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Stop 'lamenting', seek 'solutions'

UN climate chief tells COP30

AGENCIES

UN climate chief Simon Stiell yesterday urged nations at the COP30 conference in Brazil to speed up efforts to reduce emissions and keep alive the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C.



"I am not sugar-coating it. We have so much more work to do. We must move much, much, faster on both reductions of emissions and strengthening resilience," Stiell said, adding: "Lamenting is not a strategy. We need solutions."

Stiell, the executive secretary of the UN framework convention on climate

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Young indigenous workers lend their hands to 80-year-old Zinnat Ali, seen in the back, cutting his paddy for free yesterday afternoon at Borgachhi Kutipara in Rajshahi's Poba upazila after noticing him tired trying to do the work alone. PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

NOMINATION BACKLASH

BNP faces new hurdle ahead of elections

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP is facing growing backlash from its grassroots over its recently announced nominee list for the upcoming election, posing a fresh challenge to the party.

Since unveiling candidates for 237 constituencies on November 3, local leaders and activists in nearly three dozen seats have started protesting, demanding nominations for their preferred candidates.

Before finalising the list, the BNP high command held meetings with thousands of district leaders who pledged support for the party's choices. However, many are now defying acting chairman Tarique Rahman's directive to maintain discipline and joining protests.

In response, BNP has expelled at least nine leaders from the party and its affiliated organisations in two districts for participating in demonstrations.

According to party sources, BNP has engaged independent organisations to assess grassroots acceptance of its nominees.

Since November 3, at least 38 protests and clashes have been reported across 26 districts, with activists blocking roads and railways. At least 30 party activists were injured in Meherpur, Cumilla, and Mymensingh.

A day after the announcement, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir urged leaders who were

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8 killed in car blast near Red Fort in Delhi

At least 20 hurt; train stations, Mumbai, UP on high alert

REUTERS, New Delhi

At least eight people were killed and 20 injured yesterday when a car exploded near the historic Red Fort in India's capital, police said, a rare blast in the heavily guarded city of more than 30 million people.

Major train stations across India, the financial capital Mumbai and the state of Uttar Pradesh, which borders Delhi, were all put on high alert, authorities said.

"All angles" were being investigated and security agencies would come to a conclusion soon, Home Minister Amit Shah said.

A previous owner of the car, named only as Salman, was arrested after the blast, NDTV reported, without going into more details. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

Mangled bodies and the wreckage of several cars could be seen on a congested street near a metro station in the old quarter of Delhi, as police poured into the area to secure it and push back gathering crowds.

"A slow-moving vehicle stopped at a red light. An explosion happened in that vehicle, and due to the explosion, nearby vehicles were also damaged," Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golcha told reporters.

He said the blast occurred just before 7:00pm. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences to those who had lost loved ones.

"May the injured recover at the earliest. Those affected are being assisted by authorities," Modi posted on X.

At least six vehicles and three auto-rickshaws caught fire, Delhi's deputy fire chief said.

The US Embassy in Delhi issued a security alert to its citizens, asking them to avoid crowds and areas surrounding the Red Fort, and to stay alert in places frequented by tourists.

Nearly 75% CEPZ factories have no fire safety certificate

Fire department probe finds

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, ctg

Nearly three-fourths of all factories in the Chattogram Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) are operating without the mandatory fire safety effectiveness certificate, found a recent investigation by the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Every factory is required to obtain approval for a fire safety plan when it is set up and then receive an effectiveness certificate after an inspection confirms that the firefighting system is operational.

Only 55 out of 164 factories in CEPZ currently hold a valid certificate, according to the report submitted last week following a massive fire that gutted two factories inside the zone.

The lack of valid certificates not only violates the Fire Prevention and Extinguishing Act, 2003 but also poses significant risks to workers and foreign investors alike, safety experts said.

"In case of an emergency, that could have disastrous consequences," said Abdul Mannan, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Chattogram.

Implementing fire safety plans



in older buildings -- especially those constructed before 2008 -- is challenging because most were built without adhering to the fire safety code, he said, adding that the burnt-down building in CEPZ was one such old structure.

The two factories did have valid certificates until June this year, CEPZ Executive Director Md Abdus Sobhan told The Daily Star.

They had already applied for renewal, which was in process at the

time of the incident.

The CEPZ authorities have also formed a separate investigation committee to look into the cause of the blaze. The committee's report is now in the final stage, Sobhan said.

Asked about the latest report, he said: "We have not been officially informed about how many factories lack valid effectiveness certificates. If they provide us with the list, both authorities can work together to

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Medical college seats cut by 572

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The total number of seats in government and private medical colleges has been cut by 572 this year, despite the government's approval of a new private college with 50 seats.

According to the 2025-26 admission circular, there will be 5,100 seats across 37 government medical colleges, down from 5,380 last year.

Meanwhile, 66 private medical colleges, including the newly approved one, will offer 6,001 seats, compared to 6,293 in the previous session.

The newly approved Barrister Rafiq ul-Huq Medical College in Dhaka has been allowed to enrol 50 students.

However, the authorities have suspended student enrolment at two private medical colleges for failing to meet required standards.

They are Bikrampur Bhuiyan Medical College in Munshiganj (57 seats) and Monowara Sikder Medical College in Shariatpur (50 seats).

Health Secretary Saidur Rahman said the ministry conducted a comprehensive assessment of all medical colleges, considering their infrastructure, teacher-student ratio, hospital facilities, and other criteria.

"Based on the assessment, the number of seats has been either increased or decreased," he told The Daily Star last night. "All the measures have been taken to ensure better medical education and ultimately improve the country's healthcare system," he added.

The decision to reduce the overall number of seats comes two years after the previous administration increased the seats by 1,030 for the 2023-24 session, a move widely criticised for being made without proper assessment despite shortages of teachers, infrastructure, and laboratory facilities.

Officials said many of those approvals were made on political grounds. After the fall of the Awami League government in August last year, the interim administration sharply criticised the earlier expansion and announced plans to rationalise seats to uphold academic standards.

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Jamaat, allies gear up for Paltan rally

Alliance to deliver 'strong message' to govt on July charter, PR system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami and seven like-minded parties will hold a rally in the capital today to press their five-point demand, which includes a legal basis for the July National Charter and the next election under a proportional representation (PR) system.

The eight-party alliance, comprising Jamaat and Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) among others, plans to deliver a "strong message" to the interim government from the rally at Dhaka's Paltan intersection at 2:00pm, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Hamidur Rahman Azad said at a press briefing yesterday.

The briefing followed a meeting of the alliance's liaison committee at IAB's central office in the capital.

According to Azad, several lakh people are expected to join the rally, which marks the fifth phase of the alliance's protest programme since September 18. It also comes a day after Jamaat's ultimatum to the interim government expired.

On Thursday, Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher warned that Dhaka would "take a different look" if the government failed to accept their demands by November 10.

Azad said today's rally would "set the country's direction" and send a clear message to the government.

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Police officers inspect the body of a victim after a boat carrying members of Myanmar's Rohingya community sank in waters near the Thailand-Malaysia border, off Langkawi, Malaysia, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel strikes east, south Gaza City

2 Palestinians killed; Settlers destroy tent, crops in West Bank

AGENCIES

Israeli air raids yesterday struck eastern and southern Gaza City, killing two Palestinians, including a child, as attacks continued in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli forces began a three-day exercise across the occupied West Bank, raising concerns among Palestinians over increased military activity.

In the northern Jordan Valley, Israeli settlers destroyed a residential tent and agricultural crops belonging to Palestinians, the Wafa news agency reported. The attack took place on Sunday night in Khirbet al-Farsiya in the occupied West Bank.

Settlers also stole agricultural equipment during the attack, which came amid a wave of rising settler violence in the occupied West Bank.

Meanwhile, Israel has handed over the bodies of 15 Palestinian prisoners to authorities in Gaza under the ceasefire agreement.