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JULY CHARTER

## Deadlock drags on, parties want govt to step in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Failing to resolve their differences over the proposed July charter within a one-week timeframe, major political parties yesterday urged the interim government to mediate talks.

Officials said the government would wait a few more days for the parties to reach an understanding. If they fail, it will intervene and take a decision.

Despite the deadline, parties like the BNP, Jamaat e Islami, and the National Citizen Party remained deeply entrenched in their positions.

When contacted yesterday, BNP Standing Committee Member Salauddin Ahmed told The Daily Star, "If the government organises a meeting, I hope a way out of the crisis can be found. Since the National Consensus Commission and the government jointly created the problem, they must bear the responsibility."

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad said his party had taken an initiative for dialogue. "Those unwilling to participate cannot be forced. Dialogue is only possible when all parties come forward. It is now the government's responsibility to decide how to implement the reforms," he told this newspaper yesterday.

NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen yesterday urged the government not to shift the burden of reforms onto political parties.

He was speaking at a discussion titled "July Charter: Implementation Pathline," organised by the National Lawyers Alliance at the Supreme Court Bar Auditorium in Dhaka.

Akhter called for immediate implementation of the reforms agreed upon during talks between political parties and the National Consensus

- ① BNP wants govt, not Jamaat, to invite parties to talks
- ② Jamaat says those unwilling to take part in talks cannot be forced
- ③ NCP urges govt not to shift burden of reform decisions onto parties

Commission.

He said the ongoing political crisis must be resolved without delay to ensure citizens can participate in the upcoming election.

"If uncertainty around the reform process persists, it will also cast doubt on the government's exit strategy and the integrity of the electoral process," he warned.

Earlier, the BNP rejected Jamaat's call for dialogue, questioning why another political party, rather than the government, was making the invitation.

Meanwhile, nine parties including the NCP, Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and six from the Ganatantra Mancha alliance have been holding talks to break the deadlock.

But, according to a Mancha leader, responses from other parties have not been encouraging.

Hasnat Quaiyum, coordinator of Ganatantra Mancha and president of Rastro Songskar Andolan, said they were still hopeful about finding common grounds.

Disagreements persist over the timing of a referendum on reforms outlined in the charter, the charter's implementation order, and the handling of dissent notes attached to some reform proposals.

Last Monday, the government urged parties to resolve these differences and reach a unified decision within a week.

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

The BNP ignored the deadline, saying the initiative did not originate

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**67% of polling stations 'risky'**  
Reveal minutes of EC, law enforcers' meeting

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and  
AHMED DEEPTO

Nearly two-thirds of polling centres for the upcoming national election have been classified as "risky," a sharp rise from the 2024 polls, when only about 25 percent of centres were deemed risky.

On October 20, the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies held a preparatory meeting to discuss election security, the viability of granting judicial powers to the military during polling, and the reclassification of risk zones.

The details of the meeting were revealed yesterday.

The military is currently holding magisterial powers. Currently, the army is deployed in 62 districts across the country to assist the civil administration.

"If given judicial powers, the army will be able to play a more effective role in the elections," a representative of the army chief told the meeting.

An official of the Special Branch of police informed the meeting that 28,663 out of 42,761 polling stations had been identified as risky, accounting for over 67

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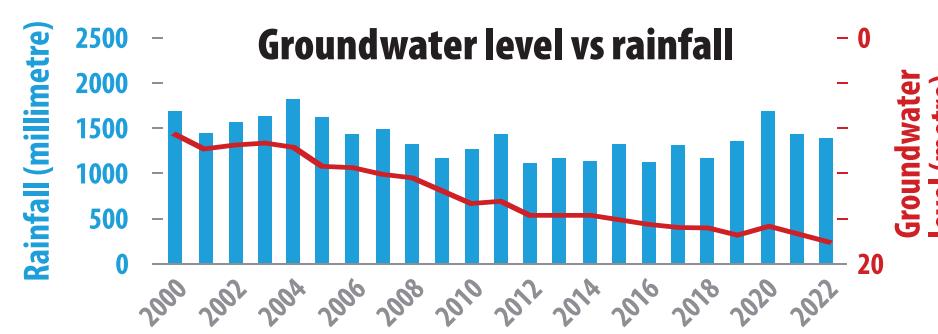


The Chattogram Development Authority is digging 36 canals across the port city to restore its waterways. With work on at least 20 canals completed, many appear healthy. The photo shows the Rajakhali canal in the Bakolia area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Barind's rice bowl is running dry

As world leaders prepare to convene at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, to chart a global path on carbon reduction, climate adaptation, and finance, the effects of inaction are already hitting home. In northern Bangladesh's Rajshahi region, marginal farmers are battling erratic monsoon patterns and rising temperatures -- climate woes that are crippling crops and leaving futures uncertain. Pinaki Roy reports from the ground.



Pointing to the cracks in his Aman paddy field, Kongres Tudu, a Santal farmer of Rajshahi's Godagari upazila, said the soil dried out and fractured after just a week without irrigation.

"If I cannot irrigate my field within a couple of days, most of the crops will turn sterile, bearing no grain at all," Tudu said, adding that he couldn't arrange money in

the first week of October to buy water from a deep tubewell operator for irrigation.

Though it rained a bit more this year than the last, the field still needs irrigation every week, said the 55-year-old farmer.

Narrating the financial strains on farmers in his area, he said that a Santal farmer from nearby Barshapara village

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ACC to sue S Alam, associates over Tk 10,500cr graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission yesterday decided to file a case against 67 individuals, including the former chairman of S Alam Group, over allegations of loan fraud and embezzlement of about Tk 10,500 crore from Islami Bank through abuse of power and influence.

The case would be the largest financial embezzlement case in the history of the ACC, said Tanvir Ahmed, the commission's assistant director (public relations).

The accused embezzled Tk 9,283.93 crore from Islami Bank by taking out unauthorised loans in the names of S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, S Alam Steels and S Alam Trading Company, ignoring official circulars and through forgery and deception. With interest, the total amount stands at Tk 10,479.62 crore, he said.

According to the case documents, Tk 9,283.93 crore was transferred through 134 transactions to shell companies such as Ahsan Enterprise, Impress Corporation, Unique Traders, AgroCorn International and Dulali Enterprise.

The entities were connected to S Alam Group's Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam's business interests.

Among them are his brothers' companies Sonali Traders and Global Trading Corporation, S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, SS Power, S Alam Steels, S Alam Cement, S Alam Vegetable Oil and Sonali Cargo Logistics.

The accused include S Alam and his brother Abdus Samad, Osman Gani, Rashedul Alam and Shahidul Alam, former Islami Bank chairman Nazmul Hasan, former managing director Mahbub ul Alam and some current and former officials of Islami Bank.



Police use water cannons on teachers of government-approved institutions outside the Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme as they attempt to break through a barricade near the Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday. The protesters, under the banner of Sammilito Non-MPO Oikya Parishad, demand inclusion of their institutions in the MPO programme. Teachers withdraw suspension, vow to continue protest -- page 3

**Beximco firms laundered Tk 1,200 crore in 5 years: CID**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beximco Group chairman and vice-chairman and their associates have laundered \$97 million (around Tk 1,200 crore) abroad over five years through 17 corporate entities under the pretext of foreign trade, the CID has found.

Following a thorough investigation, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has secured approval to file charge sheets in 17 money laundering cases against Salman F Rahman and others, CID Chief Sibgat Ullah told a press briefing at the CID Headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The approved charge sheets name 28 individuals and 19 entities, including Beximco Group Chairman Ahmed Sohail Fasihur Rahman and his son Ahmed Shahryar Rahman, and Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman and his son Shahay F Rahman.

Between 2020 and 2024, Sohail, Salman and their associates allegedly used 17 corporate entities to carry out the money laundering activities.

The companies include Adventure

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## Pakistan navy chief visits Bangladesh for the first time since 1971

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of his three day official visit to Bangladesh, Pakistan Navy Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf paid a courtesy call on General Waker-Uz-Zaman at Army Headquarters yesterday.

This marks the first visit made by a Pakistan Navy chief to Bangladesh since the Liberation War in 1971.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to strengthen defence ties and enhance the military capabilities of both forces and exchanged views on expanding cooperation through bilateral training, seminars, and exchange visits.

Admiral Ashraf also praised the professionalism of Bangladeshi participants in the joint naval exercise AMAN, held in Karachi and the North Arabian Sea in February this year, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release and a Bangladesh Army social media post.

The Pakistan Navy Chief also paid a courtesy call on Bangladesh Navy Chief Admiral M Nazmul Hassan at the Naval Headquarters in Banani.

Upon arrival, he was received by the Bangladesh Navy Chief and presented with a guard of honour by a naval contingent. He inspected the guard and took the salute.

The two chiefs exchanged greetings and discussed matters related to professional and training cooperation. Senior officials from both sides, including the Pakistan High Commissioner, Defence Attaché, and Principal Staff Officers from the Bangladesh Navy Headquarters, were present.

Earlier in the day, Admiral Ashraf paid homage to the members of the armed forces who made the supreme sacrifice during the Liberation War of 1971 by placing a wreath at Shikha Anirban in Dhaka Cantonment.

During his stay, Admiral Ashraf is scheduled to meet the Chief of Air Staff, the Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division, the Commandant of the National Defence College, and naval administrative authorities in Chattogram.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Navy ship PNS SAIF arrived in Chattogram on Saturday on a four-day goodwill visit. The ship's commanding officer, officers, and crew members will visit the Bangladesh Naval Academy, naval bases, and several places of interest in the port city.

## Barind's rice bowl is running dry

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became so depressed by his inability to irrigate his paddy field that he tried to take his own life by drinking pesticide in 2023.

In the previous year, two Santal farmers -- Avinath Mardi and Rabi Mardi from a nearby village -- died by suicide after a tubewell operator allegedly refused them water they were entitled to, according to their family members.

Md Selim Mia, a farmer from Tanore upazila, said their tubewell, which is 40 feet deep, can no longer pump out water.

"Now we have to install a deep tubewell. We all are heavily dependent on groundwater extraction here," he added.

Both Tanore and Godagari upazilas fall in the water-stressed Barind region, known as the rice bowl of Bangladesh.

The region was comparatively a barren area even in the mid-1980s, with very limited sources of surface water. In the 1990s, the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) introduced deep tubewells, enabling farmers to cultivate three crops a year.

The region now faces a major crisis with groundwater levels declining fast and temperatures rising rapidly amid a change in rainfall patterns.

"Climate change is a silent killer here. In Rajshahi region, the average rainfall is 1,235mm against the nationwide average of 2,000mm," said Chowdhury Sarowar, who has been studying the region's climate for over a decade.

"If you visit the region, you'll see lots of crop fields and many fruit orchards. It's hard to understand the drought-like situation here at first glance, as all these crops and fruits are grown at the cost of groundwater," said Sarowar, a professor of geology and mining at Rajshahi University.

Crops like Aman, which are traditionally rainfed, now require frequent irrigation, he added.

Like the two upazilas in Rajshahi, Naogaon is also hit by an acute water shortage.



Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman and visiting Pakistan Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf pose for a photo at the Army Headquarters in the capital yesterday. The Pakistani navy chief arrived in Bangladesh on a three-day visit. **PHOTO: COLLECTED**

## Fighters holed up in Rafah won't surrender

**Says Hamas; one Palestinian killed in Israeli drone attack in southern Gaza**

AGENCIES

Hamas fighters holed up in the Israeli-held Rafah area of Gaza will not surrender to Israel, the group's armed wing said yesterday, urging mediators to find a solution to a crisis that threatens the month-old ceasefire.

Sources close to mediation efforts told Reuters on Thursday that fighters could surrender their arms in exchange for passage to other areas of the enclave under a proposal aimed at resolving the stalemate.

Egyptian mediators have proposed that, in exchange for safe passage, fighters still in Rafah surrender their arms to Egypt and give details of tunnels there so they can be destroyed, said one of the sources, an Egyptian security official.

Yesterday's statement from Al-Qassam Brigades held Israel responsible for engaging the fighters, who it said were defending themselves.

"The enemy must know that the concept of surrender and handing oneself over does not exist in the dictionary of the Al-Qassam Brigades," the group said.

Israel said yesterday it had received the remains of a hostage that Hamas claims belong to Israeli officer Hadar Goldin, killed in the 2014 Gaza war. Israeli forensic experts are expected to determine the identity of the remains once they are brought into Israel.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued attacks on Palestinians in Gaza despite the



ceasefire, killing one man in the central Bureij refugee camp and two others in northern and southern parts of the territory.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli settlers wounded at least seven Palestinians in two separate attacks yesterday morning. The settlers also raised a number of Israeli

flags along a road between Nablus and Ramallah, reports Al Jazeera online.

US special envoy Steve Witkoff said on Thursday that the proposed deal for about 200 fighters would be a test for a broader process to disarm Hamas forces across Gaza.

Al-Qassam Brigades did not comment directly on the continuing talks over the fighters in Rafah but implied that the crisis could affect the ceasefire.

"We place the mediators before their responsibilities, and they must find a solution to ensure the continuation of the ceasefire and prevent the enemy from using flimsy pretexts to violate and exploit the situation to target innocent civilians in Gaza," the group said.

Since the US-brokered ceasefire took effect in Gaza on October 10, the Rafah area has been the scene of at least two attacks on Israeli forces, which Israel has blamed on Hamas. The group has denied responsibility.

Rafah has been the scene of the worst violence since the ceasefire took hold, with three Israeli soldiers killed, prompting Israeli retaliation that killed dozens of Palestinians.

## Deadlock drags on, parties urge govt

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from the government but from a section linked to Jamaat.

The party insists that Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus himself should convene a formal dialogue, and in that case, the BNP would participate.

BNP leaders maintain that the crisis was jointly created by the government and the consensus commission, which they claim favoured Jamaat.

"During the eight-month discussion, consensus was reached on key issues. How can all parties suddenly agree on something new within seven days? This is simply in favour of Jamaat," said a BNP standing committee member, seeking anonymity.

The BNP remains adamant that the referendum and the national election should be held on the same day as part of the process for implementing the July National Charter.

At a views exchange meeting in Thakurgaon's Sadar upazila, BNP

Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "Some parties are saying that a referendum should be held before the election, but we are saying it should be held on the election day."

Turning to his audience, he added, "Do you understand what a referendum or charter means? These are things only a few educated, upper-class people who have come back from America understand, and they are trying to impose these on us."

Calling the ongoing crises "manufactured", he said, "We have accepted the reforms they want to introduce. We will implement those we agree on, and those we don't agree on will go to parliament."

Jamaat's Hamidur Rahman Azad reiterated his party's demands. "These are the people's demands -- implementation of the consensus commission's recommendations, holding a referendum before national polls, and issuing the necessary order for implementation. In fact, the government is killing time by not

issuing the order."

He said the government must immediately issue the order and announce a referendum date. "The referendum must be held before the national election. Otherwise, the July uprising and all reform efforts will fail."

When The Daily Star contacted the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, he said the advisory council had suggested a timeframe of about a week but the parties could take more time if needed.

"Political parties have already taken some decisions during this transitional period. Hopefully, they will reach a consensus. If they fail, the advisory council will step in and make a decision as soon as possible, keeping in mind the best interests of both the parties and the people, especially with the national election expected in the first half of February," he said.

He added that ensuring a free, fair, and credible election remains the government's top priority.

## Beximco firms laundered Tk 1,200 crore

FROM PAGE 1

Garments, Apollo Apparels, Autumn Loop Apparels, Bextex Garments, Cosmopolitan Apparels, Cozy Apparels, Esse's Fashion, International Knitwear and Apparels, Kanchipur Apparels, Midwest Garments, Peerless Garments, Pink Maker Garments, Platinum Garments, Skynet Apparels, Springfield Apparels, Urban Fashions and Winter Sprint Garments.

Investigators found that the companies opened letters of credit (LCs) or sales contracts through Janata Bank's Motijheel branch in Dhaka but did not repatriate the export proceeds to Bangladesh.

The earnings were instead transferred through RR Global Trading in Dubai to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the UK, the US, Ireland and other countries.

RR Global Trading is registered in the names of Shayan and Shahryar.

Between 2020 and 2024, a total of \$96.97 million (about Tk 1,200 crore) was shown as export income, but the proceeds were not repatriated, the CID said.

For export products, the money corresponding to the value of goods shipped abroad is supposed to return within 120 days, or four months at most.

If the money does not return within this period, it is considered money laundering, Sibgat Ullah said.

As many as 17 money laundering cases were filed with the Motijheel Police Station on September 17 and 18, 2024.

Following court orders, the CID has seized various assets of the accused, including 2,000 decimals of land and establishments in Dohar, Dhaka; a 6,189.54-square-foot flat in Gulshan's "The Envoy"

## Dhaka slams Rajnath Singh's remarks on Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has described the recent comments made by Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus as "incorrect" and "not respectful of propriety and diplomatic nicety".

It stressed that Bangladesh remains committed to a mutually beneficial relationship with India.

"We consider that Singh's comments are incorrect and unhelpful and not respectful of propriety and diplomatic nicety," foreign ministry spokesperson SM Mahbubul Alam said as the UNB sought Dhaka's reaction to Singh's remarks yesterday.

In a conversation with Network18 Group Editor-in-Chief Rahul Joshi, Singh had urged Yunus to "watch his words".

"We do not seek tense relations with Bangladesh, but Yunus should be cautious with his statements," Singh told Joshi.

The interview was published on Friday in a report by Firstpost, a media outlet of the group.

Responding to the issue, Alam said the recent remarks made by Singh regarding Yunus have come to their attention.

He reaffirmed that Bangladesh remains committed to a mutually beneficial relationship with India based on "sovereign equality, non-interference in each other's affairs, and mutual respect".

"Bangladesh also believes that differences in perspectives are best addressed through constructive and respectful engagement," Alam added.

## Four schoolgirls drown in Meherpur

**Reportedly drowned while collecting water lilies**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Four school girls drowned, reportedly while collecting water lilies in a lake in Meherpur this afternoon. The incident occurred at Mashuribhaja Beel in Baradi area of Meherpur sadar upazila.

The deceased were identified as Fatema Khatoon, 14, and Afia, 10, daughters of Samad; Mim, 14, daughter of Isa Ali; and Aleya, 10, daughter of Saharul.

Fatema and Mim were students at Mominpur High School, while Afia and Aleya studied at Rajnagar Government Primary School.

Sumaiya Jahan Jhurka, assistant commissioner (land) of Meherpur Sadar upazila said locals believe the girls drowned while collecting water lilies.

"Residents first spotted one of the bodies around 4:30pm and later recovered three more. Fire service personnel recovered the fourth," she added.

Of the four victims, two were confirmed dead on the spot and were not taken to the hospital, while the other two were declared dead upon arrival by on-duty doctors.

Mesbauddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Meherpur Sadar Police Station, confirming the deaths, said investigation is underway.

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Children, rescued and rehabilitated by a non-government organisation, along with experts and rights activists at a discussion titled, "Disadvantaged from a Young Age: Young Journalist Changemakers Urge Action for Vulnerable Children", at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## They too deserve a dignified life

Once street children, now students, they question policymakers, experts on rights, justice at discussion

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They once roamed the streets with no home to return to. Now, they sit in classrooms and speak up with confidence about the rights and dignity every child deserves.

And yesterday, they took the floor to question policymakers, lawyers, and rights activists about their rights, safety, and future.

Around 15 children, rescued and rehabilitated by the non-government organisation LEEDO, joined a discussion at The Daily Star Centre where they asked sharp, thoughtful questions on issues ranging from legal protection and political exploitation to the right to shelter and education.

The discussion, titled "Disadvantaged from a Young Age: Young Journalist Changemakers Urge Action for Vulnerable Children", brought together government and non-government stakeholders who listened and responded to the young participants' concerns.

The students introduced themselves as "sons and daughters" of LEEDO, a non-

profit NGO that has been working to improve the lives of street-connected children since 2000. All of them are members of a LEEDO initiated "Young Journalist Changemaker" group.

If a street child is harassed by police, where can they go for justice?

There are laws to protect us, but why don't they work in real life?

How to stop people from using children in political programmes?

How the constitution ensures rights of street children?

For instance, Rudra Karmakar, who has completed his schooling with LEEDO's support and is now preparing for university admission, asked whether there was any legal remedy if a street child was

harassed by a police official. "There is no specific provision. But we found in our survey that street children are mostly abused by low-ranking officials, and if they can reach a higher-ranked one, he or she can intervene," said Dr Hasan Reza, associate professor at Indian University's School of Social Work, who joined virtually.

Hasan Ali Musafir, a ninth-grader, expressed concern about the use of street children in political programmes and asked how to act against those who engage children in politics. Arifa Chowdhury Himel, assistant director of the National Legal Aid Services, replied that there is no scope to involve children in any unethical activity, including political programmes.

The National Legal Aid Services provides legal support free of cost, and children are one of the major beneficiary groups. If any child needs legal help, they can visit our offices in all 64 districts," she said.

Another participant, Ayesha Akter, asked Additional

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# INTERNATIONAL

## Pak commits to 'dialogue' despite Afghan talks ending

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan said yesterday it was committed to "dialogue" with Afghanistan despite peace talks ending after deadly violence, with Islamabad stressing its security concerns persist.

In its first acknowledgement that the negotiations were over, Islamabad said the third round of talks "concluded" on Friday.

"Pakistan remains committed to (the) resolution of bilateral differences through dialogue. However, Pakistan's core concern, i.e. terrorism emanating from Afghanistan needs to be addressed first and foremost," the foreign ministry said. Islamabad accuses Kabul of harbouring militant group TTP that regularly claims attacks in Pakistan.

## GOVT SHUTDOWN

### US airlines brace for 3rd day of flight cuts

REUTERS, Washington

Major airlines braced for a third day of government-mandated flight cuts yesterday after rising air traffic control staffing shortages snarled thousands of flights on Saturday.

The Federal Aviation Administration instructed airlines to cut 4 percent of daily flights starting on Friday at 40 major airports because of air traffic control safety concerns. The shutdown, which has reached a record 40 days, has led to shortages of air traffic controllers who, like other federal employees, have not been paid for weeks.

Reductions in flights are mandated to reach to 6 percent on Tuesday and then hit 10 percent by November 14.

The FAA said on Saturday there were air traffic control staffing shortages impacting 42 airport towers and other centers.



People remove debris after a tornado with winds of up to 250 kilometres per hour struck Rio Bonito do Iguaçu, Paraná State, Brazil, on Saturday. Authorities said the tornado killed at least six people and injured about 750.

PHOTO: AFP

## UK, Germany warn of Russian satellite menace

### Targeting communications satellites can impact things like satellite imagery, telecoms and broadband satellite internet access

CNN ONLINE

Germany and the United Kingdom have warned of the growing threat posed by Russian and Chinese space satellites, which have been regularly spotted spying on satellites used by Western powers.

The countries have in recent weeks highlighted frequent instances of Russia stalking, jamming and interfering with their satellites in space.

"Russia's actions, especially in space, pose a fundamental threat to us all. A threat we can no longer ignore," German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius told a Berlin conference of space industry leaders in September.

Targeting communications satellites can impact things like satellite imagery, telecoms and broadband satellite internet access. Disrupting navigation and positioning systems can impact military operations as well as civil aviation, according to the global think tank RAND.

The warnings come in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of



Ukraine, now well into its third year. Ukrainian officials say Moscow has increased its level of cooperation with China, with Beijing conducting satellite reconnaissance of Ukrainian territory on its behalf.

Pistorius noted that two Russian reconnaissance satellites were recently spotted tracking two IntelSat satellites, which are used by the German Armed Forces and its allies. IntelSat is a commercial

satellite services provider whose fleet is used by governments and companies in the US and Europe.

"Russia and China have rapidly expanded their space warfare capabilities in recent years: They can jam, blind, manipulate, or kinetically destroy satellites," Pistorius added, announcing a multi-billion dollar boost in funding for German space programs.

## Sudanese city 'living in fear'

### Paramilitaries appear to prepare for an assault

AFP, Port Sudan

Residents of the southern Sudanese city of El-Obeid have said they are living in fear as paramilitaries appear to prepare for an assault, with the army reporting shooting down a drone targeting the city on Saturday.

The North Kordofan state capital, about 400 kilometres southwest of Khartoum, is a regional hub and a strategic prize for the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), at war with Sudan's army since April 2023.

While the RSF announced Thursday it had accepted a truce proposal put forward by mediators, the UN subsequently said it saw "preparations for intensified hostilities", issuing a warning about the deteriorating situation in Kordofan region in particular.

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2025

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The Daily Star

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## TRUMP PROGRAMME EDIT

## UK minister says claims BBC misled viewers 'incredibly serious'

AFP, London

A UK government minister yesterday described as "incredibly serious" allegations over the way the BBC edited clips of US President Donald Trump in a flagship documentary programme.

The comments by Culture, Media and Sport Minister Lisa Nandy came as the broadcaster said its chair Samir Shah would provide an explanation to a parliamentary committee today.

Media outlets, including the BBC, reported yesterday that the response was expected to include an apology.

The concerns regard clips spliced together from sections of the US president's speech on January 6, 2021 that made it appear he told supporters he was going to walk to the US Capitol with them and "fight like hell".

In the undocuted clip, however, the president urged the audience to walk with him "and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women".

## 67% of polling stations

FROM PAGE 1

percent of the centres. Of these, 8,226 are classified as "highly risky" and 20,437 as "risky."

The official said the classification was based on several factors, including the condition of polling centre infrastructure, distance from the nearest police station, and proximity to a candidate's residence, among others.

By comparison, law enforcement agencies had identified 10,300 out of 42,149 centres as risky in the 2024 polls.

The meeting also discussed the need for inter-coordination among the forces to ensure the safety of polling officers, voters, and election-related personnel.

"There may be a risk of attacks on various political parties, occupation of centres, snatching of ballots, forced voting, and obstruction of polling officers in carrying out their duties," the minutes noted.

Preparations have been made for the deployment of 90,000 to 100,000 army personnel for election duties across the country. The force is likely to be deployed for eight days -- three days before the election, on the election day, and four days after polling.

"The army may be allowed to enter polling stations to protect polling officials and election materials as needed. Operations to recover illegal weapons may continue. The army may also use drones for election

work," the minutes stated.

The meeting further discussed necessary security measures to hold free, fair, and violence-free polls.

"Effective steps must be taken to recover illegal weapons, arrest identified and listed extremists, set up checkpoints, and conduct random checks after the schedule is announced," the minutes read.

It was also discussed that, if necessary, borders and seaports could be sealed.

After detailed discussions, it was decided that recommendations and proposals on law and order and related issues must be submitted in writing to the Election Commission.

The forces are also required to submit a security and deployment plan after risk assessment, dividing the country into red, yellow, and green zones.

"If the referendum is held, there may be changes in the plans and preparations. Mental preparedness should be maintained to coordinate the matter," the minutes noted.

The meeting highlighted the need to prevent cyberbullying against women and minorities. It also warned that cloning human data or character assassination could occur during the polls, and preparations must be made to address these risks.

Finally, the meeting emphasised the importance of accurate information to combat misinformation.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Sunamganj Sadar, Sunamganj.  
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.9089.000.07.003.22-290

Date : 09.11.2025

### e-Tender Notice No. 02/2025-26

#### e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work	Date and time of receiving	Date and time of opening
1168248	e-Tender/PEDP4/SUN/SAD/2025-2026/W2-03905	Construction of additional class room Moinpur Govt. Primary School under PEDP4 at Sunamganj Sadar upazila, District-Sunamganj	24-Nov-2025 13:00	24-Nov-2025 13:00

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, please register on e-GP System (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for more details please contact support desk contact numbers.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to time specified in online Notice

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal and e-GP help desk [ue.sunamganj-s@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.sunamganj-s@lged.gov.bd) or call to +88-02996600995

Interested person can be communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

(Anwar Hussain)  
Upazila Engineer  
Tel : 02996600995  
E-mail: [ue.sunamganj-s@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.sunamganj-s@lged.gov.bd)

GD-2376

## 18 injured as BNP factions clash over nomination

FROM PAGE 12  
there were no injury marks on Abid's body and that he was suspected to have died of a heart attack.

Police said chairs were vandalised at the event venue, leaving at least eight people injured from both sides. The Daily Star could not reach the two BNP nominee Abdul Mannan.

In Gaibandha, authorities imposed Section 144 restricting

nomination was suspended on November 4, held a procession on the Dhaka-Bangladesh Expressway demanding reinstatement of his candidacy.

In Brahmanbaria, activists formed a human chain demanding the replacement of party nominee Abdul Mannan.

In Cox's Bazar, authorities imposed Section 144 restricting

### Internal tensions flare across several districts over party nominations

gatherings, as rival BNP factions led by nominee Faruk Alam and leader Nahiduzzaman Nishat came face to face.

In Cox's Bazar, supporters of BNP leader Abdur Rahman Badal were among the injured, said Nazneen Sultana, officer-in-charge of Laksham Police Station, quoting UNB.

Elsewhere, internal tensions flared across several districts over party nominations:

In Madaripur, supporters of BNP leader Kamal Zaman, whose

nomination was suspended on November 4, held a procession on the Dhaka-Bangladesh Expressway demanding reinstatement of his candidacy.

In Mymensingh, supporters of Mymensingh contributed to this report.



## বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

BANGLADESH POWER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

অর্থ পরিদপ্তর, বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (৭ম তলা), ১ নং আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।

ফোন- ০২-২২৩৫৫৮৬০, ০১৮১৯২৩৭০৭২

Email: [dir.finance@bpdb.gov.bd](mailto:dir.finance@bpdb.gov.bd)

## সার্ভেয়ার তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের আওতায় ২০২৬ইং ও ২০২৭ইং ২ (দুই) বৎসরের জন্য পিপিআর, ২০২৫ এর সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (Limited Tendering Method) কার্যসম্পাদনের নিমিত্তে সার্ভেয়ার তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য বাংলাদেশে প্রতিষ্ঠিত বীমা সার্ভে প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হাইতে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে। তালিকাভুক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহকে বাংলাদেশে ঢাকা বিমান বন্দর, ঢাকা; চট্টগ্রাম সহুবন্দর চট্টগ্রাম; মোংলা সমূদ্র বন্দর, মোংলা; বেনাপোল স্থল বন্দর, যশোর; ও অন্যান্য বন্দরের মাধ্যমে বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের বিভিন্ন প্রকল্প স্থাপনা, কেন্দ্রীয় ও আঞ্চলিক স্টেশনে সমূহ বিদ্যুৎ ইন্ডাস্ট্রি প্রতিষ্ঠানের বীমা সার্ভে করতে হচ্ছে। বীমা নিয়ন্ত্রক অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত ফি অনুযায়ী সার্ভে বিল পরিশোধিত হয়। তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের কর্ম অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন সার্ভে প্রতিষ্ঠানের আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। অর্থাত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহকে অত্র দণ্ডর হাইতে ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা মাত্র অফেরত্যোগ্য ব্যাংক ড্রাফ্ট/পে-অর্ডার উপ-পরিচালক (হিসাব), পিএনসিও, বিউবো, ঢাকার অনুকূলে প্রদান করতে: আবেদন পত্রের ফরম সংযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

আগামী ০৩/১২/২০২৫ইং হাইতে ১৮/১২/২০২৫ইং পর্যন্ত সময়ে পরিচালক, অর্থ পরিদপ্তর, বিউবো, ঢাকা হাইতে আবেদনপত্র সংযোগ করা যাইবে। আবেদন পত্র বিদ্যুৎ ভবন (৭ম তলা), ১ নং আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা স্থল পরিচালক (অর্থ), বিউবো, ঢাকা এর দণ্ডর পদ্ধতি দরপত্রে বাস্তু আবেদন করিতে হচ্ছে। আগামী ২২/১২/২০২৫ইং তারিখে দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা হাইতে ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সময়ের মধ্যে দাখিলকারী প্রতিনিধিত্বের (যদি কেহি উপস্থিতি থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে থেলা হাইবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শনাবেশ ব্যক্তিকে আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

বিদ্যুৎ/জন- ২৩৩(৩)/০৯/১১/২৫

## Hold to account those behind airport fire

Probe report shows how negligence, rule violations caused it

An official probe into the devastating 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 blaze. Improper storage of products such as laptops and mobile phones containing lithium-ion batteries, classified as "dangerous goods," has also been cited as a major cause. The airport, moreover, did not have the necessary demolition equipment to tear down the walls of the courier building's corrugated tin structure, where the fire is thought to have started. It was only when the Fire Service arrived with bulldozers that the source of the fire could be reached. There were also no fire hydrants near the complex, forcing firefighters to fetch water from distant points.

The investigation by Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the ground handler of the cargo complex, also found that the International Air Express Association of Bangladesh (IAEAB), which had previously subleased the area from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), exposed the area to severe fire risk by constructing a tin-shed courier facility inside, in violation of the rules. CAAB's negligence, therefore, must be held to account. Despite a letter from Biman in January 2024 warning that the cargo complex was half the required size, leading to delays in customs clearance and cargo build-up, nothing was done.

The probe report further found that the fire spread over piles of uncleared cargo blocking the roads, making it difficult for fire trucks to pass through. Biman is required to list uncleared cargo after 21 days and hand it over to customs for auction—none of which was done on time, leading to the pile-up. In January this year, a committee had recommended that all "dangerous goods" cargo should be relocated to an unused barracks on the north side of the airport complex. This, obviously, was not followed through. The level of mismanagement and negligence evident in this scenario is quite shocking. Just think: in 2011, Biman had notified the airport's then director that the cargo village and complex lacked a permanent fire suppression system, warning that delays could destroy goods worth thousands of crores. And it finally did.

CAAB must acknowledge and address the serious gaps in the airport's fire safety measures. As recommended by the investigators, lease agreements for the cargo complex must clearly define each cargo stakeholder's responsibilities regarding fire safety. Automatic fire detection and fire suppression systems must be installed across all warehouses, cargo sheds, and service buildings. Goods classified as "dangerous" must be stored separately in areas far away from regular cargo. Most of all, CAAB, Biman and all relevant entities handling cargo must work in coordination—and with extreme efficiency—when it comes to maintaining safety protocols.

## Investigate the drug cases seriously

Procedural errors, absence of witnesses remain major legal barriers

It is quite concerning that 59 percent of drug-related cases in Bangladesh cannot be proven in court. The daily Prothom Alo analysed the verdicts of 500 drug cases resolved across 26 districts, including Dhaka, between January 2021 and June 2025, and found that in 296 cases all the accused were acquitted, while convictions were made in only 204 cases. The review also revealed that investigations in such cases rarely went beyond the primarily arrested individuals. No new information was uncovered beyond initial reports, and charge sheets contained no details about any patrons, protectors, or financiers, leaving main offenders beyond law enforcement's reach. This is deeply alarming.

In short, the Prothom Alo investigation has found 16 major shortcomings preventing drug-related crimes from being proven in court. These include faulty FIRs, weak investigations, lack of witnesses, inaccurate seizure lists, contradictory statements by law enforcement officers, questionable chemical test reports, failure of the complainant or investigating officer to testify, other procedural errors, and negligence by both investigators and the prosecution.

In 237 of the 296 acquitted drug cases, the absence or unreliability of neutral witnesses was a key reason, while flaws in searches, FIRs, and investigations contributed to 48 more acquittals. Investigating officers failed to testify in 126 cases, complainants in 79, and in 66 cases, neither appeared in court. The problems are further highlighted in a research report by the Department of Criminology and Police Science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University that found that in five drug-related cases in Sylhet, a single police informant was repeatedly used as a witness, merely signing seizure documents when called. Moreover, chemical testing, crucial for verifying the substance and determining punishments, was mishandled in 23 cases, leading to full acquittals. These patterns reveal systemic negligence and malpractice in investigations and prosecutions.

In 2020, both the Police Headquarters and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) issued directives instructing officers to identify full drug networks and trace money flows in drug seizure cases. However, an analysis of 20 DMP case reports by Prothom Alo found that these directives were not followed. Investigators only charged the carriers, without uncovering the sources, destinations, or wider networks involved.

Clearly, the current police/legal approach to dealing with drug cases is deeply flawed, focusing only on low-level offenders and ignoring the main networks. If the success of law enforcement operations is measured by the quantity of drugs seized and the number of cases filed, rather than the effectiveness of targeting the entire drug trafficking network, nothing will change. Only through rigorous, well-supervised investigations, active prosecution, and a strong governmental commitment to enforce the law can we hope to stop the spread of drugs and bring the kingpins of the trade to justice.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

China's World Trade Organisation membership approved  
On this day in 2001, after 15 years of negotiations, China's membership in World Trade Organisation was approved.

# EDITORIAL

## Is the July charter drive losing its way?

### WINKERS AWEIGH!

Tanim Ahmed  
is digital editor at The Daily Star.

TANIM AHMED

It is customary for a pilot to plot a plane's flight path long before it takes off. In fact, this is essential for the sake of ensuring safety, efficiency, and airspace coordination. Only then can it be determined if the aeroplane has veered off course, or whether something has gone wrong. Through this exercise, the pilot also knows when and how the plane is supposed to land before it takes off. This advance planning—charting the full course of an operation or undertaking—has obvious benefits. Yet this is precisely what seems absent from the interim government's attempt to arrive at a consensus on the implementation of the July National Charter.

The government's latest gambit (or more of a stopgap measure)—urging the political parties to sit among themselves and reach a consensus, preferably within a week—has not worked. That suggestive one-week deadline expires today with no headway. The message from the BNP is quite clear: the party will not respond to an invitation from Jamaat-e-Islami for talks. It insists that the call has to come from the government. This stance indicates that the largest political player in present-day Bangladesh was not quite aligned with the idea of parties discussing issues among themselves. If anything, Salauddin Ahmed, the BNP policymaker who has been representing the party in the negotiations held by the National Consensus Commission, said his party would rather have the government stand in as referee, and that it would be open to discussions initiated by the chief adviser. Salauddin also dismissed the deadline, saying the government was in no position to put pressure on the parties.

In other words, when Law Adviser Asif Nazrul announced last week that the government expected the parties to sit among themselves and arrive at a consensus within a week, he and the council of advisers had probably not plotted the flight path, and likely not



for the first time. On Sunday, however, following Salauddin's remarks, he dismissed them as a negotiating tactic to put pressure on political opponents.

That the interim government did not clearly think through the initiative to secure a political consensus on the July charter has been evident since the day of its signing, when, to the surprise of many, the National Citizen Party (NCP)—natural heir to the July uprising—refused to sign the charter. Being the most visible and notable stakeholder of that uprising, the NCP's refusal was quite telling. They said that there was no concrete plan or mechanism to make the charter's proposals binding upon the next government, which was their main point of contention.

The seven-day deadline move, which came amid a raging dispute between the two political camps led by BNP and Jamaat, also smacks of an attempt to pass the buck. The government clearly did not want to be seen as the one "holding the pillow". That attempt has now been dashed, with the BNP snubbing Jamaat's invitation to talk.

In the meantime, Jamaat has threatened street protests demanding the referendum be held before the election, as well as proportional representation in both houses of parliament and an implementation order for the July charter. Some of its

single question covering dozens of constitutional reforms that many parties had disagreed with during the months-long discussion at the commission. This likely puts months of hard work at risk if, by any chance, the question mark over the referendum continues to loom.

More notably, however, the law adviser's announcement had come

demands are understandable; some are quite unreasonable and rather disruptive. On the other hand, given the BNP's notes of dissent on some key elements of the July charter, Jamaat is clearly not ready to leave it up to the former's discretion when (or if) they form the next government.

Clearly, at this point, there is a need for a strong voice of a referee, one that

prevails over the bickering sides and calms the nerves. Jamaat needs to be dissuaded from its street campaign, BNP from its stance against diluting the reforms, and the NCP from its fixation on a binding instrument signed by the chief adviser (and not the president). That strong voice has to come from the interim government, which is something it has pointedly shirked. In fact, it has changed its stance almost every time it has been faced with such resistance.

With the one-week deadline now over, the government has yet to point to a new direction in the protracted drama over the July charter implementation. So, to return to our initial analogy, the aircraft is still flying, but the pilot has yet to chart a flight path. For us citizens, there is still no indication of when or where the aircraft will touch down. What may be even more worrying is that the pilot does not seem to be too bothered by it.

## Do Jahanara's allegations really surprise us?

Naziba Basher  
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

NAZIBA BASHER

When former Bangladesh women's cricket team captain Jahanara Alam came forward with explosive allegations of sexual harassment against team selector and manager Manjurul Islam, and late Towhid Mahmud, former in-charge of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) women's department, the larger question was not who did what, but rather: was anyone shocked that this could happen to sportswomen in Bangladesh at all?

Across our streets, homes, workplaces, and schools, we have long lived with the fact that sexual harassment is rampant. Women silently endure, suppress, and fear the cost of speaking out.

So, when women step into a male-dominated arena like sports, where officials, selectors and administrators are overwhelmingly men, the odds are stacked against them. Jahanara's revelation is not an outlier; it may be the predictable outcome of a system built on male privilege, unchecked power and a culture of silence.

The pacer alleges that during the 2022 Women's World Cup, she endured indecent proposals and inappropriate physical contact. She says she raised the issue in a letter to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury that very year—and nothing meaningful happened. The question of why we are hearing this story only now should alarm us. It is sad, yet predictable,

The investigation must not merely be a perfunctory internal exercise. If it is handled this time as business as usual—closed doors, quiet deals, no accountability—future sportswomen will say: "I'm not staying, I'm not risking it." This is why an independent, external investigation becomes essential.

When a female athlete alleges harassment at the hands of those who



FILE PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Jahanara's revelation is not an outlier; it may be the predictable outcome of a system built on male privilege, unchecked power and a culture of silence.'

that female players feel compelled to suppress their voices, fearing their careers, livelihoods, and even their places on the team can be in jeopardy.

It is within the reach of BCB to act. The board has formed a committee to investigate the allegations and given it 15 working days to report its findings.

But given the board's past and present reputation for being complicit in or slow to act on serious complaints, the trust deficit looms large.

evaluate her, select her, reward her, the usual chain of command cannot remain the only mechanism for justice. As sports commentator and former cricketer Tamim Iqbal has said, this needs a probe "with no one from the BCB involved."

This is not about punishing one person or doing minimal damage control; it is about preserving the integrity of women's sport in Bangladesh. Why should we care? Because this is not just Jahanara's

problem; it is the next generation's problem.

If girls see the national team as a place where talent, grit and ambition can be crushed by misconduct and silence, they might never step in, and we will lose future sportswomen. We will lose the equity that sport could symbolise in a society striving for gender justice.

To avoid that outcome, we must insist on four things: one, full transparency in the inquiry process—specifically, who is on the committee, how evidence is gathered, and how victims are protected. Two, protection and support for those who spoke out—they should not be isolated, punished, or sidelined. Three, systemic reforms in the BCB and sporting bodies: mandatory safe sport policy, an independent ombudsman, regular training, and reporting mechanisms are necessary. Four, government oversight—because when self-regulation fails, as it so often does, this becomes a public interest matter.

The question is not merely whether someone will pay for past wrongdoing. The question is whether we allow a culture in which female athletes enter hostile terrain, are asked to perform while vulnerable, and disbelieved when they speak.

If the answer is silence, then yes, we knew this would happen, and we did nothing. And if we do nothing, we lose more than one athlete; we lose trust, we lose ambition, we degrade sport into yet another arena of male dominance.

Maybe we are shocked by the name, the sport, the profile. But not by the pattern. And therein lies our collective failure. This moment must become a turning point. Sport in Bangladesh deserves better, women athletes deserve better, and we owe it to the next generation to make sure this is the end of an era, not a continuation.

# Can Mamdani deliver on the issues that secured his win?



## AN OPEN DIALOGUE

**Dr Abdullah Shibli**  
is an economist working at a non profit fiscal intermediary. He previously worked for the World Bank and Harvard University.

### ABDULLAH SHIBLI

The mayoral election in New York City (NYC) generated global interest because the frontrunner was Zohran Mamdani, a relatively unknown politician who campaigned on a socialist platform, focused on "bread-and-butter issues" and promised many economic benefits to improve the lives of the city's average denizens. On the election day, November 4, Mamdani beat a well-known politician, Andrew Cuomo, who had the backing of President Trump and Republicans, to become the first Asian-American mayor of NYC.

What is the significance of Mamdani's victory? First and foremost, the lesson I take is that democracy is a powerful force and, once in a while, needs to be tested. Mamdani's ability to claim the mayoralty is evidence that, regardless of what we hear otherwise, the popular vote counts.

Secondly, a grassroots campaign for an electoral office by a group of energetic and dedicated supporters can beat the odds and overpower any vested interest. Mamdani was characterised by some quarters as a communist, antisemitic, unqualified, and a liar. But the voters of New York knew better.

Cuomo, who was the Governor of New York State, expressed scepticism that Mamdani would not be able to execute his ideas. "You know, the pattern is politicians talk a lot, promise a lot, get into office, nothing happens, right?" Cuomo said.

Thirdly, *The Economist* rightly identifies New York as "the country's most enduring symbol of two American ideals, pluralism and opportunity." The election of a young mayor with little administrative experience reaffirms the country's enduring faith in innovative ideas and its nurturing environment for talented individuals.

Fourthly, this was the first election since Trump took office in January that provided an opportunity to gauge voters' current

political mood. It would be premature to say that the election results confirm that Trump's extreme policies are unpopular. However, NYC has often set the political, cultural, and financial course of the country. Both Republicans and Democrats, the two dominant parties, had their eyes on NYC to provide clues before preparing for the midterm elections next year.

Overall, Mamdani's victory can be attributed to a combination of strategic campaigning, effective communication, and the political landscape that favoured a change from traditional candidates. Zohran Kwame Mamdani, born in Kampala, Uganda, to Indian-American filmmaker Mira Nair and Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani of Gujarati descent, managed to marshal grassroots support from a multicultural, diverse community, including Black and Hispanic minorities and immigrants from South Asia.

Before his mayoral candidacy, he was a social activist. He served for four years as a member of the New York state legislature from the 36th district, representing the Queens neighbourhood of Astoria. As a

**The rise of Mamdani electrified the large immigrant communities living in and around NYC. For many struggling with the high cost of living in the New York metropolitan area, the rags to riches story of Mamdani has offered a renewed sense of hope and a glimmer of a future that will bring them closer to the American dream.**

socialist, he gained the support of a left-leaning organisation named "Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM)," a multi-generational organisation of South Asian immigrants in NYC espousing social and economic justice. He promised higher minimum wages, free childcare, rent control, and free bus service.

The rise of Mamdani electrified the large immigrant communities living in and around NYC. For many struggling with the high

time for the underclass in the US. The federal government crisis is in its sixth week, and the Trump administration is carrying on with its cuts in various sectors and rounding up of undocumented immigrants. The country is reeling from the longest government shutdown in history. Mamdani's election reignited the dormant Democrats and offered the majority a chance to claim political power. The results of the NYC and gubernatorial elections in New

resources for the free bus, free day care, and free food programmes promised by Mamdani. "Implementing his vision will demand far more than pious intentions; it will require sustained support and cooperation from diverse political stakeholders, including those in Albany," veteran journalist Hasan Ferdous, who now lives in New York wrote to me in a private communication.

The newly elected mayor will also face



**Mamdani's administration will need the commitment of both the New York governor and the assembly to get the funding and resources for the free bus, free day care, and free food programmes.**

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

cost of living in the New York metropolitan area, the "Rags to Riches" story of Mamdani has offered a renewed sense of hope and a glimmer of a future that will bring them closer to the American dream. Polls largely underestimated Zohran Mamdani's support in the Democratic primary for the New York City mayor, but he emerged as the party's candidate after winning 56 percent of the vote. His overwhelming victory on November 4 capped the year-long effort to mobilise the South Asian community and the underprivileged segments of the megacity.

Mamdani's election came at a critical

Jersey and Virginia should give Republicans a nudge to reconsider the tactics they have been following over the last year.

As the new mayor takes office in January, he will have a tough uphill battle in order to deliver on his promises and to stay clear of the federal government's wrath. President Trump had previously warned that if Zohran Mamdani were to win, it would be "highly unlikely" that the city would receive federal funding beyond a bare minimum.

The new administration will need the commitment of both the New York Governor and the assembly to get the funding and

some tough opposition from the business community. To quote Sudesh Chohan, a small business owner from Flushing, Queens, from an article in *The New York Times*, "I've been working hard for 45 years. I don't want my tax dollars going to someone who can work but chooses not to."

Therefore, Mamdani's victory, while a reaffirmation of faith in participatory democracy and the power of collective action, is not the ultimate test for progressive ideals. Rather, as he takes office, his ability to deliver on his promises will be closely watched—not just in New York, but around the world.

# Remembering Roushan Jahan: My sister, teacher, comrade



**Rounaq Jahan**  
is a political scientist, feminist author and distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

### ROUNAQ JAHAN

Roushan Jahan, one of the pioneer researchers on women's empowerment, passed away on Tuesday, November 4, 2025. She was my sister, four years older than me, and the firstborn amongst six siblings. She was a born teacher, and when I was growing up, I completely relied on her to give answers to all my questions on any subject! My younger brother Kabir and I had problems pronouncing some Bangla syllables when we were children. Though she was barely eight or nine herself, Roushan managed to teach us how to move our tongue to pronounce correctly. Later in life, Roushan and I shared a common passion for doing research and writing on women's empowerment.

She was an exceptionally bright student, curious to read everything from the age of four. Roushan was especially fond of literature. She was articulate, made friends easily, and her teachers in school, college and university recognised and appreciated her many talents. Though I was four years younger, and she could have easily chosen to spend time with friends of her own age group, she devoted an enormous amount of time to me, telling me stories, playing with me, and teaching me Bangla and English grammar and literature. We were inseparable as children and all through our school and college years till she left for her higher studies in English literature at the University of Chicago on a Fulbright scholarship in 1961.

Roushan not only excelled in her studies. She participated in school theatres and learned music from Ustad Ayet Ali Khan in Cumilla. She was interested in films and sports. I remember, when Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting Club came to Dhaka to play football, Roushan

and I went to the stadium to watch the game, only two girls in a sea of men! She was quite fearless in taking these bold decisions.

Roushan was a favourite student of both Dr Syed Sajjad Hussain and Dr Khan Sarwar Murshid in the English Department at Dhaka University (DU), which was quite an achievement! After passing her MA in English literature, she taught briefly at Eden College and then joined the teaching faculty of the English Department at DU.



**Roushan Jahan (1940-2025)**

At the University of Chicago, again, she was a favourite student of Professor Edward C. Dimock. She helped him in his translation work and taught Bangla to US students, many of whom still remember her fondly. At age 92, Professor Ralph Nicholas, also from the University of Chicago, remains grateful to Roushan for teaching him Bangla. The recordings of her teaching were used for years at the university. At Chicago, she also met Muzaffar Ahmed, who was then a PhD student in the economics department. They later got married when Roushan returned to Dhaka in 1966. I missed her wedding because

I was doing my PhD at Harvard University during that time.

Roushan never got back to her teaching career at DU after marriage. I always considered this a great loss to the nation because she could have produced so many great scholars in both English and Bangla literatures and linguistics. She had a special skill in teaching people. Generations of students were deprived of learning from a great teacher!

However, when I started my own initiative of doing research on women in 1973 and requested her to join our study group, which used to meet once a week at our house, she readily agreed. I wrote my first article on "Women in Bangladesh" in English in 1973 and Roushan translated it into Bangla for wider dissemination. Ahmed Sofa organised a large lecture at DU, where I presented my article in Bangla. Razia Khan Amin and Suraiya Khanam were the other two discussants. Many young people participated in the lecture.

In 1975, we registered our study group as an NGO titled "Women for Women," and published a book with the same title, where Roushan contributed an article "Women in Bangla Literature." She later became the president of Women for Women and kept this voluntary organisation alive for the next two decades through her research and writings. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, she did pioneering research on many issues and published many books. Though a student of literature, she did research and wrote on wide-ranging subjects such as education, health, human rights, environment, politics, workers' conditions and violence against women. Her noteworthy publications include *Hidden Danger*, where she presented data on domestic violence, and *No Better Options*, co-authored with Hameeda Hossain and Salma Sobhan, where she analysed the working conditions of women industrial workers, based on findings of survey research. Both were pioneering research studies. Her most famous work was an edited version of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*, which was published by the Feminist Press

in New York and was widely used as a textbook in women and gender studies courses in US universities. The book is still much in demand. She translated into English parts of Rokeya's *Oborodh Bashini* and also Ahmed Sofa's *Onkar*.

In addition to research and writing, Roushan was actively involved with other women's and civil society organisations such as Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Ain o Salish Kendra, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Education Watch and Bangla-German Shampriti (BGS). She worked on a voluntary basis in all these organisations for decades with commitment and dedication. She was always a behind-the-scene worker, never trying to promote herself as a leader. She wrote or edited the reports

of many of these organisations.

Roushan also actively participated in many regional and international conferences. We both attended the UN Women's Conference in Nairobi in 1985, and we three sisters Roushan, Nilufar and I attended the fourth UN Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. Roushan and Nilufar were not only my sisters, but we all became comrades fighting a common cause. Now, Roushan's daughter Sohela Nazneen has joined Ahmed Sofa's *Onkar*.

In addition to research and writing,

Roushan and my close bonding

might have come as a surprise to many, as we had very different personalities. Roushan was a truly kind and humble person, never hurting anybody, never pushing herself forward, almost a saint-like

figure. I was the total opposite! But we never quarrelled, largely because Roushan was always so very loving and forgiving. She has left a void in my life that will never be filled. I will miss her every day of my remaining days, but will always rejoice remembering our happy memories together, walking in the garden where Roushan could identify every tree and flower, looking at the stars as she named them all, reading a book or a poem where she could recite every line, or listening to a song where she could sing along. She enjoyed the simple things of life. She was my first teacher, who opened my eyes to the wide vista of a world beyond me. I thank my lucky stars that such an exceptional human being appeared in my life and kept me company for so many years.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Cabinet Division Common Service-1 Branch

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Date: 9 November 2025

### e-Tender Notice Tender Notice no.4/2025-26

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Identification of Lot	Tender Publishing date & time	Last selling Date & time	Tender closing date & time
1.	1157037	Procurement of Electric Equipment	10 November 2025 9:00	20 November 2025 12:00	20 November 2025 14:00

This is the online Tender and method of tender is OTM. Only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no off-line/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration is required in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)). The fee for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal has to be deposited online through any registered bank.

*09-11-2025*  
(Md. Nikaruzzaman)  
Deputy Secretary  
Cabinet Division  
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka  
Phone- 02-226641050

# What freedom looks like in MIRA NAIR'S FILMS

**Mira Nair's women have always been unapologetically alive. They weep, desire, plot, and stumble with a self-awareness that makes them difficult to contain. Across her decades-long filmography, they have refused to be flattened into symbols of virtue or rebellion; they are flawed, defiant, tender, and human. In an industry often content to either idolise or invisibilise women, Nair carved a cinematic language that neither glorifies nor redeems them. She allows them to take up space, to be complicated, to have appetites.**



**Mira Nair's women remind us that representation, at its best, is not about showing women who break every rule, but women who live despite them.**

VISUAL:  
ANIKA TAHSIN HAFSA

#### MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

From her earliest works like *Salaam Bombay!* to *Monsoon Wedding* and *The Namesake*, Nair's lens has remained steady in its gaze—curious but not judgmental, intimate but not invasive. She does not extract stories from her women, rather builds worlds around them. What distinguishes her filmmaking is not only the diversity of her female characters but the deliberate act of giving them narrative authority. They do not exist as extensions of men's stories; men, if anything, often orbit around theirs.

*Monsoon Wedding* is perhaps her most beloved and emblematic work. Set in Delhi amidst the chaos of a Punjabi wedding, Nair constructs a world brimming with sensory overload and, within it, the emotional storms of women negotiating tradition, trauma, and autonomy. The ensemble cast allows multiple female perspectives to coexist without collapsing into cliché.

Then there's Ria, the protagonist's cousin, whose narrative unravels one of Nair's most courageous treatments of women's pain—the revelation of childhood sexual abuse within the family. Nair frames Ria's silence with mastery, letting her story emerge through stillness. When Ria finally speaks out, the camera does not sensationalise her trauma. In this cinematic restraint, Nair captures what

generations of South Asian women have been denied: the right to define their own pain without apology.

This refusal to tidy up the complexities of womanhood runs through all her work. In *Mississippi Masala*, Demetrius and Mina's interracial romance unfolds against the backdrop of displacement and prejudice, but Nair ensures that Mina's choices remain central. She is neither fetishised nor tokenised; her relationship with Demetrius is portrayed not as rebellion for its own sake, but as a genuine, self-willed connection. For Nair, love is an act of agency, particularly for women taught that love must be earned through obedience.

In *The Namesake*, based on Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, Nair's interpretation of Ashima is among her most tender portrayals. Ashima begins as a young Bengali woman uprooted into an alien American landscape, her life dissolving into the routines of immigration and motherhood. Yet Nair transforms what could have been a story of loss into one of gradual self-realisation. Ashima's world is built around others, but through subtle gestures, Nair reveals her transformation. In one striking moment, Ashima, years after her husband's death, decides to stay back in America rather than return to Kolkata. It is a mature act of self-possession; a recognition that home is not a place but a state of becoming. Few filmmakers capture aging

female subjectivity with such empathy and respect for quiet courage.

What makes her representation of women radical is her understanding that liberation is rarely cinematic; it is domestic, gradual, negotiated. Her heroines do not always win; they survive. They do not topple systems; they navigate them. Stylistically, her filmmaking complements this ethos. She frames women as part of ecosystems, the camera lingers on female collectives: women laughing in kitchens, crying in bedrooms, sharing glances across crowded rooms. Her visual language rejects the male gaze by dissolving it; by allowing women to look, to be seen, and to look back.

Across her films, Nair builds a counter-narrative to dominant tropes of South Asian womanhood. Her protagonists are rarely saints or martyrs; they are full-bodied, full-voiced women negotiating patriarchy, capitalism, and diaspora with wit and willpower. Even when they falter, they remain the narrators of their own stories. In this sense, Nair's cinema is democratic. She allows her characters to be specific, textured, and fallible. In a time when global cinema often tokenises diversity through representation without context, Nair insists on complexity over visibility. Her women remind us that representation, at its best, is not about showing women who break every rule, but women who live despite them.



## Hoichoi to stream 'Putul Nacher Itikotha' from this November

After touring international festivals and releasing in Indian theatres on August 1, Suman Mukhopadhyay's adaptation of Manik Bandyopadhyay's classic *Putul Nacher Itikotha* is set to stream on Hoichoi from November 14.

The film features Jaya Ahsan as Kusum alongside Abir Chatterjee and Parambrata Chatterjee, with the story reimagined in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Critics praised Jaya and Abir's compelling on-screen chemistry during its theatrical run.

Expressing her joy, Jaya said she hopes Bangladeshi audiences will embrace the film, as Manik Bandyopadhyay's work "belongs to both sides of Bengal." Meanwhile, her Bangladesh-Iran co-production *Fereshteh*, directed by Morteza Atashzamzam, premiered on Bongo on November 2 following its September 19 cinema release.

## WHAT'S THE HAPS?

### 'Monkey Trial'

Batighar brings its gripping 26th staging of *Monkey Trial*, a sharp reimagining of the Scopes trial, where a school teacher's lesson on evolution ignites a moral battlefield. Sanjoy Sarker Muktonil's direction transforms history into a fierce mirror, forcing audiences to confront the cost of fear, faith, and suppressed truth.

**Date:** Monday | November 10, 2025

**Time:** 7:15pm onwards

**Venue:** Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA



# NEWS

## Trinamool, BJP clash over West Bengal

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, the ECI has repeatedly assured that no eligible voter will be excluded if they can provide the required documents.

Between October 31 and November 3, the BSF apprehended 89 people, stating them to be Bangladeshis staying illegally in India, for trying to illegally cross over to Bangladesh through West Bengal's Basirhat border following the announcement of the SIR.

The TMC has announced street agitations across the state and attacked both the BJP and the ECI on the SIR issue.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew and the party's second in command, Abhishek Banerjee, led the street march in Kolkata last week, accusing the BJP and ECI of turning the SIR into a political tool for a "silent, invisible rigging" ahead of the assembly polls.

The TMC has been walking on thin ice. It does not want to give any impression of being a stumbling block in the preparation of an error-free voters' list. At the same time, it warned against a single eligible voter being deleted from West Bengal's rolls during the revision process.

Abhishek Banerjee alleged the BJP and the ECI were "colluding to erase voters from opposition-ruled states" while sparing the ones governed by the saffron party.

The TMC is visibly concerned about the potential exclusion of Muslim voters from the electoral roll. This voter segment has formed the party's core support base since 2011—just as it had been for the Left Front during its 34-year rule from 1977 to 2011.

So it's no wonder Mamata Banerjee has gone hammer and tongs on the SIR issue, accusing the BJP of "playing with fire" in the name of "purifying" the electoral roll and warning that any attempt to tamper with the voter list would amount to a "betrayal of democracy".

On the other hand, the BJP accused her of threatening violence over electoral roll revision.

Ironically, it is Mamata, as Congress leader and later of the TMC, who had often accused the Left Front of manipulating voter lists by drafting in Bangladeshis by helping them secure Aadhar and ration cards.

However, the TMC is now desperate to hold on to its Muslim vote base that

has shifted to it from the politically weakened Left.

But concerns over SIR are not just of Muslim voters alone. The revision process has also caused worries among Hindu voters from West Bengal's Matua community (the Nama Shudra Hindus who migrated from what is now Bangladesh over decades) in the North 24 Parganas district bordering Bangladesh. Those not on the 2002 voter list must now furnish documents to prove eligibility.

The Matuas are a decisive force in determining the electoral outcome in more than 40 assembly seats (out of the total of 294 seats in West Bengal) across the border districts of North 24 Parganas, Nadia, and parts of South 24 Parganas.

Matua-majority areas include the Bongaon, Gaighata, Swarupnagar, Ashoknagar, and Krishnanagar assembly seats, where the BJP made deep inroads in 2019 and 2021.

So it comes as no surprise that TMC and BJP are locked in a fierce battle to woo the support of the Matuas.

India's federal minister and Bongaon MP Shantanu Thakur, BJP's most prominent Matua face, sought to reassure the community members, saying, "There is no need to worry if names of refugee Matuas are deleted. They will get Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act of December 2019."

However, the statement has failed to calm frayed nerves.

Shantanu's aunt and TMC Rajya Sabha lawmaker Mamata Bala Thakur, who leads a rival faction of the Matuas, fears that the names of many Matuas will be deleted from the voter roll, as they arrived after 2002 and do not have the necessary documents.

There are concerns within the BJP too.

The party's legislator, Subrata Thakur, Shantanu's brother, said those who arrived between 2002 and 2025 would not be able to produce the required papers. If they apply for Indian citizenship under the CAA, they can appeal to retain their names, though there is no guarantee, as the ECA is an autonomous body.

Subrata estimated that three to four million refugees across the state may qualify under the CAA, adding that the government is proceeding

cautiously to ensure "genuine victims of religious persecution (in Bangladesh) get citizenship, not infiltrators or Rohingyas misusing the process."

BJP's internal survey suggests 25-40 per cent of voters in assembly segments under Bongaon and Ranaghat Lok Sabha seats could be affected if Matuas fail to link their names to the 2002 rolls. In parts of Krishnanagar and Ranaghat, where Matua voters form nearly 60 per cent of the population, leaders have similar concerns.

BJP has launched an outreach campaign, holding 1,000 CAA camps across border districts, North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Cooch Behar and Uttar Dinajpur. Party insiders point out that these four districts alone accounted for over half of the 77 assembly seats BJP won in 2021.

#### HC halts Ctg port

FROM PAGE 12

The CPA had increased port tariffs in September—the first such revision since the early 1980s—citing rising operational and maintenance costs, the need for modernisation, and currency depreciation.

Under the new tariff schedule, charges for vessel berthing, container handling, storage, and other port services were raised across various categories.

The revision, which took effect on October 15, drew sharp criticism from shipping operators, freight forwarders, and exporters, who warned that the sudden hike would raise logistics costs, squeeze profit margins, and reduce Bangladesh's trade competitiveness, particularly in export-oriented sectors.

Industry insiders said the higher port charges could make Bangladeshi exports less attractive in global markets and increase import costs for essential commodities, thereby impacting overall supply chain efficiency.

Bangladesh Container Shipping Association and the BMLS subsequently filed separate writ petitions, arguing that the tariff changes were made without adequate stakeholder consultation and without lawful authority.

Keywords: Chattogram Port, High Court, Ctg port tariff hike, port tariff hikeport charges, Bangladesh Maritime Law Society, CPA, Ministry of Shipping, writ petition, BCSA

## Shortage of contraceptives

FROM PAGE 12

Fourth Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNPS) in June last year.

In addition, expansion works at many hospitals, training programmes for health workers and salaries for health workers hired under the programme were halted after the interim government decided to scrap the proposed Fifth HPNPS last year.

Like other ministries, the health ministry previously implemented its development activities through multiple separate projects. However, the large number of projects—many of which were funded by foreign donors—created significant coordination challenges.

To address the issue, the projects were consolidated in 1998 into a five-year initiative called the First HPNPS.

Projects of a similar nature were grouped under specific operational plans, such as primary healthcare, hospital management, disease control, maternal and child care, medical education and family planning.

Over the past 27 years, the ministry has implemented four sector-wide programmes, with the Fourth HPNPS comprising 29 operational plans—concluding in June last year.

However, the interim government decided to move away from the

decade-old approach and planned to integrate the sectoral programme into the regular activities of health authorities to improve coordination and strengthen the basic health infrastructure of the country.

It undertook a two-year exit plan with four short-term projects to address urgent issues such as manpower, medicines, preventive vaccines, emergency family planning services, equipment and maintenance, officials said.

But it took around a year to finalise the projects, and during the time, the government made some block allocation to meet some emergency needs.

One of the projects set to be placed today aims to implement the unfinished activities of essential family planning, maternal, child and reproductive health services under the completed Fourth HPNPS.

The project, with a cost of Tk 1,664 crore, will run from July 2025 to June next year. Of the total allocation, Tk 947 crore will be spent on procuring contraceptives, Tk 193 crore on medicines and Tk 54 crore on equipment.

The situation has improved following the earlier crisis in supply, said Ashrafi Ahmad, director general of the Directorate General of Family Planning, the implementing agency

of the project.

There is sufficient stock to last until the middle of January, she said, adding that it usually takes around four months to complete the procurement process.

"We, however, hope the supply will not be hampered once the project is approved," she added.

Another project aims to complete the unfinished tasks under five operational plans, involving Tk 1,546 crore, to be implemented between July this year and June 2026.

The project seeks to complete pending works at 22 upazila-level hospitals and various offices of the health department, procure furniture for the facilities and carry out other related activities.

The third project focuses on completing the unfinished tasks of the Fourth HPNPS, linked to the Directorate General of Medical Education, the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery and the National Institute of Population Research and Training.

This project, with an estimated cost of Tk 212 crore and a deadline of June 2026, will primarily allocate funds for the training of medical professionals and health workers, procurement of medical equipment and other related activities.

Theft rising amid lax security at HSIA cargo zone

FROM PAGE 12

to walk out through the main gate with the stolen goods in plain sight, said the freight forwarder.

He alleged that surveillance in this key area is extremely weak, and such incidents occur regularly. Many victims, he added, avoid filing complaints for fear of further trouble from the organised group operating there.

With help from a BAFFA supervisor, he managed to recover six of the nine stolen items.

Kabir Ahmed, immediate past president of BAFFA, admitted that thefts are frequent in the area.

"Theft in such a secured zone should have been zero," he said, adding that surveillance and monitoring must be improved.

"We have raised the issue with the authorities many times, but little action has been taken to punish the criminals or enhance security," he said.

Faisal Samad, director of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA),

echoed him. "The export cargo area is supposed to be highly secure, and incidents of theft should not happen there. But unfortunately, they do. Goods sometimes go missing from the import area too."

However, Boshra Islam, general manager (public relations) of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, denied the allegations, claiming the export cargo complex has proper security measures.

"This area is completely under CCTV surveillance and monitored by security personnel round the clock. Therefore, there is no question of theft," she quoted ABM Nazmul Huda, general manager (cargo) of Biman, as saying.

She, however, said some parts of the export cargo village are controlled by the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association, and incidents might occur there.

Referring to the November 5 incident, she said Biman received a complaint but later found the theft had occurred in the area managed by BAFFA.

Asked about preventive measures, Boshra said, "The area under Biman's control is fully monitored by CCTV and security personnel. If any incident occurs, we take action after analysing the CCTV footage."

A top official of Biman's cargo section, requesting anonymity, said, "Unless you visit the area yourself, you won't understand the real situation. The front area of the export cargo zone is controlled by the Freight Forwarders Association, which is responsible for its safety and security. What can Biman do if items are lost from their area? It's not our concern if anything goes missing or is stolen from that zone."

The use of HSIA has been rising rapidly for air cargo export driven by export growth.

The airport typically handles up to 1,000 tonnes of dry cargo daily, mostly garments, with volumes peaking between October and December. Exporters send nearly 2,500 tonnes of dry garment cargo a month through this route.



# The Bhola Cyclone and the making of Bangladesh

## Revisiting the nation's founding moment

**The Bhola cyclone gave the people of East Pakistan a common experience of abandonment. It became a moment of recognition that the government ruling from the West neither could nor would protect them.**

SULTAN MEHMOOD,  
AHMED MUSHFIQ MOBARAK

The 1970 Bhola cyclone was among the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. It struck the coastal belt of what was then East Pakistan in November 1970, killing hundreds of thousands and destroying entire communities. Beyond its tragic and immediate human costs, it had profound political consequences. Within a year, the world witnessed the birth of a new nation.

For many who lived through it, the cyclone marked the moment when an old order lost its moral authority. It exposed how distant and indifferent the central government in West Pakistan had become to the suffering of those it governed. In that sense, Bhola did not simply destroy villages; it revealed the fragility of the bond between ruler and ruled.

Scholars of Bangladesh's political and economic history have long debated what truly brought about Bangladesh's independence. Some point to economic disparities and cultural divisions that had existed since 1947. Others emphasize the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the growing movement for regional autonomy. But important observers present in that historical moment like Archer Blood, US consul general for East Pakistan stationed in Dhaka in 1970 who famously sent telegrams to US President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to draw attention to the Pakistan army's atrocities in Bangladesh, described the Bhola cyclone as the real trigger for separation. The USAID Mission Director Eric Griffel similarly called the cyclone "the real reason for the final break".

But others believe that the cyclone's role has been overstated, that it merely accelerated an inevitable process. Professor Rehman Sobhan, one of the architects of the 1966 Six Point Movement, has argued that the storm only dramatized an already inevitable political outcome.

We revisit this conversation by uncovering long-forgotten satellite images of the cyclone's devastation that was archived by the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s satellite services group. The ITOS-1 satellite, funded by the US Department of Defense, was among the most advanced real-time cloud monitoring systems of its time and a critical Cold War asset. The satellite was only

operational from January 23 to November 16, 1970 when a tape recorder malfunction halted data transmission. The Bhola cyclone made landfall on November 12, 1970, so the satellite captured crucial imagery of cloud cover distribution and radiation. We apply modern atmospheric science research methods to these images to infer the intensity of cyclone winds felt in every *thana* in East Pakistan. We also digitize the voting records in every electoral constituency in 1954 and in 1970, as well as the birthplaces of every one of the 206,000 freedom fighters who bravely took up arms to engage in guerrilla warfare against the Pakistan army. We statistically connect all these data streams and apply modern empirical research standards to explore whether the Bhola cyclone indeed played any catalytic role to turn the discontent that already existed amongst Bengalis in the 1950s and 1960s into collective action at a decisive moment in history.

**THE STORM AND THE SILENCE**  
When the cyclone made landfall on the night of November 12, 1970, winds of more than 200 kilometers per hour and tidal surges over ten meters high swept across the Bengal delta. The storm submerged entire islands such as Bhola, Hatiya, and Manpura and carried seawater far inland. More than 350,000 people perished, and millions lost their homes and livelihoods. In any disaster, the government's first test is its response. The contrast between what people expected and what they received was striking. While the international community mobilized quickly, the Pakistan government's own relief efforts arrived late and reached few. Reports from the time describe aid shipments piling up at Lahore airport while the victims in the delta waited for food and medicine. President Yahya Khan's absence was noteworthy.

The absence of the Pakistan state was conspicuous. The USAID officer Eric Griffel later observed that "hundreds of planes came in from all over the world. For the first three days, nothing came from West Pakistan. It was noticed." Newspapers carried photographs of relief goods stranded far away from where they were needed. The episode took on deep political meaning. Many in East Pakistan already felt marginalized within a state that concentrated wealth, power, and military authority in the western wing. The cyclone and the state's callous response revealed the mindset that allowed such vast disparities to persist, and drew people's attention to those inequalities in the most striking manner.

**A POLITICAL TURNING POINT**  
The timing of the disaster gave it unusual weight. Only four weeks after the cyclone,

Pakistan held its first democratic national election in over fifteen years. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League was campaigning on a platform of economic and political autonomy. In the weeks after the cyclone, Mujib suspended much of his electioneering and instead organized local relief, traveling by boat through inundated areas.

To ordinary citizens, this contrast between local compassion and official

subset of those areas where little or no government relief was provided – sent more fighters into the liberation forces. It is difficult to draw a direct line from environmental disaster to armed struggle, but the evidence suggests that shared trauma can help transform grievance into solidarity. The Bhola cyclone gave the people of East Pakistan a common experience of abandonment. It became a moment of recognition that the government

far beyond Bangladesh. Around the world, natural disasters have often acted as moments that expose how states treat their citizens. The inadequate response to the 1978 earthquake in Iran eroded confidence in the Shah's regime. The 1976 earthquake in Tangshan, China, contributed to shifts in political leadership and policy direction.

These examples point to a larger truth. Natural disasters are tests of governance. They measure a government's capacity and its moral commitment to its people. When the state fails that test, the consequences reach far beyond the immediate tragedy.

Bangladesh itself internalized this lesson. In the decades since independence, it has built one of the most effective community-based cyclone preparedness systems in the world. Warning systems, shelters, and local volunteer networks have dramatically reduced mortality from major storms. The country's capacity to respond to disasters is now studied as a model in international development. That transformation reflects both institutional learning and collective memory.

**THE HUMAN DIMENSION**  
Behind every statistic about Bhola were individual lives. Diaries and oral histories from survivors describe both loss and awakening. A farmer from Barisal later recalled, "We had always known that our wealth went west. But when the storm came and no one helped us, that is when we understood we were on our own."

Such realizations are rarely captured in political theory, yet they form the emotional core of state formation. Revolutions and independence movements succeed not only through ideology or organization but also through shared moral conviction. After Bhola, that conviction spread rapidly.

**REFLECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY**  
More than fifty years later, Bangladesh has transformed itself from a war-torn country into one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia. Yet the questions raised by its birth remain relevant. What makes a state legitimate? What binds citizens to their government in times of crisis?

The Bhola cyclone offers a reminder that legitimacy is not inherited but earned through empathy and action. When the state fails to act, people begin to imagine a different one. In 1971, that imagination became reality. This is not only a story of Bangladesh's past but also a caution for the future. As climate change increases the frequency of extreme weather events, governments around the world will face similar tests. How they respond will determine not only lives lost or saved but also the trust that sustains political communities. Bangladesh's journey from devastation to development shows that lessons can be learned and institutions strengthened. But it also teaches that moments of neglect are never forgotten. The Bhola cyclone provided such conditions. It united the population across social and economic divides, and it gave the call for independence a moral foundation. The cause was no longer just political autonomy but also human dignity. When citizens saw that their lives were expendable to the state, the demand for self-rule gained a force that military repression could not extinguish.

**WHY BANGLADESH SUCCEEDED**  
Bangladesh's independence story also speaks to a broader question: why do some movements for autonomy succeed while others fail? Many separatist struggles, from Biafra to Tamil Eelam, ended in defeat. The difference often lies in the ability of a movement to build mass unity, moral legitimacy, and for citizens to risk their lives to take up arms against a militarized government.

The Bhola cyclone provided such conditions. It united the population across social and economic divides, and it gave the call for independence a moral foundation. The cause was no longer just political autonomy but also human dignity. When citizens saw that their lives were expendable to the state, the demand for self-rule gained a force that military repression could not extinguish.

**LESSONS BEYOND 1971**  
The Bhola experience has relevance

An aerial view of devastation in the aftermath of the cyclone that hit the Bay of Bengal in East Pakistan, November 1970.

PHOTO: HARRY KOUNDAKJIAN/AP

Detail from Zainul Abedin's *Monpura '70* (1970), black ink and watercolour.

COURTESY: BANGLADESH NATIONAL MUSEUM





## TWO DECADES, a faded cap, a lasting legacy

EKUSH TAPADER

The colour faded long ago. Even the Bangladesh Cricket Board logo has turned blurry. Holding that discoloured Test cap against the handle of his bat, Mushfiqur Rahim posted a photo on social media with the caption reading: "Companion through every rise and fall..."

On Tuesday, Bangladesh's most experienced cricketer is set to take the field for his 99th Test in Sylhet against Ireland. If all goes well, on November 19 in Mirpur, he will become the first Bangladeshi ever to play 100 Tests -- a historic milestone.

On May 26, 2005, at cricket's Mecca, Lord's, Mushfiqur received his Test cap from then-captain Habibul Bashar. Since then, that same cap has been his companion through every high and low. He has preserved it with great care for two decades, wearing it in every single Test he has played.

He has traveled the world playing Tests -- sometimes dazzling with the bat, sometimes sinking into failure. Naturally, over 20 years of dust and grind, the cap's colour has faded. But with that fading, its historical value has

only deepened.

Cherishing one's first Test cap is, of course, nothing new. In fact, it has become an integral part of Test cricket's tradition. For players who hold Test cricket close to their hearts, that cap is a deeply emotional symbol.

Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara once said about his own faded cap, "You can buy a new one, but you can't buy the history of the old."

India's Rahul Dravid used to say, "Every stain, every drop of sweat on this cap is a memory of my struggle." It's easy to imagine that Mushfiqur feels the same.

When he received his Test cap in 2005, he had just stepped out of adolescence -- boyish innocence still etched on his face. Back then, perhaps no one thought that this young lad would one day play 100 Tests for his country.

At that time, even the idea that any Bangladeshi could play 100 Tests felt unrealistic. And even today, it remains uncertain who might follow in Mushfiqur's footsteps. Maybe Mominul Haque, who has played 73 Tests so far, has a chance -- but he still has a long way to go.

That's why Mushfiqur's Test cap



already holds immense historical value in Bangladesh cricket. The story of Bangladesh's Test journey itself seems written within the folds of that cap.

No one values their Test cap more than Australian cricketers. Their iconic headgear is known as the Baggy Green. The legendary Steve Waugh wore his Baggy Green in all 168 Tests of his career. He once said, "This cap doesn't just belong to me -- it carries the legacy of all who came before me."

Another Australian captain, Ricky Ponting, once lost his beloved Baggy Green -- and it left him devastated. During the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, his Baggy Green was lost during luggage transfer at an airport. A heartbroken Ponting said, "It was the most treasured thing in my career. Losing it felt like losing a part of my soul."

Mushfiqur understands that emotion -- his devotion to Test cricket proves it. Even as some Bangladeshi cricketers in this T20-dominated era fail to grasp the essence of the longest format despite their lip service, Mushfiqur's cap can serve as a powerful reminder.

It stands as an inspiration -- that if one truly wishes, they too can dedicate themselves, day after day, year after year, to the highest form of cricket. After all, nothing elevates a cricketer's stature quite like success in a Test match. That's why even after winning his first IPL title, Virat Kohli said, "This is one of the greatest moments of my career, but it's still five steps below Test cricket. That's how much I love and value Test cricket."



Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and Ireland skipper Andrew Balbirnie posed with the Dutch-Bangla Bank Bangladesh-Ireland Test series trophy in front of the iconic Ali Amzad Clock, near Keane Bridge in Sylhet, yesterday. The first of the two-match series begins tomorrow at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, followed by the second Test in Mirpur from November 19. Recently reinstated as Test captain, Shanto will lead Bangladesh through the 2025-2027 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle. Bangladesh, still searching for their first win in this cycle after a loss and a draw against Sri Lanka, currently sit seventh with four points. The upcoming Tests against Ireland, however, are not part of the WTC.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## TIB calls for gender-sensitive safeguarding policy

STAR SPORTS DESK

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has called for urgent action over sexual harassment allegations in the national women's cricket team, issuing a press release on Sunday.

Former women's captain Jahanara Alam accused a former selector and team manager, Monjurul Islam, prompting the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to form a three-member investigation committee.

While welcoming the committee, TIB urged the inclusion of at least two independent experts with experience in investigating harassment to ensure impartiality and professionalism.

The organisation also criticised the BCB's lack of a formal safeguarding policy, which violates ICC guidelines and High Court directives. TIB called on the BCB to immediately establish an independent, gender-sensitive complaints and redress committee and adopt ICC-compliant safeguarding measures, warning that continued inaction risks undermining both women's cricket and the sport's integrity in Bangladesh.

## JAHANARA ALLEGATIONS BCB promises 'zero tolerance' regardless of ranks

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam said there would be "zero tolerance" regarding any individual, whether team management staff or director, if allegations made by former women's team captain Jahanara Alam are found to be true.

A board official yesterday informed this newspaper that the board had decided to put a few officials on OSD (Officer on Special Duty) following Jahanara's allegations.

"The board made a decision on those who have been alleged against," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said.

Yesterday, in another interview with a woman cricketer, allegations were raised against BCB director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim. Given that Jahanara's letter dates back to 2021, questions are now surfacing over whether the BCB CEO failed to take any action following her complaints of harassment.

If regular staff are being placed on OSD, some argue that the BCB should also consider putting directors or the CEO on OSD to ensure the investigation remains impartial.

Asked to clarify the board's stance, Bulbul told reporters following the Bangladesh Cricket Conference at a city hotel yesterday: "Zero tolerance."

BCB director and chairman of facilities Shahnian Tanim elaborated on reporters' questions about whether the board is creating grounds for discrimination by putting staff on OSD while directors or high-level staff are not.

"Whether it is an employee or a director, there is an investigation committee responsible for decisions," said Shahnian.

"Since the investigation committee has been declared, we are dependent on their decisions. Independently, as cricket board president or directors, we are not entitled to make any decisions."

"If they say that four employees need to be put on OSD, then that will be done. At the same time, regarding a director, the decision belongs to the committee. When they investigate, the committee will examine everyone; they will not exclude a director. As Bulbul bhai said on zero

tolerance, whether president, director or employee, the board's stance is zero tolerance," he clarified.

There have been calls to form an independent committee to investigate Jahanara's allegations. BCB officials yesterday stated that if the committee uncovers other issues while investigating harassment claims, it will provide recommendations to the board.

Questions of conflict of interest have arisen, however, as BCB director Rubaba Dowla has been named a member of the three-member committee.

"She is our only female director, and in forming the committee, we wanted someone who could collect information from the board. Since this concerns matters from 2021-22, we thought the issue had been closed during that period," Bulbul said.

As new developments emerge, the committee will have their work cut out to provide a report while ensuring there is no interference from any quarters of the BCB.



## Cuba joins squad, Hamza coming today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings' young midfielder Cuba Mitchell has earned his maiden call-up to the Bangladesh national football team, after head coach Javier Cabrera added him to the squad at the last moment for the upcoming home matches against Nepal and India.

Hamza Choudhury, meanwhile, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Monday afternoon, while Shamit Shome is expected the following night.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) confirmed Cuba's inclusion through a Facebook post on Sunday. Alongside him, Fortis FC winger Murshed Ali has also been drafted into the squad.

The national team's preparation camp began on 30 October, with an initial 27-man preliminary squad announced last Wednesday. Cuba and Murshed were later called up after Mohammad Ibrahim and Rahmat Mia were ruled out following injuries sustained during a practice match against Fortis FC.

Explaining his decision to call up the two youngsters, Cabrera told the media: "We are well aware of Cuba's talent. He hasn't been called up earlier mainly because he didn't get much playing time for Bashundhara. As you know, both Ibrahim and Rahmat were injured during the last practice match, we decided this was the right time to bring in some promising players we've been monitoring for a while."

Cabrera, however, said he would not rush the former Sunderland FC youth team player's

development: "We need to progress gradually, just as we did with Fahamedul (Islam) and Zayan (Ahmed). Cuba doesn't have much time to prepare -- only four training sessions before the Nepal match and a total of seven before the India game. Still, we're confident he'll improve while working with us. Everyone wants him to perform well, and hopefully, he'll get the opportunity to play."



Bangladesh will face Nepal in a warm-up match on November 13, before taking on India in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers on November 18 at the National Stadium in Dhaka.

Regarding the arrival of the two overseas-based midfielders, team manager Amer Khan said: "Hamza will arrive at 12:00 pm tomorrow (Monday), and Shamit will arrive the following night at around midnight, which means he'll reach Dhaka on 12 November."



PHOTO: REUTERS

### ALL-TIME ASSISTS (CLUB AND COUNTRY)

Fréderic Puskas	404
Lionel Messi	400*
Pele	369

### MESSI'S CAREER ASSISTS BREAKDOWN

Team	Assists
Barcelona	269
Argentina	60
Inter Miami	37
PSG	34

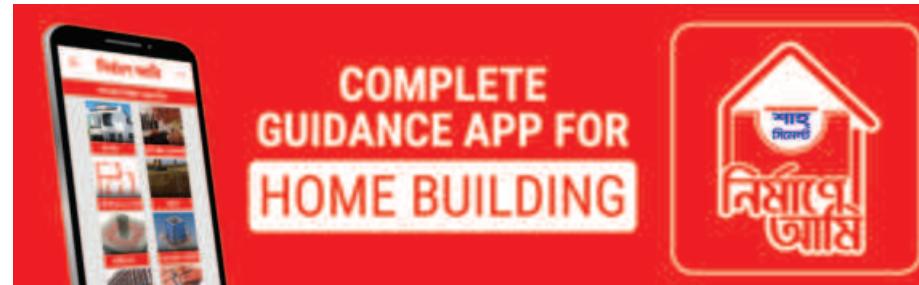
### LIONEL MESSI VS CRISTIANO RONALDO:

Messi	Ronaldo
1133	1296
894	953
400	259

Lionel Messi celebrates scoring one of his two goals in Inter Miami's 4-0 win over Nashville SC in the MLS Cup playoffs on Saturday, guiding the club to the Eastern Conference semifinals. The night also saw the 38-year-old Argentine become only the second player in history to reach 400 career assists for club and country.



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



A woman and her brother till the land to prepare it for sweet potato in Barakandi area of Khadimnagar union of Sylhet Sadar yesterday. Another family member is seen planting seedlings on the prepared field. In this poverty-stricken region, crops like potato, onion, chilli, brinjal, radish, cauliflower, and cabbage are widely grown.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

**Shortage of contraceptives, medicine may end soon**  
**Tk 3,422cr projects to be placed today**

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

The ongoing shortfall in the supply of medicines, family planning materials and the procurement of medical equipment is likely to ease soon as three related projects are scheduled to be placed before the ECNEC for approval today.

The three projects, involving Tk 3,422 crore, mainly aim to procure contraceptives, medicines, medical equipment and hospital furniture, as well as complete unfinished expansion works at several upazila-level hospitals.

Another important project, involving Tk 2,988 crore, aims to procure medicines and pay the salaries of health workers.

It has completed scrutiny and is likely to be placed before the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), officials said.

The supply of medicines and contraceptives, as well as the procurement of medical equipment, was severely disrupted after the expiry of the

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## Trinamool, BJP clash over West Bengal voter roll purge

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and its main rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), are set for a collision course as the Election Commission of India (ECI) undertakes a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the state's electoral roll ahead of assembly polls slated for March-April next year.

The SIR is an exercise aimed at verifying the authenticity of existing and new voters. During the exercise, Booth Level Officers will go door-to-door to identify and remove duplicate, deceased and ineligible

**The revision process has raised concerns among a section of Hindu and Muslim voters in West Bengal, particularly those with ancestral ties to Bangladesh, who fear they may be unfairly excluded from the updated electoral roll.**

voters and verify details of new voters. The base for the SIR is the electoral roll of 2002.

West Bengal is among the 12 states and union territories where the SIR of the electoral roll will be carried out in the first phase of the exercise.

The ECI decision on SIR announced at a press conference on October 29 has set off anxiety and panic as people rush to arrange the necessary 12 documents to ensure their names either remain or are included afresh as voters.

However, the revision process has raised concerns among a section of Hindu and Muslim voters in West Bengal, particularly those with ancestral ties to Bangladesh, who fear they may be unfairly excluded from the updated electoral roll.

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**Theft rising amid lax security at HSIA cargo zone**

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

The lax security at the export cargo zone of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka has led to a rise in theft incidents, tarnishing Bangladesh's reputation among international buyers.

For years, freight forwarders have lodged complaints with the authorities, but no effective measures have been taken to punish offenders or strengthen surveillance and monitoring in the cargo village, said sources.

They alleged that an organised group regularly steals goods from the export cargo village.

On November 5, two people were identified from CCTV footage stealing items from a carton stored in the export cargo area, but no action was taken against them, said the managing director of a freight forwarding company, seeking anonymity.

The affected freight forwarder said he reviewed CCTV footage from the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA) and identified the person responsible.

The thief was found to be a peon or food supplier working informally at the Airport Security Office. Despite not being a permanent employee and having no valid access pass, he was able

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## Ukraine strikes leave 20,000 without power in Russia

Moscow downs 44 drones; energy crisis in Ukraine deepens

AFP, Moscow

Ukrainian strikes on energy infrastructure have left more than 20,000 people without power in several Russian border regions, local authorities said yesterday.

Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said the "electricity and heating supply network has suffered severe damage" in the regional capital of the same name.

"Several streets are affected by power issues... More than 20,000 residents are without electricity," he said on Telegram.

In the western Kursk region, "a fire broke out at one of the power plants in the village of Korenevo," cutting power to 10 localities, Governor Alexander Khinshtain announced on Telegram.

A fire also broke out at a heating facility in the southern Voronezh region, according to Governor Alexander Gusev. Russia's defence ministry, for its part, reported having shot down 44 drones over the border Bryansk region.

Meanwhile, Ukraine was scrambling to turn lights and heating back yesterday after Russian attacks targeting energy infrastructure, with the state's power provider saying its generating capacity was reduced to "zero".

Moscow, which has escalated attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure in recent months, launched hundreds of drones at energy facilities across the country overnight into Saturday.

- Electricity, heating supply suffered severe damage in Belgorod
- Power cuts of 8-16 hours a day across most regions of Ukraine
- Russian drones targeted two power substations deep in Ukraine

## Chinese astronauts figure out how to barbecue in space



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronauts aboard China's Tiangong space station have successfully grilled chicken wings and steaks in a microgravity environment for the first time.

The space barbecue was made possible by a new type of oven that allows smokeless and residue-free cooking in orbit.

A video of the feat shows the astronauts placing chicken wings in a cage and placing it in a hatch that is about the same size as an air fryer.

"It's the first oven of its kind in the world that can actually be used aboard a space station," said Liu Weibo, a deputy chief designer at the China Astronaut Research and Training Centre.

"By raising the temperature to 190 degrees Celsius, astronauts can now really cook in orbit. Previous food heating is purely physical warming, but this is actual cooking, with chemical reactions included. The food can now come out golden and crispy."



In this handout photo released by Mayor Benjie Ver, town officials ride a boat to inspect a flooded street in Jipapad, Eastern Samar province, after heavy rains from Super Typhoon Fung-wong. More than a million people have been evacuated and at least two people killed as floodwaters rose in the Philippines after the typhoon slammed into the eastern seaboard.

## 18 injured as BNP factions clash over nomination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local Chhatra Dal activist died of a "heart attack" and at least 18 others were injured yesterday in clashes between BNP-nominated candidates and those denied party tickets across several districts.

In Mymensingh's Gouripur, violence erupted in the Patbazar area in the afternoon when supporters of BNP candidate M Iqbal Hossain and nomination-deprived leader Tyabur Rahaman Hiron clashed during a campaign event.

During the chase and counter-chase, Tanzeem Ahmed Abid, 35, a supporter of Iqbal and son of Ulama Dal member Md Dewan, collapsed and died on the way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Quoting doctors, Gouripur Circle Assistant Superintendent of Police Debashish Karmakar said

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