 after weeks of suspension, stares into financial distress, underscoring the perilous state of the sector.

Industry insiders say the sector is being systematically undermined by outdated rules, excessive fees, and a lack of government support, even as international carriers tighten their grip on the market. Foreign airlines now control roughly 75 percent of passenger traffic, leaving local operators to battle for a shrinking share.

“Foreign carriers are thriving in Bangladesh's aviation market while the local ones are in a sorry state. This is mainly because the country's aviation policy is not conducive to the industry's growth,” said Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation analyst.

### REASONS FOR LOCAL AIRLINES' FAILURE

- ✈ Exorbitant fees, surcharges
- ✈ High jet fuel prices
- ✈ Shortage of skilled manpower
- ✈ Poor planning, flawed marketing policy
- ✈ Wrong selection of aircraft, routes

Currently, 39 foreign carriers operate flights to and from Dhaka, compared to only three Bangladeshi airlines, including Biman. A total of 1.24 crore passengers travelled from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport last year, compared to 1.16 crore in 2023, shows CAAB data.

Asked why local

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Thousands thronged the capital's Manik Mia Avenue yesterday to show solidarity with the 'Narir Dake Moitree Jatra' programme, which called for unity, vigilance, and collective resistance in the face of injustices against women everywhere.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## ‘Will not back down on our rights’

Thousands of women march for equality, justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand women marched in the capital yesterday, demanding that the government act against the threats women and minority communities face and a misinformation campaign against the Women's Affairs Reform Commission.

The government must also take steps against the use of religious values to instil fear, they said.

The demonstrators gathered in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on Manik Mia Avenue in the afternoon and then began the “Women's March for Solidarity”.

Garment workers, house staff, indigenous and Dalit women, students, teachers, sex workers, and members of the hijra and gender-diverse communities united in their call for justice, dignity, and equality.

The demonstrators demanded that political parties clearly state their policies on the rights of women, workers, and minority communities.

Among their key demands was a mandatory 33 percent representation of women in upcoming elections.



They also urged that the interim government take immediate steps to empower women and marginalised communities through education, healthcare, and economic initiatives.

The declaration was read out by Sharmin Akter, wife of July uprising martyr Mamun Mia; Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of slain journalist Tahir Zaman; and Jayanti Chakma, an indigenous community representative.

“Rights are not granted; they must be claimed -- and we are not afraid to claim them,” read the

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## Country heading in right direction

Yunus tells The Economist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is moving in the right direction despite the challenges created by the disruptive rule of the Awami League-led regime, which was ousted last year in a popular uprising, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus told The Economist.

The interim government, which took charge after the fall of the regime, is trying to “fix everything that has been destroyed” during the 16-year-long autocratic rule of Sheikh Hasina, said the report published Thursday.

According to the report, Yunus likened the Awami League rule to a continuous “earthquake”.

“We're moving in the right direction, and the people are with us. We are hopeful,” he was quoted in the report,

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## SHAMMO KILLING DU students want arrest of ‘real killers’, safe campus

Issue 48-hour ultimatum

DU CORRESPONDENT

Protesting students at Dhaka University yesterday issued a 48-hour ultimatum for the arrest of the “real perpetrators” behind the murder of fellow student and Chhatra Dal leader Shahriar Alam Shammo, as demonstrations continued for a third straight day.

They also demanded justice for Shammo, a fair trial, and a safe campus.

Around 11:00am yesterday, the agitated students gathered at the base of the Raju Sculpture and staged a protest where they made the announcement.

Under the banner of “General Student Community of Bangladesh”, approximately 200-300 students marched towards Shahbagh Police Station.

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Jagannath University students stage a hunger strike yesterday afternoon at Kakrail intersection, on the third day of their demonstration, to press home their four-point demand. Inset, JNU VC Prof Rezaul Karim gives water to students who broke their hunger strike last night after it was announced that the government has agreed to meet their demands.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, RAKIB MADBER

## JnU protests called off

Govt assures students, teachers of meeting their demands

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Students and teachers of Jagannath University called off their protest last night after receiving assurances from the government that their demands would be met.

Prof Rais Uddin, general secretary of JnU Teachers' Association, made the announcement at Kakrail intersection, the protest site, in the capital around 8:30pm, three days after the start of the demonstrations.

All the activities of the university will resume tomorrow, he said moments after University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz visited the site and said the government accepted their demands.

The development came hours after the students began a mass hunger strike at 3:30pm to press home their four-point demand. The students and teachers have been protesting since Wednesday.

Sources in the teacher and student protesters said the government has decided to increase the budget allocation for Jagannath University to Tk 251 crore and has sanctioned an additional Tk 20 crore for the construction of a temporary residential hall. It also assured that the construction of a second campus would be prioritised under a fast-track project.

The UGC chairman, along with Jagannath University Vice-Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim, ended the students' hunger strike by offering them water.

The protesters said they would hold a press briefing soon to give their reaction.

Talking to the protesters in Kakrail, the UGC chairman said the commission worked tirelessly throughout the day to address the students' concerns.

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