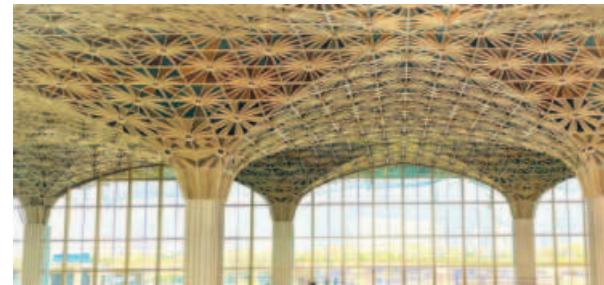




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After nine months without tourists, St Martin's Island has regained its natural charm. Lush greenery thrives, the sands feel softer, and dark corals line the azure shore. Anchored fishing boats in the distance lend the island a serene, picturesque beauty. Although the island is welcoming visitors again, overnight stays remain off-limits. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Country sees more arson attacks
Man burnt as vehicles torched in 5 districts; 35 crude bombs recovered from Geneva Camp

STAR REPORT

Several arson attacks took place yesterday in at least five districts, leaving a bus driver seriously injured in Manikganj.

The attacks came a day after the Awami League's "Dhaka lockdown" programme. At least 30 vehicles, mostly buses, were set ablaze in run-up to the programme and during it. Dozens of crude bomb blasts were also reported across the country.



A burning bus in Manikganj.

Two deaths have been reported so far. On Tuesday, a bus driver was burned to death after miscreants set fire to his vehicle in Mymensingh's Phulbaria. On Thursday, a youth died after jumping into the Turag river while fleeing a crowd that chased him for allegedly setting a bus on fire in Dhaka's Mirpur area.

In the capital, police yesterday recovered at least 35 crude bombs and bomb-making materials from Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur.

Kazi Rafique, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said the raid was conducted based on information that some miscreants are making crude bombs. The seized explosives would be defused later, he said.

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COP30 SUMMIT IN BRAZIL
Heat prompts \$300m for climate health research
Fund aims to build data, direct investments tackling heat and pollution

AGENCIES

With more than a half-million people worldwide dying from heat-related causes every year, a group of philanthropies is putting \$300 million into developing life-saving solutions as global temperatures continue to rise.

The money, announced this week at the COP30 climate negotiations in Brazil, is aimed at developing data and figuring out the best investments for tackling rising risks from extreme heat, air pollution and infectious disease.

"We are a philanthropy. We can't just keep plugging holes and resuscitating a dying model of development," said Estelle Willie, the director of health policy and communications at The Rockefeller Foundation, one of the funders.

"So what we are trying to do is through our philanthropy, we can start testing and validating new solutions through this work and coming together," she said.

Separately, COP30 host Brazil launched an initiative called the Belem Health Action Plan to encourage countries to monitor and coordinate climate-related health policy across their various ministries and departments, reports Reuters.

Govt shelves several key health reform measures

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

The government has pushed back the implementation of several key health reform recommendations made by a commission, casting doubts over the future of the reform initiatives aimed at improving public healthcare.

Fifteen out of 33 reform proposals, primarily selected from the Health Sector Reform Commission's recommendations, have been excluded from the implementation process following a review by the Cabinet Division, said health ministry sources.

This means the health ministry is no longer required to regularly update the Cabinet Division about the implementation of these recommendations, they said.

The excluded recommendations include VAT and tax exemptions on essential antibiotics and medicines used to treat cancer, diabetes and hypertension, and the imposition of higher taxes on low priority items.

Besides, the suggestions for a permanent health commission, a health service for doctors and a separate public service commission for their recruitment were omitted from the implementation list.

The development comes at a time when the health sector is facing numerous challenges, including a funding crunch, a shortage of health workers, high out-

of-pocket expenses, unequal access to services, and weak governance.

On May 5 this year, the 12-member reform commission, led by National Professor AK Azad Khan, submitted its report, recommending a sweeping overhaul of the health service management to make it more people-centred.



It suggested that the government make primary healthcare a constitutional obligation and provide it free of cost to ensure universal access.

Contacted on November 6, Prof Muzaherul Huq, a member of the commission, said, "The measures to implement the commission's recommendations is yet to be visible. If people do not benefit and the steps are not visible to them, the suggestions will become meaningless."

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Govt drops 15 of 33 shortlisted reform proposals

VAT, tax exemptions on essential medicines excluded

Plans for permanent health commission, separate PSC for doctors shelved

Progress slow on remaining 18 recommendations

Only two new health-related ordinances drafted so far

No move yet to make primary healthcare a constitutional obligation

Khalilur to join security forum in India at Ajit Doval's invite

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman will attend a regional forum in New Delhi at the invitation of his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval.

Khalilur will lead the Bangladeshi delegation to the two-day Colombo Security Conclave starting November 19.

Bangladesh joined the CSC as its fifth member last year. India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and the Maldives formed the platform in 2020 to strengthen maritime cooperation among regional countries.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing said Khalilur's participation in the conclave is a "continuation of the interim government's efforts to foster mutually beneficial regional cooperation".

"The interim government prioritises regional cooperation and has actively participated in meetings of various regional bodies," it said in a statement yesterday.

Khalilur had earlier led the



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A family of artisans prepares idols for Kartik Puja, a Hindu festival celebrated on the full moon of the Bangla month Kartik (October–November). This year, the festival falls on November 17. The photo was taken yesterday in Char Aicha village of Barishal Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

US pushes UN Council to adopt Gaza plan
Russia offers counter text

AGENCIES

Russia on Thursday proposed its own draft of a UN resolution on Gaza in a challenge to a US effort to pass its own text at the Security Council that would endorse President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan, according to a copy of the draft seen by Reuters.

The US formally circulated the draft resolution to the 15 Council members last week and has said it has regional support for its resolution that would authorize a two-year mandate for a transitional governance body and international stabilization force.

Russia's UN mission said in a note to Security Council members on Thursday afternoon, seen by Reuters, that its "counter proposal is inspired by the US draft."

"The objective of our draft is to enable the Security Council to develop a balanced, acceptable, and unified approach toward achieving a sustainable cessation of hostilities," the note said.

The Russian draft, also seen by Reuters, requests that the UN Secretary-General identify options for an international stabilization

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