



"We will continue our humanitarian and diplomatic role without any hesitation, in order to stop the bloodshed."
Qatar's PM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani on Gaza peace effort

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GAZA GENOCIDE GOES ON... Palestinians inspect the site of Israeli air strikes on houses at al-Shati (Beach) refugee camp in Gaza City, yesterday. Israeli strikes killed at least 50 people across Gaza yesterday, pushing the overall death toll to 64,756 since the offensive began on October 7, 2023. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Northern region drying up amid freshwater loss

Global study reveals alarming trend in Bangladesh over the last 2 decades

PINAKI ROY

Freshwater, both surface and groundwater, from northern Bangladesh has been declining steadily for the past two decades, reveals a new global study.

The research, led by Arizona State University and published in Science Advances, analysed over 20 years of satellite data.

Titled "Unprecedented continental drying, shrinking freshwater availability, and increasing land contributions to sea level rise", it found that 101 countries in the northern hemisphere have suffered unprecedented freshwater loss since 2002, driven by climate change, unsustainable groundwater use, and extreme droughts.

"Bangladesh is among the countries where freshwater has been declining for over the last two decades. Every year, it is reducing by 2.5mm-10mm. This is very alarming for us," said Md Rayhan, a Bangladeshi PhD student at Arizona State University who contributed to the study.

Using GRACE/FO satellite data from 2003 to 2024, the study tracked total water storage (TWS) across the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin, which covers much



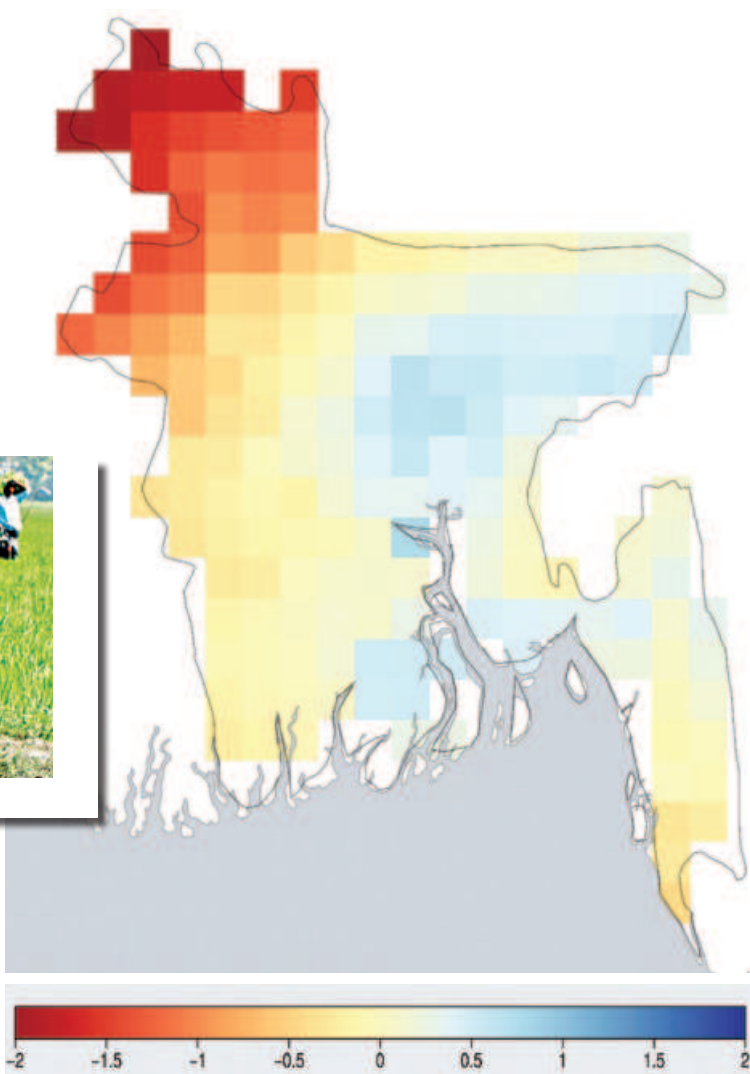
of Bangladesh. It found a consistent decline over 21 years.

The North West and North-Central regions appeared in reddish shades on satellite maps, showing annual TWS losses between -1 and -2cm.

"These TWS patterns show that over the past 21 years, parts of Bangladesh within the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin have experienced long-term declines in water storage.

"This water loss is not just a short-term change, but a long-term trend that has remained consistent even as more data has been added to the study. Scientists

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WATER STRESS ACROSS BANGLADESH
Deep red zones in the north indicate severe water decline, yellow areas reflect moderate stress, while blue regions represent relatively stable water levels.

MAP COURTESY
SCHOOL OF SUSTAINABILITY, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

Funding uncertainty stalls post-crash response plan

MAJOR STEPS UNDER RESPONSE PLAN

- ➔ A national ambulance service system
- ➔ Trauma-care training for health workers
- ➔ Providing logistics, essential medicines to health facilities along major highways
- ➔ Formation of steering committee to establish regulatory mechanism
- ➔ Employing trauma care specialists at all healthcare facilities
- ➔ Strengthening info management to monitor post-crash care

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The health authorities seek to roll out a post-crash response plan for the first time to reduce preventable deaths and disabilities resulting from road accidents, but funding uncertainties are delaying its implementation.

Though the draft of the three-year plan involving Tk 678.61 crore was formulated about four years ago for 2023-2025, it was finally approved on July 24 this year, leaving only five months for implementation.

The authorities are unsure about when they can start implementing it, as they are yet to secure funding.

Officials said the implementation window may close before the plan is put into effect, and in that case, it has to be revised.

The plan sets five strategic goals that include improving pre-hospital care for road crash victims and ensuring standard treatment at primary healthcare facilities.

The Noncommunicable Disease Control (NCDC) Programme of the DGHS prepared the plan titled "Strengthening post-crash response for the victims of road traffic injuries in Bangladesh: strategy and costed action plan for 2023-2025" in collaboration

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Nepal gets new PM after revolt

Ex-chief justice Sushila Karki to lead an interim govt for six months till elections

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's former chief justice Sushila Karki was sworn in yesterday as the country's prime minister to lead a six-month transition to elections, after deadly anti-corruption protests ousted the government.

The previous prime minister quit on Tuesday.

"I, Sushila Karki... take an oath in the name of the country and the people to fulfil my duty as the prime minister," the 73-year-old Karki, Nepal's first woman chief justice, said as she was sworn into office by President Ram Chandra Paudel.

"Congratulations! We wish you success, wish the country success," Paudel said to Karki after the small ceremony in the presidential palace, attended by diplomats and some former leaders.

The Himalayan nation of 30 million people was plunged into chaos this week after security forces tried to crush rallies by young anti-corruption protesters.

At least 51 people were killed in the worst violence since the end of a civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008.

The military took back control of the streets on Wednesday, enforcing a curfew.

The appointment of the judge, known for her independence, comes after two days of intense negotiations by army chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel and Paudel, including with representatives from "Gen Z", the

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JUCSU POLLS

Frustration as counting drags on CEC blames manual tallying; one EC resigns citing 'mismanagement'

SAKIB AHMED, MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

More than a day after voting ended in the long-awaited Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union election, the authorities were still struggling to complete the vote count, triggering mounting anger and suspicion.

Besides, the death of a teacher called for counting duty cast a pall of gloom over the campus.

The Jucusu election, held after 33 years, had raised high hopes among students eager to see their union revived. Yet by yesterday night, the excitement had given way to frustration as results were repeatedly delayed.

As the night wore on, the combination of slow counting, administrative resignations, and the tragic death of the young teacher left the campus tense and uncertain.

The results, originally expected to conclude yesterday morning, were first deferred to noon and then to night. At 8:20pm, the election commission issued an emergency notification saying the tallying would continue through the night.

As of 10:00pm, 24 hours after the counting began, the process was completed for 21 hall unions. The counting of votes of the central union began afterwards. The counting was underway at 1:00am.

Jucusu Chief Election Commissioner Md Moniruzzaman told reporters in front of the Senate Bhavan yesterday evening that the process might take the whole night.

He also said all the election officials were under surveillance and they were asked not to share results before the official announcement.

Officials admitted the process had slowed down because of the decision to abandon OMR machines and return to manual counting, a shift made following demands from several candidates.

The commission later doubled the number of counting tables from five to 10 in the morning, with additional CCTV cameras installed. But even with these adjustments, results remained out of reach.

Commission Member Secretary and University Proctor AKM Rashidul Alam said they had been prepared for machine counting, but had to improvise after the last-minute change. "Since we were not

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Ballots cast in Thursday's Jucusu election being tallied last night at Jahangirnagar University's Senate Hall.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN