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DHAKA AIRPORT FIRE

Unsafe storage, fire system failures to blame: Probe

Automatic fire detection, suppression systems recommended

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

A probe into the October 18 fire at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's import cargo complex has found that unsafe storage practices and a lack of fire protection systems were responsible for the devastating blaze.

The report identified two possible

causes -- overheating of lithium-ion batteries stored without temperature control and an electrical short circuit. Arson, or sabotage, was ruled out because of a lack of evidence.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the ground handler of the import cargo complex, conducted the investigation and submitted the report to the civil aviation ministry on November 3.

The fire spread to the import cargo section after originating inside the structure known as the courier building, previously leased to and constructed by the International Air Express Association

- ➊ Lack of demolition tool prevented access to source of fire
- ➋ Piled up freight blocked access, worsening response
- ➌ Lease agreements do not clearly define safety responsibilities

Star shows smoke rising at 2:15pm from the west side of the tin-roofed shed, a section currently leased to DHL.

The fire appeared to start atop a storage rack. Within minutes, smoke thickened, and flames erupted at 2:19pm, followed by an electrical explosion that rapidly engulfed the room. By 2:21pm, the area was entirely ablaze.

Despite the spreading smoke, no sprinklers activated. The Airport Control Tower called the Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) team at 2:19pm, but in breach of the Emergency Response Plan,

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Large patches of waste mixed with green vegetation spread across the outskirts of Dhaka's Aminbazar landfill, highlighting severe pollution and environmental degradation. Waste from the site continues to spill into surrounding areas as the capital's population grows each year, turning it into a megacity generating more solid waste than the system can manage. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No end in sight to charter deadlock

BNP bins Jamaat's call for dialogue, says it'll respond only to CA's invite

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

With just a day remaining before the interim government's preferred timeframe for political parties to resolve their differences over the July charter, there are barely any signs that the deadlock is easing.

The BNP yesterday said it would join talks with other parties only if the invitation came from Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Rejecting Jamaat-e-Islami's call to engage in dialogue on the charter's implementation,

it questioned why another political party was issuing the invitation.

Meanwhile, nine parties -- the NCP, Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and six from the Ganatantra Mancha alliance -- are in talks to find ways to break the deadlock. A Ganatantra Mancha leader said they were yet to hold discussions with the BNP and Jamaat.

In a separate development, a liaison committee of eight political parties, including Jamaat, which is carrying out a simultaneous

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Political killings, gang hits leave people of Ctg shaken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A spate of killings linked to deadly gang violence and political clashes in Chattogram over the past year has left residents in the city and adjoining upazilas fearing for their safety, with many describing the situation as living in a state of "constant fear".

As many as 35 murders have been committed across the metropolitan area and its outskirts since the political

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Russia hits key Ukraine energy facilities

Two killed; Zelensky urges increased sanctions on Russia; several Ukrainian cities using generators for power and water

AFP, Kyiv

A Russian attack hit Ukraine's energy infrastructure, killing two people and prompting power cuts in several regions, Ukrainian authorities said yesterday.

Moscow has in recent months escalated attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine, damaging natural gas facilities which produce the main fuel for heating in the country.

Experts have said Ukraine risks heating outages ahead of the winter months.

"Russian strikes once again targeted people's everyday life. They deprived communities of power, water, and heating, destroyed critical infrastructure, and damaged railway networks," Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said.

Russia launched 458 drones and 45 missiles at Ukraine overnight, said the Ukrainian air force, adding that it had downed 406 drones and nine missiles.

A drone strike on the eastern city of Dnipro ripped through a nine-storey building, killing two people and wounding six, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

Attacks forced emergency power cuts and interrupted water supplies in the northern



A woman with a dog walks near an apartment building hit during the Russian drone strike in Dnipro yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

city of Kharkiv, where the mayor said there was "a noticeable shortage of electricity."

There was no electricity, water, and partial heating in Kremenchuk, in the eastern Poltava region, the administration said.

There were also significant train delays, Restoration Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said, accusing Russia of stepping out its attacks

on locomotive depots.

"We are working to eliminate the consequences throughout the country. The focus is on the rapid restoration of heat, light and water," Svyrydenko said.

Russia has targeted Ukraine's power and heating grid throughout its almost four-year invasion, destroying a large part

of the key civilian infrastructure.

Drones also hit energy infrastructure in Ukraine's southern Odessa late Friday, the region's governor Oleg Kiper said on Telegram.

"There was damage to an energy infrastructure facility," he said, reporting no dead or wounded.

Russia's defense ministry said it struck "enterprises of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex and gas and energy facilities that support their operation."

The attacks on energy infrastructure have raised concerns of heating outages in Ukraine as the war enters its fourth winter.

Kyiv's School of Economics estimated in a report that the attacks shut down half of Ukraine's natural gas production.

Ukraine's top energy expert, Oleksandr Kharchenko, told a media briefing Wednesday that if Kyiv's two power and heating plants went offline for more than three days when temperatures fall below minus 10 degrees Celsius, the capital would face a "technological disaster".

Ukraine has in turn stepped up strikes on Russian oil depots and refineries in recent months, seeking to cut off Moscow's vital energy exports and trigger fuel shortages across the country.

Unsafe storage, fire system failures to blame

FROM PAGE 1

did not alert the national Fire Service and Civil Defence immediately.

The first airport fire truck arrived at 2:23pm after the entire room was ablaze. It was followed by two others at 2:25pm and 2:26pm. Each of these trucks had a capacity of holding between 9,500 litres and 12,500 litres of water and 1,200 to 1,500 litres of foam.

A security assistant finally dialled 999 at 2:25pm, and the Uttara fire station was notified. Its first truck reached the site at 2:50pm, when the entire shed was already engulfed.

POOR PREPAREDNESS

Because the source of the fire could not be accessed without tearing down walls of the courier building's corrugated tin structure, the response was initially limited to spraying water and foam onto the roof.

The airport lacked the necessary demolition equipment. Only when the fire service arrived with bulldozers could the source of the fire be reached.

The army joined the operation at 3:21pm. Altogether, 37 units battled the blaze.

The report noted a critical lack of fire hydrants near the import cargo complex, forcing firefighters to draw water from distant points, such as the Biman hangar, airport fire station, domestic terminal, Biman training centre swimming pool, a nearby pond, and the domestic terminal's underground reservoir.

At the time of the incident, there were no people in the courier building. Courier companies said they had closed by 1:30pm, as it was a Saturday. Though many of the courier units had fire extinguishers, none were used.

All ground support vehicles carried extinguishers, and staff were trained in firefighting. Biman, as ground handler, had also installed 34 additional extinguishers in the complex. Staff responded with nine 25-litre extinguishers at 2:32pm, but the fire had already grown uncontrollable.

The cargo compound is divided among multiple warehouses leased to different operators. Biman oversees unloading cargo from aircraft and transporting it to the import complex.

The courier building houses 57 courier services operating under separate leases with the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB). Thirteen courier offices are inside the main building and 44 in the tin shed outside.

While Civil Aviation Rules 1984 make couriers responsible for cargo safety, the lease agreements do not define this liability clearly. CAAB's leases also prohibit structural changes without its permission.

"By constructing a tin shed courier facility inside a high security area of the airport, partitioned into small iron-grilled compartments that would be difficult to access during a fire emergency, the IAEAB exposed the airport to severe fire risk," the report said.

"As the regulator, airport operator, and lessor, it was CAAB's responsibility to ensure that safety standards were upheld while approving the lease, permitting the structure, and maintaining it afterwards," it added.

CLOGGED ACCESS

The report also blamed the fire's rapid spread on piles of uncleared cargo blocking access roads. Fire trucks struggled to reach the site as goods belonging to couriers and Sky Capital were stacked outside due to limited storage inside.

By law, uncleared cargo must be removed within 21 days and auctioned within three months. However, the rule is routinely ignored, causing chronic congestion.

Forklift operators tried to clear paths for the fire trucks, but it was too

late.

A January 24, 2024 letter from Biman to CAAB warned that the 1,58,000 sq ft cargo complex was half the required size. Without an examination yard, customs clearance was delayed, forcing cargo to pile up in the open as import volume was increasing by 10 percent annually.

Biman is required to list uncleared cargo after 21 days and hand it over to customs for auction. The report found that these lists are not prepared on time, and auctions are delayed, leading to continuing accumulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Investigators recommended that lease agreements for the cargo complex clearly define each stakeholder's responsibilities regarding fire safety.

It also recommended the installation of automatic fire detection and fire suppression systems in all warehouses, cargo sheds and service buildings.

When asked about whether the DHL area had automatic fire suppression systems, Miarul Haque, the managing director of DHL in Bangladesh, declined to comment, citing ongoing investigations.

A HISTORY OF NEGLECT

Warnings about inadequate fire safety at the airport date back more than a decade.

On October 18, 2011, exactly 14 years before the fire, Biman notified the HSIA director that the cargo village and complex lacked any permanent fire suppression system, warning that delays could destroy goods worth thousands of crores and tarnish the airport's reputation.

A survey committee later recommended installing hydrant points, extinguishers, auto fire pumps, and a brigade system across both export and import cargo complexes.

Biman's internal records show that CAAB handed over the complex's operations to Biman in 1982-83, but part of it was later subleased to IAEAB in violation of rules. The courier building became that subleased section.

After a 2013 fire in the courier section, CAAB reclaimed the building and leased it directly to IAEAB from January 1, 2014. In 2019, IAEAB stopped paying rent, and the lease remained unrenewed until 2023.

The dispute was resolved in September 2023, when CAAB signed separate lease agreements with each courier company, collecting Tk 10.44 crore in rent until June 2024. A year later, in September 2024, CAAB attempted to reinstate a collective lease with IAEAB but withdrew under pressure from the couriers.

On October 30, 2025, Ahmed Jamil, joint secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, wrote to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) chairman, noting that a seven-member committee had, in January, recommended relocating all "dangerous goods" cargo to a 21,780 sq ft abandoned Ansar barrack north of the airport complex.

"We do not know what steps were taken to implement these recommendations," the letter said.

The committee, tasked with assessing overall airport safety, had concluded that there was no space to build a new warehouse and advised repurposing the unused barrack for storing hazardous cargo.

MANY ARMS MISSING

At least 16 consignments of weapons were in the vault of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, from which many of them went missing on October 28, documents reveal.

These include three consignments of pump action shotguns, two of sporting shotguns, two of "pump-action sporting", two of semi-automatic shotguns, one of "unloaded firearm",

two of "semiautomatics", one of handguns, one of "sporting weapons", and one of pistols.

The vault had other items, including electronics, laboratory equipment, and chemicals.

Following the incident, police found 67 pistols, 12 shotguns, one rifle, and 991 blank cartridges in the vault, leaving unspecified weapons unaccounted for.

A list of imported arms obtained by The Daily Star shows that the consignments were from between 2019 and 2025. Failing customs clearance, they were stored in the vault.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines, which is responsible for maintaining the vault and handling the ground cargo at the airport, has not disclosed the exact type or quantity of the missing weapons.

The vault was found intact during a routine inspection on October 27. However, the next day, Biman's security department discovered the vault's lock broken, said Boshra Islam, general manager of Biman's public relations department.

Biman has filed a general diary on the same day over the missing firearms.

On October 18, a major fire swept through the airport's import cargo complex, destroying storage facilities containing large quantities of raw materials, apparel, and product samples belonging to exporters.

On October 25 – three days before the vault was found broken – Biman sent a letter to the civil aviation secretary, requesting immediate measures to remove the arms.

"Due to the fire, all facilities and warehouses of the import cargo terminal have been reduced to rubble, with no goods remaining except in the strong room. Given the sensitive and fragile situation, it is not appropriate to continue storing valuable items in the strong room. In light of this, the National Board of Revenue may be specially requested to take these inventoried items into the custody of the customs department to ensure their proper protection," the letter, signed by Biman Managing Director Dr Md Shafiqur Rahman, read.

As per the Bangladesh Land Customs Statutes, Biman, as the handling agent and warehouse keeper, is required to remove all cargo from the complex within 21 days, if not cleared by customs, and to auction them within three months.

However, the rule is often ignored, according to an investigation report prepared by Biman and submitted to the civil aviation ministry on November 3.

Md Foysal Kabir, proprietor of Gun Max, said three of his consignments might have gone missing from the vault.

"These include 20,000 bullets, 16 pistols, and a consignment of air rifles," he said. These items were not in the seizure list prepared by police after the vault was emptied.

Kabir said he had five consignments stuck in the strong room, imported in 2020, 2022, and 2023. "Once we obtain an import permit, we are given 18 months to bring in the product. But clearing goods from customs takes years while we negotiate the duty to be levied," said Kabir, who has been importing weapons since 2011.

He claimed to have paid duty for 50 arms stored in the strong room in July, but even those had not been released.

According to sources, except for the semiautomatic rifles brought in on October 15, the other firearms in the strong room were past their sell by date.

Taslima Akhter, officer-in-charge of Airport Police Station, said, "We are still investigating the incident. We have interrogated different people, but as of today, we have no updates to share with the media."

movement, warned yesterday that if their demands are not met, they will announce tougher programmes at their November 11 rally.

The demands include the issuance of the July charter implementation order and holding a referendum on it within this month.

Amid ongoing disputes over the timing of the referendum, the charter's implementation order, and the fate of the notes of dissent, the government on Monday called on parties to settle disputes and reach a unified decision, preferably within a week.

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, speaking after a special advisory council meeting that day, told reporters: "We haven't issued any ultimatum. We'll wait. After that, the government will act as necessary."

Speaking at a discussion on "Revolution and Solidarity Day", organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday, BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed urged the interim government to remain neutral.

"We have and will continue to support you... But if you think you can invite us to dialogue through another political party... who are they? If the chief adviser invites us to discuss any issue, we're always willing to engage. But why are we being invited through another party?"

He said his party maintains political communication and dialogue with others as part of democratic culture. "However, if you indirectly invite us by assigning a referee role to another party, that may not be appropriate."

Salahuddin added that the interim government does not have the authority to impose "such deadlines." "You are not an elected government, please remember that. You don't have the mandate to dictate terms by saying, 'If you don't reach a decision within seven days, we will make one.' Such a display of power may not suit you."

Addressing Jamaat-e-Islami, he said the party took a contrary path in 1947 and again in 1971. "Jamaat became companions of Hussain Muhammad

Ershad through the Jatiya Party. Now, if you seek a political revival by aligning with the Awami League, only God knows what the outcome will be. What you have initiated could encourage the fallen fascists and other undemocratic forces.

"However, if you claim that since you're not getting your share, you'll spoil the pot for everyone, the people of Bangladesh will not accept that. They won't give you that opportunity."

He added, "If you [Jamaat] want to enjoy the benefits, go ahead. But we will not allow the democratic battlefield of Bangladesh to burn again."

"You have declared an ultimatum until November 11. Who is issuing ultimatums to the government? The government has already made recommendations in your favour. The National Consensus Commission has given you everything you asked for. That's why you're echoing its position."

Salahuddin said there was "no need" for a referendum. "This referendum will result in legislation and constitutional changes. However, it will also impose a moral obligation on current and future MPs – whether the people want these reforms implemented or not. If it is to be held, there is no alternative but to hold it on election day."

Speaking at an event titled "Janat-e-Islam", organised by Trace Consulting Firm, a civic organisation, yesterday, Jamaat's Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad said, "We invited the BNP secretary general to sit for a dialogue. They responded by saying they would not accept Jamaat's call."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Azad, also part of a two-member committee formed to prepare a "consensus framework" on the electoral structure, implementation of the July charter, and conduct of the referendum, said most parties had given a positive response to their proposal for talks. "However, the BNP was negative when we contacted them on Thursday."

At yesterday's event, Azad said the Awami League regime had followed a similar pattern: agreeing to sit with some parties while refusing others.

"Can't we move beyond that culture? If you invite us, we'll come. If the BNP extends a call, Jamaat will be the first to respond – and we'll encourage others to join as well."

He added that a referendum before the polls is necessary so that people understand what the proposed reforms actually mean. "The public may know a little, but a referendum would allow for broader awareness."

Explaining why Jamaat began its current movement regarding the referendum and charter implementation, Azad said they were advancing through a democratic process to reach out to the public rather than acting as a pressure group.

Speaking at the same event, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the country's people respect differences of opinion.

"That culture must remain among us. You can't just take to the streets at the drop of a hat. If another party then takes to the streets, what happens? If they respond with counter protests, won't that lead to clashes? Is this why we removed Sheikh Hasina?"

He said everyone has the right to protest. "But the people of Bangladesh do not want confrontational politics. They want stability."

The BNP leader added, "The issues on which we haven't reached consensus, we'll take those to the people in the upcoming election. And the points on which we've agreed, we'll implement them."

At the same programme, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said many parties are still saying there is uncertainty surrounding the July charter. "But debates like these continue for 10 to

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From left, Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, Rashtra Sangskar Andolon President Hasnat Qaiyum, Economist and activist Prof Anu Muhammad, Dhaka University Prof Samina Luthfa and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem at a discussion on 'Ila Mitra o Tebhaga Andolon (Ila Mitra and the Tebhaga Movement)' at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The Daily Star Itihas Adda organised the programme.

PHOTO: STAR

Ila Mitra's spirit lives on in today's struggles for equality

Speakers tell discussion marking her birth centenary

Our political and social consciousness has not changed much. That's why we must not forget women like Ila. The discourse on her life and ideals must continue.

FAUZIA MOSLEM
Mahila Parishad President

Ila Mitra's story was not just about one person but about an era shaped by collective struggles. Behind Ila's courage stood the memory and pain of countless others.

SAMINA LUTHFA
Professor at Dhaka University

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ila Mitra's fight for equality, justice, and human dignity remains unfinished in today's Bangladesh, where farmers, workers, and women still face the same neglect she once stood against, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said people like Ila Mitra cannot be restrained -- the more she was held back, the stronger her defiance grew, making her a symbol of resistance, dignity, and courage.

Political leaders, academics, rights activists, and journalists spoke at the discussion titled "Ila Mitra o Tebhaga Andolon (Ila Mitra and the Tebhaga Movement)" held to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Ila Mitra, observed on October 18.

The Daily Star Itihas Adda

organised the programme at The Daily Star Centre in the capital, as part of its third Itihas Adda session.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem said, "Whenever Ila spoke, she spoke for people, for struggles, for movements. Such families of shared commitment are rare today. Ila Mitra was never alone; her entire family was part of the struggle."

She noted that even after a century, women's rights over property, marriage, and guardianship remain restricted. "Our political and social consciousness has not changed much. That's why we must not forget women like Ila. The discourse on her life and ideals must continue," she said.

Fauzia said Ila Mitra worked closely with the Santal community and that their struggle still continues today. "As we celebrate her birth centenary, we must carry forward her dream."

Eminent economist Prof Anu Muhammad said, "Debates over who should be remembered or forgotten reflect the biases of those in power. Whoever stands against injustice and speaks for humanity must be remembered as one of our own."

He said society begins to change when working people and women unite against exploitation. "That's why Ila Mitra's Tebhaga Movement spread so widely," he added.

As for Bangladesh, one year after the July uprising, the dream of an equal nation remains unrealised. The aspiration exists, but the forces behind it are weak," he added.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Over 100 hurt as cops use batons on protesting teachers

Indefinite strike called at all govt primary schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 100 people were injured as police charged batons, fired sound grenades, and used water cannons to disperse a group of government primary school teachers during a demonstration in Dhaka's Shahbagh yesterday afternoon.

The incident took place around 4:00pm when several hundred teachers tried to march towards Shahbagh intersection after staging a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar to press home their three point demand, including upgrading their pay scale to the 10th grade.

Later, the protesting teachers, under the banner of Prathomik Shikkhok Dabi Bastobayon Parishad (Primary Teachers' Demand Implementation Council), a coalition of four teachers' organisations, announced a nationwide



DEMANDS

- ⦿ 10th-grade pay scale
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- ⦿ 100% departmental promotion

indefinite work stoppage starting today.

They also said they would continue their sit-in at the Shaheed Minar to protest the "police attack" and press for their demands.

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Govt's role is not to serve any party's interests
Says Tarique Rahman

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the interim government's main responsibility is to establish a democratic administration through free and fair elections, not to serve any party's interests.

Virtually addressing the "Hindu Representative Council 2025", he cautioned that the recent actions of certain political parties, who once marched alongside the anti-fascist movement, may now be creating a situation that undermines people's rights and opportunities.

"The role of some of our allies in the anti-fascist street movement is perhaps creating a situation that could destroy the rights and opportunities of many people in the country, including yours and mine. If the country becomes unstable, it may pave the way for the rehabilitation of the fallen, defeated, fugitive fascist forces," the BNP leader said.

He urged the interim government and pro-democratic, anti-fascist forces

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

CANCELLATION OF MUSIC, PE TEACHER POSTS

Voices unite in melodic protest

Cultural groups urge reconsideration of govt decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protests are continuing across the country against the government's decision to cancel the recruitment of music and physical education teachers in primary schools.

In Dhaka yesterday, cultural organisations including Udichi Shilpigosthi and Chhayanan staged programmes condemning the decision and announced further demonstrations.

Speaking at a programme marking the 75th founding anniversary of Dhaka University's Department of Islamic History and Culture at the TSC auditorium, the chief justice said, "We have worked to bring real changes so that the justice system serves people, not power."

He said the ongoing reforms are gradually becoming a "people's reform", as citizens have started to see and support the changes.

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narrow motives."

The protest programme will include cultural assemblies, human chains, and musical processions organised by Udichi's district and branch committees in association with progressive organisations, starting today.

Central activities will include submitting a memorandum to the education ministry, holding roundtable discussions, and releasing statements from prominent citizens.

Meanwhile, another faction of Udichi announced a separate protest titled "From Udichi to Jamuna" -- a musical procession.

According to a press release by Udichi's publicity secretary Manjur Morshed Milton, the procession will begin at 4:00pm today from the organisation's central office on Topkhana Road and march towards the chief adviser's residence at Jamuna.

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Protesting the government's decision to cancel the recruitment of music and physical education teachers in primary schools, members of Chhayanaut formed a human chain in front of its cultural centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Voices unite

FROM PAGE 3

Cultural organisation Chhayanaut also staged a musical demonstration yesterday in front of its Shankar bus stand cultural centre in the capital, where around 700 to 800 artists, students, and well-wishers took part.

The event featured collective renditions of Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Sangeet, Lalon Geeti, and the national anthem.

Chhayanaut President Dr Sarwar Ali said, "We believe music is stronger than speeches – that is why today's event was organised through music."

"For the physical and mental development of children, and for building a humane, liberal, and tolerant society, the practice of music and physical exercise is essential," he added.

In Gazipur, over 50 activists from Udichi's Gazipur and Kapasia branches held a protest in front of the Satyen Sen Sangeet Academy.

At an event at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, the musical group Samogeet along with artists and cultural activists, also expressed solidarity.

On August 28, the government published the Government Primary School Teacher Recruitment Rules 2025, which included the posts of music and physical education teachers.

Several religion-based groups opposed the move, demanding the recruitment of religious instructors instead.

The government later issued a revised gazette on November 2, scrapping the proposed posts.

NATIONAL POLLS

NCP weighs solo run to build 'third force'

SHAMIMA RITA

Many members of the National Citizen Party (NCP) are reluctant to contest the upcoming national election as part of a BNP- or Jamaat-e-Islami-led alliance, as the party seeks to emerge as a distinct third political force.

While discussions with BNP and Jamaat on possible seat-sharing continue, several NCP leaders believe the party should build its own identity by contesting all 300 constituencies or forming a new alliance with parties outside the two major blocs.

They acknowledged that joining hands with BNP or Jamaat could bring short-term gains, such as a few winnable seats, but warned it might weaken the party's long-term vision.

Leaders also said an alliance with BNP would make NCP share responsibility for its recent controversies, while a deal with Jamaat could threaten the party's survival.

These issues were discussed at a six-hour national committee meeting on Friday evening at the party's office in Banglamotor.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam, Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, and Chief

KEY PLANS

- ⦿ NCP leaders favour contesting all 300 seats independently
- ⦿ Party aims to build identity as third political force
- ⦿ Alliance with BNP or Jamaat seen as risky for long-term vision



Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary attended the meeting, while two key organisers, Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam, were absent.

After the meeting, several leaders spoke with The Daily Star.

"We are preparing to contest the election independently to demonstrate our ability to field candidates in all 300 constituencies," said NCP Joint Convener Sarwar Tushar.

He said, "We are also discussing forming a third political alliance outside BNP and Jamaat, but nothing has been finalised yet. Everything remains uncertain until the implementation order of the July Charter is issued."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Pakistan naval ship arrives at Ctg port on goodwill visit



UNB, Dhaka

Pakistan Navy ship "PNS Saif" arrived at the Chattogram port yesterday on a four-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh.

Chief Staff Officer of Chattogram Naval Zone warmly greeted the commander and crew of "PNS Saif". Officials from the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka and senior officers of the Bangladesh Navy were also present.

Upon entering Bangladesh's maritime boundary, the ship was welcomed at sea by Bangladesh Navy ship "BNS Shadhinota".

During the visit, the commanding officer of "PNS Saif" and other members of the delegation are scheduled to pay courtesy calls on Commander Chattogram Naval Area, Commander BN Fleet, and Area Superintendent Dockyard.

They will also visit various historic and tourist sites, naval ships and establishments in Chattogram.

The ship will depart Bangladesh on November 12, said an ISPR press release.

Man hacked to death in Noakhali

STAR REPORT

A 35 year-old man was beaten and hacked to death in Begumganj upazila of Noakhali on Friday night, reportedly over conflicts linked to the drug trade and local dominance.

Abdul Quader Jilani alias Kan Kata Kadir from Choumuhani municipality's ward 9 was attacked around 9:30pm in front of Cherang Bari under Hajipur union's ward 2, said Liton Dewan, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Model Police Station, yesterday.

Police said Quader had long-standing disputes with several local youths over drug-related activities and territorial influence. Unidentified assailants assaulted him with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot before fleeing.

Quader had multiple cases filed against him, including charges under the Explosive Substances Act and drug-related offenses, police added.

FERRY FARE COLLECTION 10 hurt as rival BNP groups clash again in Narsingdi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

At least 10 people were injured as two BNP factions clashed again over collecting extra fares at a ferry ghat in Narsingdi yesterday.

Police and locals said the third round of clashes erupted in the ferry terminal area in Jirtarampur of Madhabdi upazila after announcements were made over loudspeakers.

The violence broke out between groups led by Shahid Mia, joint convener of the Char Dighaldi union BNP and member of ward 9, and Chan Mia, general secretary of ward 8 Jubo Dal.

On November 3 and 4, the two groups clashed, injuring 10 people. Following those incidents, police had been deployed in the area, said Madhabdi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Madhabdi.

"Taking advantage of the absence of police early Saturday morning, tension flared up again... The situation was later brought under control," the OC said.

Locals said the long-standing dispute centred on dominance and the collection of excessive ferry fares from passengers.

Locals said the long-standing dispute centred on dominance and the collection of excessive ferry fares from passengers.
Earlier, the two groups clashed on Monday (November 3) and Tuesday (November 4).

Yesterday, both groups used spears and locally made weapons. Several of the injured were treated at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, while others reportedly received treatment in secret to avoid arrest.

Contacted, Chan Mia alleged, "Four of our men were injured, and at least 20 houses were vandalised and looted. Supporters of BNP leader Shahid Mia and Awami League activists jointly attacked my home. I've filed a written complaint with the police. The attack happened because I protested against collecting Tk 20 instead of Tk 6 as ferry fare."

However, Shahid Mia claimed, "Members of Chan Mia's group launched a sudden attack on us, injuring six to seven of our men."

Contacted, Abu Saleh Chowdhury, president of Narsingdi Sadar upazila BNP, said, "I wasn't informed of any clash today, but we will look into it and take organisational action if anyone is found involved."

Md Menhazul Alam, superintendent of police in Narsingdi, said, "The clash took place over ferry lease collections between Chan Mia and Shahid groups. The lease has now been cancelled, and the situation is under control."

The ferry authority could not be reached for comment.



Unilever Bangladesh Limited CEO and Managing Director Ruhul Quddus Khan, and Corporate Affairs, Partnerships and Communications Director Shamima Akhter receive the FICCI Sustainability Game Changer Award 2025 as Champion in the Community Impact category at an award ceremony in Dhaka yesterday. The recognition honours Unilever Bangladesh's contributions to health, hygiene, livelihoods, and environmental resilience through its community-focused initiatives.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Crocodile caught by locals handed over to forest dept

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A crocodile caught by locals on Friday night in Manikganj Sadar upazila was handed over to the Forest Department yesterday afternoon.

Harirampur upazila Forest Officer Md Shariful Islam said locals had spotted a crocodile in a canal of Charbangkhuri in Hatipara union about a month ago. Since then, they had been too frightened to bathe or allow their cattle into the canals.

"Around 10:00pm on Friday, they made an attempt to catch the crocodile in Chowkighata area," said the official.

Rahat Hossain, a resident of Chowkighata, said, "When the crocodile floated in the canal, we



were able to catch it with a trap made of rope."

Shariful said, "It is initially

believed to be a freshwater crocodile, measuring approximately 10 feet in length."

Over 100 hurt as cops use batons

FROM PAGE 3

Earlier yesterday, the demonstration began around 9:00am. The teachers had previously announced a symbolic "pen down" programme at Shahbagh as part of their movement.

A group of teachers peacefully dropped their pens and informed us that they would return to the Shaheed Minar.

However, another group tried to force their way through our barricade and hurled brick chips shortly after. We then dispersed them," said Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of DMP's Ramna Division.

None were seriously injured so far. Most sustained injuries below the knee, while some fell sick due to the sound grenades, he added.

The protesters said when police stopped them in front of the Public Library, they tried to break through the barricades.

Police first fired tear gas shells and sound grenades, then charged batons and used water cannons

without provocation," said Kamruzzaman, one of the protesting teachers.

The teachers then scattered and took shelter inside the Dhaka University campus, witnesses said.

By 4:30pm, a large number of police personnel were deployed at the scene.

Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman, director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said more than 100 people received primary treatment at DMCH's emergency department.

None were seriously injured so far. Most sustained injuries below the knee, while some fell sick due to the sound grenades, he added.

Inspector Md Faruq, in charge of the DMCH police camp, said at least 110 people received primary treatment at the hospital.

In a statement, the DMP said all kinds of meetings, rallies, and gatherings have been banned in and around

the residence of the chief adviser at Jamuna and nearby areas. Despite the ban, the protesters ignored the restrictions and tried to move forward.

To maintain order and protect key state installations, police stepped in to disperse the protest.

Abul Kashem, president of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association, said, "Our strike will continue indefinitely in all government primary schools across the country until our demands are met."

The teachers' key demands include implementation of the 10th-grade pay scale, resolution of issues related to higher-grade eligibility after 10 and 16 years of service, and ensuring 100 percent departmental promotion.

Meanwhile, at a programme in Khulna yesterday, Prof Bidhan Ranjan Roy Poddar, adviser to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, said they have reviewed the three demands of the protesting teachers.

"The current position for assistant teachers is the 13th grade. We have just recently promoted headteachers to the 10th grade, so how can we suddenly promote assistant teachers to the 10th grade from the 13th grade?" he asked.

"The second concern is the time scale for 10 and 16 years of service. The Pay Commission will review it, and we have no objection to that," he also said.

"Regarding the demand for 100 percent departmental promotion, we had proposed it, but the Ministry of Public Administration said the government's policy is to allow a maximum of 80 percent, keeping 20 percent reserved for new appointments. Accordingly, the policy has been implemented," the adviser added.



Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
Engineering Department
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www tcb gov bd

সাম্প্রতি ভাস্তু টিসিবি
অডিটরিয়াম ব্যবহার করুন
০১৯৫০-৯৯১৮০৯

e-Tender Notice for Goods

Memo: 26.05.0000.006.07.008.25.66

e-Tender Notice No: 01/2025-26

Date: 06 November, 2025

This tender notice for procurement of Supply and installation of two passenger lifts with voltage stabilizers at TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka e-GP Tender ID No. 1160762 is published in e-GP website. This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration on e-GP system (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is mandatory for more details contact e-GP help desk.

Tender ID No.	Name of works	Tender Publication Date	Tender Security	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1160762	Supply and installation of two passenger lifts with voltage stabilizers at TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka	09 November 2025	4,00,000/-	23 November 2025 16.00 pm	24 November 2025 12.00 pm	24 November 2025 12.00 pm

Executive Engineer

Phone: 02-55013923



Palestinian photographer Raneen Sawafta reacts as she is carried on a stretcher at Rafidia Hospital in Nablus after reportedly being injured by Israeli settlers while covering the olive harvest in the Palestinian village of Baita, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'WHITE GENOCIDE'
 No US officials
 to attend G20
 in S Africa

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump said no US officials would attend the G20 summit in South Africa, reviving debunked claims of white Afrikaners being systematically "killed and slaughtered" in the country.

Trump had announced in September that Vice President JD Vance would travel to the meeting later this month instead of him.

"It is a total disgrace that the G20 will be held in South Africa," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

"No US Government Official will attend as long as these Human Rights abuses continue."

Trump said that Afrikaners -- descendants of the first European settlers of South Africa -- "are being killed and slaughtered, and their land and farms are being illegally confiscated."

He added that he looked forward to hosting the 2026 G20 summit in the United States -- which the billionaire US president will controversially hold at his own golf resort in Miami, Florida.

Trump has singled out South Africa for harsh treatment on a number of issues since he returned to the White House in January, most notably on his false claims of a "white genocide" in the country.

GENOCIDE IN GAZA

Turkey issues arrest warrant against Israel PM

Israel kills one more violating ceasefire; UN warns Gaza aid still too slow as US eyes peace plan vote

AGENCIES

Turkey issued arrest warrants for genocide against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and senior officials in his government over the war in Gaza, as Israel continued to kill Palestinians violating a ceasefire.

The announcement from Turkey was met with a firm rebuttal from Israel. Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said Israel "firmly rejects, with contempt" the charges, calling them "the latest PR stunt by the tyrant [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan".

The Istanbul prosecutor's office said in a statement that a total of 37 suspects were targeted by the arrest warrants, without providing a full list.

They include Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir.

Turkey has accused the officials of "genocide and crimes against humanity" that Israel has "perpetrated systematically" in Gaza.

The statement also refers to the "Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital", built by Turkey in the Gaza Strip and bombed by Israel in March.

Turkey, which has been one of the most vocal critics of the war in Gaza, last year joined South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide at



the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

A fragile ceasefire has been in force in the devastated Palestinian territory since October 10 as part of US President Donald Trump's regional peace plan.

Meanwhile, one Palestinian was killed in Gaza by Israeli firing and another wounded yesterday.

Gazan medical officials said the person who died was killed by Israeli firing east of Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the UN said despite some progress in delivering food to Gazans, the territory, ravaged by war and wracked by hunger, remains in urgent need of humanitarian

assistance.

The United Nations and its partners have been able to get 37,000 metric tonnes of aid, mostly food, into Gaza since the October 10 ceasefire, but much more is needed, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters.

Haq lamented that entry into Gaza continues to be limited to only two crossings, with no direct access to northern Gaza from Israel or to southern Gaza from Egypt, while NGO staff are being denied access.

Earlier this week, the UN said it had distributed food parcels to one million people in Gaza since the ceasefire, but warned it was still in a race to save lives.

On Friday, Pakistani Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif said peace talks with Afghanistan in Istanbul aimed at preventing renewed border clashes had collapsed, adding that the truce would hold as long as there were no attacks from Afghan soil.

Afghan and Pakistani

troops on Thursday

briefly exchanged fire

along their shared

border, on the same day

peace talks resumed in

Istanbul.

The militaries

from the South Asian

neighbours clashed last

month, killing dozens, in

the worst violence since

the Taliban returned to

power in Afghanistan in

2021.

Both sides signed a ceasefire in Doha in October, but a second round of negotiations in Istanbul last week ended without a long-term deal.

OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Settler attacks hit record in Oct: UN

REUTERS, United Nations

Israeli settlers carried out at least 264 attacks against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank during October, marking the biggest monthly total since United Nations officials began tracking such incidents in 2006, the UN said.

In a statement warning against the sharp rise in violence, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the attacks, which resulted in casualties and property damage, amounted to an average of eight incidents per day.

"Since 2006, OCHA has documented over 9,600 such attacks. About 1,500 of them took place just this year, roughly 15 per cent of the total," the UN body said in a statement on Friday.

Home to 2.7 million Palestinians, the West Bank has long been at the heart of plans for a future Palestinian state existing alongside Israel, but successive Israeli governments have expanded settlements rapidly, fragmenting the land.

The UN, Palestinians and most countries regard settlements as illegal under international law. Over half a million Israeli settlers live in the West Bank.

OCHA also said that according to OCHA-confirmed data as of Wednesday, 42 Palestinian children had been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank so far this year.

"That means one in every five Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank in 2025 has been a child," OCHA said.

Israel's mission to the UN did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The West Bank attacks came despite a US-brokered ceasefire in the war in Gaza in October, which has calmed most fighting and led to the return of hostages.

Court says Trump's Guard deployment to Portland 'illegal'

AFP, Washington

A US federal judge has ruled that Donald Trump's National Guard deployment to Portland, Oregon is "unlawful" and ordered it permanently blocked, a legal setback for the president's use of troops in the country's cities.

The Republican president has sent the National Guard to three Democratic-led cities this year -- Los Angeles, the capital Washington and Memphis -- but his efforts to deploy soldiers in Portland and Chicago have been tied up in the courts.

Trump has repeatedly called the Oregon city "war-ravaged" and riddled with violent crime to justify sending forces there.

But District Judge Karin Immergut -- a Trump nominee -- rejected the administration's claim that protests against an ongoing immigration crackdown amounted to a rebellion justifying the deployment of National Guard troops to Oregon.

"The President's unlawful federalization of the National Guard violates the Tenth Amendment, which reserves to the States' any powers not expressly delegated to the federal government in the Constitution," Immergut wrote.

"With respect to the deployment of any state's National Guard to Oregon," she concluded, "THIS P E R M A N E N T I N J U N C T I O N ORDER IS IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT."

The ruling superseeded Immergut's interim order that had temporarily blocked the deployment to Portland.

Authorities in California, which had strenuously opposed federalisation of its National Guard forces to send to Oregon, hailed the decision as "a win for the rule of law, for the constitutional values that govern our democracy."

Protests sparked by a spike in immigration raids have caused unrest in parts of the country, as Trump has pushed for a massive wave of deportations -- a hallmark of his 2024 presidential campaign.

But Immergut wrote there was no evidence of any large-scale violence, major damage to property, or actions by protesters that impeded Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents from performing their duties.

The Trump administration could appeal Friday's ruling, with the possibility that the case ultimately goes before the US Supreme Court.



Residents evacuate from their flooded homes due to heavy rain brought by Typhoon Fung-wong in Remedios T. Romualdez, on the southern island of Mindanao, yesterday. Rescue work was suspended and preemptive evacuations began on November 8 as Fung-wong bore down on the Philippines, days after another storm killed at least 204 people.

PHOTO: AFP

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
 অধ্যক্ষের কার্যালয়

আজিমপুর গভর্নরেট গার্লস স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ, ঢাকা।

ইমেইল: agsc1957@yahoo.com, www.aggsc.edu.bd

স্থান: নং-এজিজিএসি/২০১৪/২৫

তারিখ: ০৬/১১/২০২৫

নিম্ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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অধ্যক্ষ, আজিমপুর গভর্নরেট গার্লস স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ, ঢাকা।

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Sexual harassment in sports must end

Probe allegations by former cricket skipper properly

We are deeply concerned by the recent allegations of sexual harassment made by former Bangladesh women's cricket team skipper Jahanara Alam against some senior members of the then team management. Allegations include inappropriate touching and remarks. Members of the sports community have rightly called for an independent inquiry and decisive action against the alleged culprits if found guilty. Meanwhile, the adviser of the youth and sports ministry has stated that the government will treat these allegations seriously and ensure "exemplary punishment" of those proven guilty, should the victim choose to pursue legal action.

It is commendable that both the sports community and the government are showing their concern on the issue, but it must be acknowledged that these reactions come after Jahanara's widely publicised interview on a YouTube channel. Male chauvinism in sports is hardly a secret in the country, where discrimination against women athletes, despite their stellar performances, has often been blatant. Recent media reports have highlighted stark disparities in pay between male and female athletes. Female athletes, moreover, often face intense misogyny from certain segments of society, as seen in the horrific cyberbullying incidents and attacks on players during matches.

Fear of repercussions, such as being dropped from the national team, and hostile behaviour from management, are key reasons why players feel hesitant to lodge complaints, which only emboldens the perpetrators. A former general secretary of the Women's Sports Association has emphasised that increasing the presence of women in coaching and management roles could help prevent such harassment. She has also suggested that female players should be accompanied only by women managers and officials during travel.

Beyond hiring and training more women for senior posts, all sports federations must take immediate steps to ensure the safety of female athletes. In addition to establishing proper official complaint mechanisms—as mandated by High Court's directives about forming complaints committees across workplaces and educational institutions—sports bodies must issue strict guidelines to members of the management and other staff regarding the code of conduct towards women athletes, with severe penalties for violations. Gender-sensitivity training should also be prioritised across all organisations.

Despite the barriers they face, women athletes—particularly in cricket and football—have demonstrated that, given the chance, they can excel and bring accolades to the country. It is about time we as a nation recognise their worth by eliminating all discriminatory practices within the sports federations and ensuring that players feel safe and supported at all times.

Razing of hills in Ctg, elsewhere must stop

Rampant hill cutting exposes deep-rooted corruption, weak enforcement

Recent media reports have revealed how illegal razing of hills continues unabated across the country, stripping it of its natural defences and ecological balance. Despite clear legal prohibitions under Sections 6(a) and 6(b) of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, state agencies and private actors alike are destroying hills, often without clearance from the authorities and in full public view. A recent report by this daily revealed that the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) flattened nine hills and removed over 10.14 lakh cubic feet of soil in the Ramgarh-Sitakunda reserve forest to expand a 38-kilometre road, without obtaining the environmental clearance. By the time the Department of Environment (DoE) intervened, 40 percent of the Tk 1,107 crore project was already complete. The project, occupying 90 acres of reserve forest land, is part of an initiative to facilitate cross-border trade, easing transport of goods from Chattogram port to India via the Ramgarh land port in Khagrachhari. However, it has come at the expense of a forest that shelters more than 120 species of birds and 25 species of mammals.

Similar disregard was found in Cox's Bazar's Ukhia, where the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) allegedly razed several hills for roadwork, and in Bandarban, where hill cutting near a primary school endangered students and residents alike. Furthermore, the private sector's role in environmental degradation is no less alarming. A *Prothom Alo* report found rampant hill cutting across Sylhet, with 45 percent of the district's hills now fully or partially razed. The surge is linked to administrative inaction following the political transition of August 2024, when local enforcement effectively collapsed. Another report detailed how Chattogram's Ruposhi Hill was cut and divided into plots, sold for up to Tk 30 lakh per katha.

Such activities have caused severe soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, disrupted rainfall patterns, and frequent landslides that have claimed at least 15 lives since 2022. Meanwhile, local politicians and influential businessmen, shielded by bureaucratic loopholes and shifting land classifications, have turned hill cutting into a profitable enterprise. This crisis reflects not just environmental degradation but a deep nexus of power, profit, and impunity. Without strong political will and accountability, mere legal provisions mean little.

The DoE and local administrations must halt all ongoing hill cutting, prosecute violators, and restore damaged sites through reforestation. Land classification loopholes allowing "shankholu" (barren land) misuse must be reformed, and receipt of environmental clearance must be made mandatory and publicly accessible. Bangladesh must treat hill conservation as a national priority. Satellite monitoring, inter-agency coordination, community reporting, and exemplary punishment for offenders are essential. Without enforcement and ecological restoration, the cost of each razed hill will continue to be paid in loss of living beings and the environment.

EDITORIAL

A false binary at the heart of the Chattogram port debate



Saba El Kabir
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founder of Cultivera Limited. He can
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SABA EL KABIR

The debate surrounding the management of the Chattogram port's New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) is one of the more consequential ones in our current national discourse. On one side we have the sovereignty brigade, arguing that leasing critical national infrastructure to a foreign state-owned enterprise poses unacceptable risks to national security, strategic autonomy, and economic independence, not to mention the nation's pride and dignity. On the other, we have the efficiency technocrats, including interim government officials and international financial advisers, contending that this arrangement is critical to overcoming domestic inefficiency and corruption, attracting vital foreign direct investment, and elevating the port to global standards.

There is no denying that Chattogram port is congested, slow, and uncompetitive, imposing a direct cost on the economy. The problem is, neither of these factions is addressing the real problem. Speak to exporters, freight forwarders, or logistics managers, and a consistent picture emerges: that containers do not sit idle because the port cannot unload them, but rather because clearance is slow, discretionary, and frequently opaque. The bottleneck is not port operations; it is the Customs clearance process under the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

And so, at the risk of stating the obvious, let me put out my argument plainly. The debate surrounding NCT is fundamentally flawed. It is not a simple binary choice between inefficient public management and efficient private operation. At the heart of the matter lies the crippling bureaucratic dysfunction of Customs, which is separate from port operations. We need not rely on hypotheticals to make this point clearer. We already have a live comparison between a disciplined state operator and a foreign private operator inside the port—and the results are telling.

The Navy-run Chittagong Dry Dock Limited (CDDL) has, over the past year, delivered record performance at the port: achieving over 122,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in a single month (August 2025), improving berth productivity, and reducing ship turnaround time to around two days. Its management approach has been characterised by clear lines of authority, predictable

operational discipline, and an absence of discretionary interference. In other words, when given operational autonomy, a state-owned operator has demonstrated that high performance is not only possible; it is already happening.

By contrast, the foreign-operated Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT) has struggled to meet expectations. The promised equipment has been delayed, throughput has remained modest, and operations have been repeatedly hampered by the absence of a working Customs scanner, an issue entirely

beyond simple port operations and offers a technological, private sector solution to the very NBR-driven paralysis that is inherent in our system.

So, if this debate of sovereignty vs privatised efficiency is a false binary, what is the third alternative? The "gold standard" for an efficient, state-led port management model is the Port of Singapore, where the answer was not privatisation, but corporatisation.

In 1996, Singapore separated the Port of Singapore Authority's regulatory and commercial roles, creating the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) as a regulator and corporatising port operations under PSA Corporation Ltd, which remains state-owned. PSA was structured to operate as a competitive, efficiency-driven enterprise, supported by business-centric IT investment, alignment between technology and strategy, flexible infrastructure, and a culture of innovation. This approach produced PORTNET, a logistics

predictable complications. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is simultaneously advising the government on the concession while having recommended substantial tariff increases that make the port more financially attractive to foreign operators, an arrangement that raises conflict-of-interest concerns. Meanwhile, pursuing the lease through a government-to-government process rather than an open tender echoes the same procedural flaws that had led the Supreme Court to strike down a Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) bid for Patenga container terminal management as "arbitrary." Legal challenges have already begun.

This is not about ideology or foreign involvement. Bangladesh has welcomed foreign investment across sectors and should continue to do so. But a decision of this magnitude, affecting the country's principal trade artery, must be grounded in a clear diagnosis and a sustainable institutional design,



Containers at the Ctg port do not sit idle because the port cannot unload them, but rather because clearance is slow, discretionary, and frequently opaque.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

outside the operator's control.

The lesson from this comparison is not that foreign operators are incapable. It is that no operator, foreign or domestic, can perform effectively if Customs systems, clearance infrastructure, and decision-making remain opaque and unintegrated. The bottleneck is systemic, not managerial.

DP World's proposal for NCT seems to reflect a clear understanding of this reality. While meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in Davos in late January, DP World's CEO stated the company wants to invest in NCT to "reduce congestion" and "increase efficiency", but specifically proposed to "introduce a digital online Customs system" to "reduce corruption." This proposal moves

platform that became central to port efficiency. Singapore now handles over 41 million TEUs annually, and PSA has grown into a leading global terminal operator competing with the largest private firms.

This model demonstrates that state ownership can coexist with world-class commercial performance. The numbers produced by our Navy-run CDDL suggest that this strategy could be viable for us, and merits exploration at the very least. The irony here is that for a regime mandated with bringing state reform, the incumbents seem to be actively eschewing reform and targeting quick fixes. This approach is fraught with risk.

The current proposal to lease NCT to DP World is already facing sovereignty.

not based on pressure to demonstrate quick wins. Bangladesh needs a port system that supports export growth, reduces cost of trade, and competes with regional peers. That requires Customs modernisation, digital integration, and operational autonomy. Simply changing the operator addresses none of this.

So, in my view, the path forward is neither to outsource control nor to continue protecting inefficiency. It is to restructure and modernise the port system from within, learning from a model that has proven successful in precisely the context we now face. If we choose the right reforms, NCT can become a catalyst for competitiveness rather than a symbol of contested sovereignty.

How disinformation is shaping global politics



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SHAHRIAR IBNE HASAN NEHAL

Despite how it sounds, the "war on truth" is not a fringe claim but an existential threat to democratic governance worldwide. Looking back at 2024's over 60 general elections across the globe, it is evident that disinformation—deliberately propagated lies—has become arguably the world's single greatest threat that countries remain least equipped to address, as per the UN's 2024 Global Risk Report.

The core claim is straightforward: our current system prioritises profit over safety, enabling foreign manipulation and interference to flourish as the capacity to fake becomes ever more realistic and cheap.

The information ecosystem has been designed for engagement, not truth. Social media algorithms prioritise terrifying or provocative content for more clicks, opting for profit over anything else. This has accelerated polarisation and entrenched echo chambers.

The pursuit of profit over people has had disastrous impacts. The threat's magnitude is stark: false political news travels 70 percent faster than factual news, and false stories get six times more "impressions" than verified information. Fueling this imbalance

is the rapid growth of artificial intelligence. AI tools have accelerated the production of deepfakes and fabricated documents, lowering the entry threshold for state and non-state actors to engineer narratives. We are already witnessing the rise of "pink slime" papers: fake news websites posing as local news outlets. Some research suggests more than half of regional digital news sites may now be AI-generated content designed to misinform.

Geopolitical weaponisation is now routine. Countries like Russia are actively intervening in democratic systems of rivals. Organised efforts, for instance, targeted the 2024 United States election. Earlier this year, the US sanctioned the Moscow-based Centre for Geopolitical Expertise—linked to the GRU—for deploying AI to rapidly disseminate disinformation and for blending a video to insult a 2024 US vice-presidential candidate.

Perhaps most worryingly, Meta announced in January this year that it would replace its third-party fact-checking programme across the US with a crowd-sourced system, citing "clear bias." This risks giving vocal,

well-organised groups the power to selectively shape narratives, and further emboldens malicious actors who already profit from exposure-based monetisation and weak moderation. Given how often these campaigns are state-sponsored, the response must also be systemic and global, focusing on structural reform.

Countries, therefore, must

Since disinformation is engineered for manipulation, the best defence is psychological. We need strong digital literacy and critical thinking programmes. One of the most effective proactive strategies is pre-bunking, rooted in psychological inoculation, which involves warning people in advance about common manipulative tactics (fearmongering, scapegoating, etc) before they encounter false narratives.

enforce digital safety and privacy by design among tech companies. An international agreement modelled after the EU's DSA could ensure social media platforms assess risk and face serious sanctions. The DSA, for

example, imposes fines of up to six percent of a very large online platform's annual global revenue if obligations are breached—an essential incentive given current profit models.

Disrupting foreign interference also requires dismantling the infrastructure that supports it; first, by cutting funding pathways, including crypto-based money laundering. Second, logistical platforms used for covert coordination, like Telegram and Yandex, should be scrutinised and regulated.

Since disinformation is engineered for manipulation, the best defence is psychological. We need strong digital literacy and critical thinking programmes. One of the most effective proactive strategies is pre-bunking, rooted in psychological inoculation, which involves warning people in advance about common manipulative tactics (fearmongering, scapegoating, etc) before they encounter false narratives. This is not censorship; it is a free speech-supporting method that empowers individuals with immunity.

Responding to the intentional degradation of truth must be a collective project led by governments, the private sector, and citizens. We cannot allow ourselves to be paralysed by the false argument that regulating digital harms equates to prohibiting free speech. Safeguarding and restoring democracy now requires us to recognise and respond to disinformation so that an informed public can choose to reject it. The time to act and demand global accountability from the systems that spread lies is now.

Breaking Cassandra's curse on air pollution

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MUKSITUL HOQUE SRIJAN and FARZANA MISHA

Let us start with the Greek myth of Cassandra, a princess of Troy, daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba. The god Apollo fell in love with her and granted her the gift of prophecy to win her favour. However, when Cassandra rejected him, Apollo could not take back the gift he had given. Instead, he placed a curse on her: no one would ever believe her prophecies. This doomed her to a life of foresight and frustration. Cassandra foresaw the Trojan horse as a trick and predicted the city's ruin, yet her people dismissed her as a madwoman. Hence the term "Cassandra's Curse"—the agony of being able to see the future clearly but being completely unable to convince anyone to believe you or act on your warnings.

Just as Cassandra's visions could not save Troy from destruction, the overwhelming evidence of air pollution will mean little if Bangladesh continues to ignore the crisis. With undeniable data and visible human suffering, failing to formally recognise air pollution as a national disaster would be a blindness history will not forgive.

In this country, we picture disasters in the forms of cyclones, floods, or fires. What truly qualifies as a disaster? According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), a disaster is "a severe breakdown in a community or society's normal functioning caused by hazards interacting with vulnerability and exposure, leading to human, material, economic, or environmental damage." Bangladesh's own Disaster Management Act, 2012 defines a disaster as "any natural, human made, or climate induced event that severely harms lives, livelihoods, resources, and the environment, exceeding a community's capacity to cope without external assistance".

Today, one of our lethal crises is invisible to our policymakers. It is the air we breathe. According to the recent Lancet Countdown report, Bangladesh recorded an estimated 2.25 lakh deaths related to air pollution in 2022.

That is more deaths than any cyclone, flood, or lightning strike caused in the same year. In Dhaka alone, residents breathed "good" air for just 31 days in the last nine years. The other 3,083 days were marked by

hazardous, very unhealthy, or unhealthy air. By these standards, air pollution is not just a disaster—it is one of our deadliest disasters.

One might ask if the government has tried to bridge this gap. Is not there already a wide range of legal and policy frameworks to combat air pollution? Bangladesh does indeed have several laws and policies addressing the issue, including the Environment Conservation Act (1995), the Brick Manufacturing and Brick Kiln Establishment (Control) (Amendment)

others, share overlapping mandates. This fragmentation, coupled with weak inter-agency coordination, makes holistic and effective enforcement of air quality regulations extremely difficult.

It is reasonable to ask whether the government has introduced any initiative to bridge this coordination gap. To ensure a coordinated approach to air quality management, the Air Pollution Control Rules established a high-powered National

enforce clean air regulations remain weak and fragmented.

Air pollution is not a slow-moving inconvenience. It is a full-blown public health catastrophe. And yet, unlike floods or lightning, air pollution has not been officially recognised as a national disaster.

Why does official recognition matter? Back in 2016, the government declared lightning a disaster due to rising casualties. When lightning was declared a disaster, it

the Disaster Management Act, 2012 there will be several upsides. First, polluters could face legal penalties. Sub-sections 37 and 43 of the act make ignoring directives punishable, while sub-section 51 holds company leaders accountable. Second, the victims could seek compensation, which will evidently increase or, in our case, introduce accountability. This will also make it easier to access dedicated disaster funds that could support medical care, masks, air filters, and preventive campaigns. Finally, a response mechanism could be activated. Disaster management committees across the country could be mobilised to monitor air quality and enforce regulations. Such approaches would shift air pollution from a "soft" environmental concern to a hard legal mandate.

Now we might be asking ourselves: has any other country taken such steps? The answer is nuanced. None has declared air pollution a permanent national disaster, but several have taken half measures. In South Korea, "severe smog" has been declared a "social disaster," unlocking emergency funding. Chile has declared environmental emergencies over "toxic haze" in Santiago. Indonesia declared national emergency for transboundary haze. China's "Red Alert" system for air pollution in cities like Beijing functions as a de facto local disaster protocol. When a Red Alert is issued, it triggers mandatory school and factory closures. These declarations trigger immediate, mandatory actions, such as temporarily shutting down thousands of factories. Banning unfit vehicles from the roads, prohibiting the use of wood-burning activities.

For us, declaring air pollution a national disaster is not "symbolic" anymore. It is a strategic and immediate necessity. It would ensure that polluted air is treated with the same urgency as floods or cyclones—because it kills silently, relentlessly, and at a larger scale.

Bangladesh has shown global leadership in climate adaptation. The country, facing some of the world's most toxic air, can be a pioneer by being the first to formally recognise this silent killer as a national disaster under our own robust Disaster Management Act.

We must not wait for another generation to choke. Recognising air pollution as a national disaster would honour our constitutional duty to protect public health, enforce accountability on polluters, and provide relief to the millions already suffering. Until that day comes, we are all condemned to wear Cassandra's gown, forced to watch a preventable future with painful clarity, powerless to make those in power believe our warnings.



According to the recent Lancet Countdown report, Bangladesh recorded an estimated 2.25 lakh deaths related to air pollution in 2022.

Act (2019), the Air Pollution Control Rules (2022), and the National Air Quality Management Plan (2024-2030). Together, these frameworks provide the legal backbone, sector specific interventions, as well as standards, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms for air quality management.

However, under these policies, the responsibility for enforcement does not lie with a single authority. Instead, multiple government bodies, such as the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), the traffic division of Bangladesh Police, and

Committee to Control Air Pollution, headed by the cabinet minister and senior secretaries of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, BRTA, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk), and city corporations of Dhaka. However, despite this structure, the committee's work has shown little progress. Adding to the challenge, the Bangladesh Clean Air Bill, prepared six years ago, still awaits enactment. If passed, it would constitute the most significant legal instrument for air pollution control; in its absence, efforts to

transformed our response. The government mobilised funds, launched a life-saving public awareness campaign, installed lightning arrestors, widely used radio, television, and mosque loudspeakers to warn people about the dangers of being in open fields or under trees during thunderstorms, and the "30-30 Rule" campaign was integrated into our early warning systems. These measures significantly increased awareness among communities about lightning risks and safety practices. But lightning kills only a fraction compared to toxic air.

If air pollution is declared a disaster under

Can COP30 elevate climate adaptation?



MIZAN R KHAN
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As the world braces for the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Brazil, the host nation's presidency is signalling a decisive shift in climate policy, placing the issue of adaptation at the forefront of its agenda. Through a series of eight impassioned letters, it called on the global community to view adaptation "through new lenses."

In the eighth letter, shared on October 23, the COP30 presidency designates adaptation as the signature agenda. Even in the first letter, the presidency argued for "a major inflection on adaptation" to align climate actions with people's lives through multilateral cooperation. The last letter states: "survival has never belonged merely to the strongest, but to the most cooperative...cooperation has been the essence of our humanity in natural selection." These ideas reflect the organising principle of this COP, i.e., *Mutirão*—the Brazilian culture of community cooperation to solve a problem through dialogue—extended globally as the "global *Mutirão*." This sentiment that adaptation must be viewed through a new lens is also reflected in the *Report of the Circle of Finance Ministers*.

Authoritative reports such as *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience* of the former Global Commission on Adaptation and studies by the World Bank estimate that robust adaptation measures can yield two to ten times their cost in economic, social, and environmental benefits. The COP presidency rightly deplores that adaptation remains undervalued and underfunded. Nominal adaptation support (\$28 billion) represents only a quarter of total climate finance, which is at least 20 times smaller than the estimated needs. According to Oxfam, the already insufficient official figure for adaptation funding is a gross exaggeration, and the actual, effective amount of support is roughly three times smaller than what is being claimed. Moreover, two-thirds of public adaptation support comes in the form of loans to developing countries, and over half even to the least developed countries (LDCs).

Bangladesh is an example where climate debt continues to mount, as shown in research by Change Initiative.

However, the COP presidency does not elaborate on the underlying dynamics of why adaptation remains the "poor cousin" of mitigation. As a long-time negotiator and writer-activist, I have been arguing for strengthening the conceptual and legal basis of adaptation. Progress is finally being made, though slowly, for its expanded understanding.

As adaptation has never been officially defined, epistemic ambiguity persists. It began its journey in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an afterthought, while mitigation was prioritised. This was justified because mitigation was and still is considered the cardinal solution. By the end of the first decade of the climate regime, adaptation witnessed a steady ascent for three reasons: developed countries were not pursuing mitigation, climate disasters were becoming the new normal with increasing frequency and severity, and the climate justice movement was gaining momentum because poor communities and countries contributing least to the problem were suffering most, with the least capacity to adapt. The outcome was a recognition of adaptation as a pillar equal to mitigation at the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali.

The Paris Agreement included an article dedicated to adaptation, linking its need to the level of mitigation. Still, adaptation remains perennially underfunded. I ascribe this poor funding to three reasons. First, there is a spatial disconnect between the main causes and the main sufferers of climate change. Hence, the empathy of the rich historical emitters fails to reach the faraway victims, despite an obligatory responsibility under the climate regime. Second, private sector support is weak because adaptation benefits are seen as non-exclusive, shared freely by others.

Here lies the fundamental lacuna:

adaptation is perceived as providing only local or national benefits. Under the narrow neoclassical understanding, public goods, defined more than 70 years ago by economist Samuelson, were bounded by national territories, when extra-territorial pollution problems had not yet emerged. By the early 1990s, global commons problems like climate change had begun to manifest as the most

mitigation not also be regarded as a GPG?

CCIs are global public goods (GPBs), plain and simple. Therefore, the solution to GPBs

should be provided by taxing the GPBs, which

is a fundamental lesson from neoclassical

economics. The climate regime is founded on this mainstream model, and the UNFCCC

parties are supposed to promote it (articles

3 and 5). Here lies the "moral corruption" of

historical emitters in avoiding the underlying

Woods Conference in 1944 that established

institutions like the World Bank must

acknowledge that "economic diseases are

highly communicable; [it] follows, therefore,

that the economic health of every country is a

proper matter of concern to all its neighbours, near and distant." Climate change and

COVID-19, which induced compound health

and economic distress affecting all countries, exemplify such communicability. This was



UN Sec-Gen Antonio Guterres appears on screens as he speaks at the opening of the Belem Climate Summit plenary session, as part of COP30, in Belem, Brazil, November 6, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

intractable crisis.

Socio-economic concepts evolve in response to societal needs and cannot be treated like religious precepts. In recent years, cross-border and secondary impacts of pollution have been increasing and recognised. Many organisations and writers, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have argued for an expanded understanding of public goods to cover developments beyond national territories.

In a similar vein, I have been arguing for an expansive interpretation of adaptation as a global public good (GPG). The argument is: if mitigation to restore climate stability is universally recognised as a GPG, then why should adaptation to address climate change impacts (CCIs) resulting from non-

dynamics of climate change.

Many examples illustrate that funding adaptation brings both direct and indirect global benefits—bio-physical shifts in ecosystems and species, transboundary river pollution, trade disruptions, financial instability, increasing human displacements, etc. Addressing these issues through adaptation provides benefits at all scales. If the most vulnerable economies of more than a hundred low-income countries—including LDCs, small island states, and large economies like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan—continue to decline due to devastating CCIs, will regional and global security, trade, and financial stability not also be affected?

Global statesman President Roosevelt argued at the opening of the Bretton

foreseen even 266 years ago by Adam Smith, the father of modern economics, who argued in *The Theory of Moral Sentiment* (1759) that interests are indivisible at individual, national, or international levels; one cannot pursue personal or national interests while ignoring the interests of others.

Finally, upon reading the letters shared by the COP30 presidency, we see a common thread—a deep and passionate advocacy of global cooperation based on norms and values befitting the intricately wired world of today, not the Westphalian order of the 17th century. Along this vein, we hope all countries at COP30 will agree to a capacious framing of adaptation that can mobilise funding through solidarity levies from high-emitting economic and industrial sectors.

Music should be accessible for everyone, especially children: PRINCE MAHMUD

"I have been working on several new songs about the martyrs of the Liberation War – ones who lost their lives in the armed struggle, genocide, and various clashes against East Pakistan during 1971."

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ
An ongoing cultural backlash is at the forefront of the entertainment industry, as many artistes have called upon the government to reconsider its decision to abolish the posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools. At the forefront of this movement was Chhayanaut, which staged a demonstration at 4:30 pm yesterday to protest the decision.

Legendary music director Prince Mahmud, however, has been outspoken about the need for music in primary schools. "I would argue that government primary schools are where we need music teachers the most," said the audibly determined musician over the

phone. "Elites can afford to send their children to music schools, but most middle-class parents can't. Music should be accessible for everyone, especially children." According to the award-winning musician, it is very much possible to reach a middle ground on the issue. "I think that the government should think about making the music and PE classes optional – so in that way, students or parents who object to it don't have to attend."

Prince Mahmud, who is known for his soul-jerking patriotic songs, had recently announced that he is making a song for Abrar Fahad and the martyrs of July. "I have forgone many commercial projects in order to focus on this project. I only begin a project



Once I am certain of my own preparation. Currently, I am working on seven individuals, including Abu Sayeed, Mir

Mugdho, Wasim Akram, and Shaikh Yamin. I have done this for myself, not to make headlines. I have done it out of an inner drive."

On top of that, the *Bangladesh, Ma*, and *Baba*-famed music director is also working on songs revolving around Bangladesh's liberation war. "I have been working on several new songs about the martyrs of the Liberation War – ones who lost their lives in the armed struggle, genocide, and various clashes against East Pakistan during 1971. I had made 5 songs about the martyred intellectuals who were victims of the genocide on the night of March 25, 1971, back in 2004/5. I am redoing those with a completely new sound."



Orlando Bloom visits Bangladesh as UNICEF goodwill ambassador

Hollywood star Orlando Bloom arrived in Bangladesh after eight years for a four-day visit as part of his duties as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador, the organisation confirmed in a press release.

Bloom, known worldwide for his roles in *The Lord of the Rings*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *Kingdom of Heaven* visited Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, on Wednesday. During his visit, he met with Rohingya children, youth, and teachers, learning about their educational programs and challenges.

Bloom, who has served as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador since 2009, has been actively involved in promoting the rights and welfare of underprivileged children around the world.

Chhayanaut holds demonstration to protest government decision



Chhayanaut has called upon the government to reconsider its decision to abolish the posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools.

As per their announcement by the General Secretary of Chhayanaut, Laisa Ahmed Lisa, artistes, students, and well-wishers gathered in front of the Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban at 4:30 pm yesterday, where they

performed songs, urging the authorities to review the decision. In attendance were Laisa Ahmed Lisa, alongside Nazrul Sangeet exponent Khairul Anam Shakil, and Kalpana Anam. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education recently cancelled the newly created posts of music and physical education teachers in government primary schools following criticism from religion-based organisations. Alongside

the cancellation, several "wording changes" have been made to the Government Primary School Teacher Recruitment Rules 2025. However, the decision has sparked protests from various organisations demanding its withdrawal. Chhayanaut has joined these voices, emphasising its statement that "there is no alternative to music education and physical exercise for building a liberal and tolerant society."

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

ALI AZMAT x JAMES - Legends Live in Dhaka



Two legendary rock icons, Ali Azmat, widely known as "voice of Junoon" and Nagarbaul James, are set to perform together for the first time in Dhaka. The concert, titled *Legends Live in Dhaka*, organised by ASSEN Communications, will bring together audiences from across the region. Music lovers will get to experience an unforgettable night filled with classic hits, energetic performances, and the magic of two of South Asia's biggest rock stars on one stage.

Date: Friday | November 14, 2025

Time: 5 pm – 11 pm

Venue: United Convention Centre

NEWS

July victims faced 20 barriers to care, last rites

FROM PAGE 12
inadequate or delayed care; mismanaged referrals; overwhelmed facilities; shortages of workforce or resources; documentation errors; ethical breaches in healthcare; financial barriers or informal payments; and premature or coerced discharge.

Obstructions during the last rites of deceased victims included non-identification of several bodies, police interference during inquests, harassment during body handovers, lack of private mortuary services, overcrowded public morgues, delays in autopsies, and difficulties in obtaining death certificates.

Ehsanur Rahman said, "There were three primary reasons behind such obstacles: gaps in emergency preparedness, coordination and leadership, and legal and infrastructural support."

The four root causes, Shamim Hayder said, were the deprioritisation and over-politicisation of the health sector; absence of institutional ethics promotion and culture; and lack of acknowledgement of political conflict as a special health need.

The study made five recommendations: strengthening the enforcement of medical neutrality and ethical accountability; depoliticising the health sector; improving emergency response; modernising outdated medico-legal laws; and ensuring transparency in data.

Prof Muzaherul Huq, a member of the Health Sector Reform Commission, said emergency medical care has not developed adequately in the country, noting that hospital emergency departments lack essential equipment and workforce,

leading to the poor response during the July uprising.

Regarding allegations that some doctors refused to treat the injured during the uprising, he said, "A doctor's primary and ethical duty is to treat patients under all circumstances," adding that ethics and ethical behaviour are not properly taught in the country's medical schools.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, said the crisis exposed by the research lies in political and economic issues.

"While the country's health sector faces many problems, the weakness of emergency medical care was particularly exposed during the July uprising."

"An emergency medicine course – the first of its kind in the country – is set to be launched at Bangladesh Medical University next year, but it will take five to seven years to develop experts in the field."

He added, "Additionally, there is a plan to procure 500 ambulances and appoint paramedics for ambulance services, which will take between one and two and a half years to implement."

"All these will be available one day, but the situation will not improve unless the political and financial issues involved are addressed."

Prothom Alo Special Correspondent Shishir Moral, who was also involved in the research; Zahirul Islam, a representative of Swedish SIDA; Khairul Islam, regional director (South Asia region) of WaterAid; and several injured victims of the July uprising also spoke at the programme.

Tarique

FROM PAGE 12
responsibility to ensure his security, Akbar said.

Asked whether the BNP has held any meeting with the government over Tarique's security issues, he said: "Once we know the exact date of his arrival, we will make a formal request to the government."

The party has initiated the process of purchasing two bulletproof SUVs for Tarique, The Daily Star has learnt from people with direct knowledge of the matter.

Tarique will stay at the two-story house next to his mother Khaleda Zia's current home "Feroza". The house, which is built on 32 kathas of land, is now being prepared for Tarique, they said.

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, was allotted the plot after the assassination of her husband, President Ziaur Rahman, on May 31, 1981.

She retained control of the property for years, and after the interim government assumed office, it was officially registered in her name on June 5, when an adviser handed over the documents.

Will not accept

FROM PAGE 12
or Canada. But after the elections, they fail to keep those promises. In the past 54 years, the people of this country have been deceived many times. This time, say no to these deceivers."

The Jamaat leaders said voters must not be misled by flowery rhetoric but should instead realise the reality before them.

"For too long, we have been quarrelling over the past. As a result, we have lagged behind in global competition. While other nations have moved forward, we remain backward. But now it is time for a change. To transform the fate of the nation, we must move forward with positive plans and ensure their implementation."

Shafiqur called upon the youth of the country to remain uncompromising in the field to ensure the victory of the scale symbol in the upcoming election to build an ideal and value-based society founded on justice and fairness.



Participants at a discussion on anti-discriminatory law organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, at the Bangladesh-China Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Democracy cannot survive discrimination

FROM PAGE 12

discrimination is a must alongside creating institutional obstacles to prevent the decay of democracy," Osmani added.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, said the core spirit of the July uprising was anti-discrimination and what emerged out of it are the guarantee of justice, elections and reforms.

In order to get justice, citizens must be protected from discrimination. When citizens are empowered, they can express their opinions and actively take part in political and governance process.

"Effective reform is in no way possible without ensuring the rights of the citizens," said Debapriya, also a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

If discrimination continues and

deepens, it will not only hinder justice or reform, but will also eventually endanger democracy and development.

Subsequently, he called on the interim government to issue an ordinance of the anti-discrimination law.

The political parties should include it in the manifesto so that the law is passed by the next parliament, he added.

The civil society groups for long have experienced that there were various forms of discrimination in society in the names of caste, creed, ethnicity and gender and initiated drafting an anti-discrimination law in 2013, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Finally, the cabinet had approved a draft law that went to the standing committee in 2022. The draft was

not passed for unknown reasons despite promises by the then law minister.

The promise of the Liberation War and the July uprising was to build a humane, non-discriminatory society free from inequality.

"But that has not been possible yet," she said.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman said as per the constitution, all citizens are equal, but the country repeatedly sows divisions based on religion.

In recent times, another division has entered the scene: political discrimination.

"The entire social system has been driven into such a vicious cycle of criminalisation of politics," he said, while calling for coming out of such social, religious, and political divisions and discriminations.

Two notifications, signed by Mohammad Shahidur Rahman, assistant secretary of the EC's Personnel Management Branch, were issued yesterday.

They stated that 21 election officials and two upazila election officers have been transferred to different upazilas

until further notice. The changes take effect immediately in the public interest.

Among those transferred, one notification posted Muhammad Harun Molla, upazila election officer of Akhaura, Brahmanbaria, to the Narayanganj District Election Office.

Mehedi Hasan, upazila election officer of Jashore's Bagharpara, has been moved to the Daulatpur Thana Election Office in Khulna.

could be sold in Bangladesh for less than Tk 50 per kilogramme.

Currently, importers are required to pay a total of 10 percent import duty on onions. Since prices in neighbouring countries remain relatively low, the BTTC said there is no need to reduce the existing duty.

It added that swift imports would help stabilise local supply and prices.

According to a BTTC report, the

Commission urges govt to authorise onion imports

FROM PAGE 12

artificial shortage.

"We have recommended granting prompt approval for limited onion imports."

At present, onion prices are lower in India than in the local market. Importing onions from neighbouring countries could help ease domestic prices.

Even after duties, imported onions

average price of onions in March 2025 was Tk 42 per kilogram, which soared by about 150 percent to Tk 105 in November.

The report said that onion prices have historically jumped by over 100 percent between March-April and November over the past three years, indicating the need for a long-term solution to this recurring problem.

Govt reshuffles DCs

FROM PAGE 12
13th national parliamentary election, reports BSS.

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A father and son fish together while the mother rows their boat in the Mongla area of the Pashur river in Khulna yesterday. Like this family, many living along the river depend on catching fish for their livelihood. They earn between Tk 700 and Tk 1,200 per day from selling fish.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Two cousins drown in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Two children drowned in a pond while visiting their grandparents' home in Sarail upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday.

The victims are Md Takrim, 3, son of Akhtar Hossain of Kuttapara village, and Md Adnan, 5, son of Md Arafat Mia of Uchaliyapara village in the upazila. The two were cousins, said police.

The incident took place at Uttar Para in Kuttapara village in the afternoon.

According to locals, Adnan had come to his maternal grandparents' house a few days ago. On Saturday morning, he was playing near a pond with his cousin Takrim. At one point, both slipped and fell into the water.

Later, locals spotted the two floating in the pond and took them to Sarail Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared them dead on arrival.

Sarail Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mursheedul Alam Chowdhury said police visited the spot and were looking into the matter.

Judiciary

FROM PAGE 3
"Institutions must serve people. Authority without legitimacy is empty," he added.

The chief justice also said the judiciary, like any other institution, must reform to stay relevant. "It cannot survive only on tradition," he said.

He mentioned that the Supreme Court has been strengthening its global ties by building partnerships with countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Thailand to share ideas and experiences.

The event was chaired by Prof Md Ataur Rahman Biswas, head of the department.

Faculty members Dr Md Siddiqu Rahman Khan, Dr Md Abdur Rahim, Dr Abdul Bashir, and Dr Abu Khaled Mohammad Khademul Haque also attended, along with former and current students.

Govt's role

FROM PAGE 3
to remain vigilant, suggesting that just as some opposition members once used "covert strategies" to survive under fascist rule, the defeated fascist forces might now be using similar secret tactics to obstruct the country's path to democracy.

He said BNP, therefore, remains committed to cooperation with the interim government and its partners in the anti-fascism movement.

Matua Bahujan Samaj Oikya Jote, a Hindu religious sect founded by Harichand Thakur, organised the programme at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

MEDICERAM IN MALAYSIA

152 Bangladeshi workers protest forced repatriation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At least 152 Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia yesterday wrote an open letter protesting forced repatriation and urging the Bangladeshi mission in Kuala Lumpur, international organisations, and civil society groups to intervene in their termination case against their employer, Mediceram.

About 180 Bangladeshi workers were handed termination letters on October 31 after they protested the non-renewal of visas for more than 90 fellow workers.

On November 4, Malaysian authorities deported 10 of them after executives of the glove company forcibly took them to the airport in Kuala Lumpur.

They said they do not want to be forcibly sent back to Bangladesh.

They urged all parties concerned, including the Malaysian authorities, the Bangladesh High Commission, international organisations, and civil society groups, to take immediate notice of their situation and intervene to protect their fundamental rights as migrant workers.

Meanwhile, the group of 152 workers, who are living in fear and under intimidation in Selangor district, have appointed Louis Liaw Chambers to provide legal support for their case.

"Despite continuous threats,

intimidation, and the forced repatriation of our democratically elected worker representatives, we have collectively decided that we will not go back to work under the same management and conditions that violated our dignity, rights, and safety," said the letter.

They sought an immediate transfer to a law-abiding and responsible employer in Malaysia. "We respectfully call upon the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia, as well as all relevant authorities, to support this transfer process urgently and ensure our continued lawful employment in Malaysia."

They said they do not want to be forcibly sent back to Bangladesh.

They urged all parties concerned, including the Malaysian authorities, the Bangladesh High Commission, international organisations, and civil society groups, to take immediate notice of their situation and intervene to protect their fundamental rights as migrant workers.

"Despite continuous threats,



A labourer squeezes oil from a stick wrapped with foam after collecting leftovers from the bottom of empty soybean and palm oil drums. This process of clearing the drums completely takes place before they are sent from wholesale stores to mills. The photo was taken on Port Road in Barishal city yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

Ila Mitra's spirit lives on

FROM PAGE 3

Rashra Sangskar Andolon President Hasnat Qaiyum said Ila Mitra's struggle was part of a long, unfinished fight for farmers' and workers' rights in Bengal and Bangladesh.

"The Tebhaga Movement didn't end with Ila Mitra's generation. Those who work today for reform and justice are, in a way, her descendants," he said, adding that her defiance inspired him to stand by the marginalised.

Qaiyum drew parallels between the Tebhaga Movement and the ongoing land rights struggle of the Santal community, saying similar patterns of dispossession and police violence persist.

He also criticised the government for failing to uphold the causes Ila Mitra championed. "Even after repeated appeals, no national commission has been formed to improve the lives of farmers and labourers. The very people Ila risked her life for remain unheard," he said.

Prof Samina Luthia of Dhaka University's sociology department said Ila Mitra's story was not just about one person but about an era shaped by collective struggles.

"She became who she was because of the consciousness of her time -- the Tebhaga movement and the farmers' long fight

for justice," she said, adding that the movement was also a women's movement where women stood beside men against exploitation and violence.

Referring to the torture Ila faced, she said it revealed how patriarchal and colonial powers used sexual violence to suppress women's defiance.

"Behind Ila's courage stood the memory and pain of countless others who came before her," Prof Samina added.

The session began with a welcome speech by The Daily Star journalist Shamsuddoza Sajen, followed by a poem on Ila Mitra recited by Ekram Hossain.

The event was moderated by The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz.

PRAYER TIMING

NOVEMBER 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:00 12:45 3:45 5:25 7:00

JAMAAT 5:35 1:15 4:00 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

NCP weighs solo run to build 'third force'

FROM PAGE 4

"When that happens, we will observe other parties' activities and finalise our strategy," he added.

Meeting sources said Nahid and Patwary proposed that the party contest the election independently, a move most members supported, saying it would allow NCP to avoid unexpected complications.

A major part of the discussion focused on the pros and cons of forming an alliance with BNP or Jamaat.

One central leader said, "We know that joining the BNP-Jamaat alliance could help us win seats, but

BNP's current stance and approach to the July charter and state reforms don't align with ours."

According to a meeting source, the leader noted that BNP's actions over the past year had raised concerns and said joining them would make NCP accountable for those issues.

Leaders also questioned whether BNP activists

would campaign for NCP candidates and warned about potential rebel contenders from BNP in shared constituencies.

A senior leader cautioned that Jamaat coming to power could trigger a "resurgence of religious extremism," said another meeting source.

While most leaders

supported an independent run, they also discussed forming a third front with like-minded parties such as the AB Party and Gano Odhikar Parishad.

"We may not form a nine-party alliance, but a smaller

front is possible," said one central leader. "Talks are ongoing with the AB Party and a few others."

However, sources said parties like Gano Odhikar Parishad and Gano Samhati Andolon have little interest in joining a new alliance to the BNP-led coalition through seat-sharing.

The meeting also discussed the option of coordinating election participation based on the July charter, state reforms, and seat conditions, without entering a formal alliance with BNP or Jamaat.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়

শের-ই-বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা

তারিখ: ২৪ কার্তিক ১৪২০/০৯ নভেম্বর ২০২৫

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(বেসামরিক পদ)

২৩,০০,০০০,০৭০,১১,০৩১,২৫,২৬৯

পদের নাম, মেরেন ক্লে ও প্রেজ (১৫ অনুমতি)

সংখ্যা

তারিখে সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

৪

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হিসেবে ইলেক্ট্রিকাল, ইলেক্ট্রনিক, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং টেকনিকালেক্ষন বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সম্মানের প্রাক্কার্য ২য় শ্রেণি বা সম্মানের সিলিঙ্গে এবং ডিপ্লোমা এবং ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা প্রাক্কার্য এবং ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টি�ফিকেট হিসেবে ইলেক্ট্রিকাল, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং টেকনিকালেক্ষন ডিপ্লোমা-ইন ইলেক্ট্রিকাল কোর্সে অনুমতি ০৫ (৫)

(খ) ইলেক্ট্রিকাল ও ইলেক্ট্রনিক, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা প্রাক্কার্য এবং ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট হিসেবে ইলেক্ট্রিকাল, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং টেকনিকালেক্ষন ডিপ্লোমা-ইন ইলেক্ট্রিকাল কোর্সে অনুমতি ০৫ (৫)

(গ) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বা সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

১১

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হিসেবে ইলেক্ট্রিকাল, ইলেক্ট্রনিক, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং টেকনিকালেক্ষন বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা প্রাক্কার্য এবং ডিপ্লোমা মাধ্যমে প্রাপ্ত কুল সার্টিফিকেট হিসেবে ইলেক্ট্রিকাল, মেকানিকাল, একোলজিক, প্রিমিটিভ এবং টেকনিকালেক্ষন ডিপ্লোমা-ইন ইলেক্ট্রিকাল কোর্সে অনুমতি ০৫ (৫)

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১২

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বা সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

১৩

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বা সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

১৪

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বা সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

১৫

অনুমতি ৩২ বৎসর

(ক) কোন স্থানে প্রক্রিয়াজ বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বা সর্বোচ্চ সর্বসূচী

Everyday habits that bring diabetes to your doorstep

MUSARRAT SALIM

November 14 marks World Diabetes Day 2025. According to the latest International Diabetes Federation (IDF) report, 1 out of 9 adults is living with diabetes as of 2025, and 40% of them are unaware that they even have diabetes. The majority of these adults reside in low- and middle-income countries, such as Bangladesh.

Patients with diabetes are more vulnerable to other diseases like heart attacks, high blood pressure, and stroke (which is a major cause of death in the country). They even have an increased risk of facing long-term kidney and nerve damage. Once you visit the doctor to address your symptoms, the most common advice is to exercise daily and to take short walks more often. Additionally, there are other ways to manage existing diabetic symptoms or help young people prevent diabetes altogether. Now, let's shed some light on some daily habits that disrupt your blood sugar management:

WHITE RICE WITH EVERY MEAL:

In most South Asian households, a typical meal consists of white rice and curries. Although the type of curry varies daily, processed white rice is consistently served on the plate throughout the week. Eating white rice for meals provides a significant portion of carbohydrates daily, which can increase blood sugar levels

multiple times a day due to its high glycemic index. Therefore, it is essential to control portions and limit your intake of white rice.

DAILY TEA WITH SUGAR AND BISCUITS:

Milk tea is typically enjoyed with multiple cubes of sugar

in a sugar crash. If you have this habit, try switching up your drink and having green tea or black tea occasionally. You can also substitute the sugar with a little organic honey.

GOING TO BED STRAIGHT AFTER DINNER:

After dinner, it is recommended

SWEETS FOR EVERY OCCASION:

In Bangladesh, it is a cultural norm to celebrate special occasions with lots of sweet-soaked treats like roshomalai, shondesh, and various pithas. The main ingredients of celebratory snacks are, as you already know, sugar and milk. What may seem

LATE-NIGHT PHONE SCROLLING:

Disrupted sleep can negatively affect your body's response to insulin. More glucose will remain in the bloodstream as a result, and the risk of diabetes increases. Insufficient sleep also causes hormonal changes, which in turn increase the craving for unhealthy food.

JUICES AND DIET SODA:

Juices and diet sodas contain high amounts of natural or artificial sugars. Just one glass (300ml) of juice can have up to 30 grams of sugar, while the WHO-recommended daily sugar intake is capped at 25 grams. Try making your own smoothies and healthy juices at home with less sugary fruits. Some recommendations are turmeric and ginger shots or beetroot juice.

It is hard to change habits drastically overnight. That is why it is recommended to make changes step by step and to practice moderation eventually.

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, several events are happening. You can join the events for awareness and free screening (<https://worlddiabetesday.org/activities/events/free-diabetes-screening-awareness-program/>), while the Bangladesh Endocrine Society is organising the Diabetes Day Run 2025 at Hatirjheel, Dhaka (<https://bes.org.bd/>).

The author is a Chemistry graduate. E-mail: musarratsalim02@gmail.com

How AI enhances productivity but weakens the mind

TASHRIF AREFIN

The convenience of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is undeniable. Yet, it raises questions about our cognitive habits. Concerns are emerging that over-reliance on AI may affect critical thinking, problem-solving, and intellectual development. What actually happens to the human brain when it no longer needs to think as hard?

In the MIT Media Lab study "Your Brain on ChatGPT," researchers observed that younger people (aged 17-25) – the same ones who often see themselves as tech geniuses – turned out to be the most vulnerable. Using EEG scans, measurable changes were detected, showing significantly lower neural connectivity in participants who used AI compared to those who worked independently.

Excessive AI use can push us into cognitive debt, a state in which neurons involved in memory, reasoning, and creativity become less active. The brain gradually prefers these "lazy" pathways because it is inherently energy-efficient. This not only impacts learning but also erodes confidence in one's intellectual ability.

When we let AI write, plan, and think for us, our neurons essentially clock out early. We may become increasingly dependent on the tool and less able to function without it. Engagement with questions like "why?" or "what if?" may decline. We risk becoming consumers of AI-generated answers rather than thinkers producing them.

The MIT team also found that AI-assisted essays were more formulaic and less original, with participants showing weaker recall of their own work. In fact, 83% could not quote a single line from essays they had just "written" with AI assistance. This phenomenon closely aligns with what psychologists term digital amnesia – the tendency to forget information easily.

The real advantage of AI lies in using it mindfully and as a complement rather than a replacement. We should deliberately start doing things ourselves, such as mental arithmetic or navigating without GPS, to maintain mental agility. Limiting time spent on AI-driven platforms that promote mindless prompting and setting boundaries for its use in specific tasks rather than as a default, can be beneficial. In addition, taking regular breaks from digital engagement can yield noticeable benefits.

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Breakthrough in sight restoration

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A pioneering brain-computer interface (BCI) implant has restored functional central vision to patients suffering from geographic atrophy (GA), a severe form of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) – a leading cause of blindness worldwide. The results of this landmark clinical trial have been published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), marking what scientists call a "paradigm shift" in vision restoration.



Associate Professor
Mahi Muqit, a British-
Bangladeshi Consultant
ophthalmic surgeon at
Moorfields Eye Hospital

and Chair of Ophthalmology at the University Hospital of Bonn. "The implant represents a paradigm shift in treating late-stage AMD."

Professor José-Alain Sahel, senior co-author from the University of Pittsburgh and Sorbonne Université, described the results as "something we couldn't have dreamt of when we started more than a decade ago."

Dr Mahi Muqit, a vitreoretinal surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, added, "Artificial vision is the only approach that actually gives patients any vision back – and that's what they want."

The PRIMA implant, measuring just 2 millimetres wide and half the thickness of a human hair, demonstrated a strong safety profile. Most post-surgical side effects resolved within two months, and the Data Safety Monitoring Board recommended the device for European market approval. Regulatory processes are

now underway in both Europe and the United States.

Science Corporation's CEO, Max Hodak, said the company's mission is to develop technologies that "provide hope to patients in need and have the ability to transform lives."

If approved, PRIMA could become the world's first commercially available treatment capable of restoring – rather than merely preserving – sight for patients with advanced macular degeneration.

Guidance to address drastic global health financing cuts

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released new guidance for countries on ways to counter the immediate and long-term effects of sudden and severe cuts to external funding, which are disrupting the delivery of essential health services in many countries.

The new guidance, called "Responding to the health financing emergency: immediate measures and longer-term shifts", provides a suite of policy options for countries to cope with the sudden financing shocks, and bolster efforts to mobilise and implement sufficient and sustainable financing for national health systems.

External health aid is projected to drop by 30% to 40% in 2025 compared with 2023, causing immediate and severe disruption to health services in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). WHO survey data from 108 LMICs collected in March 2025 indicate that funding cuts have reduced critical services – including maternal care, vaccination, health emergency preparedness and response, and disease surveillance – by up to 70% in some countries. More than 50 countries have reported job losses among health and care workers, along with major disruptions to health worker training programmes.

"Sudden and unplanned cuts to aid have hit many countries hard, costing lives and jeopardizing hard-won health gains," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "But in the crisis lies an opportunity for countries to transition away from aid dependency towards sustainable self-reliance, based on domestic resources. WHO's new guidance will help countries to better mobilise, allocate, prioritise and use funds to support the delivery of health services that protect the most vulnerable."



PHOTO: WHO

This year's funding cuts have compounded years of persistent health financing challenges for countries, including rising debt burdens, inflation, economic uncertainty, high out-of-pocket spending, systemic budget underfunding and heavy reliance on external aid.

The new guidance builds on WHO's commitment to help all countries strengthen and sustain robust health systems, built on a commitment to universal health coverage, underpinned by strong primary health services delivering essential care to all who need it.

It also aligns with existing World Health Assembly mandates, including resolutions on "Strengthening health financing globally" and "Economics of health for all," to translate global commitments into actionable policy steps. WHO and its partners are committed to providing technical support, analytics and peer learning to countries to manage the health financing crises and navigate the transition, including through the new UHC Knowledge Hub, a partnership with the Government of Japan and the World Bank, set to be launched in December 2025.

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

FUNCTIONAL CHOCOLATE

Turning pleasure into purpose

RAISA MEHZABEEN

Chocolate, once dismissed as a guilty pleasure, is now reclaiming its identity as a functional food. No longer merely a sugary indulgence, functional chocolate is emerging as a smart fusion of taste and nutrition, blending traditional cocoa goodness with scientifically backed bioactive compounds. It symbolises how food innovation can transform pleasure into purpose.

Functional chocolate refers to chocolate products enriched with added nutrients, herbs, probiotics, adaptogens, or superfoods designed to provide specific health benefits beyond basic nutrition. It sits at the crossroads of food science and wellness – where indulgence meets intention. The transformation of chocolate from a treat into a tool for

better health reveals how consumer demands and scientific progress are reshaping the food landscape.

Cocoa itself has always carried a strong nutritional profile. Dark chocolate is naturally rich in flavonoids – powerful antioxidants known to support heart health, improve blood flow, and reduce oxidative stress. But the new wave of functional chocolates goes further, integrating ingredients such as ashwagandha for stress relief, collagen for skin elasticity, MCT oil for energy, magnesium for sleep, and even probiotics for gut

balance. The result is a redefined chocolate experience that serves both body and mind.

Chocolate, once the symbol of temptation, may now become the symbol of transformation. Functional chocolate isn't just a trend; it is a testament to how innovation and nutrition can coexist beautifully – proving that even the sweetest pleasures can be good for you when crafted with purpose.

The writer is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com



Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2025, KARTIK 24, 1432 BS

What to WATCH

SPORTS

Bangladesh U19 vs

Afghanistan U19

5th YODI

Live from 9:00 am

STAR SPORTS SELECT

HD1 AND HD2

Premier League
Aston Villa vs Bournemouth
Live from 8:00 pm
Man City vs Liverpool
Live from 10:30 pm

'To see myself in big positions, I must think big'

Ruba Haider Jhelik hit a match-winning half-century on ODI debut to help Bangladesh start their 2025 ICC Women's World Cup campaign with a win. But Jhelik's form and the Tigresses fortunes, dipped from then on. Jhelik is now undergoing specific drills to improve her footwork with an eye on the upcoming T20 World Cup qualifiers. *The Daily Star's* Abdullah Al Mehdi recently caught up with her. The excerpts are as follows:

DS: How special was it to make your ODI debut in a World Cup and what did you take away from the experience?

Ruba Haider Jhelik (RHJ): I was very excited to go to a stage like the World Cup, knowing I and I was very excited that my debut would happen there. I got to see so many good players up close, and learn about them. Seeing them, it felt they thought differently about cricket; they have totally different dreams. Seeing them I realised that expectation should be more on one's own shoulders because if I want to see myself in a big position, I must think big.

DS: Can you share a bit about your journey in cricket?

RHJ: The journey started when I was very young. A press release was published in a

DS: You are a left-handed batter, which is a rarity in women's cricket in Bangladesh. Has that ever been an issue?

RHJ: I was a lefty from a young age. I used to eat and write with my left hand, and even got scolded a lot for it. "Why are you not eating with your right hand?" people would say. But when I held the bat with my left hand, my coach was very happy. That's when I thought, "Being a lefty maybe means something special."

DS: Who inspired you the most in the World Cup?

RHJ: Smriti Mandhana, I watched her batting in the last match. As a lefty, I liked her batting more because she looked cool and calm while batting. Alyssa Healy, too, and struck a ton against us. Seeing them, it felt like they could read minds or something, that's how they play cricket.

DS: You are a left-handed batter, which is a rarity in women's cricket in Bangladesh. Has that ever been an issue?

RHJ: I think footwork and using the crease are the most important things for us. I saw that players of all the big teams excel at going down the track, or at using the crease to play various shots. Quick use of feet, body reaction, and movement are also very important. I think I will benefit from working on that. I am currently working on footwork and reaction movement. The drill from Shajib bhai [batting coach Nasiruddin Faruk Shajib] focuses on batting skills, footwork, bat swing and how one can shift one's body movement towards the ball along with footwork.

DS: Is there a separate plan for batting in T20 World Cup qualifiers?

RHJ: We must focus on big shots. Strike



Mushfiqur Rahim appears in good spirits with Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Mominul Haque and newly appointed batting coach Mohammad Ashraful during a practice session at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium ahead of the first Test of the two-match series against Ireland, starting on November 11. The series holds special significance for the 38-year-old Mushfiqur, as he is set to become the first Bangladeshi cricketer to reach the 100-Test milestone if he features in both matches. The second Test will be held in Mirpur from November 19.

PHOTO: STAR

Women's cricket in decline in JASHORE

MOHSIN MILON, Jashore

Once a promising hub for women's cricket, Jashore is now witnessing a gradual decline of the sport among female players. The district suffers from a lack of dedicated playgrounds, qualified female trainers, coaching centres, and basic facilities – all contributing to the fading dreams of aspiring women cricketers. Yet Jashore's legacy in Bangladesh's women's cricket remains impressive. Rubya Haider Jhelik, a dependable opening batter in the Women's World Cup, hails from Arshingipur village in Chowgacha but grew up in the Kharki area of Jashore town. Another proud product of the district, left-arm spinner Sanjida Akter Meghla, caught the eye with her spell against New Zealand, while off-spinner Sultana Khatun was named among the standbys for the same tournament.

**Read the full story on *The Daily Star's* website

local newspaper in Jashore that a practice session for girls was going to take place. My maternal uncle was the first to suggest that I should play. My father really wanted his first born, if it were a boy, to learn cricket. But I was his first born, a girl. So, my father said, "Okay, let her try, let's see what happens." I couldn't play much because of academic pressure, as family always put that first. I studied and couldn't play during my SSC and HSC exams. But slowly I first made it to divisional cricket in Khulna, and then NCL and after that the Premier League. When I was new in the divisional team, I carried water for the team for 2-3 years. Then, I slowly thought that, "No, I think I can achieve something better if I pursue this professionally, especially since I had good skills from a young age." So, that's how I started taking cricket more seriously.

DS: After seeing them up close, what do you think makes them special?

RHJ: They have been playing cricket for many years, and experience matters a lot. Match scenarios and practice scenarios are different. I think as they have played more, they are more mature than us.

DS: After the World Cup, what do you think you need to do to be more successful?

RHJ: Fitness is a big issue. Secondly, consistency in scoring runs. In all the big teams, almost all the players consistently make runs. After I started very well in the World Cup in my debut match, I was confident that I would score runs consistently. Somehow, I couldn't manage that. But I feel I have gathered a lot of experience from the World Cup.

DS: Reflex exercises are part of your

rotation too, of course. And footwork usage is definitely a factor. I am thinking about focusing on these areas.

DS: Bangladesh came close to winning against England, South Africa and Sri Lanka, but couldn't. What did you personally feel about those matches?

RHJ: I was very sad when we lost matches after coming close to winning. The most heartbreaking defeats were against South Africa and Sri Lanka. After losing to South Africa, we couldn't sleep for 2-3 nights.

DS: What is the team's assessment of the World Cup?

RHJ: We had eight fifties this time in the World Cup. We were hoping for a century, but it didn't happen. At the 2022 World Cup, we hit just one half-century. Overall, we were very happy that at least we could perform better in some areas than before.

SHORT CORNER

Chapol wants to take Bangladesh archery to unprecedented height

Kazi Rajib Uddin Ahmed Chapol vowed to take Bangladesh archery to an unprecedented height after being elected as the president of World Archery Asia (WAA) yesterday. "I want to take Bangladesh to a level no one has ever imagined -- and I also want to raise the standard of Asian archery to a global level," said Chapol after his emphatic win in the continental body's presidential election.



Shamima, Dilara hit big as women's NCL begins

Shamima Sultana stole the show on the opening day of the Women's National Cricket League T20, scoring an unbeaten 87 to guide Sylhet to an 18-run win over Mymensingh at BKSP Ground Three, Savar, yesterday. In the afternoon, Dilara Dolarai's 78 off 44 went in vain as Khulna suffered a five-wicket defeat.

Paran, Amite fall in nervous 90s on NCL Day 1

Shah Paran and Amite Hasan narrowly missed out on centuries in their National Cricket League 2025-26 fixtures yesterday. In Chattogram, the home side recovered from early setbacks to reach 340 for eight against Khulna, with Paran scoring a brisk 91. In Cox's Bazar, Amite Hasan fought a lone battle for Sylhet, scoring 91 off 110 balls, as they finished on 172 for seven.

**Read full stories on *The Daily Star's* website

Matthijs de Ligt rescued a 2-2 draw for Manchester United at Tottenham in a frantic finale as both sides missed the chance to go second in the Premier League on Saturday. Spurs looked to have secured a dramatic victory, having trailed with six minutes to go, as Mathys Tel equalised before Richarlison headed home in the 91st minute. However, De Ligt powered in a 96th minute header to extend United's unbeaten run to five games. Both sides now sit on 18 points from 11 games, with goal difference placing Spurs third and United seventh.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pep faces Liverpool in 1000th test

For the first time in several seasons, Sunday's high-stakes showdown between Manchester City and Liverpool may not be the defining fixture in the Premier League title race. Arsenal currently sit comfortably at the top after 10 matches, leaving City and Liverpool trailing by six and seven points respectively, and, unusually, both doing the chasing.

○ The match also marks a historic milestone for Pep Guardiola, who will take charge of the 1000th match of his managerial career. Guardiola's journey began with 42 games at Barcelona B, before taking charge of the Barcelona first team for 247 matches. He later oversaw 161 matches at Bayern Munich, and has so far managed 549 games for Manchester City.

○ Across his 999 matches, Guardiola has earned 715 victories, collected 39 major trophies, and suffered just 128 defeats – a remarkable 71.57% win rate. However, Liverpool have often proved one of his toughest opponents. Guardiola has been beaten 10 times by the Reds – the joint-most he has suffered against any club – and his teams have conceded 38 goals against Liverpool, second only to matches against Real Madrid (39).



*City, however, lost both league encounters to Liverpool last season, including a 2-0 defeat at home. Yet Guardiola's side have been the Premier League's most in-form team since April, collecting 42 points by winning 13 of 19 games. They have also won nine of their last 10 home league fixtures.

○ At the other end, Liverpool arrive under pressure away from home, having lost their last three Premier League matches on the road -- they have not lost four straight away league games since April 2012.

○ Erling Haaland has scored 98 goals in 107 Premier League appearances, and could become the fastest player to reach 100 goals, surpassing Alan Shearer's record of 100 in 124 games.

○ Mohamed Salah's (188 goals, 88 assists) goal against Aston Villa saw him match Wayne Rooney (183 goals and 93 assists) for most goal contributions for a single club. Against City alone, Salah has been particularly lethal. He has nine goals and six assists against them in the league, contributing to 15 of Liverpool's last 20 Premier League goals in this fixture.



BSRM
THE ONLY STEEL FACTORY IN BANGLADESH TO RECEIVE THE
GREEN FACTORY AWARD 2025



Tarique may return in the first week of December

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahaman is expected to return to Bangladesh after 17 years in exile in the first week of December.

He will come to the country immediately after the election schedule is announced, Fazle Elahi Akbar, BNP chairperson's chief coordinator on defence and security issues, told The Daily Star.

Once back in Bangladesh from the UK, Tarique will be on the campaign trail all over the country.

"He needs to make his presence felt by the entire country as he is the chairman [acting] of the party. There will be huge crowds wherever he goes, so there are security risks."

The government has a

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DMP tightens security after bomb blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All police stations in the Dhaka metropolitan area have been instructed to beef up security measures, while field officers have been directed to step up patrols and surveillance at important establishments.

The directives came at a security meeting held at the Police Auditorium in Rajarbagh Police Lines yesterday, attended by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Baharul Alam and DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali, among other top brass.

At the meeting, police officials reviewed present law and order and discussed the necessary courses of action.

Following the meeting, the DMP conducted security drills from 4:00pm to 5:00pm at key installations across the city.

The heightened security follows Friday night's incident, when a crude bomb exploded in front of St Mary's Cathedral in Kakrabi.

Hours later, two more crude bombs exploded in front of the residences of priests and teachers of St Joseph School and College in Mohammadpur.

The attack on St Mary's occurred just hours before its Jubilee celebration yesterday. The celebration, however, went ahead on the church premises with devotees from across the country.

These incidents come after a crude bomb attack on the Holy Rosary Church in Tejgaon on October 8.

Meanwhile, activists of the Awami League -- whose activities are currently banned -- held a flash procession in the capital's Shankar area Friday night, during which another crude bomb explosion occurred.

Besides, the Awami League announced a "Lockdown Dhaka" programme on social media for November 13 -- the day the International Crimes Tribunal is scheduled to fix the date for delivering its verdict in a case against three people, including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

DMP Additional Commissioner (admin) Md Sarwar said, "All things considered, an emergency situation could arise at any time. Security drills were arranged so that police can act swiftly in such a scenario."

July victims faced 20 barriers to care, last rites

New study finds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deceased and injured victims of the July uprising faced at least 20 different barriers in receiving medical care or having last rites performed, a new study has found.

Conducted by Bangladesh Health Watch and Eminence Bangladesh in association with Sweden Sverige and unveiled at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday, the study, titled "July Mass Uprising and Crisis of Health System", identified three primary and four root causes behind these obstructions and made five recommendations.

Public health researcher Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman and Eminence Bangladesh CEO Shamim Hayder Talukder presented the findings.

Ehsanur said that after discussions with injured victims, health service providers, journalists, and hospital administrators, as well as analyses of newspaper reports, the study found barriers in seeking medical treatment, receiving effective treatment, and conducting last rites.

Four major factors obstructed injured victims from seeking timely treatment: fear of persecution by police or the then ruling party (Awami League) members; mobility restrictions such as curfews; breakdown of transportation services; and having no one to accompany them.

Nine barriers were identified in receiving effective hospital treatment: denied or delayed admissions;



Police charged truncheons, fired sound grenades, and used water cannons to disperse a group of government primary school teachers, leaving dozens injured. The teachers were there to press home their three-point demand, including upgrading their pay scale to the 10th grade. The photos were taken at Shahbagh intersection yesterday afternoon. Story on page 3.

PHOTOS: STAR



Govt reshuffles DCs in 15 dists ahead of polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday reshuffled deputy commissioners in 15 districts as the country prepares for the next general election in a few months.

The public administration ministry appointed new DCs in nine districts and transferred six others from one district to another. In doing so, it withdrew nine DCs and reassigned them to different ministries or agencies.

Four separate circulars were issued in this regard.

This marks the first major change in the district administration since Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus announced that the next general election will be held in February 2026, beginning the process of transferring power to an elected government.

The districts in which they changes will take place are Noakhali, Habiganj, Gazipur, Dhaka, Gaibandha, Barguna, Bogura, Sirajganj, Magura, Pirojpur, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Khulna, Kushtia, and Bhola.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission yesterday transferred 23 officials ahead of the upcoming

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'Will not accept anyone as big brother'

Says Jamaat ameer on his party's foreign policy motto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said Bangladesh is an independent and sovereign country, and it will not run on anyone's directives.

"We'll not accept anyone as a big brother -- we will stand on our own feet and move forward with our heads held high and with self-respect," he said at a gathering organised by Shafiqur's supporters at Jhilpar in Mirpur's Pirerbagh under the Dhaka-15 constituency.

Shafiqur is contesting in the upcoming polls from this constituency.

The Jamaat chief said the party's foreign policy motto will be based on friendship and equality with all and no antagonism towards anyone.

He added that the party will not compromise on establishing a society based on justice and fairness and in freeing the country from corruption and misrule.

"We want to build a confident young generation who will be self-reliant and voluntarily assist the government."

He urged the people to ensure the victory of Jamaat candidates across the country in the upcoming election to establish a peaceful, dynamic and developed society.

Shafiqur said Jamaat does not believe in the politics of mere promises; rather, it is committed to ensuring consistency between words and actions.

"Prior to the elections, some people or parties talked about the dreams of turning Bangladesh into America

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Democracy cannot survive discrimination

Say political, legal analysts, and civil society leaders, urge enactment of anti-discrimination law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Democracy will not sustain if discrimination cannot be eliminated, said noted political and legal analysts and civil society leaders yesterday.

"If we cannot eliminate discrimination, democracy will not be protected in the future because the institutions we create will easily break down," said SR Osmani, professor of Development Economics at the University of Ulster.

Osmani's comment came at a discussion on anti-discriminatory law organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Manusher Jonno Foundation, and Nagorik Uddyog (Citizen's Initiative), with support from Switzerland and UNDP, at the Bangladesh-China Conference Centre yesterday.

Democracy can go astray due to tyranny of the majority. Institutional obstacles can be created, but there is no guarantee that they will be permanent and effective, he said.

In the past, despite constitutional guarantees and recognition, institution after institution has been destroyed, first for party interests,

and then for individual interests. "The answer, therefore, is in the people, who must take responsibility for protecting their power," he said.

However, the vast majority of these people are victims of discrimination, which starts with socio-economic disparities that ultimately turns into a disparity in political power.

When those who are oppressed are asked whether they want democracy or autocracy, they prefer democracy.

However, due to discrimination, the attraction towards democracy often decreases over time, and they get frustrated and that leads to apathy.

"This then takes them far away from that deliberative democracy or public reason. At that point, they lack the opportunity to enter the discussion forum, and the ruling party, individual or group takes advantage of this lack of opportunity and this apathy."

The ruling group accumulates more power by exploiting the apathy and consequently accumulating more power.

"In this way, the decline of democracy gradually occurs. This eventually enables the rise of autocracy. Therefore, eradication of

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If discrimination continues and deepens, it will not only hinder justice or reform, but will also eventually endanger democracy and development.

DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA
Convenor of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs



Heavy rains at the turn of October and November have damaged early potato sowed in Joypurhat. Waterlogged fields resulted in seeds failing to sprout, forcing farmers to replant at a cost of Tk 20,000-25,000 per acre. The photo was taken on Thursday in Khetai upazila of Joypurhat.

PRICE SPIRAL Commission urges govt to authorise onion imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In response to escalating onion prices, the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) has advised the government to authorise imports as a strategic measure to increase supply and stabilise the local market.

Retail prices of the popular kitchen essential climbed by 53 percent to Tk 110-120 per kilogramme in Dhaka's markets yesterday from Tk 70-80 per kg a week ago, according to data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The BTTC attributed the price spiral partly to delays in planting the early-season varieties, locally referred to as "Murikata" onions, which could delay harvesting and impact market supply.

BTTC Chairman Moinul Khan said the commission found certain intermediaries to be trying to destabilise the market by creating an

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