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Mahalaya today

**BSS, Dhaka**

Mahalaya, an auspicious occasion that heralds the advent of Goddess Durga, will be celebrated at dawn today through different rituals by the Hindu community across the country.

With the beginning of “Devipaksha”, Mahalaya is observed six days before Durga Puja. Special programmes will be arranged at different temples. Hindus will remember and pay homage to their ancestors, who passed away, by performing puja, and offering the Brahmins clothes, food and sweets in their names.

A special programme will be arranged at the Dhakeshwari National Temple at dawn. Similar programmes will also be arranged in different temples in the capital and across the country.

Durga Puja will formally begin on September 28 on the day of Maha Shasti.

4 of a family suffer burns in AC blast

**UNB, Dhaka**

All four members of a family suffered burn injuries after an air conditioner exploded in Jatrabari area of Dhaka early yesterday.

The injured were identified as Md Tuhin Hossain, 38, of Madaripur district, his wife Eva Akter, 30, and their two sons -- Tanvir, 9, and Tawhid, 7.

A fire broke out after the air conditioner of a room exploded around 1:00am, leaving all four members of the family injured. Later, they were taken to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Shaon Bin Rahman, resident surgeon of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said among the victims, Tuhin suffered 47 percent burn injuries, while Eva with 15 percent, Tawhid 8 percent and Tanvir 40 percent burn.

SONY MURDER  
Convict Tagor remanded in arms case

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Mushfiq Uddin Tagor, a convict in Buet student Sabekun Nahar Sony murder case, on a two-day remand in an arms case.

The order was passed after Investigation Officer Motiur Rahman Bulbul, a sub-inspector of Lalbagh Police Station, produced him before the court.

The IO said Tagor was involved in collecting illegal weapons from border areas and supplying those to buyers in Dhaka.

Rab-3 arrested Tagor on September 18 in Azimpur.

Sony, a second-year student of Buet's chemical engineering department, was killed in June 2002 during a factional clash between two JCD groups.

Sony died after getting caught in the line of fire.



Construction workers without safety barriers or gear while working on a high-rise building in Dhanmondi. Despite frequent fatal accidents in areas like Rampura, Mohammadpur, and Sabujbagh, the Bangladesh National Building Code requires worker safety at all construction sites. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

‘If you’re sure of victory, why delay the election?’

Salahuddin asks Jamaat

**UNB, Dhaka**

BNP senior leader Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday questioned why Jamaat-e-Islami is trying to delay the next election through various ploys, including street agitation, if it is so confident about coming to power as its leaders claim.

Speaking at a youth dialogue in the capital, he also criticised Jamaat's demand for banning Jatiya Party and members of the 14-party alliance while the party is now on the streets together with a party that contested the 2024 national election held under Sheikh Hasina's rule.

“There were a few rallies of Jamaat and other parties across the country yesterday [Friday]. Some newspapers carried headlines today [yesterday] saying that Jamaat leaders claimed they will form the government while BNP will sit in opposition. But who decides that? Is it you, or is it the people? If you are so confident, then why don't you join the election instead of making excuses one after another to obstruct it?” the BNP leader said.

He also said BNP knows what Jamaat's real purpose is -- “to derail the national election.”

Arpan Alok Sangha organised the 3rd Dialogue on



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### STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS

## Two new panels announced for Cucusu polls

**CU CORRESPONDENT**

Two new panels have been declared for the upcoming Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) polls.

At a press conference yesterday, the Bishwa Insaniyat Biplob Student Front announced a five-member panel titled “Revolution for State of Humanity”.

The organisation's General Secretary Kefayet Ullah declared the panel and named himself as vice-president candidate. Other contenders include Kazi Shahriar Ullah for general secretary and Jonayed Shibli for assistant general secretary.

VP candidate Kefayet said due to the absence of Cucusu elections, students have been deprived of housing, food, transportation, and research facilities for the past 35 years. He added that the irregularities and lack of transparency in the current administrative structure are

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Following a long 35-year wait, the Rucusu election is finally set to take place on September 25. In the run-up to the polls, the RU campus is abuzz with anticipation as candidates put forward their pledges. The Daily Star spoke with two such aspirants -- VP candidate Tasin Khan and GS candidate Fahim Reza -- to gain insight into their thoughts and aspirations.

## Tasin pushes for 10-year academic roadmap at RU

**SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK**

Tasin Khan, vice-president candidate in the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union elections, has said that if elected, she will put pressure on the administration to formulate an academic master plan with emphasis on research.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the VP candidate from Sharbajanin Shikharthi Sangsad said Rajshahi University, despite being 72 years old, had yet to establish itself as a proper educational institution.

“At the end of the day, students are being graduated not as skilled human resources but as political activists or unskilled

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## Fahim stresses accountability, research, welfare

**SHARIF M SHAFIQUE**

Fahim Reza, contesting for the post of general secretary in the upcoming Rucusu election from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed Sammito Shikharthi Jote panel, has pledged to establish a system through which students can evaluate the performance of teachers, the university administration, and Rucusu representatives.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Reza, who served as one of the coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement during the July uprising in Rajshahi, criticised the decades-long suspension of Rucusu polls.

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ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY  
Stop building ramp at Hatirjheel, Panthakunja Demand speakers

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Eminent citizens yesterday demanded an immediate halt to the construction of an elevated expressway ramp at Panthakunja Park and the Hatirjheel reservoir, calling the project “anti-people” and “nature-destroying”.

At a press conference organised by the Bangladesh Tree Protection Movement at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, they said recent development activities were carried out without a valid environmental clearance, which expired in December 2023.

They noted that the ramp -- being built from the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation to Palashi near Buet -- defies a court order and has already damaged the park and reservoir. Its continuation, they warned, would damage the environment of Dhaka University, Buet, Kathalbag, Kataban, and Nilkhet areas.

Eminent economist Anu Muhammad said the interim government has continued the previous government's projects instead of reviewing them. “The interim government came to office as a result of the uprising but has taken the previous government's footsteps,” he said.

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, “The elevated expressway will only benefit private car

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Allocate more budget for medical research: experts

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

With Bangladesh lagging far behind in funding for medical research compared to some neighbouring countries, health experts and officials have demanded that the government increase the medical research budget to ultimately improve health services.

They also said research needs to be conducted on problems and situations specific to the country in order to identify the real issues and provide healthcare accordingly.

They were speaking at views exchange meeting organised by Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) at its office in Mohakhali yesterday.

Earlier, Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum inaugurated a dormitory for researchers at BMRC building.

In her presentation, BMRC Chairman Prof Sayeba Akhter said the annual budget of India's research council, the Indian Council of Medical Research, is \$283.13 million, with a per capita allocation of \$0.19.

In contrast, BMRC's budget is only \$1.82 million, or just \$0.01 per capita. The allocation is even lower than that of Sri Lanka, whose National Research Council (NRC) has a budget of \$0.86 million, amounting to \$0.04 per capita.

“In the past, our focus was not on research,” she said, adding, “We won't be able to move forward unless we improve in research.”

She said they received a much higher number of applications for research funding last year but could

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The arrival of autumn is marked by the gentle sways of white kans grass (kashful) beneath the blue sky. For many, this scene signals the coming of Durga Puja, as people travel miles to spend holidays with friends and family amid fields blanketed with kashful. The photo was taken in Aranghata, Khulna recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN